

Notes of the Aquatic Working Group (AWG) Meeting
Tuesday, September 29, 2009
Canadian Tire Conference Room, 2200 Yonge Street
5:00 – 7:00 pm

These notes were written by Nicole Swerhun, Meeting Facilitator. Questions, comments, and results of discussion are integrated throughout the Notes. Materials distributed at the meeting included: (1) Let's Make Waves September 2009 Fact Sheet, (2) Earl Grey pool communication, (3) Toronto Star letter by Debbie Gordon and Janet Dabrus, (4) Swimming Statistics and Information from the ASA, and (5) a summary sheet that includes key statistics on the 9 schools with pools still on probation.

I. Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review

David Crombie opened the meeting. He extended a special welcome to people attending an AWG meeting for the first time, and reviewed some of the key activities that the AWG has been involved in, including:

- The process started in the Spring of 2008. At that time David had been asked by the TDSB to see if it was possible to find a long term solution for the sustainable use of pools in schools.
- In May 2008 we held a large open meeting with key stakeholders to talk about pools in schools. Let's Make Waves and many others participated. From that meeting, the Aquatics Working Group was formed, and first met in September 2008.
- AWG approached the TDSB with a workplan, which was supported. Resources (\$4 million) were obtained from the Provincial government to carry the pools through another year while the AWG did its work. This also covered the costs of completing an audit on the pools.
- In March 2009 the AWG reported to the TDSB that work was underway to secure funds from the Province to support repair of the pools (to fill needs identified in the audit report). The TDSB was asked to continue shouldering their component of pool costs, and AWG committed to continuing to work with the community to raise revenue for pools.
- There have been a number of significant successes to date. Approximately \$16 million has been obtained from the Province to support capital repairs. The AWG has successfully demonstrated the viability of 23 of the 39 pools. There were 7 pools recommended to close, which means 9 pools remain to be saved.
- The AWG has been making steady progress. Six weeks ago only 13 pools had been saved. We received support from the TDSB for 6 more pools and then 4 more pools, to total 23.
- On behalf of the AWG, I would like to thank all the people who have been working hard in communities to help save these pools. It shows that if communities dig in, they can force governments to pay attention. I'd also like to thank the Trustees and the Province who have stood behind us.
- Finally, this is not only about keeping pools open, it's about sustaining them over the long term. Pools are part of a larger effort which is looking at how we better use our schools in ways that benefit the community.

Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, reviewed the proposed agenda, and confirmed with participants that it presented a reasonable outline for discussion at the meeting. All participants also introduced themselves.

II. Presentation: Overview of Work to Date & Updates Since Aug AWG meeting

Karen Pitre, consultant to the Toronto Lands Company (TLC) presented the following slides as part of her update on activities since the August meeting:



TORONTO LANDS CORPORATION **AWG**
Adults Working Group

AWG Update

September 29th, 2009

Capital Costs

- Agreement with the Province
 - Up to \$15.8M (provided the TDSB opens the pool)
 - Remain open for at least 8 years
- Construction underway on 3 pools (Riverdale, Northern and Stephen Leacock)
- Scope of work completed for additional 13 pools, design work started.
- Signage package approved and installed as part of the renovation program.



POOL Renewal Project

This Pool is being upgraded with funding support from the Government of Ontario.

To Permit this pool contact The Toronto District School Board (Permit Unit) at 416-395-7666 or permits@tdsb.on.ca

Ontario

Swim 4 Me/Davina
 lessons@davina.com www.davinaswim.com

North York Aquatic Swim Club
 www.nyac.on.ca 416-785-0430

Issues/Challenges

- Operating Costs (Operating Base/Operating Incremental)
- Permitting a “closed” pool
- Caretaking Overtime
- Priority School Funding
- Community Use of Schools Funding

Operating Incremental Costs

SCHOOL	Incr. Cost	\$5.21/SF
Carleton Village Sr PS (operating school)	\$	59,925
Central Technical School (B)	\$	72,044
Earl Grey Sr PS	\$	55,940
George Harvey CI	\$	72,122
Kensington Community School Jr	\$	48,015
Monarch Park	\$	71,726
SATEC @ WA Porter CI	\$	53,043
Western Technical-Commercial School (A)	\$	81,026
Winona McMurrich Jr PS	\$	76,280
TOTAL	\$	590,121

Successful Partnerships

- YMCA Greater Toronto
- Toronto Star
- Kiwanis Club of Toronto Foundation
- RBC Corporate Donations
- Manulife Financial
- Canadian Tire Foundation for Families
- Toronto Community Foundation – Swim Toronto
- Swim Clubs/Swim Schools
- Community Groups/Parent Councils
- SPOC



Discussion (responses, where provided, are in *italics*):

- Can schools apply for priority funding from the Province? *It works like this: communities apply, and then principals are part of the decision-making process regarding who receives the funding.*
- If Jack-of-Sports is willing to permit \$30k, is that enough to keep a pool open? *It depends. Right now the only guarantee is if you “hit the target” for the incremental costs of your pool. Ultimately it will also involve consideration of the size of the gap. Note that the original motion from the TDSB was not that the pools needed to cover the incremental costs, but instead that they needed to demonstrate the ability to generate revenue.*
- There was also a request to staff (by the TDSB last week) to come back with a process for decommissioning pools.
- At one time we talked about the possible situation where there was community interest in a pool, but no program available. Do we have a way to match people providing swim programming to pools with a demand for that programming? *Yes. There are a number of groups interested – Toronto Swim Club and the YMCA are a couple of examples.*
- The Forest Hill School Council has set up a permanent sub-committee dedicated to the pool (they monitor the TDSB decisions that impact pools, ensure permits are maintained, etc.). This may be a model that other pools want to consider.
- Are some pools closer to being saved than others? *Where there is a dedicated group of people, chances of the pool being saved go up.*
- Which of the 9 pools have the ability for splitting up genders? This option may help with corporate fundraising. *A number. Examples include Porter, Central Tech, Winona.*

III. Let’s Make Waves

Heidi Wilson, Let’s Make Waves (LMW), reviewed the LMW Fact Sheet available at the meeting. Her presentation quickly covered a number of points, including (but not limited to):

- What is *Let’s Make Waves*, and how LMW is different from the Aquatic Working Group;
- The TDSB’s response to the AWG report;
- Permit requirements; and a
- Call to action.

Heidi also reviewed a one page sheet that LMW put together with statistics on the 9 schools with pools still on probation.

IV. Pool-Specific Strategies

Following Heidi's presentation, participants divided into a number of groups to discuss opportunities to organize to save each of the remaining 9 pools. The following reports were delivered:

- **Carlton Village.** Thanks to everyone for supporting us and speaking so positively about the need for equity in funding for pools. A few of the things we discussed included:
 - Opportunity to have some after school programming, especially using the daycare, which has a large after school program (over 40 kids). Though would need to hire high school lifeguards.
 - Opportunity to use the pool in the summer – could offer a summer swim (could be around the clock).
 - Meeting with 2 feeder schools and Catholic School next door to look at how we can work together to offer programming for students, build permitting, and allow for sustainable operation of the pool.
 - Looking at the possibility of charging small fee for a swim to help cover permit.
 - Looking at the opportunity for a large scale sponsor.
 - We have a number of swim schools here today – ask that you explore possibility of using Carlton Village. Please speak to me.
- **Central Tech.** I've been going to Ward 10 meetings for years, and I've met with people running programs. Central Tech is in an awesome location. We're going to look at daycares, follow up with after school programs, and looking to feeder pools. I DO THINK OUR POOL IS SAVEABLE.
- **Earl Grey.** At a recent Council meeting we got a number of parents involved. We have sent information to our feeder schools. We are having a curriculum night – at that time we'll be asking people to sign up (parents or kids) for swimming. We'll also approach swim schools OR will hire swim instructors and lifeguards to do this on our own. We're also connecting with a number of agencies in the community to spearhead swim programs that will work to meet community needs already identified. Looking at daycares too.
- **George Harvey.** While no one was at the meeting to represent the school (the Principal is in BC), a representative of the AWG (Mona) connected with the head custodian for an update. Mona reported that, based on her conversation with the custodian, \$250k has been spent on a new filter system for the pool. Parks and Recreation staff have trained there, but then transferred the permits to other schools. The pool is wheelchair accessible and 82 degrees. Kids with additional needs have used this pool in the past, but now people are waiting to see what happens with the pool. The AWG is working to get representation from the school community at the next meeting. The York Swim Club had put permit in for this pool.
- **Kensington.** The participants discussing Kensington had to leave the meeting before the individual group reports, but through another participant they reported that "They have a plan".

- **Monarch Park.** Due to the tireless efforts of parents, 2 permits are coming to the pool with a value of roughly \$30-35k. Given accessibility of the pool, it should be open anyway. We are connecting with disability associations in the community – and inviting them to a Monarch open house to talk about possible permitting. The YMCA may have interest in this pool also. I THINK WE'RE PRETTY CLOSE.
- **SATEC @ Porter.** Our group brainstormed ways of generating revenue. I see it as part of my job as Principal to start some kind of marketing campaign. We want to begin with signage – not enough people know we have a pool. There are interested groups – Jack of Sports, Scarborough Swim Club, Torch – all interested in helping us get revenue through them. Feeder schools – General Brock, Clair Lee, other – are interested in coming on board. My job is to develop a strategy with the school council, phys ed department, and other groups. We have an INCREDIBLY growing community. Thousands and thousands of units being developed across the street – huge potential.
- **Western Tech.** This the first time we've been here (to an AWG meeting) – we appreciate being here and everything we've learned. The incremental cost for our pool is a huge number \$81k – so we'll need a couple of big permit holders. We are targeting 3 groups now, and feel fairly confident we'll get one this week, and hope to get a Letter of Intent for the another. We're also working on increasing awareness of the pool – and how great the pool is (in addition to sign – that's fabulous), Thurs night we have curriculum night – students will be educating parents. We'll also have mailing with a flyer about the pool. We want to work with the 3 schools that reside in the building – Western Tech incorporates Ursula Franklin and Alternative School. We want to work together to develop a way to get the word out and get people using the pool (following HumberSide “community swim” model – which will rapidly increase awareness of quality of pool). We're doing email blasts and doing follow-up to clubs and community groups who might be interested in using pool. We have a fabulous computer facility – so we're perfectly set up for computer camps (only a couple of these exist in the City of Toronto – typically in northeast end of the city) – those camps always use gyms and pools. WE ARE CONFIDENT OUR POOL WILL REMAIN OPEN. We will work with te permit office to accommodate users in the neighbourhood - if one school is full (for example, it may be possible to have a program on Mondays/Wednesdays at one pool, and Tuesdays/Thursdays at another neighbourhood pool). Hopefully not redirecting entire program to a different school.
- **Winona.** Many Winona parents and grandparents are here – and we've generated a lot of enthusiasm. Last week we had our first Parent Council meeting – we've sent a letter home from Council indicating this meeting (the AWG meeting) was happening. That's one reason for the good turnout from our school. In our discussion we had parents and representatives s from Forest Hill and HumberSide sharing their experiences with us. We want to network with other schools first and foremost – we had at least 2 reps from 2 schools in our catchment area. There is interest in those schools to run swim programs after school. It may be an option to run it during school hours (down the road). There are a number of schools close by, and they may well be interested in our pool if they knew (A) Winona has pool, and (B) there could be program that could be launched for them. We also talked about wanting to offer these same services to the Catholic Board and other private schools in area. We also want to get the word out to the community that Winona has a pool – WE NEED TO GET THE WORD OUT. To save it, we need people to know it's there. We need to generate interest through community networking, including with seniors. There's a real serious need for geared-to-seniors programming. We have 3-4 seniors residents in the area. They may be interested in setting up some kind of programming. There is some interest in leading a geared-to-seniors program if

there's enough interest. We are also thinking about setting up some kind of email address. We're WELL ON WAY TO GENERATING INTEREST.

In addition to the individual pool reports, the following points were raised:

- Jack of Sports is very interested in renting at Winona, also at Western Tech.
- At Fern we considered a few strategies that others may find useful, including: (1) getting daycares to permit during the summer; (2) setting up family swim times (free swims every Tuesday night, open swim, \$25/family); (3) connecting with a local old folks home; and (4) user fee – lot of outlying areas charge \$1 or \$0.50/swim if your area can afford it.
- Suggestion – if any schools have an anniversary coming up, tap the alumni network for pool support.

V. Next Steps

David Crombie wrapped up the meeting, thanking people for coming, with special thanks to political representatives from City Council and the School Board. He also extended thanks to principals and other staff that came from the Board, the City, and elsewhere.

He said that the AWG team would keep in touch in the usual manner. He ended with a final thanks, and his feeling that “I'm convinced we'll be able to do this”.

The next meeting of the AWG is on Tuesday, November 3rd at the Canadian Tire Conference Centre, 2200 Yonge Street.

Appendix A. Participant List (from meeting sign in sheets)

AWG, Andrea Demchuk
AWG-SPOC, Mona Rozenblum
AY Jackson Pool, NYMAC, Sandra Oliver
Barbara Langenberger, TDSB
CA for Trustee Cathy Dandy, Mandy Pipher
Canadian Tire Jumpstart, Harry Bell
Carleton Village, Curtis Ennis
Carleton Village PS, Elana Ruben
Carleton Village PS, Tran-Dam
Carleton Village PS, Jeff Keay
Carlton/Western, Murray Duncan
Central Tech, Joy Brickell
City Council, Paula Fletcher
City of Toronto, Ed Reed
City of Toronto – Councillor Karen Stintz, Andrew Bodrug
CMT, M Coshan
Community Matters, Surabhi
Concerned citizen, Mary Kruk
Councillor Walker’s Office, St. Paul’s Ward 22, Chris Sellors
CUPE 4400, Marilyn Churley
David Crombie & Associates, Robin Crombie
Earl Grey, AWG, LMW, Janet Dabrus
Facilitator, Nicole Swerhun
Fern, Craig Tsuji
FHCI Pool Captain (and SPOC), Lori Tanzer-Chad
FHCI School Council, Robert Jordan
Glenview and Lawrence, Glenna de Haan
Humberside, Sarah Doucette
Humberside, Donna Luke
Humberside Council, Katherine Trimble
Humberside Council, Dor Hawkinson
Jack of Sports, Larry Tobin
JumpStart, Dan Thompson
Kensington Community School Parent Council, Kory Prentice
Let’s Make Waves, Nancy Abbey
Let’s Make Waves, Heidi Wilson
Malvern, Nancy Palmer
Monarch Park, Sharon Gomes
NSS Pool Captain, Eileen MacDonald
Parent, John Spina
Parent, Fern PS, Teresa Emmanuel
Parks, Forestry and Recreation – City of Toronto, Mark Edelman
SATEC @ Porter, George Marraganis
Scarborough Swim Club, Chris Smelt
SPOC, AWG, Lisa Jorgensen
Swimming Dragon, Yang Gao
TDSB, Randa Dickin
TDSB, Jill Warthy
TDSB Swim Teacher, Swim Smart Swim School, Zoe Sher
TDSB Trustee, Cathy Dandy
Toronto Lands Company, David Crombie
Toronto Lands Company Consultant, Karen Pitre
Toronto Swim Club, Laura Pratt
Town Crier Newspaper, Kris Scheuer
Trustees Howard Goodman & Sheila Ward’s Office, Melanie Dickstein
Ursula Franklin Academy, Lorna Stewart
Ward 21 Councillor, Joe Mihevc
Western Tech, Parent, Laura Wood
Winona, Simone Pflug-Taylor
Winona, Quincy T.
Winona, Jane Huggard
Winona, Mary Altern
Winona, Esther Pflug
Winona, Jane Turrittin
Winona, Tony Turrittin
Winona Parent, Adriana & Nicole Nedelcu
Winona Parent, Danylow Harris
Winona Parent Council Chair, Kathy Carlin
Winona School, Jennifer Simon
Winona, Central Tech, Harbord – Parent, Gordon MacNeil
Winona, Parent, Cassie Bell
Winona/Oakwood Parent, Karl Brown
YMCA, Heidi Pratt
Suzy Rose