

Town of Hartford, Vermont

Pool Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 7, 2018

Present: Scott Hausler, Joe James (acting chair), Steve Lagasse, Skip Nalette, Scott Snyder, Kim Souza, Mike Vanasse.

Unable to attend: Chris Hamilton, Hilde Ojibway, Brett Mayfield, David Sherman, Joseph Trottier.

Meeting commenced at 6:04 p.m. in Room 312, Town Hall.

Approval of Minutes

Committee members reviewed draft minutes of the two prior meetings on June 26 and July 24, 2018. Misspellings of Mr. Nalette's, Mr. Vanasse's, and Ms. Souza's last names were corrected in the July 24 minutes. With no other amendments, motions were made, seconded, and unanimously passed to approve both sets of minutes.

Discussion of alternate pool sites

Mr. Lagasse asked if any discussion occurred at the last meeting regarding access to alternate pool sites, e.g., by bus, bike, or walking. Mr. Hausler replied, yes, accessibility is among the criteria.

Mr. James explained that the pool committee will need to answer to the community why it would choose to keep the pool at the current site, or not. It was concluded the committee should vet all alternate site options and give a few most promising candidates to Mark Mariano (Weston & Sampson) for further evaluation.

The committee reviewed a summary that Ms. Ojibway had prepared which listed parks and swimming areas in Hartford with pros and cons for each. The discussion points included:

- Frost park
 - impact to nearby neighborhood with its own green space
- Kilowatt North and South
 - owned by Great River Hydro utility
 - town is responsible for shore land, erosion control work
 - has wide open areas already available
 - adjacent river access could also be developed
 - easily combine other water activities, kayaking, etc.
 - existing built-in flood control with dam and roadway infrastructure
 - would town want to invest in land it may lose control over after long-term lease?
 - multi-functional activities could share park areas, concessions, etc.
 - generous parking

- Watson Park
 - very low elevation in flood plain, suffered disaster of Irene (like Clifford Park)
 - potential development could be engineered for resiliency against flooding
 - owned by School Board, managed by Parks & Rec
 - current organized use includes flag football, rec softball, but no longer used for youth baseball or softball
 - accessible on bus route
 - walkable to both downtown WRJ and Hartford Village
 - high visibility
 - shade from trees
 - could get cold, foggy being low along river's edge (cf Lebanon pool often cold without enough sun exposure on a river site)
 - generous existing parking
 - playground
- George Ratcliffe Park (Latham Works Ln)
 - underutilized
 - somewhat remote regarding access
 - river access and playground
- Christian Street School Property
 - about ½ mile from Dothan Brook
 - good piece of land without any other clear use
- Dothan Brook School
 - access to bike path
 - on bus line
 - south zone has appeal where garden is, but may be too tight
 - may interfere with future school expansion
 - 3 miles from current site (Mr. Lagasse observed a high number of kids who live in the multi-family housing below Victory Circle are drawn to the current pool)
 - Mr. James suggested relocating baseball field farther back, combined on soccer field, leaving a large area for a pool next to playground and parking.
 - school would probably like the ability to offer swim lessons for P.E. etc.
- Lyman point park
 - under 2 acres
 - wedge shaped area next to Town Hall where bandstand is, out of floodplain
 - loss of park area if replaced by a pool
- Maxfield Outdoor Sports Complex
 - can get overcrowded, although parking has been better at Nighthawks this year

A few other locations were also discussed:

- Across Maple street from Town Hall?
 - considered a promising pool site during a recent town planning forum

- centrally located, visible and accessible
- School bus garage could be prime site if could relocate, say to Sykes Ave., but— all these ideas involve private property.
- Other areas on HS-middle school campus?
 - high elevation, sunny exposure
 - all spaces are already valued for various school uses, e.g., ballfields for P.E.
 - future school expansion plans?
- UVAC campus?
 - town technically owns the property
 - politically messy
 - UVAC would like to add future outdoor pool, amenities, splash pad, etc.
 - passes for non-members are complicated to administer
 - access limited
 - generally very different demographics at town pool vs. UVAC
 - Ms. Souza had prior conversation with UVAC director regarding “being in the pool business”—given its operating expenses, UVAC is simply unable to offer free or highly discounted fees to Hartford residents.

The committee considered the value of the changing rooms, accessory buildings, and infrastructure at the existing pool site. It was noted that previously Mark Mariano had estimated the cost to rehabilitate Rutland’s existing bathhouse structure to be around \$700k.

Mr. Hausler filled in some history of the current bathhouse, which many in the Hartford community feel was a recent big ticket item, and there is some perception that it was primarily intended for and fully sufficient to support the pool. However, the School Board and Town had cut the budget on that project, and despite still going over budget, its program and functionality were reduced.

Even if the pool remains at current site, it may require more money to expand or relocate lockers, showers and support areas, and possibly to create a new entry access control area, maybe with a few family changing rooms. Mr. Hausler explained that use of the fitness center is expected to increase, and when camp season ends, football and fall sports conflict with locker room use for the pool. Had it been operating this summer, the pool would have ended its season this coming weekend, for fall sports transitions, etc., but it would be desirable to keep the pool open for a longer season in the future.

A cautionary comment was made that local news media have a habit of fanning embers of controversy, sometimes resulting in killing projects before they ever get off the ground. Mr. James asked if Mr. Hausler could talk to superintendent Tom Dibalsi about potential usage of school properties in relation to potential pool locations.

The three leading candidates for alternate sites that emerged from the conversation were Kilowatt Park, Watson Park, and the Dothan Brook School. Mr. Hausler will inform Weston & Sampson to look at these options as part of its overall evaluation.

Discussion of desired programmatic features for future pool

Committee members shared a wide variety of features that could enhance and complement the aquatic experience. Mr. James gave a list of several to consider:

- zero entry
- ground spray
- dumping bucket
- divider between shallow and deep pools
- flume slide
- concession area
- splash pad
- heated water
- well sprays
- sun shade (especially toddler area)
- floatables
- corkscrew slide
- pavilion
- picnic areas

Mr. Vanasse thought about Storrs Pond as a good template for comparison. It has the same L-shaped pool, but with a few extra pieces.

For Mr. Lagasse, the key word is *intergenerational*, with so few destinations where ages 2 to 92 cross paths.

Mr. James asserted that the pool must accommodate both kids who can and who cannot swim.

Mr. Hausler described examples of imaginative play structures for children, e.g., a splash pad slide that looks like a turtle.

Mr. Snyder suggested the Montshire Museum of Science garden, which is a very popular destination for families in warm weather, as an example of integrating water features into the landscape that engage children without feeling like an amusement park.

Mr. Lagasse asked if anyone had visited other local pools or aquatic parks.

Mr. Snyder described the inflatables at Camp Carpenter for Cub Scouts that were a huge hit, including a floating pillow launch pad.

Mr. Hausler mentioned Colchester beach has floatables and charges admission.

Ms. Souza asked what activities does Ventures do at the pool? Mr. Hausler said there were swim lessons for public and campers in addition to free swim.

Mr. Snyder asked about diving, and Mr. James conveyed that it was discussed at the last meeting and that the committee decided not to include diving due to safety risk and inefficient use of pool space, i.e., only one person can be on the board or in the deep zone at one time.

Mr. Vanasse mentioned that kids line up to use the diving boards at Storrs Pond. It may be worth asking Weston & Sampson for the relative cost to have a diving area.

Community meeting to gather response to design options

An exercise is planned to occur at Glory Days in September where various pool and water feature options will be displayed on boards, on which the public can post comments and vote for favorites. Probably no costs will be associated with the options yet at that time.

No old or new business was raised.

The committee will meet again in two weeks with Mark Mariano.

Adjournment

By motion duly made and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectively submitted by: Scott Snyder, Recording Secretary.

Draft minutes of the meeting on August 7, 2018, to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Any changes noted and signed by Chair or Recording Secretary.

Minutes were reviewed at the meeting on AUGUST 21.

Any changes or corrections:

NONE.

With the corrections noted above, minutes were approved:

Signature: 

Date: 2018-8-21

