



Notes from Aquatic Working Group Meeting
September 25, 2008, 2:00 p.m., Wellesley Community Centre

In Attendance: D. Crombie (Chair), K. Pitre (TLC), N. Swerhun (facilitator), M. Riley (TLC) and Working Group participants (see Appendix A)

1. Welcome and overview

David Crombie introduced himself as Chair of the Aquatic Working Group. In welcoming all participants, he introduced the following support:

- Karen Pitre, Toronto Lands Corporation
- Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator
- Marlene Riley, Toronto Lands Corporation/TDSB

2. Update and Task at Hand

D. Crombie reaffirmed information discussed at the Aquatic Summit. This Aquatic Working Group (AWG) has been struck to develop recommendations to bring forward to the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC), to harness our best thinking in developing a long-term plan for the viability of school pools in Toronto. In particular, the focus will be to develop a strategy for the 39 pools scheduled for closure by the TDSB.

Recommendations must be completed before the end of January 2009 so that they can be shared with all partners and support can be solicited for the implementation of the recommendations prior to the TDSB Board meeting in March 2009.

3. Approaching the Work

Karen Pitre noted that the development of a long-term strategy and recommendations for the 39 pool will require:

- information from the TDSB;
 - creative thinking from the participants of the AWG;
 - a review of technology options regarding maintenance, repairs, etc;
- and

- the building of a strong, defensible rationale to support our recommendations.

Some work is already underway through the Altus Group. The Altus Group are construction cost consultants that also review building construction. David Wells was introduced as the key representative and spoke to the audit that will be conducted on the 39 schools. The audit will identify what is required to ensure each pool is in operable condition and what is required to keep that specific pool operable into the future.

In order to accomplish our work, four key areas of expertise will be required:

- Finance (including energy efficiency),
- Governance,
- Program; and
- Communications (physical/health expertise, marketing expertise, community/demographics expertise)

Participants will be asked to sign-up in their area of expertise in order to share their knowledge with pool specific groups.

We are asking for volunteers to assume the role of 'pool captain' for each pool. In the meantime, TLC staff will develop a template of information to be gathered by each pool captain, which will give us a clear snapshot of each pool and assist us in developing a long-term plan/strategy for that pool.

We would ask the group to complete as much data gathering as is possible and then return to the next meeting (end of October or early November) to identify issues and report on information gathered to date. A template to gather this information will be prepared and forwarded for all participants to review and for pool-captains to complete. Suggestions for information to be gathered include:

- Why is the pool not being used outside of school hours? If being used outside of hours, by how many?
- What is potential use?
- What is the TDSB responsibility outside of school hours?
- What is most appropriate use of the specific pool?
- What is the pool usage during school hours?
- What other things does the school have (baseball diamond, etc.)

At the same time, the Altus Group will present their findings thus far, to ensure the Aquatic Working Group is fully up-to-date on information being gathered.

K. Pitre suggested participants begin by identifying those areas/approaches we can agree on. The following list was developed:

Suggestions:

- Important everyone should learn not to drown - yes
- Learning not to drown doesn't have to happen in a school pool, however, school pools are the most consistent way of ensuring each student will have access to water to learn not to drown. - yes
- Pools should be used for the most appropriate/logical use outside of school hours (or when not in use for school programming purposes) - yes
- It may be the case that some pools have to close because they're beyond they're useful life, however, pool recommendations must consider recreational space/places in the geographical area and the long-term well-being of its area-residents - no

4. Facilitated Discussion

The following questions arose from the floor. Associated answers were provided:

Why not take on the challenge of developing a long-term strategy for all 78 pools of the Board?

At this time, the TLC cannot handle more than 39 pools. It is not our mandate to wade in on pools that are not our responsibility. Also, 33 of the 78 pools are the responsibility of the City given a new agreement with the TDSB and the City.

Is it intended to complete an evaluation on all 39 pools?

Yes

At the end of the process will the policy between the school board and city be consistent for all the pools? Not necessarily. We may find that the strategy for these 39 pools may look very different on a pool to pool basis.

Is there anything in this exercise that will result in a message to all stakeholders – province, city and the Board – to suggest they need to develop a more beneficial working relationship?

Yes. We will frame it in a context of: "this is what we have learned and it might help you with other common issues."

Will we be able to get costs for each of the 39 pools? Will we review utilization analysis from the past to help us develop realistic uses for pools going forward?

Yes

The idea of pool captains is great? Is there room for a demonstration project?

Yes, we would like to see 39 demonstration projects. Please give us your best thinking – and be creative.

When will pools open again?

We are targeting to have them open and operable by mid-October. This will mean the 23 pools will be back in business, supported by TDSB swim staff, staff paid by the TDSB. The TDSB will invoice the TLC for this expenditure. D. Crombie has met with Principals and Union/Association heads to explain this process.

If, in the future, a pool were able to be physically separated/isolated from a TDSB school, would staff still be TDSB or non-TDSB?

This question cannot be answered at this time.

If the cost to run a pool is \$114,000 per year, what does that represent?

This will be answered more specifically as we move through this process, but the annual costs generally include caretaking support, utility costs (gas, hydro water), and minor maintenance. Major replacement and maintenance costs are not included.

Additional information that will be beneficial regarding Pool Data:

- Information from *Lets Make Waves* team, gathered last year
- Demographic reports from the City, also available during the past year
- Neighbourhood profiles from the City
- Seek polling information available through Environics

5. Wrap Up and Next Steps

The following commitments were made on behalf of the TLC:

- broadly communicate in a very transparent way
- update website as frequently as possible
- keep people updated through ward council meetings and PIAC (Parent Involvement Advisory Committee)
- develop a list of participants
- develop a template for gathering information on each pool
- provide Pool Captain information based on sign-in sheets
- provide Expertise (financials, governance, program and communications) from which Pool Captains can seek advise
- post permitting process for pools to the web
- confirm that TDSB Principals will not be required to pay for pool time from their school budgets for this school year (2008-09), but must track their use of pool time through the permitting system for record purposes
- share minutes with those interested
- organize work in an understandable way

D. Crombie wrapped up the AWG meeting by thanking all participants. He spoke to the need for Torontonians to move to the next step of thinking around city/board use of facilities to create a brighter future. This is a golden opportunity for us together. This is a good exercise in a civil society to ensure communities have the resources they need.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be called for the end of October or early November, by Chair Crombie. It will be a lunch-time meeting.

The date of the next TLC Board meeting is Monday, September 29, from 6 to 8 pm, 5050 Yonge Street, Committee Room A.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.