

August 7th, 2008

Mr. John Campbell
Chair
Toronto District School Board
5050 Yonge St.
Toronto ON
M2N 5N8

Dear John,

RE: TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD POOLS

As you will recall, on April 16, 2008, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) asked me to propose a long-term sustainable solution for the continued use of the Board's pools. Since that time, with the assistance of Karen Pitre, Chair of the Toronto Sports Council, I have entered into discussions with a variety of people and organizations having a particular interest in this matter. In May, for example, Karen and I co-hosted an Aquatic Summit, sponsored by the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families, bringing together over 60 participants representing community organizations, clubs, agencies and individuals. As well, we have been offered assistance from other outstanding organizations such as the YMCA of Greater Toronto, Variety Village, the Toronto Community Foundation, the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance at the Munk Centre, the community group Let's Make Waves, the Lifesaving Society, CUPE, the Red Cross and the Canadian Urban Institute. We have also met with municipal and provincial politicians and staff as well as philanthropically-minded members of the business community. Clearly the TDSB's decision to close 39 pools in the next two years has focused these serious discussions regarding the roles, responsibilities and opportunities of community infrastructure providers.

There is solid support for the development of a community-based, long-term strategy for the use of pools and a willingness to work together. People are strongly motivated by the possibility of creating a well thought out and accessible aquatics program, a more generous and vigorous community use of schools and a determination to employ new approaches to financial and environmental sustainability.

At the same time, commitment to a process of transition supported by all stakeholders is crucial as we move from a no longer viable arrangement to creating a lasting solution that will benefit all Torontonians. Furthermore, paramount to achieving this goal is the necessary time and opportunity in which to collect the appropriate data and analysis that would establish the framework for critical decisions and planning.

Accordingly, we would like to move forward with the following next steps:

I. ESTABLISH A VOLUNTEER AQUATICS WORKING GROUP (AWG) TO UNDERTAKE THE FOLLOWING TASKS:

1. Carry out a complete inventory of all pools available for public use and assess the demand, rental rates/permit fees, service level and criteria for access for these pools by all user groups, within each community.
2. Develop a standard for evaluation of all public indoor pools and audit on a pool-by-pool basis current conditions and state of repair, providing analysis of capital and operating costs.
3. Request an aquatics professional for one of the Community Use positions funded by the Ministry of Education.
4. Review best practices on pool governance models and make appropriate recommendations.
5. Identify community partners and strategic projects which would provide on-going operation of school pools.
6. Investigate the establishment of a comprehensive capital reserve fund including a capital charge on permit fees; sponsorship possibilities; foundation and philanthropic contributions and sport infrastructure funding.
7. Explore alternative energy options that would dramatically decrease pool operation costs without significant capital contributions, by pursuing overtures already made by the renewable energy sector and utilizing existing federal and provincial programs.

Much of the material required for the above tasks has already been completed, commenced or is available, which would allow the AWG to provide a report no later than March 1st, 2009.

II. REQUEST THE TDSB TO:

1. Participate in the AWG.
2. Transfer the operation of the 39 pools on an interim basis to the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC) as part of the leased portfolio pending the recommendations from the AWG.
3. Permit the pools from the TLC during school hours to provide aquatic opportunities in schools with pools for the 2008/9 school year where possible.

III. REQUEST THE CITY OF TORONTO TO:

1. Participate in the AWG.
2. Complete Phase II by November 30th 2008 of the Toronto Indoor Pool Aquatic Strategy and include the TDSB pools

IV. REQUEST THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO TO:

1. Participate in the AWG.
2. Support a one year Transition Plan that will assist in the on-going operation of the pools for 2008/9.
3. Provide up to \$100,000 for an updated pool audit.

V. REQUEST THE TORONTO LANDS CORPORATION TO:

1. Provide direction, support and manage the AWG.
2. Licence/permit and manage the 39 pools on an interim basis for one year.
3. Monitor the on-going costs of the pool portfolio.
4. Provide project management for the pool audit.
5. Respond to proposals for renewable energy options.
6. Project manage the installation of separate meters in the pools to monitor energy costs.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to assist with this important community matter and would be pleased to meet with you and your colleagues to discuss further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Crombie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "C".

David Crombie

cc.

Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education
Councillor Joe Mihevc, Chair of Community Development and Recreation
Gerry Connelly, Director of Education,
Dino Chiesa, CEO Toronto Lands Corporation
Let's Make Waves Community Group