

MERRIMACK POOL (MPRA) ANNUAL MEETING 2019

Thursday, JUNE 20, 2019

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:20pm by President, David Seltzer. Approximately 65 Equity Members were in attendance which provided the ten percent of membership necessary for a quorum under the bylaws.

Each Board Members was introduced, including their primary area of responsibility. David also recognized Linda Karson for being the primary point-of contact in answering the calls and emails sent by members and outside vendors to the pool.

David voiced appreciation to outgoing board member, Gabe Horowitz for his service. To fill the current board vacancy, the Board presented the nomination of Bob Dohner and asked him to introduce himself. Bob said they are frequent users of the pool, he retired from Treasury a year ago, and has the time and desire to give back to the community. Growing up, he was a member of a pool like Merrimack and values having a pool with a vibrant swim team. He would round out the Board by representing the members who do not have young families. David asked for a motion to approve the nomination of Bob Dohner, and all approved.

David then directed attention to the handout pages of the 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes. He asked if there were questions, then requested approval of the minutes from last year's Annual Meeting. A motion was made to approve, then seconded, and the minutes from last year were unanimously approved.

Mike Brooks, MPRA Treasurer, referred everyone to the handouts and gave an overview of the financial reports. He reported that the checking and savings accounts had been moved because the bank required that these be at the institution where the renovation loan was secured. The pool borrowed money for construction but we have already started paying back the \$600,000 loan. He said a \$60,000 extra prepayment was recently made, and a balloon payment will potentially be due when the loan matures in August 2023. He advised that the loan can be prepaid without penalty. Mike is confident that the loan can be extended if a balance remains at maturity. He also advised that the last time the pool took a loan, it was for \$650,000 over 10 years and it was paid off early.

He explained the large depreciation expense line in 2017 was based on the new tax laws. As an aside, Mike advised those laws are sort of silly because the pool is a non-profit and doesn't pay taxes, but the pool accountant has advised we must report it this way. He further advised that given the pool's strong cash flow, we can likely continue to pay significant extra funds toward the loan annually, while still maintaining around \$100,000 in cash available. Overall, the pool is in good financial shape.

Mike and Linda provided an update on the membership. Mike advised the 300 Equity Member slots are filled and we have at least two dozen on the waitlist. The Full Summer Affiliates waitlist was cleared filling roughly 275 slots. Mike explained that we used to fill 300 slots but the pool was too crowded, then Full Summer Affiliates were limited to 250 and the pool was not full enough, so 275 seems to be a happy middle. The 80 Late Summer Affiliate slots have not been filled in past seasons but we may get closer to hitting that number this year. The bylaws have limits but there is a little wiggle room so that we can make sure the pool remains at safe attendance capacity limits, factoring in varying family and guests.

David took the opportunity to thank Mike Brooks for his many years of service as Treasurer, which he does on a volunteer basis. He moved to adopt the budget and there were no objections.

David began the report on current pool business by advising that the renovations are just about complete! He explained we owe Cris Weals a debt of gratitude for all he did to champion the renovations. David then cited the following projects that have been improved since last season.

- The fence was painted.
- The food area patio was re-surfaced.
- New large food patio umbrellas were installed for shade and cover. With the threat of rain, he made an aside that we were fortunate to be sitting on the patio under the new umbrellas.
- The bathrooms were upgraded with tile trim and new mirrors. There are some residual fixture and plumbing issues with the toilets and soap dispensers being resolved. The automatic toilet sensors do not flush quickly. We had not been advised that these would operate this way and for some reason they don't work well. We have also been told that the viscosity of the soap may not be right for the new soap dispensers. It may be necessary to retrofit both.
- Signage has been upgraded significantly in the past year.
- Thanks to Steve Hackett, a security system has been installed. David advised that nothing terribly serious had occurred previously but there were reports of activity in the parking lot and on the pool grounds after hours—now we can “go to the video tapes”.
- The wifi, previously more like a residential setup, has been significantly upgraded.
- The snack bar “re-opened” as Mack’s Café with new signage. David explained that the snack bar is not operated by pool. Mike Horan, owner of “Skinny Mike’s Catering”, owns, operates, and provides staffing. Mike is a food vendor and it is terrific that they manage the operation. The pool does not make any money from the snack bar

operations but we need them to be successful to stay open. If there are any challenges or concerns, please let us know.

- We are taking bids for locking dumpster doors.
- We are exploring having the parking lot spaces remarked.

The floor was opened for comments and questions.

- A member stated that he was happy the security system was installed. He said that at least twice a year he can hear kids (who may not be sober) getting in, using the diving board and pool. David encouraged everyone to let us know if there are issues because we do not get notifications from the system but can review the tapes for times when there are incidents.
- It was questioned whether the need for dumpster doors was due to animals getting into the trash. It was explained that household trash was being dumped at the pool and that doors that remain closed should make the area more attractive.
- More discussion on the café. It opened last year mid-summer and was successful enough that they came back but we need to see how this August goes. Merrimack does not have camps or tennis courts as additional attractions. We have been using Twitter and the website to promote the specials. Mack's is your closest restaurant and we must support it or we lose it. We don't have the provisions to run the snack bar internally, it would be hugely challenging. We picked Mike because he is at other pools and offers modestly priced food that you'd expect at a pool. Other vendors had much more expensive offerings. We've been happy and so far, Mike is too.
- A member questioned if the playground area tether ball could be moved from the lower level where there is a water drainage issue. David thanked her for this suggestion because we were not aware of the issue and will check into getting this done. [Shortly after the Annual Meeting the tether ball was moved to the upper level.]
- It was noted that periodic maintenance is needed on ancillary things, like foosball.
- It was reported that kids have been opening the quick release gates and letting in friends. David explained the additional gates were required based on calculations using 1,400 people who might be in the pool! It was suggested that adding "Emergency Exit" and "Security Camera" signs might help deter these activities and parents are urged to provide more supervision of their children.
- David provided an update on the Georgetown Aquatics pool management staffing. Sam Gaffney is the pool manager; he was assistant manager last year. He is terrific, very responsible, a team player, and over all great fit for the position. Ben Levin is the assistant manager this year.

David then reviewed and responded to the questions and agenda items that were submitted in advance by members.

- There was concern about the upkeep over the off-season. Some things, like the foosball tables, were left out over the winter and even things left in the guard hut were exposed to the elements. Lessons have been learned and we will make sure that everything is put away more carefully when the pool closes for the season.
- Who does what? The primary areas of responsibility for each Board Member are listed on the pool website but David advised that it is best to send emails to the MerrimackPool@gmail.com address to be sure communications reach the correct Board liaison. David explained there has been significantly better communications this year thanks to the efforts of the Board Communications liaison, Siobhan Gonzalez. He said that they are conscious of the push-pull challenges of sending more or fewer emails. The approach this year was to use the “On Deck at MERRIMACK” newsletter to provide more comprehensive messages. Twitter is being used for real time notices, such as pool weather closures. The Merrimack Facebook account is defunct. It was asked if anyone does social media? Amy Stephens offered to help resurrect Facebook.
- Is it possible to have a handyman make monthly repairs? David explained the first “line of defense” for pool repairs is Georgetown Aquatics. The owner, Clark, is able to fix most plumbing issues, he has repaired light fixtures, and done other maintenance. When there are specific issues that Georgetown Aquatics is unable to handle, they have the vendor contacts. David urged everyone to let us know about repairs that need attention.
- Can there be healthier options at Mack’s Café? David said we are aware that some would like this but the vendor must calibrate what can be easily stocked and what sells. When they have purchased hummus and vegetables, much of it ends up being thrown out.
- Can the basketball court be improved? Is there an opportunity elsewhere on the property? David said “If Jim Mchaffie couldn’t make it happen then it probably can’t be done!” There are complicating factors with the pond adjacent to the parking lot that is County protected land, and drainage that make it a far bigger undertaking than it appears to be. Prior to the bathhouse renovation, the creek used to run where we’re sitting now. The Army Corps had to approve putting in pipes and Montgomery County makes us handle the water running off the parking lot. There is a swale at the end of the property, a bio treatment filter flows from the hoop area then over time drains down and contaminants are removed rather than going into Potomac. We cannot regrade or change the area based on the easement obtained for the stormwater, and the credit the pool receives on our personal property taxes. It seems like an unlikely project because of these obstacles and the significant costs involved. The asphalt and area in general were recently cleaned. Other locations were considered but there was concern about having kids going through the parking lot if the hoop was placed toward the top of the driveway.

- Can we get a new bike rack? David reported absolutely yes, the dilapidated one was taken away during the renovation.
- Can we ban sunscreen spray on the pool deck? David explained we want kids to use sunscreen and banning is hard to enforce but we realize it's flammable and breathing it is bad for others in the area. Instead he said we will communicate being considerate of fellow pool members and to step aside to apply sprays. It's hard for the lifeguards to tell adults not to spray sunscreen on the pool deck so the newsletter will include a reminder that sprays are an irritant to others in the community.
- Can there be mosquito control? David said there used to be bug zappers but over the years they have found that it's just that some seasons are better or worse than others. It was noted that the chlorine helps to control the bugs and that it's just areas of the deck that are far away from the pool where the pests are worse.
- Can the pool closing hour return to 9:00pm and can the season end later? David advised that the pool will be open Monday through Thursday 11:00am-9:00pm and close at 9:30pm on Fridays. The lifeguards will announce at 8:50pm that the pool is closing. The guards are only paid until 9:00pm so it costs us more to have them here later. Regarding keeping the pool open longer, the challenge is that it is hard to get kids to guard in September once school has started. After Labor Day, Georgetown Aquatics is unable to get guards for during the week, even afternoons and evenings are difficult. David encouraged everyone to be sure to check-in each time so that we can better assess pool usage and we will continue to ask about extending the season into the fall as much as possible.
- Can the medical supplies and AED be wall mounted? A member advised that she has been providing supplies but that's really the job for Georgetown Aquatics.
- Lap swimmers asked if it was possible to have more than one lane in the evenings 6:30pm-closing. Currently, 4-5 adults are trying to lap swim in one lane. Coach Elizabeth advised that she makes sure all 7 lanes are available for early bird swim and beginning at 7:30pm swim team will be done so lap swimmers will have more lanes starting at 7:30pm until closing. She explained that there are 207 swimmers on the team this year and that some age groups have almost 50 kids so the lanes are needed for practice. The website advises that one lap lane is always available and she will try to provide more for lap swimmers when the practice numbers allow.
- Is there a grill for members to use? David said the Café took over use of the grill when they opened. It's a fine balance, we don't want to take business away from Mack's but will see if it's feasible for limited use.
- It was asked if there would be more Movie & Raft nights.

Appreciation was expressed to everyone in attendance and a motion was made to adjourn at 8:32pm.