

AQUATIC WORKING GROUP (AWG)

September 27, 2010

Metro Central YMCA, 20 Grosvenor St.

12:00-1:30pm

MEETING SUMMARY

The following meeting report was written by Alexandra McDonough. Please send any changes or comments to amcdonough@canurb.com. All handouts and attachments referred to in this summary are available on request.

I. Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review

David Crombie opened the meeting with some remarks about the Governance Committee Report which was approved by the TLC and the TDSB. He encouraged the AWG to keep working at developing an interim model and eventually a long-term model. Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, briefly described the agenda and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

II. Updates to AWG

Karen Pitre provided the following updates:

1. **Swim Toronto** has been endorsed by the TLC and TDSB as a body unto itself. It still requires ongoing input from the AWG and Swim Captains.
2. The **permit schedule** shows hours available to permit for each pool, the number of hours permitted, costs and caretaker fees. The schedule also shows where there are permitting gaps and where permitting has grown.
3. We are in the process of working to create an **online system** with information about when pools are permitted and who has permitted them.
4. **The Swim Toronto Staff Resource** will be the liaison between users and the permitting department. This role will relieve pressure on the permit department and will facilitate the permitting process by dealing with issues like temperature and cleaning. If you are interested in the position, submit your application to the TLC.
5. **The Construction Schedule** outlines the completion percentages for construction projects. They all need to be complete by the end of August, 2011.
6. An **update on signage** is attached to the agenda. Signs are being installed when construction begins.

Questions of Clarification: The following questions were asked. Answers provided by Karen are indicated by italics.

- Is it likely we'll receive additional provincial funding? *Provincial funding for pool repairs was a one time investment. The agreement was that if the provincial funding was provided, the school pool must stay open for 8 years. If it doesn't stay open for 8 years, then the TDSB has to repay the province.*
- Are the construction costs coming in on budget? *Yes, incredibly close. We've moved things between pools where the costs are over or under what was estimated.*

- Who decided where the signs would go? *The sign company recommended locations for the signs. If the location is an issue, we can go back and look at relocating it.*
- What happens to the signs if the permit holder changes? *The sign company will put a decal over top to cover it with new information.*
- The signs don't indicate that there is a community swim time. *We aren't advertising programming, just users. There are other ways to advertise that.*
- If the permit holders change, who should we get in touch with? *The new staff resource person.*
- The Riverdale sign has been tagged with graffiti. *At Riverdale, talk to Ron Bernard to clean it up. Other schools should also be able to remove the graffiti if you talk to them.*
- We know 4 pools we want to permit but we can't submit the permit until March 1. *As part of our process, there's a recognition that Swim Toronto can deal with that. People need to understand that you may not get your first choice every time; you might get your second choice.*

III. Working Session On Permits

Permit Process and Governance: The Pools Governance Report is significant because it formalizes a subcommittee of the TLC. The name of this subcommittee is now Swim Toronto. It will be a skills-driven committee and there will also be a staff person who works at the TLC to support pools. The intent is to have a system where the AWG meets a couple of times a year, local pool teams meet more frequently (i.e. pool captain(s), permit holders, school principal, others) and the Swim Toronto staff person supports the system year round.

The permit flowchart (as distributed at the meeting) demonstrates that new permit requests go to Swim Toronto. If the requested time is available, the TDSB issues a permit. If the requested time is not available, there are a few suggested principles to follow. Participants at the meeting provided the following feedback about how to make the system work smoothly:

- The need to keep things as simple as possible was emphasized. Some felt that the proposed model was too complex.
- Some described the importance of trying to strengthen governance at the local level. They suggested giving local community groups a terms of reference so they know what role to play.
- There was some concern that giving existing permit holders priority over new permit holders could shut out new permit holders.
- Some mentioned the importance of working with TDSB Safe Schools to make sure the environment is safe during off hours.
- Several people raised the need to address the TDSB policy that the Principal has decision-making power between 4-6pm. The Principal may book time for the pool but there may not be a coach available because of teacher turnover. Also, the Principal is supposed to permit the school by June 1 for the following school year. These issues need to be discussed with Principals.
- Some discussed the need for improved communication between school users and permit holders. Adequate notification deadlines should be confirmed.

Permit Fees: A permit fee of \$50 per hour was established no matter who the user was or which pool was being used. That amount was set for one year with a commitment from the AWG to revisit the amount at the end of the year. Some metering of pools has been done, but the initial readings are inconsistent. More metering information will be released as it becomes available. Feedback about permit fees is below:

- Some said that charging different rates for different users would be difficult and that all users should be charged the same rate. This was related to the difficulty of assessing the value of the pool assets including parking, diving boards, hairdryers, etc. Others said that it makes more sense to charge higher rates for larger pools because more swimmers can be accommodated in lessons and therefore more revenue can be earned. Others encouraged charging different rates for different groups such as non-profits versus for profits.
- Some felt that permit fees should be front-end loaded so that money can be refunded if required (rather than chasing money later).
- Several suggestions related to fees were made including: incentive pricing for later hours, a minimum 2 hour requirement for permits, putting a minimal capital levy on each hour and having the permit office ask whether there is a cost to participants to prioritize some users and accommodate more community use.
- Several people emphasized the need to phase in a price increase over time and to give adequate notice; if rates go up for next September, the permit holders should know by January so they can build the costs into their business models.