

Hollin Hills Pool Past History, Present Status and Future Decisions

The community will soon be re-visiting some recurring issues about the Hollin Hills Pool—money and organization. The Hollin Hills Civic Association owns the pool and the land surrounding it, but it rents the facility to the non-profit corporation—the Hollin Hills Swim Club—that it created to operate the pool. The relationship between the Civic Association and its pool corporation is not unlike the relationship between a tenant and landlord—as a landlord you expect tenants to pay the day-to-day operating costs, keep the place looking good, and not bother you with their day-to-day life. But should the roof collapse, or the pipes burst, you want to be involved because these matters involve the property's future value to you, its owner.

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This is not the first time we have been faced with these issues. Indeed, a community history put together by Alan Warshawer indicates that we have repeatedly considered these issues and undoubtedly will again. In 1952, when the first section of Hollin Hills (known to some as "Old Hollin Hills") was built, residents began organizing to develop a community pool. In 1954, the Civic Association borrowed \$10,000 to purchase the land for the pool. To insure repayment, the Hollin Hills' developer, Robert Davenport, agreed to charge an extra \$100 for each new lot he sold. One hundred and ninety-three families (at the time, almost every home in Hollin Hills) pledged \$29,000 (about \$150 from each family) for the construction effort. The pool opened in 1954, and similar to our present operating structure, a separate non profit corporation was formed to operate the pool.

Building the pool was perhaps the easiest and cheapest part of owning and operating the pool. From the beginning, the costs of maintaining the pool structure have been substantial and have required a community effort. In 1954, when Civic Association dues were \$24 per year, 75% of that amount was devoted to pool expenses. In January 1955, the still-in-use bathhouse,

concrete apron, ventilators and lighting were added at a cost of \$10,000. In 1962, the pool required repairs of \$10,140, and \$8,000 of the cost was borrowed.

Thereafter, for reasons I have not discovered, the Civic Association assumed direct responsibility for the pool's operation. In 1965, the Civic Association enlarged the pool to its present size and financed the project by borrowing \$25,000. At the same time, the community was also faced with a myriad of issues concerning pool membership. Fairfax County had imposed membership limits and, given the homebound nature of most families in the 50's and 60's, those membership limits were easily met with just the homeowners in Sections 1-10. Since homes in these "sections" had been involved in raising the money to build the pool, proposals to extend membership to residents of "new" Hollin Hills and to Marlin Forest were rejected. Hence, the Hollin Meadows Pool was developed to serve "new" Hollin Hills.

The lifestyle changes that were affecting the rest of the country during the 1960's also impacted the pool. By the late 1960's, membership declined as mothers pursued careers outside of the home and families acquired a second and third car.

Age, of course, has not been kind to the pool. In 1987, major structural repairs cost in excess of \$60,000. The Civic Association decided to return to its original operating model and created a separate entity to operate the pool. \$35,000 of the \$60,000 was

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borrowed. Pool members raised the rest, began marketing efforts, and instituted a \$300 capitalization fee for all new pool members. While the pool's revenues were used to repay the loan, nothing was left for the inevitable next round of capital costs. By 1998, when the loan had been paid down to \$18,000, the pool was ready for the next \$50,000 of structural repair. To fund these costs, the loan was increased to \$35,000. Once again, the pool sought additional capitalization fees and increased its marketing efforts. The pool continues to use

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its revenues to repay this loan, but as before, there is little in reserve for the major structural repairs that lie ahead.

The Civic Association is once again considering how best to operate the pool and keep it available to the community for another 50 years. Are the community's interests best served by the present organization, or will the community be best served if the Civic Association operates the pool? Over the next few months, the community will be called upon to make a decision. There are also going to be issues about money (aren't there always?) including how to pay for the next round of structural repairs that will help the pool last another 50 years. Peter Kinsler, Frank McKenna, Alan Warshawer and I are working on recommendations for the Civic Association concerning these matters. We want to hear from you!! Call, send us emails or otherwise let us know your thoughts on these topics.

—Barbara Ward

See page 2 for more on the Pool.

LETTER TO THE BULLETIN

"More Housing Now!" is a group of citizens who believe that federal, state, and local governments must invest revenues in building housing for people in the lower third income bracket. With land at a premium in Fairfax County, we believe land could be leased from Fort Belvoir or acreage from the Lorton prison area could be devoted to this purpose. We would like to see a commitment from County officials to build 2,500 new housing units in the next fiscal year, 2004-2005.

Planning for this community must include day care centers and access to support counseling. Transportation, including Metro and Fastran buses must be provided for working class families and individuals who cannot afford automobiles

For more information about "More Housing Now!" contact Randall Merrifield, 703-721-2020.