

## **Clemens Pool Update Summer 2019**

### **Key Messages for Philomath School District**

1. The District plans to keep the pool open for now (except for scheduled maintenance). We will continue to respond to new information from the Benton County Health Department or other external regulating agencies, as it arises.
2. The District is currently gathering more information about the extent of the pool's repair needs and is exploring both interim and long-term solutions. We will continue to communicate with the community as we go through this process.
3. We are committed to working in partnership with our community partners, including the Benton Community Foundation and the people of this community to develop a long-term solution for an aquatics resource in Philomath.

### **FAQ**

#### **Q: What's the problem with the pool?**

A: The pool is 60 years old. When the firm, we hired for the original repair project, started evaluating the pool's needs, they discovered a problem with the tank, or pool vessel. Specifically, there is an underground water source underneath the tank that could be causing some structural instability. We have resolved some minor safety issues related to the pool deck. We are working with pool experts from around the country to determine the best possible solution to the pool issues.

#### **Q: Why didn't the school district foresee this complication?**

A: Many of us have experienced a home improvement project where we started with a solid plan, but when we dove into the project – ripping out a wall, say, or removing an appliance – we discovered we were facing bigger problems than originally anticipated. Similarly, we developed the original pool repair plan given the information we had at the time. Once we had the funds to hire a firm, we uncovered new information. We now see that there is no short-term solution to the pool repair problem, but we are committed to doing our best to find a long-term solution.

#### **Q: Can the pool be fixed?**

A: Our pool partners are currently evaluating the extent of the problem. It is possible that the pool could be repaired, given enough funding. If that were to happen, the pool might be dry for 70 days or so. That is certainly a reasonable option, and we are looking into interim pool access in Corvallis for our pool patrons during such a repair project. If we decide to repair the pool – as opposed to raising funds to build a new pool – it will have to be something that will keep the pool open for 25 years or more. Given the scope of the repair an 8 to 10 year fix is not seen as a practical option.

#### **Q: Why is the recent donation from the Benton Community Foundation being returned?**

A: We discovered that the pool needs much more extensive repair work than originally understood. The gift from the Nitka family endowment, given to us last fall by the Benton Community Foundation, was extremely generous but is not enough to cover the cost of repair as we now understand it. We have decided to have the Foundation continue to serve as stewards of the Nitka family funds. They will be able to invest the funds and continue to grow the pot of money for our use in the future. The Foundation will also continue to help fund day to day pool operations and will make the larger gift funds available to us when we have a long-term plan in place.

**Q: How much longer will you be able to keep the pool open?**

A: The District will not make a decision to close the pool at this time. We hope to keep the pool open while we investigate our options.

**Q: Is there a back-up plan if the pool must close?**

A: We are exploring all our options. There are two pools in Corvallis that could potentially be available for our pool users: Osborn Aquatic Center and the OSU pool. We are exploring options with both facilities.

**Q: How can the community support a long-term solution?**

A: Any future aquatics resource for Philomath is going to take support from the entire community. We will need to run a fundraising campaign and we encourage everyone in the community to contribute to this community resource. Please keep your eyes open for a future announcement of a fundraising campaign and donate at that time. We welcome your enthusiasm; please also talk to your friends and neighbors about joining you in supporting this community resource.

**Q: Why can't we all just drive to Corvallis and use the pool there, and save the money?**

A: The Clemens Community Pool is a widely used asset to the greater Philomath community. Children walk over to the pool to take lessons during the school day; without making changes there is not enough time in the school's schedule to easily bus kids to Corvallis. Many of our pool users walk or bike to the pool here; driving to Corvallis might not be an option for them. And, keep in mind that many people living in outlying areas already travel a good distance to get to our pool; the additional distance to Corvallis would deter many users. Looking to the future, for logistical reasons, and because the community is growing rapidly, Philomath needs its own aquatic resource.

**Q: What's the next step?**

A: We will be holding a public forum this fall to present our latest information and to accept comments and suggestions from the community. Then, the District will present the outline of a plan at the December or January school board meeting. This outline will present the information we have gathered up to that point and a proposal for what to do next, whether that be to get additional engineering studies done, begin a fundraising campaign, or whatever other options have been developed.

**Q: Where can I submit my comments about the pool?**

A: We welcome community members to voice their ideas and concerns. Please go to the school district's pool website and submit a comment via the link provided there.