



**DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS  
AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

1108 Jefferson Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

James B. Spengler  
Director

Phone (703)746-4343

Fax (703)746-5585

**Park and Recreation Commission**

October 24, 2014

Mayor William Euille  
Vice Mayor Allison Silberberg  
Councilman John Taylor Chapman  
Councilman Timothy B. Lovain  
Councilwoman Redella S. Pepper  
Councilman Paul C. Smedberg  
Councilman Justin M. Wilson

Re: Warwick Pool and Aquatic Facilities

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

The Park and Recreation Commission recommends that City Council close Warwick Pool for the 2015 summer and, at the same time, move funds set aside for Aquatics in Fiscal Year 2018 to Fiscal Year 2016 so that the facility can be replaced as soon as possible. This recommendation is based on the extremely poor condition of the facility and on the significant community use of the facility.

As you know from the detailed May 2014 pool assessment provided to you by Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities staff, Warwick Pool, originally constructed in the 1950s, is in a state of severe disrepair directly affecting the safety of the site and the surrounding neighborhood. To make the minimum necessary repairs to keep the Warwick Pool facility open for one more summer would cost essentially as much as wholesale replacement of the existing pools. In addition to the myriad problems identified in the May 2014 pool assessment, during the summer of 2014, the main pool lost between 3,378 and 6,756 gallons of water per day, resulting in the flooding of the adjacent neighborhood.

Still, even in its state of disrepair, the two pools (the main pool and the kiddie pool) served thousands of Alexandria residents who visited either on their own or as part of a summer camp or program. The majority of the non-camp or program visitors came from the neighborhoods in walking distance of the facility. This heavy use and consistently vocal support for the facility from the community illustrates the continued need for the Warwick facility and the hardship on the community that would result from a multi-year closure due to the funds for replacement not being available until FY 2018.

The Commission is dismayed that the condition of this facility has gotten to the point where it must be closed to the public for the 2015 summer, particularly given the current lack of funding for beginning the replacement planning process. But the Commission also views this as an important opportunity for the City to demonstrate its commitment to Aquatics and to providing facilities that can both serve all citizens and also result in some revenue generation through opportunities for programming and provision of amenities. In removing and replacing the existing pools, the City has the opportunity to include elements of design (such as a slide, spray feature or designated program area) that can result in increased revenue generation from increased uses. Accordingly, the

*(continued)*

Commission recommends that City Council:

- **Close Warwick Pool for summer 2015.** No more funds should be expended on minimal and temporary repairs to keep the facility open. Instead, the replacement process should begin as soon as possible.
- **Move \$3 million of the \$5 million set aside for Aquatics from FY2018 to FY2016.** The Commission recognizes that the citizen groups have agreed that the Warwick “share” of the \$5 million is \$1.5 million. But the Commission is concerned that imposing that limitation at the outset will unnecessarily limit creative planning. Instead, the Commission believes that the better policy is to have the budgetary flexibility to consider a range of design options that will not just replace but will also improve the facility. The Commission also does not want this facility situation to be repeated at other Aquatics facilities. By moving up more than the minimum required to replace the existing pools at Warwick, Council will give the department flexibility both to determine the best possible design for the new Warwick pools and to begin planning for other Aquatics facilities, decreasing the chances that similar closures will have to happen in the future.
- **Direct the appropriate City agencies to form a communication and transportation plan around the closure.** The Commission believes that it is incumbent on the City to ensure that residents who normally use Warwick Pool are aware of the closure and of alternative aquatics access options for the summer of 2015, including camps and public transportation options to other aquatics facilities. The City should also consider to what extent free or low-cost transportation can be provided from Warwick to other Aquatics facilities on a regular basis.
- **Move the remaining Aquatics funds to FY2017.** The Commission believes that Aquatics is not just about fun in the summer time. The ability to swim is an important life skill that every Alexandria resident should have the opportunity to learn. It is also a sport that can be practiced in every stage of life. Alexandria has a well-regarded public swim team and a continually over-subscribed program of Aquatics classes at all levels from babies to seniors. The City should not delay any longer matching the commitment of its citizens to these activities with the commitment of resources to our Aquatics facilities.

In closing, the Commission would like to commend the work of Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics, Warwick Village Citizens Association, Tenants & Workers United, and the many citizens who came together to discuss Warwick pool among themselves and with the Commission. Their hard work at building consensus among the various groups is a testament to the strength and commitment to civic engagement of our citizens. The Commission is delighted that the community reached consensus about the best course of action and looks forward to the continued participation of these groups in addressing Aquatics issues throughout the city.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

*Jennifer Atkins*

*Judith Coleman*

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Jennifer Atkins and Judy Coleman, Co-Chairs  
Park and Recreation Commission

DocuSigned By: Judith Coleman

