

## INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

### Tukwila Metropolitan Park District

TO: **Tukwila Pool MPD Board**

FROM: **David Cline, City Administrator**

DATE: **November 1, 2013**

SUBJECT: **Review of correspondence to the Board**

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During the October 21st Board meeting, there was a reference in a PowerPoint presentation, to a letter that was titled to the "Tukwila Pool Advisory Committee." This letter was from a pool user expressing their views on the gender only swim at the pool. That same evening, a Tukwila Pool Advisory Committee (TPAC) member stated that she had never seen this correspondence. Upon hearing this information, City staff members were very concerned that this information may not have been provided to the Board or to TPAC. It has come to our attention that MPD Board members also shared this same concern. City staff then researched this information. I am providing this chronology of events regarding this correspondence.

The letter referenced in the October 21st PowerPoint, was received as part of six total letters by the pool staff on July 14, 2013 in one envelope marked "Pool Board." All of the six letters inside were addressed to the "Tukwila Pool Advisory Committee." City pool staff asked the authors about who they would like these to be sent to and there was a confirmation that these should be given to the Board to ensure the broadest possible distribution. By sending it to the Board, it was expected that TPAC members would then also see these in the public correspondence. These six letters were scanned by the City pool staff and sent to the City Clerk and the Parks & Recreation Director for distribution to the Board on July 15, 2013. This was the same evening of the typical MPD Board meeting. These letters were sent via an email from the City Clerk to the full board on July 15, 2013 at 11:50 a.m.

Upon conversation with staff, it would have improved public communication if these letters had been included in the public packet at the next MPD Board meeting in August under correspondence. The staff will include these letters and this explanation in the November packet under correspondence. The original six letters are now all attached to this email.

Since these letters had been sent to the full MPD Board in July, City pool staff shared these public documents with the consultants as well. As part of their grant work on the Community Transformation Grant from Seattle Children's Hospital, Seattle King County Health Department and Healthy King County Coalition staff shared the letters with the granting agency to show the work being done was having an impact on the community. Tizzy Bennett, Seattle Children's Director Guest Services and Community Benefit, then used one of these letters in her PowerPoint presentation regarding the grant work and single gender swimming review to the MPD Board.

Attachment A:  
Email communication from City Staff to the MPD Board

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**From:** Christy O'Flaherty  
**Sent:** Monday, July 15, 2013 11:50 AM  
**To:** Verna Seal; Allan Ekberg; Joe Duffie; Allan Ekberg; Kathy Hougardy; De'Sean Quinn; Kate Kruller  
**Cc:** Laurel Humphrey; Rick Still  
**Subject:** MPD Board Correspondence Attached

Attached are 6 letters received from pool patrons. They were addressed to TPAC, and appear to be intended for the Board. Please advise of any questions or concerns. Thank you.

Christy

**From:** Amy Kindell  
**Sent:** Monday, July 15, 2013 11:20 AM  
**To:** Rick Still; Christy O'Flaherty  
**Cc:** Malcolm Neely  
**Subject:** Patron Letters Received 7.14.13

Rick, Christy,

Attached are scanned copies of letters we received from patrons. There has been some confusion about the difference between the Board and the advisory committee, and even though these letters are addressed to the advisory committee they are intended for the Board.

Let me know if you need anything further.

Thanks,

Amy

Amy Kindell

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***The City of opportunity, the community of choice.***  
**Please consider the impact on the environment before printing this e-mail.**

Dear Tukwila Pool Advisory Committee,

For many women of color from immigrant families living in and around the city of Tukwila, having ONE hour out of the week designated for their own use is not only a right, it's freedom. The freedom to be a part of something which makes them feel "inclusive," "accepted" and "fit in" with the American way of life. The American way of life, a way that is diverse but inclusive of all peoples despite their race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. That's what makes our nation the best nation in the world because we honor and protect our citizens, we invite them to enjoy the basic fundamental human rights which are unheard of in their repressive and war torn countries. Many of the women who go to the pool go because they want privacy and want to feel safe being around other women. Many of them **don't** and **can't** swim in public or private pools without proper accommodations being made ahead of time due to cultural and religious obligations. If they were in their native countries, they would probably not even be allowed to step out of the house! But they're not in their native countries; they're in the United States of America, the best nation in the world. And despite the fact that we (as citizens) have been given the freedom of self-expression, let's not let the voice of one individual be the reason why something which offers so much (social, emotional, and physical) benefit to so many be the reason to end it. Please show these women that they are and will continue to be respected and honored members of our community.

For some individuals, myself included, an hour at the pool serves not only as a means for social interaction with other community members; rather it has immense therapeutic properties. I've been the victim of a serious motor vehicle accident and have found the time spent at the pool to be very therapeutic because it has helped me strengthen my shoulder and leg muscles. And I know that there are other women in the community that can attest to having gained certain physical benefits from being in the pool that modern medicine cannot give.

I hope after hearing my personal experience, that you will make the right decision regarding this critical matter. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. Should you have further questions or comments, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Zaynab Ilyas-Sheikh Ali

Dear Tukwila Pool Advisory Committee,

My name is Asia Zayan. I live in Tukwila and I enjoy coming to the Tukwila pool for the women only swim on Sundays with my kids. It gives me a chance to meet other women and moms to socialize with and it is the only type of exercise which I can do a regular basis during the summer. So please do not terminate the Sunday women's only swim.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Asia Zayan

E-mail: [asia\\_farole@hotmail.com](mailto:asia_farole@hotmail.com)

Dear Tukwila Pool Advisory Committee,

My name is Jamila Abukar and I am a resident of Tukwila. I have been attending the women only swims this summer and it disheartens me to find out that the city may discontinue this vital service due to the irrational complaints of one individual. I was excited when I heard that there are women only swims because it caters tremendously to my religious and cultural needs when swimming in public pools. I feel safe and comfortable when I swim for one hour on Sundays with other women. It gives me a sense of protection of my privacy knowing that the pool is reserved for us women only without men around for only ONE hour. I feel free to wear whatever I want to wear while in and around the pool since I am only around other women. Also, as someone who does not do much exercise due to a busy life, going to the pool is my only physical exercise regimen. As a woman of color, I believe that these swims have helped other women of color in our community to start living healthier lives by having cultural and religious accommodations when swimming at the Tukwila Pool for one hour a week.

Please remember that other communities like New Holly and Southwest Seattle have women only swims to cater to the needs of their women of color so why should Tukwila be any different (since it is the most diverse zip code in the U.S.)? Please do not take away this sense of freedom from us.

If you have any more questions for me, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jamila Abukar

(206) 226-1701

janatulfirdous@gmail.com

Dear Tukwila Pool Advisory Committee,

My name is Suad Abdul Alim. I'm a Tukwila community member and I been coming to Tukwila Pool since 2009. My children grew up at the pool since they were babies. Two of my kids are still in the swimming team lessons. As an immigrant woman, I am asking you to please keep the woman's only swim because it is a very important resource for us since it accommodates our cultural and religious needs. As a mom of three, the women only swim has helped me to find time for exercise, socialize with other women, and it helps me with my weekly stress.

We have been coming to enjoy the women only swim and we will continue to come. I'm very thankful to Amy who put this swim together so please keep this swim open!

For further questions, please feel free to ask me.

Sincerely

Suad Abdul Alim

(206)779-8545

Dear Tukwila Pool Advisory Committee,

My name is Umm Ayoub and I am a Child-Birth Educator residing in Tukwila. I was excited to learn that the Tukwila Pool has a women's only swim one hour a week therefore, I started referring my pregnant clients to the pool because being in the pool, helps to alleviate swelling in the joints due to pregnancy. The women only swim has immensely helped my clients to not only get the critical healing which they need for their pregnancy but it has also helped cater to their cultural, personal, and religious needs as well. In fact, some of my clients who are not affiliated with any religion prefer to go to these women only swims because they innately feel shy to be around men in public pools therefore, it is a type of privacy for them. Many times in the news, we hear that when men and women swim together in public pools, there is almost always some report of sexual harassment and assault so please help to safeguard the safety and dignity of these women.

I am asking you all to please not discontinue the women only swims in our community because as a professional working with women, my clients depend on it for physical therapy and privacy.

Please contact me with any questions.

Best,

Umm Ayoub

Dear The tukwila pool advisory committee

once I heard that the tukwila pool was starting to have a women only swim, I was so happy because in my religion women cant just go swimming in public, we have to have certain guidelines to follow in order to go swimming such as finding an indoor pool, having the windows covered etc. The tukwila pool staff have done a wonderful job in accomadating our needs. for that reason, I dont think it would be fair to not have a womens only swim since it is only one day a week for one hour that is not a big deal and so I am asking please do NOT consider shutting down our womens only program just because one person has a complaint about us. Even though the swim is only one hour, in that one hour we meet new people and have fun.

Balijafarde

(206) 226-1702