



**RESTON COMMUNITY CENTER
PUBLIC INPUT RECORD
MARCH 31, 2017 – APRIL 27, 2017**

The following comments were submitted to RCC for consideration by the Board of Governors between the dates of March 31 and April 27, 2017. All text in red is Executive Director Leila Gordon's response to input.

Lucy Manheim, Non-Reston Resident, submitted the following comments via email:

Two more ideas for the RCC pool renewal. Where water is deeper than ~5 ft, have a "toe shelf" around the walls at 4 ft depth. This is a safety feature. In the women's locker room, there is a locked door between the sinks and the toilets. I suggest that the contents of that closet be moved to another location and the room there be converted to a changing room for those who need extra privacy.

Thanks Lucy.

Robert Finkelstein, Reston Resident, submitted comments to Leila Gordon (see attached document).

Mike Foxworth, Reston Resident, submitted the following comments via comment card:

When redoing the pool, men's showers in 2018, note 2 things: 1) hot water lines need to be fully insulated. Currently turning off water, even briefly, allows the water in hot lines to get quite cold. Most people just let the hot water run instead of turning off during stages. So, need to redo that wall to allow maintenance to access the entire line length. 2) Current valves use end control to control both temp and volume. Simple but having separate ones is better and can save water and energy. But need reliable ones, which may be more expensive. Recommend – go for the best! Should pay off eventually.

Today I received a comment card from you with the following (above comments restated). I just wanted to let you know I got it and have forwarded the ideas to the architects. Thanks very much for considering the project and ideas to improve our facility.

Therese Martin, Reston Resident, submitted the following comments via email:

Whatever is done, I hope that you will consider the needs of all potential users (of all ages) of the facility. I used to participate in water aerobics classes but had to drop out because the water was always too cold. It was also inconvenient because the (drop in) class had a limitation size that meant that fighting the traffic to get from North Reston to the RCCHW might not guarantee that I could get into the class once I got there.

Thank you for sending us your input. I assure you we are very cognizant that many patrons desire a warmer water exercise environment and that is one of the issues we hope the renovation concept will help us address. There will eventually be a facility run by the Park Authority in Reston Town Center North that will likely include other aquatic options for the community. Nonetheless, RCC's Terry L. Smith Aquatics Center will continue to serve important needs for our various swimmer populations for the foreseeable future – we are thus endeavoring to consider how to improve and not just replace the various components of our facility. The documents related to Monday's meeting will be on our website and there will be subsequent meetings you may attend if you are unable to come to Monday evening's meeting. Please also don't hesitate to reach out to me if you'd like more information about the project.

Mark Wilson, Non-Reston Resident, submitted the following comments via email:

I attended the March 6 RCC Pool Study Public Hearing, and would like to provide my input on the pool redesign considerations. I live in Oakton, so not a Reston resident, but only 8 minutes by car to the pool. As such, RCC is by far the best pool for me to use. I am a very regular lap swimmer, going to RCC about 5 days/week for lap swimming and use of the very well designed spa area. I am extremely happy with most things about the RCC pool. I love the 25 meter length, and would really hate to see it reduced to 25

yards. I love the spa. The pool is well used, but not so overcrowded that it is overly difficult to find a lane to use. I also am very happy with the temperature of the pool. My conclusion therefore is I would like to see very little change in the design. From talking with other very regular users, it is my impression that the vast majority of them also favor minimal changes. I think there is a danger that the current redesign concepts are aiming at trying to partially satisfy too many different pool user wishes/possible types of users, and if that direction continues, the redesign may alienate its most ardent, frequent and happy users that love the unique aspects of our pool — the 25 meter size, the conduciveness to lap swimming under pleasant conditions, great spa, comfortable temperature, and friendly and communicative people. I hope we don't spoil a good thing! I realize I'm just one voice in the wind, but I wanted to register my strongly held views. It would be great if you could do a bit more testing to see how common my view might be among other regular users. Feel free to contact me at below address or email, should you have any questions.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us regarding a possible renovation of our Terry L. Smith Aquatics Center. While I can appreciate that for many patrons, the idea of closing our facility for an extended period of time and the scope of changes we anticipate are not ideal, it is also true that we have heard many comments through the years that have prompted us to consider the opportunity before us to substantially improve our aquatics venue. We are also hearing from people who are enthused about the opportunity to achieve substantial improvements in their aquatics home. It is not entirely the case that people are universally enamored of the 25-meter versus 25-yard pool length. For the three non-profit swim team groups using our facility regularly, the 25-meter length is not ideal. Given that the difference contemplated is along the order of about 7 feet, it seems to us that capturing that length of water to do more family oriented water features is a good way to expand our programming potential. All our data and input point to more and more older people wanting a warm-water exercise option; and it's also true that the swimmers who use the pool for fitness or competition want the water to be cooler. It has never ceased to amaze me that the difference of just two degrees can make a difference between a happy swimmer and a very unhappy one, but I do know after hearing people discuss water temperature now for 9 years, it does. I assure you that our pool experience will continue to offer lap swimming – it will be at a slightly lower temperature – that is leisurely and enjoyable. The new body of water for exercise and lessons will enable us to provide a water temperature that is warmer by 3 degrees or so. People will be able to warm up (literally) and if they desire a more strenuous exercise routine, transfer to the cooler water to obtain that. Then they can still unwind in the spa as they have always. What's important to us is having a body of water to fit the needs of people who increasingly need warmer water for therapeutic exercise as well as families who want warmer water for their little ones. We have not pursued this effort divorced from either our data, or our patrons, or our constraints. We hope we will be looking at a rejuvenated and substantially more pleasant aquatics environment when we are finished. We will look forward to welcoming back all our regular swimmers and those for whom our current configuration doesn't provide the type of swimming experience that they are seeking. Thanks again for sharing your ideas and your enthusiasm for our facility. I promise we are doing everything we can to avoid disappointing our loyal patrons.

Thank you for your very thoughtful response. I'm impressed that you took the time to do that. I can better appreciate your thinking now, even if I personally would much prefer something closer to the status quo layout (at least for the lap swimming pool) and especially the 25 meter length. For what it's worth, I'm quite happy with the pool temperature now, but could pretty easily live with 1 or 2 degrees cooler, or maybe 2-3 degrees warmer. However, I have used the 2 indoor pools at Lifetime Fitness Center in Reston, one of which is warmer and for mixed family use and lap swimming, and I found the warmer one very uncomfortable to swim laps in. I would guess it might be at least 4 degrees warmer than ours. The other thing I wonder about is the cost/financing for the more major redesign under consideration, which I would guess is several \$ million more expensive than leaving the layout more or less as is, but with the necessary repairs. Is that likely to lead to significantly higher user fees (over and above increases in line with inflation) down the road? Or are you anticipating that the payback for the investment will come from a greater number of users? Or just not known at this point? In any case, thanks again for expressing your thoughts.

I am always happy to engage with our patrons – particularly on a topic of such importance to us and them. Regarding the water temperatures, I am sure there will be some experimentation involved in determining the exact right set points for both bodies of water we contemplate. I doubt we will go more than 1-2 degrees cooler in the lap pool; the warm water pool will likely go a 1-2 degrees warmer than our current set point. And yes, it's still amazing to me what a difference just those 1 or 2 degrees make to people! In terms of cost, the outside envelope estimating we are looking at presently assumes that simple capital maintenance would run about \$1.2M against a possible total cost of \$5.5M for the more robust

renovation project (if it costs every penny involved in contingencies). So, it might be a difference of about \$4.3M. We would not look to recover that cost difference in fees. It's never been the practice of RCC's Boards to try to recover capital improvement costs; they view these efforts as a responsibility to the community to maintain the highest quality facilities feasible within our resources. We will however continue to adjust fees as we have been doing to be benchmarked to Park Authority fees for County residents in the various age cohorts with a further discount for Reston patrons applied because of their payment of the special tax that supports RCC. I don't anticipate that such increases will be onerous.

Gloria Michau, Reston Resident, submitted the following comments via email:

I appreciated getting the information handed out at last night's meeting concerning the new proposed pools. I totally understand the need to meet the needs of other community members in the warmer therapy pool. However, I do have the following questions:

- 1) Where will the current Advanced Arthritis, Fibromyalgia and MS classes be taking place in the new configuration of the pool?
- 2) Where will the drop in classes that currently do deep water therapy meet in the new pool configuration?

I would very much appreciate your answers to these two questions as they will definitely impact my quality of life in the future as well as that of many other users of the pool. I very much applaud the idea of putting in a private changing area in the women's locker room in what is now a closet in lieu of the two private changing areas that will be lost to the new family changing area. Thank you for preserving this important feature of the locker room.

Thank you very much for following this discussion so closely and constructively. At present, I anticipate that the answers to your questions are not going to be precise as there are many things about the programming future the two new pools can address but that will require more details to be able to flesh out with specificity. Generally, I can imagine these conditions/options:

1. That class (I believe that is the one taken by Lynn?) could take place in either pool; I know that for you, the depth of the pool is critical to its benefit and when we have more information about the bottom surface and how it will descend, it will be easier to determine the size of the class that can be accommodated there.
2. Deep water drop-in classes also could occur in either pool – again, it will depend on balancing programs across both environments to be able to offer balance in the programming – the configuration of the deep end of the lap pool certainly lends itself to deep water exercise – for those who want warmer water, as in the answer to (1) we will have to see how the bottom configures to figure out how many people at a time are an optimum size of the class.

As was noted last night – there are many interim steps to take in the coming months to get to a final understanding of the specifics and/or constraints of the depths, size, ramps and so forth. Key to us will be obtaining a solution that continues to offer space for lap swimming, exercise and team practice while greatly improving the attractiveness of having a more comfortable water temperature (or more suitable water temperature) and new features to attract family and recreational swimmers for whom there is truly nothing extraordinary or compelling about the current pool. One question I have for you was posed by someone to me last night – they wondered if some of the offset of cooler water could be achieved in the lap/fitness pool by wearing swim shirts or suits with greater insulation for those who want a vigorous workout/lap swimming but in warmer water. I didn't have a good answer for that; perhaps you do? Thanks again, Gloria, and I assure you we will keep people posted about our progress toward more specific information about design. Thanks for chatting with me on the phone about the Board of Governors exploration of a renovation project for our Terry L. Smith Aquatics Center. I am attaching a copy of the motion the Finance Committee members in attendance passed unanimously (one member was absent) and the handout from the meeting that contains the Hughes Group Architects presentation material. The concept plan we are currently exploring is included. The cost estimate in the handout doesn't include the added 20-25% cost for architecture/engineering, permitting, construction management. As I said, the action by the Finance Committee – and presumably the full Board on May 1 – represents the "end of the beginning/beginning of the middle" of this process. I also assured the community at our meeting on Monday night that the Board's consideration of design issues and strategies to accommodate patrons will continue and those will be handled in the regular public business of the Board through the coming months. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you want clarification of any of the attached materials or our conversation.

Many thanks for your in-depth response to my questions even if they are "iffy." As for warmer wear for the pool, I do indeed already wear a neoprene jacket (think wet suit material) for exercising, as do a number

of my fellow classmates. It helps warm the upper body, shoulders mostly, but does nothing for knees, hips and neck. So that's where the warmer water makes the difference for us arthritic folks. I cannot use a full length wet suit, as they are very heavy when saturated with water and the centrifuge can't remove water from that large a garment. So, the answer is, the warmer water is still needed. Again, many thanks for your complete and speedy response.

Fallon Forbush of Connection Newspapers spoke with Leila Gordon via phone.

(Leila response) Thanks for chatting with me on the phone about the Board of Governors exploration of a renovation project for our Terry L. Smith Aquatics Center. I am attaching a copy of the motion the Finance Committee members in attendance passed unanimously (one member was absent) and the handout from the meeting that contains the Hughes Group Architects presentation material. The concept plan we are currently exploring is included. The cost estimate in the handout doesn't include the added 20-25% cost for architecture/engineering, permitting, construction management. As I said, the action by the Finance Committee – and presumably the full Board on May 1 – represents the “end of the beginning/beginning of the middle” of this process. I also assured the community at our meeting on Monday night that the Board's consideration of design issues and strategies to accommodate patrons will continue and those will be handled in the regular public business of the Board through the coming months. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you want clarification of any of the attached materials or our conversation.

Clark Rumrill, Reston Resident, submitted comments to Leila Gordon (see attached document):

(Leila response) I am sorry I missed chatting with you this morning – I was immersed in detailed work in my office. I have read the attached and wish to respond to the assertions you make. At the outset, I reiterate that we greatly appreciate your perspective and involvement in attending and participating in our community meetings to date on this topic. I also appreciate that you are engaged with other swimmers when you swim here; some have shared with me that they agree with your perspective and others have shared that they disagree with it. Regarding your attached input:

1. The figures you cite for current utilization are roughly accurate in the sense that, at present, the majority of our water users are older than 55. I think it is “too much of a stretch” however to assume that all those swimmers except the Master Swim team swimmers in that age cohort prefer the current water temperature and configuration. Perhaps you base your assertion on the expressed preferences of your swimming companions and the surveys done by our current water exercise participants; however neither research approach satisfies impartiality criteria nor do they encompass a test of all RCC swimmers or – crucially – the preferences of swimmers who are not swimming here because the water is too warm or the pool configuration unsuitable. We heard from some of those people in our meeting in February and subsequently in writing. Further, the research conducted by us in exploring the possible partnership with the Park Authority three years ago confirms that many Reston swimmers would prefer temperature and feature options we don't currently offer.
2. As I have noted in each of our meetings, the goals we are pursuing by seeking two separate bodies of water with different temperature set points are these:
 - to allow for far broader appeal to different groups of swimmers. Those preferring cooler water temperatures include:
 - All three Reston swim teams: Masters, South Lakes High School and Reston Swim Team Association.
 - Fitness swimmers who pursue aerobic exercise of a strenuous nature (and typically, those are not swimmers – of any age cohort – who overlap with your swimming hours).
 - to serve people who prefer warmer water for therapy, exercise, lessons and leisure use of the pool. Those include:
 - Parents/toddlers/babies taking their first learn-to-swim curriculum and/or enjoying a social swimming experience.
 - Therapeutic exercise programming that we are not currently offering that could more effectively be programmed in a warmer water environment by new instructors with that expertise.
 - Current water exercise programs that are taught to class sizes of 12 participants in the current pool that might be modified for smaller class sizes to achieve the right balance between the space and the curriculum.

3. You note that the renovation project will require (estimated) nine months of construction as opposed to the (estimated) four months for repair/replacement requirements. There is no escaping that fundamental fact and the degree of inconvenience and discomfort it may create. However, we have had experience with closing the entire facility (in 2008) for a six month period; and each year, especially as the maintenance issues have become more challenging, we close the facility for nearly or a month. Whenever we have closed for an extended period of time, we arrange accommodations for RCC swimmers at the Y and Reston Association members have access to the outdoor pools in our community. We will explore other options if they appear to offer ways to give our swimmers more support without an unsupportable budget impact.
4. You are correct that our lifeguarding requirements will change. We will be sure to incorporate that consideration in our planning as well as our pricing of offerings we will be able to provide with expanded capabilities.
5. Regarding the issues of how the pool is programmed, for whom, at what times – it remains part of our work ahead to envision ways to schedule use of the water that will incorporate new swimmer groups and individuals as well as the current users. As I pointed out on Monday evening to you, your position and the conversations you've had with like-minded patrons are a part of the overall set of considerations for us. That said, you are excluding key groups of swimmers whose needs aren't being met – their numbers extend significantly beyond just those of the one swim team you cite. Furthermore, Clark, it is not a function of our mission to simply provide options to the community preferred at any given moment in time by a majority of patrons. Our mission is to serve our entire community as broadly and equitably as feasible. Our current water environments don't support disabled swimmers adequately. Swimmers who want to train for competition – not just the Masters – are not able to do that. Those who want a rigorous lap swimming experience are frustrated. Families who want a more relaxing and entertaining environment for their social swimming are unimpressed by our current pool. As we look to the future, we will be engaging with those groups to gain a good understanding of their water and recreation preferences and include those considerations in our program and operations planning. One could reasonably turn your question regarding equity around, Clark, and ask, "is it fair to ask the public to accept the limitations of their community center pool simply because the current users are content with it?"

So, from my perspective and that of the Board, it is not the case that "we have a solution in search of a problem here." We have a process that considers all the perspectives of current and future users, the frustrations of current and future users, and in considering those, is seeking the right solution given the resources we have and the needs we may be able to address, for a long-term productive future in the Terry L. Smith Aquatics Center. I look forward to your continuing involvement in our efforts and also to your future enjoyment of the end result.

Sally Beth Fellers, Reston Resident, submitted the following comments via email:

It was dismaying to see that the architects of the latest therapy pool design still do not appear to have heard any of the concerns of the deep water aerobics attendees. The depth is still only 5', not 5-1/2' which is the minimum depth suitable, and it appears that there will be room for only about 6 people in the "deep" end. It seems as though the exercise needs of the 55+ age group, at least those of us who need deep water, are simply taking a back seat to the needs of kids and physical therapy needs. Perhaps we're such a small percentage of pool users that it will not have much of an impact on RCC if we end up having to find an alternative location. However, it would certainly have a big impact on us. We love RCC and its location and would certainly prefer staying there. I urge you all to reconsider the design and address at least some of our concerns.

I assure you that the architects have heard your concerns loud and clear. It's impossible to go farther on the depth issue at this point - more work of a more specific architectural/engineering type is needed than our current Hughes contract permits. They understand that your class is 12 people large and that you all want a depth greater than five feet. But until we are in the actual design phase, we won't know what is feasible given how a host of soil conditions, ADA requirements, and other existing or pending applicable conditions will interact with our goals. Please don't take the fact that the concept drawing didn't change at all as any indication of anything except what it is - our current "concept". And it reflects the input and feedback they got from February and March meetings; they also had to use a concept to arrive at a rough order of magnitude on cost where the elements involved were relatively straightforward in terms of understanding how that would translate into construction pricing. We want to serve your needs, the needs of those presently using the pool in a variety of other ways, and the needs of people who don't like the existing pool configuration or conditions. We will strive mightily to serve as large a cross-section of all of

those patrons as we can. Please don't get upset preemptively or think that your concerns and those of others who have been participating have not been heard or addressed. They continue to figure in our planning issues.

Thanks so much, Leila, for such a comprehensive answer. Now I understand completely what is happening and why. I'm not upset as much as concerned, and I absolutely recognize the wide range of users that the pool serves. This has to be a difficult and complex problem to solve with hundreds of voices giving input. You are most patient!

You're completely welcome; I know how important this pool is to all of you!

My name is Robert Finkelstein

I have lived in Reston since 1970.

I am here to urge RCC not to further increase the rental fees of the Wednesday night bridge game.

The Wednesday night bridge game is an ACBL – American Contract Bridge League – sectioned game, offering master points to winners.

Ron Kral, who is a Reston resident, is the president of the Northern Virginia Bridge Association. Candy Kuschner is too modest to tell you that she has been honored a few years ago as the best tournament director, **singular**, in North American by the ACBL. This game adds prestige to Reston and RCC.

I have been playing bridge at the RCC Wednesday night game for 25 years. It is important to note the quality of bridge players at this game is high. I can win at many bridge games in Northern Virginia against a weak field, but I find no challenge or enjoyment. My bridge game has significantly improved by playing against better players. For those not as competitive, there is also a game for non-life masters. I have made numerous new friends playing bridge in this area.

Ten years ago there were a number of the bridge players at the Wednesday night game who did not live in Small Tax District 5.

The number of people playing bridge at the Wednesday evening game at RCC has decreased significantly; it has nothing to do with the efforts of Candy and Marshall; they run an excellent game. The attendance at most evening club games has decreased significantly, due to the aging population of bridge players. The national average age of bridge players has been advancing 11 months a year. Our bridge player population is getting older and less mobile. Many people who used to travel to Reston for the game will no longer drive at night. ***And people who live in Reston cannot or do not want to travel distances in the evening to play elsewhere – including me.*** I used to travel to McLean, Leesburg, Arlington, and Alexandria to play in the evening games. Now I don't. Almost all the players at the Wednesday night game are residents of Reston

For many people in Small Tax District 5 this game it is their only contact with RCC. Personally, this game is one of the few activities in the evening that I can participate in.

The cost for the entry fee is competitively priced. Increasing the cost of entry fees will reduce the number of players, putting the game into a death spiral.

Having this game in Reston is important to the Reston Community and the taxpayers of Small Tax District 5. If the rent is increased again and the game can no longer make a modest profit – which is very likely - then this activity will cease and Reston will be poorer for not having it. This game clearly fits into the stated RCC mission of: "... [to] enhance the quality of life for all people living and working in Reston by providing a broad range of programs in arts, aquatics, enrichment, recreation and life-long learning; creating and sustaining community traditions....." (*Taken from the RCC Mission statement.*)

Dual Temperatures for the RCC Aquatic Center

Really?

A key to planning for the coming renovation of the RCC aquatic facility is the idea of two separate water temperatures: cooler for the main lap pool used by the masters' swimmers who train at RCC, and warmer water for a separate pool which would be used by both older and younger patrons. Before casting this into stone, it may be useful to examine whether this is a sensible idea.

The reason for two temperatures is said to be that the masters' swimmers who use the pool find the current temperature of the pool (84 degrees) to be uncomfortable for their long (over an hour) lap swims. In judging the seriousness of this problem we may note that long distance (and other) Olympic swimming events are performed in water up to 82 degrees. Currently, all Reston swimmers are swimming in water only two degrees above the Olympic standard. Interestingly, the proposed temperature capabilities of both pools overlap at 82 degrees, raising a question of the value of the change at all.

Impartial estimates are that daily attendance at the pool is about 200 swimmers, including some 35 master's patrons. And it may not be too much of a stretch to assume that really none of the some 165 regular swimmers favor colder water -- even by as little as two degrees. These swimmers are composed of persons over 50 years of age, children, casual lap swimmers (who swim for less than an hour) and handicapped and therapy swimmers.

So, what are the costs of a two-temperature solution?

- 1) The geometric changes to the pool required by two separate temperature regimes will mean the aquatic facility will be closed for at least nine months for construction. Although some months may be mitigated by the availability of RA pools in the summer, for at least five months there will be no pool in Reston. This is much more than a matter of comfort for the therapy and handicapped swimmers.
- 2) The changes associated with two temperatures present problems to children's use of the pool. There is no longer room for the slide, a popular attraction, nor is there either space or water depth for the diving board.
- 3) Because two separate pools are required for two different temperatures, the lifeguard staff will have to be doubled, a substantial and continuing expense.
- 4) A five-month - minimum - loss of the pool for exercise is a serious and permanent physical loss to the pool's handicapped and therapy swimmers.

The plans shown at the April 17th board committee meeting show lap swimming for non-masters' swimmers and deep water therapy and handicapped use will take place in the "cold" pool. Is this not simply circular? Does it not just perpetuate the problems the pool "upgrade" purports to solve?

There is also the question of equity. Is it right to ask the public to support a very significant change that will seriously burden, including physically, at least 80% of the users of the pool? After all, the fees paid for the masters' swimmers (\$15,000 a year) are only two percent of the annual pool budget. Is it fair that the regular swimming patrons and Reston residents must pay virtually all of the miniscule to non-existent benefits of the two-temperature regime?

Do we have a solution in search of a problem here?

Clark Rumrill

April 18, 2017