

Hartford Pool Committee DRAFT Minutes

Tuesday, July 24, 2018

In attendance:

Joe James, Skip Nolette, Mike Vanesse, Brett Mayfield, David Sherman, Hilde Ojibway, Dick Grassi (Hartford Select board), Scott Hausler, Dept of Recreation; Mark Mariano and Kyle Elmy, engineers with Weston and Sampson.

Unable to attend: Scott Snyder, Chris Hamilton, Joe Trottier, Kim Sousa, Steve Lagasse.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm. The meeting began with introductions of all present and their roles. This represents the kick off meeting with the Weston and Sampson, consulting engineers, as contracted by the Town of Hartford. Mark Mariano is the project manager and Kyle Elmy is an engineer assisting on the project.

No public comments.

Minutes – Copies of the minutes from the June 26th meeting were not available to all so the minutes will be reviewed and approved at the next Pool Committee meeting.

Scott Hausler reviewed the charge by the Hartford Selectboard for the pool committee and gave a copy of the document to Mark Mariano. There was a discussion during which each member of the committee provided their personal view of the project to date, which included their experiences with the current Hartford pool and any experiences with other community pools that helped shape a view of the future in Hartford. Could community members summarize the committee's intent into a one-line goal?

The results of the community pool survey (750 responses in total including 110 paper responses) were available to committee members prior to the meeting. Committee members referred to various highlights throughout the discussion of progress to date and next steps.

Joe James noted that the responses were overwhelmingly in favor of having a community pool despite the fact that a majority of people also reported that they had not used the pool in recent years. He believes this helps show that people are concerned about services for the broader community, even if they may not directly benefit. Joe felt that the current pool area could be made much more appealing with improved features including shade. David Sherman said that he was first most interested in determining whether it was economical to repair the existing pool or not. Depending upon that answer, other aspects of the committee charge would be pursued.

Dick Grassi expressed his concern that whatever money is invested, what would it mean for the present pool location. He noted that current bonds about a million dollars remains on current bonds, extend through year 2024. There are currently 500 Hartford households that have difficulty paying their property taxes (on payment plans). Dick stressed that he wanted to identify an economical, long-term solution.

Hilde Ojibway said that she thought the current pool site could be used to create a pool facility that had more variety in order to better address a range of needs including: shallow entry for toddlers and also to meet needs of people with limited mobility; shaded areas for social gathering near the pool. She did not want to duplicate experiences that were available at the Upper Valley Aquatic Center or among the various natural swimming areas around Hartford.

Brett Mayfield said that he felt that the community accepted the current location and thought it would be helpful to focus on how to update the pool to have “water park” type features: sprays, slides, variety of activities on site – also picnic area. He noted that residents of the Quechee Lakes development use the pool and Lake Pinneo. Brett also thought having a place for the kids to learn to swim was important. He noted that with the pool closed in 2015 and now in 2018, families explored other options (Lebanon, Storrs Pond).

Mike Vanesse said that, as a member of the Parks and Rec Commission, he’d been thinking about the pool for quite a while. He stressed the need to focus on practical decisions, crunching the numbers for various options.

Mark reported that he and Kyle were able to do an initial assessment of the pool for several hours prior to the committee meeting. This included review of the mechanical systems, operations (compliance-wise), and hammer test on concrete. Mark noted so many stress cracks, no expansion joints. He felt that a concrete core compressive strength test was not necessary since it was clear that the concrete has so many defects. Sampson and Weston will produce a written report but gave some initial impressions. The pool was built in 1966 and lacks the necessary standards in construction: no expansion joints in the concrete resulting in structural cracks so that it is not water tight. There may be movement of the deck. In a 1997 repair there were cuts in the top of the pool and a new gutter was installed. The result is that water is getting behind the gutter and deck. Not able to make the current structure watertight. The pool shell has been exposed for years to chlorine and would need complete replacement. There had been ideas floated to use the existing framework or “shell” and install a new pool within that structure. Mark noted that may result in putting a pool into an unstable foundation resulting in structural problems in the new pool within a few years.

Overall, Mark recommends looking at cost to longevity. Facility assessment to date – the cost v benefit of renovating the current facility weighs in favor of new construction. Trying to renovate the current pool, spending at least \$300,000, would only buy a few years. A new pool may require a 20 year bond so it is essential to get the design and usage right so that it will last 20 years without further major design or expenses needed to meet community needs.

The discussion then turned to possible costs to demolish the pool and site i.e.

“bloom and seed”. Demolition costs may also be rolled into the project costs for replacement of the pool if that is the community decision. These options and prices will be included in the final report.

The committee members discussed the value of the infrastructure at current site – water, power, locker room, parking. Mark noted that it is difficult to have a specific number on this value at this point. It may be important to identify a second site as a point of comparison for the infrastructure costs. He noted that at another community pool project in Rutland, the value of the bathhouse alone was around \$700,000.

Next Steps in the process:

Committee members will explore other possible sites within the next two weeks. (Even though the current site may be the best option, a part of the charge was to evaluate alternate sites.) An alternative site should meet the following criteria: publically owned land, at least two acres, not within a flood plain, access to town water and sewer, parking, located near population center.

Committee members will identify program goals to be achieved in an outdoor pool. This will inform engineers about features to include in the design. There are dozens of comments and suggestions included in the community survey that will help committee members identify and prioritize features. Examples for consideration include shading and landscaping, diving board, splash park type features, etc.

Weston and Sampson will complete the assessment report on the current pool facility. Based upon the suggestions of the committee regarding programming and desired pool features, they will develop designs with associated costs. These draft designs will be presented to the public at a meeting in early September. There was a discussion about how best to engage the maximum number of people in a public meeting in order to get feedback on draft design options. It was suggested to have the meeting and presentation in conjunction with the Glory Days of Railroad scheduled for Saturday, September 8th. Mark Mariano suggested that they would create displays/poster boards for various features/programs and the public could review and vote on their preferences using a tool like colored dots.

Next meetings of this committee:

Tuesday, August 7th at 6 pm Pool Committee
Meeting focus – define desired programs, facility features, possible public locations.

Tuesday, August 21st at 6 pm– Committee with Weston and Sampson
Meeting focus - report back on pool assessment, finalize plans for public input meeting

Minutes prepared by Hilde Ojibway.