

# THE NORWICH POOL

## Public Forum on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011

### Summary of the meeting:

Lars Blackmore, Recreation Council President, lead the forum. He welcomed everyone and then began by reading an excerpt from a letter to the soldiers overseas written in the Norwich News, December 1994 titled "Greetings from the Home Town". It referred to the "high spot of the summer being the opening of the new Community Swimming Pool. Over 400 people attended the celebration with all sorts of good food and festive community activities, held on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1944."

Neil Fulton explained that, representing Norwich, he is in the process of working with FEMA. We are hoping to receive 90% funding for repairing or replacing the dam and plan to keep residents updated on the funding status as well as providing information about future forums about the pool. Such information will be posted on the List Serve, sent out to the town 'global' distribution list and new list compiled from those who signed in at the forum. A sign will also be posted in front of Tracy Hall a few days before any future forum. Other ways of getting the word out were brainstormed. The Norwich Times will include a story about the pool in an upcoming issue.

The floor was opened to attendees to ask questions and let us know what they would like to see happen to the pool after Irene's devastating blow on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Plans to re-build the Norwich pool were strongly supported. There was a suggestion to expand the current footprint to restore the original pool size. Private fund-raising for the 10% match was discussed.

The town's insurance claim was denied because the company concluded that it wasn't a structure, so Mr. Fulton is pursuing a refund of the premiums paid related to the pool area.

The thought of a permanent in-ground pool was raised and elicited a collective moan. Estimated cost to do this is over 1.5 million dollars. An estimated yearly operating budget of close to \$100,000 would also be required to maintain it. This is over half of the current Recreation Budget and appeared prohibitive and unwanted by the group.

Many excellent ideas and suggestions were shared and bounced around. A side channel earth pond was thought to potentially have too high a risk of high e-coli counts if used by hundreds. The idea of a pond at Huntley was brought up, but there was trepidation that it would be an attractive nuisance liability-wise. Because a fence would likely have to be installed, the group expressed that the lovely feel of the Norwich pool would then be lost.

Other considerations for planning are ADA compliance, correct permitting, as well as meeting all state and federal requirements.

The consensus of the group was to maintain the character of the pool, but to improve safety, drainage and function as well as the system for damming it up and letting it out.

Some in attendance expressed a desire for Connecticut River access which is in the town's long range plans.

We will be seeking additional public input from residents during the evaluation and design process. Such a forum will be announced on the Norwich List Serve and a sign will be posted in front of Tracy Hall a few days ahead.

Thank-you to everyone who attended and in particular, Recreation Council members Lars Blackmore, Kris & Ian Strohhahn, Laura Duncan, Bill Miles and Dave Bibeau. Special thanks also to Neil Fulton, Judi Strohhahn & Bill Aldrich for their contributions to the evening. Over 65 residents attended the forum.

Laura Duncan recorded forum notes and Jill Niles followed up with this summary.