

**Deerfield Park District**  
**Pool Advisory Committee**

Minutes of September 9, 2021

The meeting of the Pool Advisory Committee was called to order at 6:00 p.m. and the following were:

Present: Sylvia Dresser, Andy Kettlewell, Lauren Patinkin, Sari Winick, Rick Patinkin, Jeff Nehila, Laura McCarty, Heather Lund

Absent: Peter Greenfield

**Public Comment**

No emails from the public were received prior to the meeting.

**Committee Member Resignation**

Laura informed the committee that Samantha Garrity resigned from the Pool Advisory Committee.

**Review of Committee Meeting Minutes of July 22, 2021**

Committee members reviewed the minutes of the July 22, 2021 Pool Advisory Committee meeting noting no corrections/changes.

**Recap of 2021 Pool Season**

The 2021 pool season went very well. Deerspring closed on August 15 and Mitchell closed on Labor Day. The weather cooperated and allowed for many days to enjoy the pool.

As the start of the pool season was approaching, staff was preparing to open the pools under Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan. As we got closer to the start of the season, staff learned that the state may be in Phase 5 by the start of the season and quickly made plans to sell pool passes instead of just offering a daily admission. We offered group swim lessons and private swim lessons both which were very popular this year.

The concession operation offered pre-packaged goods as well as ice cream. The ice cream was especially popular, and staff had to get a second freezer to keep up with the demand. The plan for 2022 is to bring back the pre-packaged goods and the ice cream.

Historically during the last 3 weeks of the season it is hard to retain staff. We started the season with 92 lifeguards and by the end of the season we only had 5 to 6 guards remaining including the Aquatics Supervisor. For the end of season schedule, on weekdays we were able to offer lap swim in the morning and public swim in the afternoon. On weekends we operated our normal weekend schedule. However, the last week of the season we had to modify the schedule even further and were not able to offer the afternoon public swim during the week but was able to continue to offer morning lap swim. Staff will continue to offer as much open pool time as staffing will allow at the end of the season.

Andy asked how surrounding area pools did this summer. Laura responded that she doesn't have specifics but would imagine that they had good attendance this summer, especially if they were closed in 2020.

Lauren mentioned that our pool opening an hour earlier on the weekends than some surrounding pools was attractive to younger families from other communities.

Sari asked if we offered staff a higher wage during the last 3 weeks of the season. Laura responded that we do pay a premium to staff to stay on until the end of the season.

### **Discussion/Committee Recommendations for 2022 Fees**

Committee members reviewed data on the fee structure and proposed recommendations. Staff proposes that our daily fee rates remain the same as what was proposed in 2020. In 2021 the daily fees were adjusted as staff didn't believe we would be able to sell pool passes. Staff proposes that coupon books sell at 10 visits for \$90. This creates a savings of \$1.00 off the daily fee. For season passes, staff proposes a 15% increase on all pass categories. This is due to the minimum wage increase. The Early Bird rate offers a 20% discount off the regular season rate if purchased by May 27. Non-resident pass rates are increased by 50%. Historically the district has only increased passes by \$5 each season. But with the rapid increase in minimum wage and operating costs, a \$5 increase will not be sufficient.

Fee recommendations will be discussed and approved at the October 7, 2021 Special Board Meeting.

Andy asked what minimum wage rate the 15% increase supports. Laura responded that a 15% increase will support a \$14 an hour minimum wage.

Sylvia commented that she always thought our season passes were way underpriced for the amount of pool time available. She mentioned that she noticed the Sr. Couple rate wasn't very reduced. Staff will relook at the proposed rate to make sure it is properly priced.

Laura commented that our rates offer an excellent value even with a 15% increase.

Lauren asked about the rate for Sachs Recreation Center upgrade pass was determined. Laura responded that the fee is in addition to their monthly SRC membership rate and is per person. Staff felt like \$25 per person was fair. This gives our SRC members opportunities to enjoy the outdoor pools.

Sari commented that the proposed fees are very fair and are easily justified with the increase in staff wages, the investment in Mitchell and the upcoming renovations to Deerspring. She stated that the passes offer a tremendous value.

Staff is proposing slight increases in swim lessons, pool rentals and party packages. We were not able to offer rentals the last two summer, so staff is looking forward to providing those services.

Staff feels comfortable that we are charging appropriate fees based on comparisons to surrounding area pools.

Committee members reviewed data related to season pass sales. Staff was able to offer season pass sales beginning on June 7. Passes were sold at the Early Bird rate only. We generated a \$111,000 in season pass revenue. We sold 762 passes across all categories. That equates to 1,922 people with a season pass.

In pre-COVID years our annual pass sale revenue was \$135,000-\$140,000. With the proposed season pass rate increase and using 2019 pass sales, that would be \$188,000 in season pass sales for 2022.

Committee members reviewed data related to daily fee sales. Deerspring made over \$21,000 and Mitchell over \$55,000 in daily fee revenue this season. This is over \$76,000 in daily fees alone. Daily fee sales were even better than our last normal operating season in 2019. We did have a very rainy June in 2019. Staff is proposing that we continue to offer the non-resident rate as we did in 2021.

Combined revenue to daily fee and season pass sales was over \$188,000. Sylvia asked how this compared to the actual amount budgeted. Laura responded that the total is higher than budgeted.

We had a total of 23,784 guests visit both of our pools this season.

Historically, the pools have operated on a rotating opening/closing of the pools. Keeping with the rotating method would mean that in 2022 Mitchell would be scheduled to open first and close first. In 2022, we will have the addition of the new sprayground at Deerspring. Sylvia sent a letter stating reasons that Mitchell should be the pool to remain open at the end of the season based on accessibility, amenities, etc. Committee members agreed. Therefore after discussion, staff proposes that Deerspring Pool open June 4 and close August 14, Mitchell Pool should open June 11 and close it on Labor Day, Monday, September 5, 2022. If staff are available, there is a possibility the sprayground could open Memorial Day weekend and stay open past Labor Day weekend.

Andy asked if the Deerspring Sprayground construction will be complete by June 4. Laura responded that it is scheduled to be completed prior to June 4.

Committee members reviewed data related to staff wages. Effective January 1, 2022 the minimum wage will increase to \$12 per hour. For 2022, staff proposes we continue with the \$2.00 increase and start lifeguards and swim instructors at \$14.00 per hour. Staff is also proposing the \$3.00 end of season increase if staff stay on until the pool closes. New this year, staff is proposing offering an incentive of \$6.00 per hour to any guard that stays on through the year to work at SRC or for Coho. The rate would go down when they return to the outdoor pool. Staff is trying to retain as many lifeguards as possible and hopefully this will help.

Sari asked if offering an accelerated annual increase would help in retaining staff from season to season. Laura responded that we have been successful offering the \$.75 increase each year but could consider an accelerated option. Heather responded that 60% of our 2021 lifeguards were returnees.

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Board Liaison Patinkin asked if the majority of our lifeguards are from Deerfield. Heather responded that most of them are local.

Andy mentioned that we may need to watch the market to determine if we need to increase wages even more to draw staff as many places will be starting entry level staff at \$15 per hour and there will be many options available.

Laura asked if committee members would be open to adjusting the Lap Swim age requirement from 18 & over to 16 & over. Committee members had no objections to lowering the age requirement.

### **Other Items**

#### **Update on Deerspring Sprayground Project**

Laura provided an update on the Deerspring Sprayground project. The equipment has been ordered and is scheduled to arrive next week. The construction documents were sent to Illinois Dept. of Public Health at the end of July. We are hoping to have approval back before November 1 so demolition work can begin. Bids have been submitted and are scheduled to be approved at the October board meeting.

Sylvia mentioned how nice it was to see the fire department staff and their families enjoying the pool. Heather reported that the fire department was on site two times throughout the summer to train with the lifeguards and also utilized the diving well three times during the summer for their own trainings.

Lauren asked if any comments ever get left in the comment box outside Mitchell. Laura responded that she has never received a comment from the box but does get emailed comments.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 26, 2022.

There being no further discussion, the Pool Advisory Committee meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.