

Arlington Aquatics Committee (AC)
Draft: Meeting Minutes – August 18, 2020
Microsoft Teams Online Meeting

Attendees

Members: Cynthia Hilton, David Pilch, Trish Madden, Howard Seamens, Guy Land, Kristi Sawert, Carla Fletcher

Absent: Ron Kampeas & MacKenzie Kearney

Staff: Helena Machado & Maija Paegle

Visitors: 30 guests in Microsoft Teams

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for meeting held on June 23, 2020 were presented and approved as submitted.

Announcement

An active chat line will be used throughout the Microsoft Teams Meeting.

Helena's Presentation on Back to the Pool Updates

Arlington Public Schools (APS) Pools are Operating Under Phase III of VA Forward Program: Gyms & Indoor Swimming Pools Guidelines

- Maintain Social Distance of 10 ft
- 3 swimmer/lane – APS does two swimmers/lane to better ensure safety and social distance/easier to manage
- Shower before swimming (Arlington Health Dept requirement)
- Health screening & temp check
- At the moment, only individual activities or small group instruction
- Face covering the whole time not actively swimming in the water

Current APS Lifeguard Guidelines

- Social distance 10 feet apart for lifeguards with other staff and swimmers
- Face coverings when on foot patrol
- Cleaning every two hours (all hard surfaces), facility disinfected at the end of every day
- Lifeguards help ensure only 2 swimmers/lane

Currently allowed: lap swimming, water exercise, water jogging, diving, small group instruction

Organized Family Swim pods: 5 people in the pod

Sundays: wanting to implement special needs swim pods for families with those children

Helena reported on Survey Results: 401 responses (great feedback)

- Swim sessions are 45 or 60 mins long for now
- Reservations will remain
- Online self-serve platform is working well
- 24-hour in advance booking, helps keep down cancellations, stay up to date on most relevant health information, gives more opportunities for swimmers
- No more waitlists
- Drop-in fee still in effect
- Can also buy memberships now (160 memberships were reactivated)
- Cancel 30 mins in adv and will be a credit for 3 days
- Wrist band indicates group, no kickboards or swim aids provided to the public

Pools at 75% capacity (10 feet distance) – does not work in the locker rooms

Reasons for two person per lane: passing a swimmer is very low risk

There is not a way to share lanes with household members, not necessarily a way for staff to confirm this

Guidelines:

- Use the lane you were assigned, enter & exit on the same side, make your way across to the ladder with social distance
- Don't hang out during rest break
- Stay in footprints at check in and don't arrive early; swimmers also cannot stay longer than allotted time: helps with contact tracing

Water Jogging: 10 ft distance social hour

Groups 2-4 joggers; no equipment available

Exercising: Groups of 2-5, do own exercises

Family Swim Pods: Every weekday afternoon YK, W-L weekends, \$12.50 for group and must register as pod

Memberships

- Can use memberships now, can unfreeze them whenever/return to normal operations
- Swim passes – cannot be connected to the self-service portal; however, many passes are left on your pass: get a coupon code to use those swims
- Can also now buy memberships or pay drop-in admission fees

Rules/Regulations

- Health screening: Temp check <100.4 F, Two failed checks, no entry
- Enter through front doors, front desk, take shower, follow through to designated area
- Family changing room is open for after swim for changing & restrooms available during swim
- Exit the pool with face mask

Survey Results

- Survey Results: 75% of those answered are swimming at APS pools
- Not swimming at APS: 36% swim outside; 9% not comfortable swimming
- Satisfaction for reservation process, enough sessions, efficiency of check in, enough time to change & shower, enough time to get on deck
- 23% want longer sessions
- Weekly capacity: 2500 spaces
- Bookings: 1520
- Attendance: 1336

Fall Schedule

- Operating early bird, midday, evening
- Rental groups & AAC get some pool time in significant reduction
- Classes expected to return in late fall
- Water exercise format called liquid gym—Indigo aquatics

Public Comment

Jennifer Connor: Had to cancel a session twice and could not find her credit in the self-service portal.
Solution: Email Kevin Cronin

[7:44 PM] Jonathan (Guest)

I would like to thank everyone for providing an amazing public service. I have been swimming for exercise at WL 3-4 times a week since opening, and have started using the family pod at YT with my 5-year-old son. He is overjoyed, and rapidly improving his swim skills!

A few questions:

- Are there plans to open family pods at WL during the week (in addition to the weekend)?

Helena: There are plans but no concrete plans. Working on managing check in times and keeping social distance. Wanting to expand pods when Wakefield opens. Wakefield is behind schedule due to COVID-19 complications, aiming to open on September 8. Mom & Dad questions, want to do toddler pods in the mornings at Yorktown. Families smaller than 5 and with younger children could have more options in the future.

- My son is a beginner swimmer, and I prefer to use the standard pool rather than in the instructional pool, so he doesn't try to stand/hop and "cheat". I have been told we will no longer be able to do so, as my son would be required to pass a swim test which he is not yet able to. Is it possible to waive this requirement? I believe that swimming in both pools poses the same risk, and I am always by his side.

- Since opening at WL & YT, have there been any reported infections that required contact tracing?

Helena: No staff has tested positive. APS pools have not been contacted by contact tracing at this point, so answer is probably no.

Tom Karl: Thank you for the great presentation. Yorktown has an exceptional team and he is thankful and grateful to keep everything open. Appreciate maximizing the resources.

Helena: We will reschedule the pods. Currently testing with W-L and will try to add more pods concurrently with pod swimmers.

Trish Madden: Why is a family pod set to 5?

Helena: Has to do with the space with the other groups and how much social distance space there is. Working on continuing maximizing space. Working on reaching everyone as much as possible. As winter approaches, we are seeing what we can do better and how we can add more swimmers to the pool.

[7:58 PM] Trish Madden (Guest)

Why is the family pod set to 5?

Ten-foot separation: Even before exercise is it still ten feet?

Helena: we are sticking to ten feet and we are sticking with it for less confusion and is a higher safety measure.

Can the screening questions be written on paper?

Helena: No.

You spoke to superintendent, are you prioritizing lap swimming?

Helena: We are providing access through organized groups and as citizens of Arlington. Third party groups are a business. Following existing policies in place. Priority is school programs, citizens, County based programs, rentals. Community swimmer space will not be taken away for a rental group.

[7:59 PM] Trish Madden (Guest)

Will the 2 people per lane apply to rental/AAC groups?

Helena: Groups and swim teams would be allowed to do 3 swimmers/lane as coaches can have control over the swimmers.

[7:59 PM] Trish Madden (Guest)

Is there a family or sibling per lane exception?

[7:59 PM] Trish Madden (Guest)

Will you revisit the 2 vs 3 per lane before winter when demand increases?

[7:59 PM] Pam Harley very much appreciate all the work you all are doing to keep us safe and swimming! I understand the need to maintain a 30-minute window for cancellations. But can there be more flexibility in signing up for open spots closer than 30 minutes? It would be great to be able to use the available capacity, even if we sign up at the last minute.

Helena: The 30 minutes allows for more flexibility. Helena is looking at and considering making that time shorter. Easy time to remember. Something we could try.

Pam: 15 minutes in advance could work :)

[8:15 PM] David Pilch (Guest)

Hi, I'm David Pilch, a new committee member. I do think we need to make sure that we are making it a priority to give space for children learning to swim. This is such an important life skill, and there is a relatively limited window for kids to learn. It sounds like a lot of conflicting priorities are being well handled, but as a father with a young child, I know firsthand how important it is for kids to get swim time and traditionally how difficult it has been to find that space in Arlington.

Helena: Wants to prioritize swimming for children and drowning prevention. Opportunity for seniors to have exercise. We need to be equitable for all the groups. Helena has served the community for 25+ years, trying to be sensitive to advocacy for all the groups. Compromises and tough decisions will have to be made during COVID times.

[8:01 PM] Trish Madden (Guest)

Is the 10' separation for post-athletes or pre-athletes? I'm more familiar with outside rules.

[8:12 PM] Tom Karl (Guest)

I can be in the pool in 9 min :)

[8:12 PM] Katherine Christensen

I called 20 minutes in advance and I got moved manually into the time I requested. There was plenty of space so they could do that. Call!

And a comment: I make sure to breath on the side away from any co-swimmer in my lane, reducing the risk for both of us. The floats between lanes are somewhat of a "barrier", given that breathing is happening at 1-2 inches of height.

Committee Member Comments

Cynthia: Appreciates the hours Helena has put in to help meet the needs of different committees. Children learning life saving skills are different than children who do know how to swim. Helena hosts school- based learn to swim program (3-4th grade), groups of 25+ in the bus and locker rooms. Right now, there is no school, or even if we do go into school, the learn-to-swim program for APS elementary swimming will probably not happen given Phase III logistical restrictions. Helena, what impact will Phase III have on other programs?

Helena: HS school group rotations, 9-10th graders, may come in after October. High school swim season has been condensed and moved to December. Elementary swimming will be unlikely this year.

Maija: Dept of Parks & Rec (DPR) learn-to-swim programs may eventually come back. Parent tot, levels 1-6, Red Cross format. 6 months to adult, would have to maintain 10 ft distance between teacher and student. There is not an easy way to teach a non-swimmer to swim without coming closer than 10 feet apart. Breathing on each while in the water. DPR recreational classes will be on hold until school resumes in person.

Trish: Prioritizing adults over children, does not want that happening, nervous for kids who want to swim in the winter who are Arlington residents. Youth in swim teams.

Helena: Community swimmer means swimmers without an association (individuals including kids and families). Those children could come swim as community swimmers.

Trish: Kids mental health in question, where other sports may not happen, want to make sure children can swim.

Helena: Rental group green light today, I would like to have everything back to the extent that we can do so safely.

Cynthia: APS policy, community swimming has priority over private swim teams. Youth swimmers can get an APS pool access membership and swim laps as much as they want.

Guy: How confident are you about September 8th Wakefield opening?

Helena: 99% sure, turning the [HVAC] system on. Surrounding area of the natatorium is being worked on. Hoping to move everything up.

Kristi Sawert: Thanked Helena for putting in thousands of hours. She addressed new committee members, telling them Helena is dedicated to teaching kids to swim and offering equal opportunity with socioeconomic disparities across Arlington. Helena has advocated for kids especially in South Arlington, those socioeconomically deprived; Helena is amazing and in their corner. Thousands of kids would not have learned to swim if not for what Helena has done.

Helena: Thank you. There are a lot of compromises that need to be made. Start things slowly, one thing at a time, control things better with adults first, then children. Wanting social interaction for kids. Fun time at the pool with classmates. Always checking with other colleagues outside of Arlington to look for creative solutions. Doing what we can, while resources are limited. Input and constructive criticism is always appreciated.

David: Thank everyone for all your efforts.

The next meeting of the AC is scheduled for TUES, September 15, 2020 from 7-9pm. It will be Microsoft Teams format. Motion to adjourn Kristi and a second. Adjourned at 8:45pm.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm.