

MEETING SUMMARY

AWG November 21, 2011

Over 25 people participated in the November 21st, 2011 AWG meeting. This summary was written by Kate Green, part of the facilitation team, and is intended to reflect the key points raised at the meeting. If you have any questions about the AWG, please contact Karen Pitre or Nicole Swerhun (see contact information in the margin).

1. Overview of Presentations

After a briefing from David Crombie, Chair of the AWG, there were four presentations, including: (1) An update of pool repairs by David Wells, Altus; (2) Status of the lease agreement between TDSB and the City by Marlene Riley, Toronto Lands Corporation & Swim Toronto; (3) Overview of data received from 33 pools by Karen Pitre; and (4) Recommendations from the Coroner's Report – Swimming as part of Ontario Curriculum from Livia Hunter. Below are highlights from David Crombie's briefing and Marlene Riley's presentation.

Highlights of remarks from David and Marlene include:

David Crombie, Chair, AWG

Briefing on the AWG Approach: Reflecting on the deliberate steps the AWG as taken to successfully strengthen pools programming in Toronto, David highlighted three key elements of the AWG approach:

- **Dissent** – The AWG was initiated through responsible dissent in response to the decision to close pools
- **Research** - The power of the AWG's contribution has come from the facts-based approach that relies heavily on research and on-the-ground knowledge
- **Collaboration** – We (the AWG) collaborated with anyone who would collaborate with us, gaining numerous partners and allies

Marlene Riley, Toronto Lands Corporation & Swim Toronto

Status of lease agreement between TDSB and the City, including status of information exchange

- The lease agreement will be extended until the end of April 2012, giving an **extra four months to negotiate the renewal of the city's pool lease agreement** with the TDSB.
- TLC and TDSB have received the first draft of the Terms of Renewal for review.

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2. Discussion

Given what we've learned and achieved to date, what advice do you have on how to best increase programming and pool users? What other advice can we provide?

a. Streamline the Process

Make it easy for people to find out *what* pools are available, *when* they are available, and *how* to get a permit:

- Make a strong communication plan to advertise what pools are available, what equipment is available, and when it's available
- Improve communication about how to get a permit

b. Conduct extensive education and outreach

Educate community about the benefits of swimming:

- Educate people about the safety and health benefits of swimming
- Use recommendations provided by the Coroner's Report to target higher risk groups
- Include translation in education and outreach initiatives to include as many people as possible

c. Provide Creative Programming

Entice more people:

- Make programs fun and creative to attract a wider range of people
- Encourage sharing of pool time between schools with pools and other nearby schools that don't have their own pool

Target specific groups:

- Have gender specific programs based on need, i.e. programs for males who are more frequent drowning victims, or programs for women from specific religious groups
- Target adult swimmers from 8:00pm to 10:00pm when the pools are otherwise idle, and hold adult swim classes
- Share pools with nearby daycares

d. Continuously Improve Facilities, Accessibility and Staffing

Improve coordination around equipment repairs and maintenance:

- Identify what equipment is available and in good repair at each pool
- Clarify who is responsible for maintaining equipment
- Encourage greater coordination between permit users and pool staff regarding equipment storage and maintenance

Improve access to pools for people with mobility issues:

- Identify barriers for people with mobility issues - even if a pool is on the ground level and accessible for wheel chairs, people may still require lifts, and greater mobility throughout pool area and change rooms
- Make accommodations for seniors throughout pool area and change rooms for greater safety and mobility

Improve availability and training of staff:

- Ensure staff have sufficient training about changes to pool availability, how to get permits, and what equipment is available
- Prevent shortages of trained staff by addressing affordability or access issues that may stop people from becoming qualified lifeguards and instructors