

February 21, 2021

RE: Committee Of the Whole (CoW), February 22, 2021, Agenda Item 7.1 Service Delivery Option Report, Point #6, potential of closing the Peter Gorman Swimming Pool for the 2021 season:

Dear Mayor and Council:

Please forgive my last-minute email, but it has just been brought to my attention that the Service Delivery Option Report proposes the closure of the Peter Gorman Swimming Pool for the second year in a row.

I am very disappointed (devastated actually) that this beloved facility might not open again this summer. This outdoor pool offers so much value to the entire community, namely children, teens, adults and seniors, not mention the New'ark'et dogs (when socially acceptable).

As we are all aware, the benefits of 'outdoor' activities are vital to our physical, mental and emotional health, all the while enhancing exposure to fresh air and vitamin D, boosting moods, and reducing stress. This is especially important to residents during Covid-19. As a retired senior, I valued the opportunity to exercise outdoor at this pool. I know that I and many of my aqua fit friends sorely missed our regular exercise in 2020.

It is my wish that this proposal be either rejected or deferred to give residents adequate time to offer input on the cancellation of this valuable asset for a second year. I feel this is a short-sighted option considering the many valuable physical, emotional and mental health benefits this outdoor activity brings to residents, and also that the money savings could/should be found elsewhere within the budget.

Below are some added points for your consideration:

Summer temperatures are rising each summer. We need cooling opportunities.

Seniors need exercise, especially ones that allow them to be outdoor. The Ray Twinney Complex is not scheduled to open until September 2021. Where do we go? Do we invade the kiddie splash pads in town?

Many new mothers bring their young-ones to the pool. It's a wonderful relaxing and bonding time for them. Children love to go to the pool and play outside.

This will affect many lower income families and age specific sectors in our society. Many residents do not have a backyard swimming pool and they have no easy access to lakes. It is not safe to swim in stormwater ponds, some of the local streams and creeks, not to mention Fairy Lake.

The Town has the capability to schedule pool times and implement Covid-19 safety measures in a socially acceptable manner.

The pool opens in July. Why is the decision being rushed? Could the opening of the pool be decided at a later date? If Covid-19 is still at a heightened level in the Spring, perhaps a more informed decision could be made then.

How does this affect the structural integrity of this asset being closed two years in a row?

I understand Covid-19 has had devastating effects on the Town's financial health and I know it is not an easy task to find and implement efficiencies especially when they entail closing down valued services. I am urging you to reject the proposal or at least, defer your decision until the Spring.

Sincerely,
Nancy Fish