

FAQS FOR BOLIVAR POOL ARTICLE

2019 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

BY

CANTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

CANTON RECREATION COMMISSION

BUILDING RENOVATION COMMITTEE

May 6, 2019

**1. HOW MANY PEOPLE PRESENTLY USE THE TOWN POOL?**

- The pool serves more than just occasional swimmers. The Canton Dolphins Swim Team has about 125 members. The town-run Pequitside Day Camp uses the pool each year and in 2018 had 326 participants over 8 sessions. Separately in 2018, the Rec Department taught nearly 200 swim lessons. 302 families purchased season passes in 2018.
- All in, it is estimated that about 5,000 people use the pool per year.
- After accessibility upgrades are made to the pool, it is anticipated that there will be more opportunities for Seniors and programs coordinated through the Senior Center.

**2. IS REBUILDING THE TOWN POOL REALLY NECESSARY? CAN'T WE JUST FIX IT UP**

- The 2016 Annual Town Meeting, Article 12 Motion 2, approved \$35,000 for a pool study. The Architectural Firm CHA was hired. They issued a Report on April 27, 2018. The April 2018 pool study included an estimate of \$1.2 million to renovate the existing complex. However, a project of this size (over 30% of assessed value), would have triggered the State Code Compliance for all systems, escalating the total repair cost to \$2.5 to \$3 million. Pool resurfacing would not have been guaranteed as for the age of the underlying concrete structure and its structural integrity as well as underground piping and mechanical systems. Furthermore, the proposed renovation did not replace complete components. Rather, it replaced parts and patched parts, creating ongoing repairs and maintenance issues.
- The renovation estimate was virtually a band aid to the complex and would not likely have served the Town for any meaningful length of time. Moreover, the study was all based on visual inspections and not system testing such as pressure testing, creating concerns over additional unseen underlying issues. At \$3 million+, the Building Renovation Committee could not recommend the renovation to the existing facility that is close to 50 years old.

### **3. WHY ARE WE PUTTING THE POOL ON BOLIVAR STREET VS. SOMEWHERE ELSE IN TOWN?**

- When it was decided that a pool rebuild was necessary, the Building Renovation Committee and Recreation Commission considered other sites around Canton but ultimately found none were suitable.
- Building a pool at Pequitside is not allowed due to the legal restrictions on the property.
- The schools do not have space to build a pool on school property.
- Putting the pool in any new location would involve increased site work and installation of new utilities, which would add additional costs to the project (\$1M to \$2M).

### **4. WHY DOES IT COST OVER \$6 MILLION TO BUILD A POOL?**

Building projects in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts must comply with State laws. We must hire an Owners Project Manager (OPM) since this project will be over \$1.5Million. We must hire an Architect to design the Project. We must comply with Board of Health Requirements, Building codes for Electric, Mechanical, Plumbing. We must meet current code on all aspects of the building and the site. We must pay Prevailing Wages as set by the state. We must comply with All ADA Requirements. To do all of this increases the cost of these projects. The project is more than just a pool. In addition to the pool, the project will include a splash pad (available outside of pool hours), a new bath house / mechanical room (required by code), an improved parking lot and multiple elements to improve access for those with mobility challenges.

- These costs break down as follows:
  - Pool and mechanicals: \$3.3M
  - Bath House: \$1.13M
  - Pool Deck: \$540k
  - Accessibility Improvements: \$100k
  - Site Work and Parking Lot improvements: \$605k
  - The remaining difference is largely contingencies
- Pool codes have changed dramatically since our pool was built almost 50 years ago, including ADA requirements and ratios of bathers to plumbing fixtures. There are also requirements for a First Aid station and separate storage for pool chemicals.
- For comparison, in 2014 Belmont built a facility for \$5.6M (about \$6.5M in 2019 dollars).

## **5. HOW WILL THE NEW TOWN POOL IMPACT THE OPERATING BUDGET?**

- The current pool requires extensive work to get up and running each year, including scraping and repainting the pool itself (repairs that do not usually even last the entire summer). Many of these upgrade and patching costs will be eliminated with a new pool.
- New equipment will be more energy efficient, resulting in savings. The pool currently has many leaks which require adding hundreds of gallons of water per year at a substantial cost to the town.
- There are no plans to increase staffing or any other changes that would increase expenses, so the expectation is that the annual operating costs would stay even or more likely drop slightly.

## **6. CAN'T WE GET CORPORATE DONATIONS TO PAY FOR THE TOWN POOL?**

- Donations will certainly be sought to defray the cost of this, or any Town Project, however it is important to remember that we have a split tax rate in Canton. Where the average homeowner (with a home assessed at \$490K) would pay \$30 in additional property taxes per year for the pool, the average business with a \$490k property (of course, most valuations are MUCH higher than that) would pay \$63 in property taxes per year. A business property valued at \$10M would pay \$1,300 in additional property taxes per year towards the pool.

## **7. WHY NOT BUILD AN INDOOR POOL?**

- First and foremost, there was not a space identified that could fit an indoor pool. Even if such a project could be connected with a school, the time to advance a project like this would take years and risk Canton going without a pool for multiple summers.
- An indoor pool on school grounds would also create access and student safety issues if open to the public during school times.
- Finally, the cost to build an indoor pool would be multiple times the cost of replacing our current pool and the increased recurring costs of year round operation would require an Operating Override (in addition to this Debt Override) to raise the annual revenue needed. It is simply too costly.

## 8. HOW MUCH WILL THE NEW TOWN POOL COST THE AVERAGE TAX PAYER?

- The average assessed value of a home in Canton is \$490k. Based on this assessment, the new town pool will cost the average resident about \$30 per year (\$2.50 per month), over the life of the 20 year bond to finance this project.
- ***The payments on the bond will not likely start until Fiscal Year 2021. It is important to note that in Fiscal Years 2023 & 2024, the debt from several older projects, such as the Library and High School will be entirely paid off. The average taxpayer is currently paying \$104 per year for existing debt override projects. That number drops to \$88 (a drop of \$16 per year) by the time we would start paying for the pool and to \$19 (a drop of \$85 per year) by Fiscal Year 2025. This reduction in taxes is far more than the \$30 in increased taxes per year the pool project will cost.***
- It is possible that in the next few years the Schools will request a debt override from town meeting for the middle school. However, they must first receive Massachusetts School Building Authority approval (approval comes with a ~40% reimbursement from the State). Under the best possible case scenario, payments on this possible new debt would not begin until Fiscal Year 2023 or 2024, by which time other projects would have been paid off. Any vote like this would also need to be approved by the voters.