



NEEDHAM PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Park and Recreation Commission
FROM: Patricia M. Carey, CPRP, Director
RE: Pool Season 2017
DATE: July 7, 2016

Project Manager Mike Retzky and I have coordinated the following discussion topics to assist the Park and Recreation Commission in the determination of the Summer 2017 Pool Season. Input on the list has also been provided by BH+A.

The question before the Commission is whether to open the current Rosemary Pool for (a) a full season in Summer 2017, (b) an abbreviated season in Summer 2017 or (c) to close at the end of Summer 2016, allowing the next season to be given to the contractors for a full year of construction and a full Summer 2018 in the new facility.

It is the strong recommendation of the PPBC, Director of Construction-Design, Architects, and Project Manager that the site become available to the contractor by June 1, 2017. Their comments follow:

- Shortening/decreasing the overall contract duration will generally increase the construction bid price as it puts more risk on the contractor to finish the project in a shorter duration.
- A full 12 or 13 month schedule is what the architect considers is a reasonable amount of time for the construction of this project. This is their highly recommended option to help achieve the overall success of this project and the best chance for the opening in the 2018 season. They cannot comfortably state that a shorter contract duration will achieve the goal of an on-time 2018 opening.
- Delaying the start of the project can push the project into winter conditions which can shut-down the outside construction tasks prematurely or cause the contractor to seek additional costs for winter conditions and subsequently delay the opening in 2018.
- It is critical for the success of the project to maintain the anticipated schedule for the completion of the project. The exterior building envelop (footings/walls/floors and roof system etc.) must be installed as early as possible in the construction process/schedule. If this is not performed and work has to stop due to winter conditions the project is at a high risk of a full shut down and delayed opening or full loss of the 2018 season.
- We are expecting and working towards full permit coordination and timing with the DPW/Engineering Dept.'s dredging project. We need to maximize our schedule/timing to conform with what the permit outcome provides

for the draining/dredging work. Committing to opening the pool for a short period in 2017 could mean a promise for a 2018 opening has been made that can't be kept. (*note: the lake needs to be drained for approximately 4 months to allow the pool work to be done*)

- As these constraints get added to the construction schedule, they can put the completion date in jeopardy.
- Allowing every opportunity for the pool to open as early as possible will allow for the maximum/best use of the new pool and system's guarantee and warrantee period. If the opening is delayed letting the pool sit dormant while the warrantee /guarantee period clock runs is not recommended or an advisable route to take.
- The summer period and early fall can generally be the drier periods of the construction season, allowing the contractor to take full advantage of these conditions to perform their site work, excavation for demolition/utilities/ re-grading, roadway work and parking lot excavation, retaining walls and the necessary drainage improvements. Again delaying the start could delay this portion of the work and the overall schedule for the 2018 opening.
- Contractors generally prefer to take control of the site as soon as possible to allow their coordination and site investigation for the project to occur efficiently. This work includes test pits/utility abandonments, site security and environmental controls to be installed ASAP.
- In some cases General Contractors bidding the work could be finishing a project they are currently working on in the late spring and would look to get right into another project in late May/June. Delaying the start to mid-summer may preclude the contractor from bidding the work because they have sought work on other projects that started at a more opportune time.

Rosemary Pool provides a service to the community, and not having it open for one season is not ideal under regular circumstances.

- *Loss of location for swim lessons.* Our department offers four 2-week sessions, so children have 9-10 daily lessons within each session. Our department also offers adaptive aquatics for youth with challenges, one-on-one private lessons, and specialized programs including stroke clinics and high school swim team conditioning.
- *Loss of location for swim team.* Over 50 Needham youth participate in the summer swim team, practicing several days a week, and hosting 5-6 home meets.
- *Loss of centrally located community space, for residents of all ages to come together for a summer recreation activity.* Though non-residents are also welcome, the vast majority of visitors to the pool reside in Needham. For many visitors, summer outdoor swimming is the only time they swim throughout the year.
- *Regular visits to Rosemary help strengthen swimming ability in youth.* From participating in lessons or swim team, attending clinics or practicing for the deep water test, and using the diving board, young swimmers become much stronger in the water and develop survival and safety skills for when they are at other pools or lakes.
- *Loss of location for area day cares/summer programs, some who participate in swim lessons and general swim, and some who just participate in general swim.* Three Park and Recreation programs visit the pool: Tennis Academy (daily), Outdoor Living (1xweek), Sports Specialties (1xweek).

- *Loss of employment for 26 aquatic/swim team staff.* This is also a break in training and leadership development which are part of the equation of having a quality staff.
- *Loss of volunteer opportunity for 30+ volunteers.* Though not all will later be employed by Park and Recreation, this is a valuable learning lesson for older youth to take into future employment opportunities.

The following tasks have been undertaken in past years to prepare the pool for opening. All of this work is done in combination with Fall/Winter/Spring programs, Summer program preparation, and other staff duties that extend beyond programming.

- Late fall: begin procurement/bid process for purchase of chlorine and other pool supplies, so that all is confirmed by spring. Procurement process would also need to begin for hiring a diver to spend about two weeks cleaning the pool from winter debris.
- January: start working on hiring supervisors and returning staff; start interviewing new applicants.
- March: confirm dates/prices for Summer brochure. Finalize program details.
- April: start selling season passes; volunteer registration; contracts completed for majority of staff, and processing them for payroll system. *We are requested to have as many staff on payroll ready for summer, prior to mid-May, as they set-up parallel payroll systems for two fiscal years. Those who are entered after mid-May tend to have more errors that need correction.*
- In past, April was the time to start draining, but that can't be done in 2017. Starting pre-season work is weather dependent.
- In past, May was time to clean/paint, but without draining, but there is no painting or full cleaning in 2017 without draining the lake. The diver will clean enough debris out of the pool so that we can get the filter system started up. Based on our experience in 2010, it will take 2-3 weeks, as much of the material is silty so the vacuum needs to move slowly to prevent stirring it up into the water.
- May: Public Facilities plumber activates the building, and makes needed repairs. Other repairs typically needed including welding of railing and replacing deck boards.
- Supervisors and maintenance staff, with some other pool staff, start after Memorial Day, preparing the grounds, building and pool for season. Typically takes 4 weeks to make the full facility presentable and safe.
- Staff training occurs throughout June, job specific and general to all. This includes needed re-certifications.

Director's Comments

- Rosemary Pool has been part of my personal life since opening in 1972, and professionally since 1986. The benefits of this "engineering marvel" have well exceeded the detriments to the facility, so it is sad for me to see this era come to an end – while I am also excited to see the new facility, and its ability to maintain much of what makes the current Rosemary Pool special, but modernized and more appropriate for this century with current needs and wants of the Needham community.

- Maintaining a 45 year old outdoor pool with a 42 year old unheated building is a tremendous challenge, and takes more effort, each year, on the part of staff from Park and Recreation, DPW Parks and Forestry, DPW Water and Sewer, Public Facilities-Operations and private contractors to keep everything operational and in safe condition.
- The pool will not be repainted in 2017, so will give the perception of a lower quality facility.
- From earlier discussions, the Commission has been comfortable with holding a shorter season in 2017, so my assumption that opening for a full season prior to construction is not an option.
- That leaves two options – a partial 2017 and no 2017.
- If just the two new pools were being built, there would not likely be an issue being ready for 2018. The cost might be higher as the port-a-dams would likely be needed, and we would still have an old building and driveway/parking. But, the Rosemary Recreation project includes major site work and building re-construction, plus is being coordinated with the lake sediment removal project. All of that work and coordination takes more time than just doing the two new pools.
- It would be challenging to hire a full staff for a short-term work opportunity in 2017.
- Opening for part of 2017 would likely mean only having a partial season in 2018. That would create the situation of having two partial seasons, which is not ideal in a customer service operation.
- If a decision was just made on the short-term goals, I would try to have at least some of the 2017 season to decrease the impact of the losses, but looking at the long-term, it seems more appropriate to focus on the new facility being fully operational in 2018.

Based on the input from the architects, PPBC, and Town staff, and my own professional experience with construction projects and timelines, it is my strong recommendation that Rosemary Pool close permanently on August 26, 2016.

In order to deal with the losses to the community in 2017, I would

- Coordinate with nearby municipal facilities for possible resident rates; provide alternative options information to all pool users and other residents
- Coordinate with nearby municipal facilities and the Charles River YMCA on swim lesson programs
- Coordinate with nearby municipal facilities or Charles River YMCA on practice location for swim team, and accommodations for hosting swim meets
- Create employment opportunities for current staff who want to continue to work with Park and Recreation: (a) additional summer program staff; (b) crews to help with projects – trail work, playground cleaning, painting, picnic table/bench repair/building; (c) seek lifeguard opportunities at nearby municipal facilities
- Encourage pool volunteers to try opportunities at the programs (some actually volunteer at pool and programs)
- Support day cares/camps with finding one year alternative

- Much of this work would be useful, in the event that construction funding was not supported in May. It would be challenging to condense all the winter/spring work into a few weeks and open in June 2017 for one final season, so we would need to help people prepare for the long-term without Rosemary Pool.