



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 22, 2014

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER/s/

DOCKET TITLE:

City Council Receipt of the Report on the Condition of and Recommendation for Future Improvements to the Warwick Pool Facility.

ISSUE: Should the City Continue to Provide Aquatics at the Warwick Pool Facility?

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Receives the report and the Park and Recreation Commission recommendation for improvements to the Warwick Pool Facility; and
2. Determine whether or not Council intends that the City provide aquatics at the Warwick site as a capital investment priority ahead of other neighborhood serving aquatic facilities; and
3. Acknowledge that the timing and funding level of any future Warwick Pool improvements will be determined through the forthcoming FY 2016 to FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget process.

BACKGROUND: The Warwick Pool facility, originally built in the 1950s, requires significant capital investment in order to continue operating. Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) staff, the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the City Council annually review and determine the feasibility of opening for each summer season and, to date, have opted to make minimal repairs to keep it open. This memorandum and its attachments document the continuing decline of the facility, along with a potential risk to users and neighbors of the pool. Based on this information, City Council was informed in a May 2014 email from the City Manager that the pool cannot safely be opened for the 2015 Summer Season, and that a decision regarding the long term future use and any improvements to Warwick Pool is required to inform the FY 2016-2025 CIP budget process. Currently, with the exception of the Chinquapin facility, there is no proposed CIP funding for aquatics facilities until FY 2018 (\$5 million for "Aquatics TBD").

DISCUSSION: In December 2013, RPCA staff provided an update to City Council regarding the current known conditions at Warwick Pool, including the projected capital investment needed to open for upcoming seasons and alternatives for future improvements to the facility (December 2013 docket memo, Attachment 1). Staff indicated that both short and long-term decisions needed to be considered by Council regarding the operation of Warwick Pool. A short-term decision was made to open Warwick Pool for the 2014 Summer Season (FY2015), which required repairs to the electrical system to be completed prior to opening. At that time, projections for any additional capital investment were based on previous site assessments conducted in 2002 and 2003.

In the spring of 2014, staff from RPCA, General Services and the consulting engineer, Kimley-Horn, conducted an updated facility assessment. The report was completed in May 2014 and provided to the PRC and City Council in June 2014 (Warwick Pool Facility Assessment, Attachment 2). The report documents a number of items in urgent need of repair, ADA compliancy requirements that must be addressed, as well as additional components requiring repair. The total estimated cost to *repair* the existing facility ranges from **\$1,451,170 to \$1,987,580** (pool and bathhouse). Whereas the cost to *replace* the existing facility (Alternative 5 in Attachment 1, to demolish and remove the existing children's wading pool and main pool and replace them with new steel shell construction pools is estimated at **\$1,859,878 to \$2,347,058**. There is a much greater expected life of use for a new facility versus repairs in place.

Just prior to completion of the above study, in May 2014, residents of Sanborn Place began reporting that water from Warwick Pool was flooding into their backyards. Staff later determined that the flooding, compounded by heavy rain, was caused by leaks in the pool, which likely originate in the tile area, flow between the two pool shells, and then disperse out into the subsurface. While staff report that this is not a new issue, the severity of the issue is far greater now than it was in years past and may create a potential hazards to adjacent residents.

At the PRC meeting in June 2014, following the report of the study and flooding issues, staff were asked by the Commission to provide additional information about the users of Warwick Pool to support future decision making related to the facility. Per that request, during the 2014 Summer Season, staff monitored attendance for point of origin to determine what neighborhoods pool *day pass* users most frequently came from. The analysis does not include programmed camp use of the pool. An overview of the results for August 1 through August 17 is shown below, based on a total of 441 (out of 562 visitors) responding patrons (Map of Neighborhoods, Attachment 3):

○ Warwick Village	30%	= 134
○ Arlandria/Four Mile	5%	= 23
○ Lynhaven	8%	= 36
○ Del Ray	30%	= 134
○ Rosemont	5%	= 22
○ Braddock Heights	7%	= 29
○ Park Fairfax/Beverly Hills	14%	= 60

- Other 1% = 3

As shown above, the majority of users (60%) for this time period came from Warwick Village and Del Ray Neighborhoods. Overall, pool visitation for the 2014 Summer Season increased slightly from visits in 2013.

Based on review of the report and analysis of the flooding issue, RPCA staff recommends closure of the pool after the 2014 Summer Season. The City cannot operate additional seasons between now and when the \$5 million in “Aquatics to be Determined” CIP funds are available in FY 2018, until the identified repairs to, or replacement of the current facility are made. For an in-depth discussion of the alternatives for Warwick Pool, please refer to pages 3 and 4 of the December 2013 City Council memorandum.

Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation:

On October 9, 2014, staff provided the Park and Recreation Commission with a consolidated report of the information above and the PRC held a public hearing prior to making a recommendation for future improvements at the Warwick Aquatics Facility. Through this public hearing, staff sought a recommendation from the PRC regarding future improvements to the Warwick Pool Facility, including recommended CIP funding and timing of those improvements; and that the recommendation is in line with the needs expressed by the Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics (AAA) stakeholder group, the Warwick Village Citizens Association, and the broader public.

The PRC received comments from AAA and the Warwick Village Citizens Association supporting the replacement of the existing facility, and voted to provide the following recommendation to City Council:

- Support the closure of the facility for the 2015 Summer Season and request that RPCA reach out to the existing users to promote use of other pools in the City;
- Recommend replacement of the existing pools at Warwick, with additional amenities to attract visitors and improve revenue potential; and
- Recommend moving up CIP funding for the design and construction of the facility from FY 2018 to FY 2016.

The PRC (Attachment 4) will provide and AAA (Attachment 5) has provided letters in association with this docket item, providing greater detail regarding this recommendation. If Council determines to continue to provide aquatics at the Warwick pool site by making the Warwick pool facility an investment priority, then staff will have this Council decision when staff prepares the forthcoming upcoming FY 2016 to FY 2025 City Capital Improvement Program. As is the case for any proposed City capital project, the proposed Warwick aquatics facility will have to compete with all other proposed City capital projects for funding, as well as compete for funding timing. If priority were given by Council to the Warwick aquatics facility, then that would give it funding and timing priority over the other neighborhood serving aquatics facilities including the Old Town Pool, Nannie J. Lee Pool, Ewald Pool, Colosanto Pool, and the site-to-be-determined West End pool. It should be noted that the Charles Houston pool is relatively new and does not have a major pending pool funding need, and the Chinquapin Pool is considered a citywide aquatics facility, which is on a separate scope and funding consideration track.

FISCAL IMPACT: The estimated cost of the recommended Warwick aquatics replacement alternative is from \$1,859,878 to \$2,347,058 for the pool and bathhouse. The project could also be accomplished as the Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics letter indicates for \$1.5 million if the focus of the improvements were on the two pools and the needed-to-be-fixed items in the bathhouse building. Operating costs will be similar to the current annual amount of approximately \$92,000, but may be adjusted to address any potential expanded programming

available with a new facility.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: December 2013 City Council Docket Memorandum

Attachment 2: May 2014 Warwick Facility Assessment Report

Attachment 3: Warwick Pool Users, Neighborhood Map

Attachment 4: Park and Recreation Commission Letter of October 24, 2014

Attachment 5: Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics Letter of October 16, 2014

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

James Spengler, Director, Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (RPCA)

William Chesley, Deputy Director, RPCA

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