



Save Centennial Pool Committee Presentation
(Supporting Documentation)

For

Community Planning and Economic Development
Standing Committee Meeting

January 18, 2024

Save Centennial Pool Committee

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“I think the Centennial Pool is a beautiful structure. When you’re attending a late afternoon class and the sun is shining through the windows in the west wall, the light hits the water and turns it a beautiful blue and you feel almost transported away and can’t believe you are in downtown Halifax at a busy intersection. This pool is a gem and should remain where it is serving its community as it has done since it was built in 1967 for the Canada Summer Games and became part of Halifax’s history.”

From a testimonial letter of an Aquacise Class participant

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# *The Issue*

The Save Centennial Pool committee was formed to promote the continued existence of Centennial Pool. This was in response to a motion by Councillor Waye Mason, passed unanimously by HRM Council in June 2022, directing staff to begin planning for the replacement of Centennial Pool and to outline the process to develop a new 50-metre pool, not on the peninsula, that meets Canada Games requirements for competitive swimming and diving.

The motion included the prioritization of the rebuilding of Needham Community Centre. Reasons cited by Councillor Mason for the disposal of Centennial Pool included that it is nearing the end of its useful life and for economic development. The staff report on the potential disposal of Centennial Pool is expected early in 2024.

**The motion is flawed** in that it does not consider the value of Centennial Pool in terms of its historical significance, its unique architectural importance, the impact on the community of health and wellness, its economic and social impact as well as the negative consequences related to climate change and the environment.

**The motion is flawed** when it suggests that prioritization of the Needham Pool will ensure continuity of municipal pool access on the peninsula and recover aquatic service to the area. Refurbishing or rebuilding Needham will NOT be able to compensate for the loss of Centennial.

Most concerning is that the motion asserts that Centennial Pool is at the end of its so-called “life cycle”.

*There is no evidence that this is the case.*

# *The Motion*

## ***Item No. 15.4.2***

***Date of Council Meeting: June 28, 2022***

***Subject: Replacement of 50m pool in HRM***

### **Motion for Council to Consider:**

1. That Halifax Regional Council direct the CAO begin planning for replacement of Centennial Pool pending the outcome of a staff report which outlines:
  - a. Process to undertake the development of a new 50-meter pool that meets Canada Games requirements for competitive swimming and diving and is consistent with the Long-Term Aquatic Study direction;
  - b. Potential disposal of 1970 Gottingen Street pursuant to Administrative Order 50, Respecting the Disposal of Surplus Property, for Economic Development including recommendations to include an affordable housing component;
  - c. Review of the prioritization of the Needham Community Centre to ensure continuity of municipal pool access on the peninsula; and
  - d. Analysis of revenue sources including the pending application for the Needham Community Centre within the Green Inclusive Community Building Program, and other appropriate Federal and Provincial funding sources.

**Reason:** Centennial Pool is nearing the end of its useful life. Programming and club-use has been impacted considerably, especially in the last 2 years with continued leaking of the pool. This motion provides for a halting of all new capital spending on the current pool while also reviewing options for the service to be provided in the interim as a more permanent solution is investigated. To recover aquatic service in the area, the motion proposes to prioritize the Needham Community Centre replacement. The motion also directs the CAO to formally outline the process to build a new 50-meter pool in HRM, with other partners as outlined in the Long-Term Aquatic Strategy.

**Outcome Sought:** A staff report to outline steps to explore replacement of Centennial Pool with a new 50-meter pool and advancement of the renewal of the Needham Community Centre.

**Councillor Waye Mason – District 07**

# *Our Response*

The brief that follows was presented in person and in writing to Councillor Lindell Smith at a Save Centennial Pool Committee meeting on October 19, 2023 at Centennial Pool.

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This brief is submitted by the committee to Save Centennial Pool from disposal on behalf of the Centennial Pool Association.

The committee was originally formed in July of 2023 at the Annual General Meeting of the Centennial Pool Association. While the Committee initially included some members of the Board, it is now more broadly represented by volunteers from the larger community of Centennial Pool users.

The committee was initially formed in response to a motion to Council that asked city staff to prepare a report that would:

- Dispose of Centennial Pool as surplus property for economic development. This means selling this public land to developers. Note: there is a local developer who has already expressed interest in buying this land.
- Plan for the development of a new 50m pool that meets the Canada Games requirements for competitive swimming and diving and is consistent with the pre-Covid 2019 Long-Term Aquatic Strategy (LTAS). It is important to note that this pool would NOT be on the peninsula.
- The motion also states “to recover aquatic service in the area (in other words – to satisfy the needs of teams/groups and community swimmers), the motion proposes to prioritize the Needham Community Centre replacement to ensure the continuity of municipal pool access.
- The motion presented as the reason to dispose of Centennial Pool is that it is nearing the end of its useful life. This is a perceived notion – there is no evidence given that this is true. In fact, research done by this committee demonstrates the opposite to this position.

The Save Centennial Pool Committee, user groups, swim teams and the larger community of Centennial pool users believe that Wayne Mason’s motion to dispose of Centennial Pool presents only one side of the story and underestimates the value of Centennial Pool not only to the swimming community but the broader general population of HRM. His motion is sadly short-sighted.

The motion is flawed in that it does not consider the value of Centennial Pool in terms of its historical significance, its unique architectural importance, the impact on the community of health and wellness, its economic and social impact as well as the negative consequences related to climate change and the environment.

The motion is flawed when it suggests that prioritization of the Needham Pool will ensure continuity of municipal pool access on the peninsula and recover aquatic service to the area. Refurbishing or rebuilding Needham will NOT be able to compensate for the loss of Centennial.

Most concerning is that the motion asserts that Centennial Pool is at the end of its so-called “life cycle”. There is no evidence that this is the case.

Buildings, physical structures, bridges, houses, etc. have a natural expected lifetime beyond which they must be replaced. Structures do deteriorate with time but time is only one factor that would determine life span. See the attached document from Ellis Betensky “Factors Determining Swimming Pool Longevity” for numerous examples of historic pools built long before 1967 that are still operating.

A refurbished Needham Pool will not meet the needs of the swim teams that use Centennial Pool for competitive training.

A new 50m pool to meet Canada Games requirements is not a replacement for Centennial Pool and results in a **net loss** to all residents of HRM but most of all to the centre of the peninsula, the very area that is the fastest growing part of the city. The demand is increasing and will continue to grow in the foreseeable future.

Councillors who voted for the June 2022 motion only had limited information and were likely not aware that the motion will result in a **net loss** affecting:

1. Economic Impact
2. Public Need for Public Facilities
3. Accessibility and Affordability
4. Health and Wellness
5. Heritage, Culture, Architecture
6. Climate and environment

The motion is clearly one-sided and designed to produce the outcome sought by Councillor Mason. It asks for a staff report to support the disposal and sale of a **public** asset for short term economic gain for developers and questionable gain for HRM.

The motion fails to direct staff to look at all options for this historic community asset.

The motion ties the building of a new 50-metre pool to the loss of Centennial Pool when what HRM needs is an additional new facility to meet the growing demands of the burgeoning population of HRM.

The Save Centennial Pool Committee has been actively gathering information and engaging with the Centennial Pool community, teams, groups, individual swimmers and other from a wide range of backgrounds and extensive experience and knowledge when it comes to the value of Centennial Pool. The devastating impact that would result from the loss of this facility is evident. The attached impact statements are a sample of the response to date.

The motion was tabled without any meaningful public engagement and is based on information that is pre-Covid, or from the 2019 Long-Term Aquatic Strategy (LTAS).

We encourage all those with decision-making authority to imagine what an enhanced Centennial Pool with additional public recreational and community space perhaps integrated with the new Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre and a redeveloped Cogswell area. Imagine a new community Health and Wellness Centre with the pool as a key component: partnering with Capital Health with a walk-health clinic; a centre that offers affordable and accessible services for all residents of HRM.

Connecting this to the redeveloped Cogswell area would create a public recreational and community green belt that extends from the waterfront to the Oval, Citadel High facilities, the new seasonal pool, and the Halifax Common. This would be a legacy everyone could be proud of.

The LTAS provided that Regional Council may choose to direct staff to consider alternatives to the directions in the LTAS to dispose of Centennial Pool, therefore we are asking for the following:

- A motion to direct staff to prepare a report that would outline the option of maintaining Centennial Pool as a public community and cultural asset that represents a significant part of the built heritage of modern Halifax and provides for the growing demands of our rapidly increasing population. It is undisputed that we need more public assets that promote health and wellness and allow for the active participation of all ages, economic status and abilities.
- We are also requesting that the motion provide that staff examine securing funding and identify revenue sources from provincial and federal sources to build the new 50 m pool with Canada Games specifications without relying on the sale of the Centennial site or projected revenues from a new tax base that would be the result from another high rise of unaffordable units.

It appears that no thought was given to refurbishing or rebuilding Centennial on the same site in the future, and keeping it publicly owned and operated.

Is building the new 50m super pool on the Centennial site possible? This has never been looked at. Perhaps HRM could partner with Dalhousie University to make this happen?

Vision and imagination are what is needed from Council in order to meet the changing demographics of HRM.

## **Reasons to Save Centennial**

We expand on the reasons to save Centennial below:

1. Economic Impact
2. Public Need for Public Facilities
3. Accessibility and Affordability
4. Health and Wellness
5. Heritage, Culture, Architecture
6. Climate and Environment

## **Economic Impact**

The current and potential economic value of Centennial Pool to the swimming community and the general public is tremendous and will be ongoing. It is short sighted to dispose of Centennial Pool – the lost economic potential far exceeds the \$10M Councillor Mason expects to realize from the sale.

The expected usage and demand for this facility now and in the future justifies keeping the pool as a public resource. The city is experiencing consistent pressure from private developers to sell the Centennial Pool property but this too is short sighted and ignores the best interests of the public.

It is important not to give in to private greed over public need.

HRM's "inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27 envisions a HRM population of 650,000 in 2037, a 35% increase from the current level of approximately 480,000 and that is only fourteen years from today. Much of this population increase would accrue to the Halifax peninsula due to HRM's densification policy. It cannot be denied that there will be a need for additional aquatic facilities going forward. Dispose of existing viable facilities runs counter to overall capacity enhancement.

The Province and its taxpayers struggle to meet the rising cost of health care. There are long-term, positive economic impacts gained from a public facility that promotes physical, mental and social health and wellness.

An interesting study in Australia found a benefit of \$26 Australian dollars per pool visit in health care savings.

*Centennial Pool is **not** nearing the end of its useful life.*

## **Public Need for Public Facilities**

Centennial Pool is a vital part of the community infrastructure and a valued public resource. Former Councillor Sheila Fougere put it succinctly when she commented to me "Stop selling off public assets. Building age is not a determination of capacity to serve the public need."

The current increasing population density has resulted in increased use. There is evidence of this as the swim lesson wait lists in HRM facilities exceed in number those able to be accommodated. Pool time demand by user groups exceeds availability with the current capacity. HRM needs another aquatic facility (a new "super pool") in addition to keeping and enhancing what we already have in Centennial Pool. Selling Centennial would be a huge mistake and a disservice to residents. Replacing Centennial Pool – an integral part of Halifax's urban landscape with another privately owned high rise, would be a regrettable, predictable mistake.

## Accessibility and Affordability

Location, location, location! A significant current and future positive impact of **not** dispose of Centennial Pool can be attributed to where the pool is located. It makes no sense to remove a public, year-round recreational facility with equitable access for every citizen, regardless of age, physical ability or socioeconomic status. Its' locale spurs walkability and cycling which in turn fosters affordability and availability. It is close to transit and has available short term parking. One of the largest and most diverse high schools in HRM, Citadel High, is located next door.

Members of the Canadian military are able to swim at Centennial Pool, without cost. They have no other pool readily accessible to train and keep them fit since the Stadacona Pool has closed. Centennial Pool provides an essential training facility for them.

New Canadians to HRM also can enjoy the benefits of Centennial Pool at no cost. For many cultures swimming is not common, particularly for women, and swimming at Centennial Pool assists in integrating new Canadians into Canadian culture.

Facilities run by private/institutional organizations serve their own clientele first, not the public. They are generally not affordable or accessible to the public who are not part of their clientele.

## Health and Wellness

Nigel Kemp, renowned Halifax former Olympic and Masters swimming coach, stated

*"I have witnessed the transformative power of Centennial Pool, it is in its prime condition and serves as a beacon for physical and mental well-being within our community."*

The proposed demolition threatens to take away this crucial resource from our community. It is not just about swimming,

It is about promoting healthy life styles, fostering social interactions and providing an essential recreational space that contributes significantly to the quality of life in Halifax.

According to Stats Canada 2016, regular physical activity like swimming can reduce the risk of heart disease by 22% for adults.

Nigel also believes that swimming is a cost-effective activity across the lifetime.

*"Regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do for a healthy life. Not only does it significantly reduce the risk of numerous non-communicable diseases, but it also improves mental health and well-being."*

(WHO/OECD-2023)

Selling Centennial and reducing the aquatic capacity on the peninsula would deny the citizens of positive health and wellness benefit. Keeping Centennial Pool open as a public resource that leads to improved health prevents future expenses in the health care system.

## **Heritage, Culture, Architecture**

Centennial Pool was built in 1967 to commemorate Canada's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday. It represents an important part of our local and national history and stands proudly as a distinctive and imposing example of 1960's mid-century modern architecture.

One of the pool's attractive features, still enjoyed, is its semi-A-frame backdrop of stained and laminated pine beams. It also benefits from daylight through the windows set high in the east and west walls.

The pool's importance to the province as the centre for diving was aptly demonstrated during the 1969 Canada Games, when Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau did a somersault dive off the diving tower.

Centennial Pool has been the proving ground for generations of Nova Scotia competitive swimmers, swimming instructors, coaches, lifeguards and leisure swimmers.

The disappearance of this iconic landmark would constitute and deprive citizens of Halifax an integral part of their cultural identity.

Doing away with a Canadian legacy facility that celebrates the Centennial and Canada is wrong.

Preserving our heritage is priceless and should not be measured solely by age or financial considerations.

## **Climate and Environment**

Disposing of Centennial Pool and selling the land to developers because of recent maintenance costs and the perceived notion that "*Centennial Pool is nearing the end of its useful life*", Councillor Wayne Mason, June 28, 2022, are based on selective inferences of the LTAS.

It is undisputed that demolishing buildings adds to increased greenhouse gas.

We do not expect all buildings to be disposed of at a certain age and we should not expect swimming pools to have a predetermined life expectancy. Buildings deteriorate as a result of many factors, including wear, environmental conditions, maintenance and design limitations like choice of materials.

Centennial Pool was built at a time when stronger concrete was used and it is likely overbuilt.

The LTAS was written in 2019 pre-Covid. Much has changed. While the LTAS recognizes the population growth trends and the groups to service, it focuses on the replacement of Centennial; instead of adding additional facilities to the growing demand for aquatic facilities.

A key finding in the LTAS recognized that "lowering fees and upgrading and enhancing facilities" were two factors that could encourage more aquatic participation. The main barrier to participation expressed was "not having enough aquatic facilities nearby". Again, what is needed is an additional aquatic facility not a replacement of Centennial Pool that is "nearby" to the growing population.

The LTAS identifies the two oldest recreational aquatic facilities, Needham and the old Halifax Common outdoor pool as not fully meeting current program requirements and having the lowest recreational participation but located within areas of anticipated residential growth: the Regional Centre. The old outdoor pool was at the end of its life cycle, Needham is “nearing the end of its life cycle” NOT Centennial Pool. We have now spent \$20 million on the new outdoor pool, available at the most for three months of the year, and the plan on refurbishing Needham is being prioritized.

Recent financial investment of approximately \$1 million in Centennial Pool and its history of being a well-managed facility have resulted in Centennial Pool being in its “best ever” condition.

Structure is usually the longest lasting element, and there are many, many pools that have significantly exceeded this length of time which are still in operation. Since Centennial was built in the 1960’s and was likely 30% overbuilt, it is a good candidate for refurbishing to extend its life well into the future.

***Centennial Pool is not nearing the end of its life!***

# *Factors Determining Swimming Pool Longevity*

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*Prepared by Ellis Betensky, October 2023*

In a world where new ventures are successful, and old concepts are designated as obsolete it becomes reasonable to expect physical structures, like buildings, bridges, highways, and houses to have a natural expected lifetime beyond which they must be replaced.

Examples of structures that deteriorate with time are numerous, but not according immutable laws of physics. They deteriorate as a result of many factors, including wear, environmental conditions, maintenance, and design limitations like choice of materials. These factors are not the same for all structures. We do not expect all buildings to be demolished at a certain age, and we should not expect swimming pools to have predetermined life expectancy.

Indoor swimming pools are part of a larger building structure. It would be unreasonable to expect an indoor pool to outlast the building that houses it. To rule out the possibility that the housing limits the lifetime of a swimming pool, it is informative to look at the age of concrete structure buildings. While the use of concrete dates back to before the Romans, in the twentieth century reinforcing rebar made it most popular.

The argument that concrete deteriorates quickly, and wet concrete even more so, requires discussion. The Hoover Dam, completed in 1936, is a good place to start.

## **Significant Older Structures Still Standing:**

- The Ingalls Building, 16 floors Cincinnati, 1902
- The Monadnock Building, 16 floors Chicago, 1891

## **Significant Older Pools:**

- The Champagne Bath, Ottawa, 1924
- Glenmore Pool – Dollard des Ormeaux, Montreal, 1962
- Verdun Natatorium, Montreal, 1940
- McGill Memorial, Montreal, 1950
- Bain Morgan, Montreal, 1914
- Bain Emard, Montreal, 1914
- Piscine Schubert, Montreal, 1929
- Westmount YMCA, Montreal, 1923
- Hart House – University of Toronto, 1919
- West End YMCA, Toronto, 1911
- The Sunnyside, Toronto, 1925
- Donald D. Summerville Olympic Pool, 1963
- West Side YMCA, New York, 1930
- Woolworth Building, New York City, 1913
- Portage Park, Chicago, 1959 Pan Am Games

There are many types of swimming pools large enough for lap swimming and training, but most of those pools are not community owned. Apartments.com lists 1,630 apartments in buildings with swimming pools for rent in New York. Many of those are lap pools. An actual count is not readily available, but additionally, there are many condominium apartments in “prewar” buildings (built before 1930) that have functioning swimming pools. In Toronto, construction of apartments with pools became popular in the 80’s, and forty years later, those pools remain.

### **Well-known Hospitality Pools:**

Also, not community owned, are hotel pools. They are numerous, and some have stood for many years. Well-known examples include:

- Royal York, Toronto, 1929
- Hotel Bonaventure, Montreal, 1967
- Ritz-Carlton, Montreal, 1912

The above examples are North American. There are many more in Europe, Asia, and Oceania, but there are no significant qualifying characteristics other than good design and maintenance.

# Who We Are

The **Save Centennial Pool Committee** was initially formed in July 2023 at the Annual General Meeting of the Centennial Pool Association. While the Committee initially included some members of the Board, it is now more broadly represented by volunteers from the larger community of Centennial Pool users. The Committee was initially formed in response to a Motion to City Council that asked city staff to prepare a report (expected in early 2024) that would:

- Plan for the development of a new 50 metre pool that meets Canada Games requirements for competitive swimming and diving and is consistent with the (pre-Covid) 2019 Long-Term Aquatic Strategy for direction. Note: The new, 50 metre pool would *NOT* be located on the peninsula.
- Potential disposal of Centennial Pool as surplus property for economic development including recommendations to include an affordable housing component. This means selling this public land to developers. Note: there is a local developer who has already expressed interest in buying this land.
- The motion also states “To recover aquatic service in the area (in other words – to satisfy the needs of teams/groups and community swimmers), the motion proposes to prioritize the Needham Community Centre replacement.” in order to “...ensure the continuity of municipal pool access...”
- The motion reasons that disposal of this property is justified because “Centennial Pool is nearing the end of its useful life.” However it provides no evidence that this is true. In fact, extensive research by this sub-committee along with input from subject matter experts suggest the exact opposite is the case.

## *Saving Centennial Pool: in the News*

The Save Centennial Pool Committee Website and Petition were launched with a press release on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. Our story was first covered by Gareth Hampshire of the CBC with radio/online news coverage and a news story on the CBC Nova Scotia News at 6:00 on December 28<sup>th</sup>. In addition to the CBC coverage, Linda Hunt was on As It Happens on the 28<sup>th</sup>, we had front page coverage in the Chronicle Herald and were featured on Global News at 6:00 on December 29. There have been subsequent re-posts of the CBC coverage in the Halifax Examiner and the Coast.

## Halifax group launches campaign to save Centennial Pool

'This is an essential facility in the centre of Halifax,' says committee chair

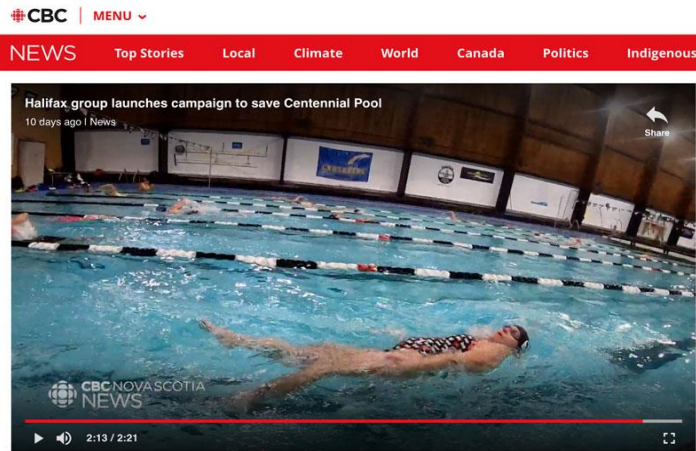
 Gareth Hampshire · CBC News · Posted: Dec 28, 2023 6:00 AM AST | Last Updated: December 28, 2023



Linda Hunt has been swimming at Centennial Pool in Halifax for more than 50 years. She is supporting a campaign to try to save the facility. (CBC)

*"This is an essential facility in the centre of Halifax," said Trevor Brumwell, the chair of the Save Centennial Pool Committee. "This facility is affordable, it is accessible, it is a public asset of the city."*

[Read the CBC News Nova Scotia story by Gareth Hampshire 2023-12-28](#)



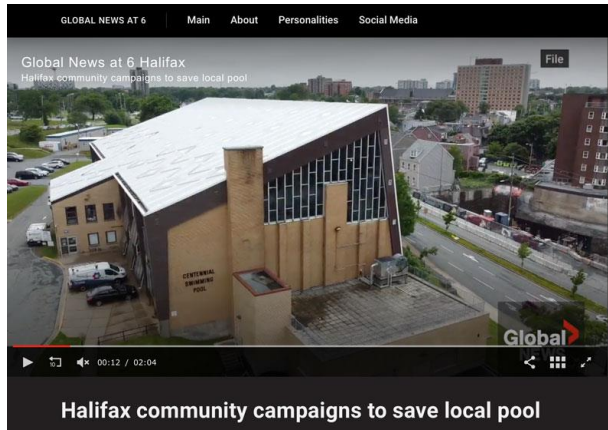
### Halifax group launches campaign to save Centennial Pool

10 days ago | News | 2:21

Linda Hunt has been swimming at Centennial Pool in Halifax for more than 50 years. She's now supporting a campaign to try to save the facility. Gareth Hampshire reports.

*"Linda Hunt has been swimming at Centennial Pool in Halifax for more than 50 years. She's now supporting a campaign to try to save the facility."*

[Watch the CBC News story with Gareth Hampshire 2023-12-28](#)



“A campaign to save a historic pool in Halifax is underway as the municipality plans to move Centennial Pool off the peninsula. As Amber Fryday reports, the recent decision has left many feeling frustrated and confused.”

[Watch the Global News at 6 story with Amber Fryday 2023-12-29](#)



## ‘Shortsighted’ to sell off Centennial Pool property in downtown Halifax, says community group

Save Centennial Pool Committee says a new facility shouldn't replace Gottingen Street institution

[Jen Taplin](#) | Posted: Dec. 28, 2023, 4:47 p.m. | Updated: Dec. 29, 2023, 8:26 a.m. | 6 Min Read



Trevor Brumwell, chair of the Save Centennial Pool Committee, poses in front of the downtown pool on Thursday. - Ryan Taplin

“Save Centennial Pool Committee says a new facility shouldn’t replace Gottingen Street institution”

[Read the Saltwire story by Jen Taplin 2023-12-28](#)



*Centennial Pool Community  
User Groups/Teams/Public*

- ~ Halifax Trojan Aquatic Team
- ~ Dartmouth Crusaders Swim Club
- ~ Halifax Chronos Masters
- ~ Sackville Waves Aquatic Team
- ~ Atlantis Artistic Swimming
- ~ Halifax Tri-Club
- ~ Halifax Wavecutters Aquatic Club
- ~ Cygnus Diving
- ~ Swimming With A Mission (SWAM)
- ~ Aquago – a program of Artistic Swimming that includes new Canadians and the visually impaired
- ~ Aquacise Classes
- ~ Lane Swimmers
- ~ Water Walkers
- ~ Canadian Military Members

# *Nova Scotia Aquatic Clubs Impact Statements*

- Atlantis Artistic Swimming Club | Nova Scotia Artistic Swimming
- Chronos Masters Swimming
- Dartmouth Crusaders
- Halifax Trojan Aquatic Club
- Halifax Wavecutters Aquatic Club
- Sackville Waves Aquatic Team

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## **Atlantis Artistic Swimming Club | Nova Scotia Artistic Swimming**

Thank you for reaching out and taking on this initiative to save the Centennial pool.

Here is what I can tell you about how the closure of Centennial pool will affect the Atlantis Artistic Swimming Club, as well as the Nova Scotia Artistic Swimming (NSAS) organization.

Atlantis offers recreational and competitive programs at 4 pools throughout HRM: Centennial, Dalplex, Zatsman and CGC. Of these 4 pools over 50% of our programs/training is at Centennial pool, with the remaining 30% in Dalplex, and 10% in each of Zatsman & CGC. There are no other pools in the HRM that currently provide the availability or are of appropriate size for our club. As you may know, Artistic Swimming requires not only a specific pool size but also a specific depth to ensure that our athletes can train and compete safely. Centennial is one of only a few pools in the HRM that meets this requirement.

Atlantis currently offers the following programs at Centennial:

- 5 recreational programs of various age and skill levels, 4 nights per week, for about 25-30 athletes.
- 3 competitive programs of various age and skill levels, 3 nights per week, for about 20-25 athletes.

The Centennial pool has been instrumental in allowing Atlantis to continue to grow in size by offering more flexible schedules for our members. This growth has allowed us to keep our fees relatively stable and affordable. Without Centennial's availability, the club would certainly lose membership, leading to higher costs for all families.

NSAS, our Provincial Sports Organization also runs programs (independently of Atlantis) out of Centennial. Currently, NSAS offers the following programs at Centennial:

- Blind and Visually Impaired program, 1 afternoon per week, for 30 athletes.
- "New Comers" program for new Canadian residents, 1 afternoon per week, for 50 athletes (and anticipating 80 registrants in 2024).

For NSAS' programming, Centennial pool is crucial for several more specific reasons. The Blind and Visually Impaired program requires accessibility for its participants and Centennial is easily the most accessible pool in the HRM. Other facilities, due to their size or configuration are much

more difficult to enter and exit without support. Similarly, Centennial's central location in the HRM is beneficial to the new Canadian residents, many of whom depend on public transportation to get to and from the pool.

The loss of Centennial would be a great setback for these specialized programs and would affect NSAS' ability to grow the sport, particularly among marginalized communities.

Another benefit of Centennial's space is its seating capacity. In the past, Centennial has often hosted Provincial- as well as Maritime-level competitions. Other pools, particularly CGC, offer substantially less seating capacity and are ill-suited to host large competitions and events.

The loss of Centennial would jeopardize our city's ability to host Artistic Swimming events. These events are crucial to growing the sport locally but are also helpful to the city by generating economic activity. Our city is already at a disadvantage for hosting larger, National events as we do not have the facilities to support them.

Please let me know if you need any further information or support from our organization.

Sincerely,  
Andrea Cohen  
Chair – Atlantis Artistic Swimming Club

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## **Chronos Masters Swimming**

Thank you for your note on saving the pool. I am the current president of Chronos Masters swimming. The loss of Centennial pool will most likely destroy the Masters program in the city. Chronos is the largest team in the area and provides Masters swimmers the caliber of coaching and practicing necessary to compete nationally.

During the temporary closure of the pool there was no other pool able to host our group.

The idea of selling the property where there is adequate land to build a world class competitive pool facility, is ludicrous. HRM has not shown any support for the swimming community let alone the community where the pool is currently located.

I am a recently retired member of HRM staff. I have some inside ideas on the true motive for selling this property.

I am 63 years old and have swam at this pool on a team since 1971. It is very functional and as you stated can expect another 10 years of life.

Imagine attaching a 10 lane pool to this and then renovating the current facility. Having this in the downtown will allow HRM to bid on very lucrative aquatic events. Anyway I can assist let me know.

Chuck Bezanson  
Chronos Masters Swimming

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## Dartmouth Crusaders

October 13th, 2023

To HRM City Council:

The Dartmouth Crusaders Swim Club vision is to build a better person through the sport of swimming. Every action we take, every instruction we give, every goal we set and every result we desire starts from a decision about WHY we do it.

The Crusaders currently has approximately 150 swimmers ranging from our pre-competitive program to our Nationally ranked athletes. Our weekly training schedule involves dozens of hours spread primarily across three (3) facilities – The Zatzman Sportsplex, Centennial Pool and Cole Harbour Place. Centennial is host to our top 2 training squads (30 swimmers) on Thursday and Saturday mornings from 6-8 or 9AM.

The Crusaders are very sensitive to pool closures having had our home pool (the Sportsplex) closed for almost a full 2 years for renovations. During that period of time, we struggled every week to find space for our athletes and our training schedule not only varied week to week but also involved facilities inadequate for our needs – eg. The Needham Pool and the Survival Systems Training facility. The lack of facilities and irregularity of the training scheduled resulted in a significant drop in membership (40%) as swim families looked at other clubs offering a more predictable schedule.

Since the re-opening of the Sportsplex, numbers have grown rapidly, exceeding pre-closure figures and access to pool time is our Clubs biggest challenge as we continue to expand and require additional training space. The possibility of the Centennial pool closing without having an alternate facility available to absorb that loss is of great concern and would seriously limit our Clubs ability to meet the growing demand of Dartmouth, Cole Harbour and Halifax residents.

The lack of even a plan to open a replacement for the Centennial Pool causes our Club a great deal of unease; HRM's track record in developing aquatic facilities over time has been poor:

- Cole Harbour Place has inadequate deck space and so cannot host sanctioned swim meets,
- The Canada Games Aquatic Centre cannot host sanctioned swim meets because of an error in planning resulting in the pool being roughly 5 cms too short,
- The renovations of our home pool (the Zatzman Sportsplex) limited our ability to host swim meets because our viewing area was eliminated, and available deck space taken up by a hot tub and "splash" pad – this despite assurances throughout the planning and renovation phases that there would be a viewing area.
- The most recent pool constructed in HRM (The Halifax Commons Pool) is an outdoor facility, and, although we applaud HRM for its development, it is only available through the short, summer season.

These examples have the impact of sowing doubt in the swimming community that aquatics is a priority for the city.

Because of its low-impact nature, swimming is a sport that allows individuals of all sorts to engage in physical activity – from the very young, to very old, to persons with a disability. Removing access to a facility such as the Centennial Pool for an indeterminate period will impact not only competitive programs across HRM but also the lives of hundreds of people around HRM who rely on the pool to improve their physical and mental wellbeing – something that the pandemic has made us all much more aware of.

It is for these reasons that the Crusaders firmly believe that any planning for the repurposing of the Centennial Pool and its land must involve having an adequate facility constructed and available to support the community before its closure.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jody Crowther, President  
Dartmouth Crusaders Swim Club

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## **Halifax Trojan Athletic Club**

To Whom It May Concern:

First, some background information on our club. We are a competitive swim club of over 200 members that primarily swim out of the Dalplex and Centennial facilities. The club has a long storied history as the major player in the Atlantic Swim community and as well as being involved on the national stage as well.

The sport and this team can have a huge impact on people's lives whether they swim at the highest level or transfer their skills to other aspects of their life. We are very proud of the impact we can have, and how many people we can have that impact on.

Currently, we are using Centennial every day of the week, bar Sundays, with our swimmers in the pool for over 100 hours worth of lane space at Centennial every week. We do not have a way of replacing that time if Centennial is to be closed. We know of the main pools in the area that could provide coverage, YMCA, Needham, Sackville, Zatzman, the Canada Games Centre. Yes, there is the pool at the commons, but we only overlap for less than a month with its opening. The YMCA in downtown does not book out to clubs or memberships and we have been turned away. Using Needham would help alleviate some of the stress of our younger/pre-competitive groups, but the facility is inadequate for training for the majority of our membership. Sackville and Zatzman are both at capacity due to the Sackville and Dartmouth teams training out of those pools respectively. Canada Games is at capacity as said by their Ward Councillor. A closure to Centennial would impact our ability to operate at or near the size we have for decades. Our biggest worry would be in losing membership and our ability to gain it back. When COVID hit, as pools were closed for a very long time, many teams found themselves hit very hard and membership took time to bounce back as many athletes chose to move to sports that were running. With a closure and drop to membership, we would be worried about our ability to retain those swimmers and maintain a healthy population. Last year, we had a moment where Dal had a scheduled closure and Centennial had an unexpected closure simultaneously. When this occurred we had a mad scramble to contact pools to gain lane space to keep our membership in the water. We were forced to cancel most of our practices, swim out a Long Lake and send swimmers to join the practices of other teams. We could not get any lane space

during the after school hours of 4-8pm in any pool in the HRM. I only had response and lane space from Bridgewater, Acadia University, and Truro. This highlighted to us, the sheer lack of both pools and space within the HRM.

We are very happy to see the city plans to build a new 50m pool with additional side tank and to refurbish the Needham facility. However, we are concerned that closing Centennial Pool would be losing a publicly owned 50m pool in the heart of the city at a time when the population is growing and the demand for more aquatic facilities is growing. What would devastate our club would be if Centennial Pool and a refurbished Needham were both closed at the same time.

I would also like to make note of another user group that I feel like would be affected more so than any other, Cygnus Diving. They operate out of Centennial and Centennial does have a seemingly very good facility for diving between its platforms, towers, and land space. With Dal not opening its facility for diving use, their team would be completely without a facility.

We support the Save Centennial Pool Committee's efforts in working with the City Council in order to find alternatives or solutions to the need of a Top-Class facility that benefits both the city, region, and Atlantic provinces.

— Halifax Trojan Aquatic Club [↑](#)

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## **Halifax Wavecutters Aquatic Club**

The Halifax Wavecutters Aquatic club runs three different programs:

- Competitive Swimming
- Stroke improvement/Maintenance for Summer league swimmers
- Water polo for youth, and this program is the only one in the Province.

We went through the period of not using Centennial Pool during the two and a half years of this pool repairing. We were able to maintain our Competitive Swim team, but other activities had to be stopped due to no availability of pool space elsewhere. We believe that if Centennial pool will be closed again, we would have to shut down the club that has existed since 2005 and has had huge achievements in Competitive Swimming (still possessing 11 provincial records) and Water Polo being the core of competitive stream in this sport.

The demolishing of Centennial pool will barely impact most of clubs using that pool (those have other "Home" venues) but for our club and Cygnus this closure will be critical.

I am also very pessimistic about you being successful in your approach. I remember how many letters and requirements had been sent to different authorities about Canada Games Centre asking them to build a 50m pool instead of what they actually built and all that have been ignored. I have a feeling that they will do the same thing now – ignore.

Regards,  
Nickolay Shulga  
President of Halifax Wavecutters Aquatic Club

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## **Sackville Waves Aquatic Team**

October 15, 2023

Dear Councilor Smith,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the potential closure and demolition of Centennial Pool and the significant impact it would have on the Sackville Waves Aquatic Team's ability to train and compete. Our swimmers that use the facility range in age from 6-18years old.

The pool has been an invaluable resource for our club, as our swimmers rely on its 50m length for training purposes and hosting of swim meets. We host approximately 4 Nova Tech Swim meets a year at Centennial, because we are unable to host meets at our home pool at Sackville Sports Stadium because it is not designed for competition. Sackville pool has no Spectator area, not enough diving blocks and is only a 25m pool.

It is Important for people outside the swimming community to understand that swimmers need official long distance swim times (times that you achieve in 50m pool) to qualify for provincial, national, and international swim meets. Thus, if Centennial pool being one of only two 50m pools in Nova Scotia closed this would hurt our athletes' development and the sport of swimming in Nova Scotia because our athletes will have limited opportunities to use a facility to qualify or train for events.

As mentioned before Centennial Pool is one of two 50m pools in all of Nova Scotia. If it closed it would be concerning that the only other 50m pool in Nova Scotia is the Dalplex. Dalplex would not have any available times for SWAT to practice or host any swim meets. This would further limit SWAT's access to a suitable training and competition facility, potentially hindering swimmers' development, and ability to compete at all levels.

The closure of Centennial Pool would indeed have a significant impact on the Nova Scotia Swimming Community as a whole. It would limit access to a 50m pool, affecting not only our club but also other swimmers and teams in the region who rely on the facility for training and competitions. The loss of such a valuable resource would be detrimental to the development and growth of the swimming community in HRM and Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Kershaw  
Vice-President of Sackville Waves Aquatic Team (SWAT)



## *Aquacise Program*

In May 1968, the Centennial Pool was constructed by the former City of Halifax in co-operation with the Province of Nova Scotia and the Federal Government through its Centennial grants. This facility was the site of the first Canadian Summer Games in 1969. The Aquacise program began shortly after the pool opened. The classes at that time were offered Monday, Wednesday and Friday from Noon to 1:00 PM and were mostly filled with participants who were working in the Halifax downtown area. Classes were not offered in the mornings then because the Halifax School Board Swim Programs used the pool for the Elementary School Students in the mornings and afternoons.

Currently the Aquacise program has classes scheduled at 10:00 AM and 12:15 PM five days a week, as well as a 5:30 class on Tuesday, and a 5:45 class on Sunday evenings. These include deep-end and shallow water classes for different levels of physical activity. The lunch time and 5:30 classes accommodate working people that want to fit Aquacise into their daily routine as well. The Centennial Pool Instructors are highly qualified and experienced paying special attention to the individual needs and physical restrictions of their class participants to making these classes accessible for all.

### *Physical and Mental Benefits of Aquacise Programs:*

There are many benefits of Aquacise classes to people of all ages, including physical, emotional, and mental:

- It provides a good cardiovascular workout, gently increasing the pulse and breathing rate, so it's great for helping to improve heart health.
- It strengthens and tone muscles – the resistance of the water means that opposing muscle groups are worked in each movement as you push and pull against it.
- It improves flexibility, while the support of the water greatly reduces the risk of muscle and joint injuries.
- It's a great stress reliever – the water massages and cools you, giving you a feeling of weightlessness and an enormous sense of wellbeing.
- Exercise helps older adults preserve their mental function, it helps prevent - or at least delay - the onset of dementia in susceptible individuals.
- Because of the reduction of the 'weight' of gravity, Aquacise enables older adults, especially those with joint problems, to exercise at a much more intense (and therefore more effective) aerobic level.
- Intense aerobic exercise, like aquacise, helps to prevent coronary artery disease.
- Exercise classes preserve social functioning in the elderly
- It is an excellent exercise in pregnancy, especially late trimester.
- It is helpful in rehabilitating injuries and for those with chronic diseases.

- Physiotherapy can be expensive if you're not well-insured. Water exercises at Centennial are a very affordable complement to other treatment and aquacise is highly recommended by medical professionals.
- Aquacise participants benefit from the social component of the program, by getting to know other poolgoers from other backgrounds and parts of HRM - being a part of the Centennial pool community.

*Other Benefits of the Centennial Aquacise Program:*

- Affordability - Financially, it works on a "pay-as-you-go" system, for the reasonable cost of \$3.00 per swim. There is no need for class participants or other swimmers to buy a membership, pre-register or provide any other up-front costs. No costly membership fees (sometimes exclusive) that include exercise facilities that are not used.
- Accessibility - The Aquacise participants very much appreciate the efficient and safe access to the pool. Right from the parking lot, the building entrance, into the locker rooms and washrooms and to the pool deck everything is on one level. This is a huge advantage for people who have difficulty walking, use walkers or wheelchairs, or people who have other health problems. There even is a therapeutic chair lift for those who are disabled.
- Location - Physically, it is centrally located on the peninsula and the downtown core, close to a number of residential neighborhoods. People walk, cycle, use public transit and drive to the pool. Free parking is available for those bringing their own vehicles or car-pooling.

*And just yet another benefit:*

*"I think the Centennial Pool is a beautiful structure. When you're attending a late afternoon class and the sun is shining through the windows in the west wall, the light hits the water and turns it a beautiful blue and you feel almost transported away and can't believe you are in downtown Halifax at a busy intersection. This pool is a gem and should remain where it is serving its community as it has done since it was built in 1967 for the Canada Summer Games and became part of Halifax's history."*

*(From a testimonial letter of an Aquacise Class participant)*



## Community Testimonials

*"...please re-visit the motion to replace Centennial Pool."*

*"Losing this pool would be a travesty for all concerned..."*

*"...encourage the continuance of the Centennial Pool."*

*"Keep aquatic fitness accessible to all!"*

*"It is accessible, both financially and physically."*

*"...this pool has saved the healthcare system millions of dollars..."*

*"The pool is well used and well loved. It's a true community pool."*

*"A few medical points of fact backed by research."*

*"...a much-needed facility for the community..."*

*"We are so proud of our pool that when our family visits us from anywhere we bring them to swim."*

*"The pool offers an affordable option for many seniors and others..."*

*"This pool has given us our lives."*

*"...and I feel like I belong."*

*"It has been an important part to my personal health..."*

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To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: *SAVE CENTENNIAL POOL*

I am writing to ask for your help regarding the potential closure of Centennial Pool and the development that may occur on the Centennial site in the middle of HRM.

Since I moved to Halifax in 1989, Centennial Pool has been “my pool” – it’s where I learned the front crawl, where I trained as a triathlete for nearly 10 years, and where I now enjoy Aquasize classes three times a week.

I am a 67-year-old who lives in the West end and would be deeply disappointed to see the Centennial Pool site become just another ‘real-estate development.’”

I firmly believe the funds HRM Council used to fix Centennial Pool’s deficiencies in recent years have made the pool more useful than ever. I disagree that Centennial Pool is nearing the end of its useful life.

It begs the question: Why did HRM Council incur those expenses knowing it was for a pool that would be replaced elsewhere? At 55 years of age, Centennial Pool still has a large customer base and is one of the best pools in town. Surely, that was known when the renovations were undertaken.

We have the new YMCA pool where it’s difficult, expensive and time consuming to find parking, and it’s an expensive option compared to Centennial.

The population base on the Peninsula is not shrinking and will increase by thousands of new residents based on the apartment units under construction. That alone means the need for an existing 50-meter pool will remain consistent or be higher than ever.

Needham, at just 18 meters, is small for lane swims and Aquasize classes. DalPlex is often 100% at capacity (as is the parking situation there). The Canada Games Centre pool is often at capacity, and for seniors who live on the Peninsula, poses a barrier to getting there and for affordability.

I’m asking you to “*please re-visit the motion to replace Centennial Pool.*” We need it and it’s in the best condition it’s ever been in, thanks to the funds spent by our Council.

I support the construction of a new 50-meter super pool off the peninsula, as well as the revitalization of Needham Pool. However, more pools, not less, are needed and for different reasons to support our growing population – just not at the cost of disposing of the Centennial pool for economic development. Once it’s lost as recreational space in the heart of the City, it will never be regained.

A few reasons why Centennial Pool makes sense, not just for seniors who live on the Peninsula but also for many other residents who may not have vehicles or deep pocketbooks:

- *Affordability* – Financially, Centennial Pool works on a “pay-as-you-go” system, for the reasonable cost of \$3.00 per swim. There is no need for class participants or other swimmers to buy a membership, pre-register or provide any other up-front costs. No costly membership fees (sometimes exclusive) that include exercise facilities that are not used.
- *Accessibility* – The Aquasize participants very much appreciate the efficient and safe access to the pool. Right from the parking lot, the building entrance, into the locker rooms and washrooms and to the pool deck everything is on one level. This is a huge advantage for people who have

difficulty walking, use walkers or wheelchairs, or people who have other health problems. There even is a therapeutic chair lift for those who are disabled.

- *Location* – Physically, it is centrally located on the peninsula and the downtown core, close to a number of residential neighborhoods. People walk, cycle, use public transit and drive to the pool. Free parking is available for those bringing their own vehicles or car-pooling.

HRM Council advocates for physical and mental health and its importance to its residents of all ages. From maintaining physical strength to avoiding social isolation for seniors, Centennial Pool's Aquacise and lane swims improve the lives of many a senior. Well, I am speaking as one senior who cannot easily get to the Canada Games Centre or the Sackville or Dartmouth sportsplex complexes. And I am just one of the many!

Please keep Centennial Pool – we need it far more than a new luxury high-rise.

Thank you,  
Marilyn Pincock  
December 11, 2023 [↑](#)

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To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great distress and worry that we hear about the possible demolition of our beloved Centennial Pool. My husband Ian and I have been going to the pool for lane swimming and aquacise for many years, and we cannot imagine our lives without it. Our overall health has been vastly improved since we regularly swim and exercise in the water.

The pool is not only a place to exercise but also a place to meet people and form friendships which is of utmost importance for us seniors. The staff at the pool is very friendly, and we are being greeted by name when we arrive; where else is that the case nowadays? Our instructors know us well by now and guide us with great care and gentleness through our exercise. There even is a therapeutic chair lift for those who are disabled. And, of course, the fee for attending is very affordable for low income people, compared to other facilities.

Centennial Pool is also very well known for having only one of two 50m pools in Nova Scotia, not to mention the only 10m diving tower complex. These facts alone draw a lot of swim teams and events to the pool.

***“Losing this pool would be a travesty for all concerned,”*** not only us seniors but the whole city. After all the money spent on repairing and upgrading the facility, why would the subject of demolishing this pool even be considered?

Our fervent hope is that common sense and concern for the well-being of our community will prevail and win out over the mighty dollar.

Thank you for listening to our concerns. We will see you in the pool!

Anna and Ian West  
October 2023 [↑](#)

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***From Donita Boyd and daughters Sara Lomonico (Boyd) and Jessica Boyd***

To Whom It May Concern:

My brother and sisters and I learned to swim at the Centennial pool the first year it opened.

My father (Carl Boyd) was on the Board to determine if an aquarium was the best use of the Centennial Birthday Gift Funds. When the Aldermen listened to the citizens, and spoke up in favour of building the pool, my Dad was heartbroken. My mother, on the other hand, took full advantage of this gift to Haligonians.

She was newly arrived to the country. With Nova Scotia having so many Lakes, Rivers, and Ponds, throughout the province, a woman with 4 young children must keep them safe from all kinds of water hazards. Yet also have them embrace the joy that comes with being in and on the water in all seasons. So, every Summer starting in 1967, my Mother drove us all into the city, in the VW van, to learn to swim, to learn CPR, to learn to dive from the High Diving Platform, to get our life guard certificates, to learn to be safe in our homeland, to learn to be fit, to learn to embrace the feeling of freedom that being in the water provides. I thank her heartily, and I thank the Alderman who made it possible.

My mother, Donita Boyd, now 89 years old, continues to enjoy this Birthday gift to the citizens. She attends Aquatic Exercises three times week in the same pool where I learned when I was 5.

I hope you will be able to vote against this proposed development.

Sincerely,  
Sara Lomonico (Boyd)  
October 2023

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To Whom It May Concern:

I've heard a rumour that Centennial Pool is to be closed so that business high rise development can happen on the property.

I am asking you, as my representative, to ***“encourage the continuance of the Centennial Pool.”***

I attend Water Exercise three days a week in this Pool to keep me healthy. I have a very bad back that prevents me from walking very far. I am not the only one using this Pool for physical fitness and mental health. We do not have the ability, or the means, to leave the Peninsula to go to a Mainland Pool. The destruction of the Pool would be detrimental to my health and the health of many in the city.

The Centennial Pool was built with money chosen to celebrate Canada's 100th birthday. To turn the area into a commercial building would dishonour such well received and utilized gift. And it would dishonour the intent of givers.

I hope you will be able to vote against this proposed development.

Donita Boyd  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
October 2023 [↑](#)

*\*Note: Donita Boyd has been coming to Centennial Pool Aquacise classes since 1971*

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To Whom It May Concern:

As my sister (Sara Lomonico) has said, I learned to swim and dive and be water safe at the Centennial Pool many years ago.

That was a long time ago now, but it is still a wonderful resource for the city and for me. I recently started lap swimming for exercise and fun. I have swum in the Dalplex pool, the Canada Games Center pool and Centennial pool. By far the best pool in Halifax is the Centennial. It is the cleanest, the most welcoming and the most friendly. The staff are amazingly helpful and I am never made to feel that I am too slow by the other swimmers.

The other pools are very crowded, and someone like me who can swim only 2 km in an hour is made to feel like I'm in the way. But that doesn't happen at Centennial.

I often feel the lifeguards at the other pools would rather talk to each other than watch what's happening in the water. But at the Centennial, the lifeguards are always ready to lend a hand and I feel safe.

The water quality at Centennial is the best in the city. I love swimming through the crystal clear water. The sunshine coming through the large windows makes the water sparkle and adds joy to my exercising.

I know the Centennial is small for today's Olympic standards, and the people of HRM should have access to an Olympic sized pool. But tearing down this beautiful little pool should not be part of the plan for building a newer pool. We can, and should, have both.

Please do everything you can to keep this gem in the heart of the city.

Jessica Boyd  
October 2023 [↑](#)

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To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a Centennial Pool user ever since it was built. I attended the 1969 Summer Canada Games swimming events in which my brother competed on the NS team. Now that I am retired, I attend aquacize classes three times a week and cherish the community I have found there.

If Centennial closes that will leave only one year round public pool on the peninsula where users can pay a modest fee for a swim or exercise class. Larger facilities require a full membership which is a big financial commitment. Centennial has parking, is physically accessible and serves a wide range of community users from all over the peninsula. I live in the West End which has no pool of its own.

Whatever fancy competition pools are built, the community's need for daily fitness is best met by more modest facilities like Centennial and Needham. ***"Keep aquatic fitness accessible to all!"***

Mary Guildford  
October 2023 [↑](#)

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To Whom It May Concern:

I have been informed that the City of Halifax has voted to close Centennial Pool by vote on June 28, 2022.

As a regular user of the aquacise classes at the pool, I would like to add my voice to those who find this decision completely unacceptable.

There is no similar facility on the peninsula that provides the amenities that Centennial has. This pool is a true community gem. ***"It is accessible, both financially and physically."*** Although I do not participate in lane swimming or in other activities that take place there, I am sure that those users share this view. I would expect that the swim and diving clubs which use the facility would be hard-pressed to find anywhere else to go.

Financially, it works on a "pay-as-you-go" system, for the reasonable cost of \$3.00 per swim. There is no need for class participants or other swimmers to buy a membership, pre-register or provide any other up-front costs. As many of the aquacise class users are seniors, this is very important as we know the financial challenges that those who may have limited incomes are facing in this economic climate.

Physically, it is centrally located on the peninsula, close to a number of residential neighbourhoods. People walk, use transit and drive to the facility. Parking is available for those who need it. With new residential buildings being constructed in the area, why would the City even consider closing a good recreation facility?

My own experience mirrors those of a number of users of the Centennial aquacise classes. As they are offered in the morning and at noon hour, many participants are seniors who have arthritis and/or other joint issues and as a result find other forms of exercise challenging. I personally broke an arthritic knee and can attest to the fact that although physiotherapy was helpful what really aided my recovery was the water exercises. Physiotherapy can be expensive if you're not well-insured. Water exercises at Centennial are a very affordable complement to other treatment and aquacise is certainly recommended by medical professionals.

The aquacise instructors at Centennial are dedicated and knowledgeable, and give advice on how to do various individual exercises that accommodate a participant's limitations. I know that my overall health has improved by regular attendance at the classes.

I want to thank you, the members of the Board, for working to keep Centennial open for those of us who would be lost without it! The two years that it was closed meant that I did not participate in aquacise. The other facilities are not the same. Even if the thought of the City is to refurbish Needham so that there is a community pool on the peninsula it would take a lot of money and a lot of time to even come close to Centennial.

Janet Willwerth  
October 17, 2023 [↑](#)

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To Whom It May Concern:

To lose this community pool would be devastating to many on the peninsula of Halifax. As has been stated, it is the only community pool of its size, offering diving capabilities and training for swim teams with its 50 metre lane length, variety of diving heights, as well as water clubs and water aquacise programs.

I have led water aquacise classes at Centennial Pool for nearly 20 years and began at the pool myself as a participant. I suffered for a long time with severe sciatica. I have always found the water to be my most successful form of keeping fit and keeping my chronic pain at bay. I have had two successful back surgeries within that time and I delight in leading so many toward continued good physical and mental wellbeing.

As we age, aches and pains are a common element of the process. Once one participates in an aquacise class, a regular comment is that they are 'good for the rest of the day'. Think about that...not a drug, not an expensive form of physiotherapy or psychotherapy ...just the movement of the body in the best manner possible...in the water, with its soothing and freeing properties which allow joints to move ...joints which, on land, are limited by gravity and weight.

I have had over these past twenty years at least six medical doctors who have been active participants in water aquasize and this, to me, speaks to the success of water programs, not only for the aging, but for all.

I have witnessed firsthand the delight that participants feel being able to move, to exercise somewhat effortlessly in the water. It buoys them on daily basis throughout a variety of physical and mental impairments.

Many of the aquasize participants who come to this pool are seniors. Many are seniors on fixed incomes who truly appreciate the affordability of the pool, the costs of which are largely offset by the growing swim club memberships, diving clubs, synchronized swimming and other water sports.

These people come by bus in all types of weather, arranged drives, self-driving and parking in the pool's parking lot. To be able to come through the door, off the street, all at one level, is a real bonus to those who come in walkers, with canes and even one doctor who himself used to come regularly on a striker bed, lowered into the water with the mechanical aids. In recent weeks, I have seen this doctor now coming in a wheelchair.

Given the large percentage of seniors living within the boundaries of the peninsula, many of whom are on fixed income, endeavouring to live their best lives, it would be devastating to them to lose this life line. I would hasten to guess that "***this pool has saved the healthcare system millions of dollars***" as people have found alternate methods of coping with a variety of ailments. Recently a woman who regularly swims wherever she can as she has severe advancing MS has decided to participate in water aquacise. Witnessing her joy at being able to join in gives me tremendous satisfaction at having helped to make her life somewhat richer. I can see it in her smile and in her determination.

I have true passion for the wellbeing of those who attend water aquacise classes at Centennial Pool. I would be happy to address any or all who are involved in the process of decision making regarding the future of the pool.

I have spoken to several participants regarding the possible closure and they are fully prepared to petition and protest in large numbers any closure of Centennial Pool.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my thoughts.

Nancy Mahoney,  
Aquacise Instructor, Centennial Pool  
October, 2023 [↑](#)

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To Whom It May Concern:

While attending aquafit last night at Centennial Pool I heard that there was talk about the possible redevelopment of the pool's site including the removal of the pool. I hope that this isn't true but I do want to speak up about the Importance of this community pool to its patrons.

When I first developed chronic back issues thirty years ago, it was suggested to me to try aquafit as an exercise suitable for the injured or those returning to fitness because it's the ultimate "low impact/no impact" exercise. I loved aquafit from my first class and it has been part of my life ever since.

I was a faithful YMCA patron for years until the Y closed for redevelopment. At that point I started going to Centennial Pool which is within walking distance of my home in the South End. Since then I have been a Centennial Pool patron.

When the new YMCA opened I decided to stick with Centennial because the Y was imposing limits on the number of participants at aquafit classes, you had to register using an app, etc. This has never been my experience at Centennial. Even if others are using the pool, lane lines can be moved to accommodate more patrons. I always feel a strong sense of community as there are often swimming lessons going on, lane swims, children stretching before diving lessons, etc. ***"The pool is well used and well loved. It's a true community pool."***

I also love the aquafit staff at Centennial because they are all of different ages which reinforces the idea that you can be fit and healthy at any age. Being fit doesn't just have "one look". It can be as varied as the participants and their instructors.

At 63 I am still working during the day but am looking forward to retirement when I can attend the daytime aquafit classes at Centennial. There are currently 10 daytime classes and they are well attended. I can't imagine telling the participants of any of those classes that the pool will shut down due to redevelopment. I understand that many of the participants use the bus service to come to the pool which speaks to their dedication and determination to participate. For many of them it is a social as well as a physical event. Aquafit truly heals mind, body and soul.

I feel that there are certain services that must form part of a well-functioning city and that includes a community pool. Thousands of people both live and work in the downtown core and it's essential to have a pool they can use before going to or after work to keep them physically and mentally fit. Many of us choose to live in the downtown core so we don't need a car and can walk to amenities. We have chosen to live in the heart of the city which keeps it from becoming a ghost town in the evenings and weekends.

Obviously city planners don't want the downtown to become a ghost town either as evidenced by all the apartment buildings and condos being built. Once these buildings are occupied, where will their tenants exercise?

In addition to all of the above I think the Centennial Pool is a beautiful structure. When you're attending a late afternoon class and the sun is shining through the windows in the west wall, the light hits the water and turns it a beautiful blue and you feel almost transported away and can't believe you are in downtown Halifax at a busy intersection. This pool is a gem and should remain where it is serving its community as it has done since it was built in 1967 for the Canada Summer Games and became part of Halifax's history.

Thank you,  
Centennial Pool Aquacise Participant  
October 16, 2023

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Hi Nancy (Aquacise Instructor),

I absolutely agree that everything possible must be done to keep the pool open. ***"A few medical points of fact backed by research."***

- Exercise helps older adults preserve their mental function, it helps prevent – or at least delay – the onset of dementia in susceptible individuals.
- Because of the reduction of the 'weight' of gravity, Aquacise enables older adults, especially those with joint problems, to exercise at a much more intense (and therefore more effective) aerobic level.
- Intense aerobic exercise, like aquacise, helps to prevent coronary artery disease.
- Exercise classes preserve social functioning in the elderly

However, Aquacise is not just beneficial to seniors. It is an excellent exercise in pregnancy, especially late trimester. It is helpful in rehabilitating injuries and for those with chronic diseases.

In addition, the Centennial pool is one of only two 50 metre pools in HRM and the only one on the peninsula. Does the city really want to lose this facility?

I hope these are a few points which might help.

All the best,  
David  
David D Imrie MB, BS, FRCA, FRCPC  
October, 2023 [↑](#)

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To Whom It May Concern:

These are my reasons for keeping the Centennial pool open.

I started going to the pool in January, 1999. Yes, that is 24 years ago and I am still a regular user of the facility.

After my young husband (age 57) passed away, I very much needed a place to physically work out my grief. The aquacise classes not only provided me with exercise but gave me a social outlet for meeting and enjoying new people. Over the years, people from the classes organized lunches, pot lucks, Christmas gatherings, birthday celebrations, a once a month brunch group and an annual summer picnic at a member's lakeside property.

When I go to the pool, I see people like myself—a senior who gets out and about and makes exercise part of my healthy living style. The pool is always busy with other swimmers, classes, swim club members, swim meets—all of us being of different age groups.

Please keep the Centennial pool open. It is ***"a much needed facility for the community"*** in this part of the city for the parking lot, easy access to bus routes and most importantly all the pleasant employees of the pool and the rest of us who like going there.

Thank you,  
L. A. Ginsburg  
October, 2023\_

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To Whom It May Concern:

Veena my sister by choice and I have been coming to Centennial pool 5 days a week since 2011. We have the pleasure of meeting lovely, caring ladies, front staff, and instructors – Nancy yourself and Maureen. You have made the classes enjoyable and fun for us and we are like a big family. We share so much with each other.

This winter Veena and I took swimming lessons from Maureen. She was so patient with us and with her encouragement we both can swim. I was scared to get in the pool and now I can swim. Our Pool family encouraged and kept an eye on our progress.

We have tried other pools too, but we love this one for easy accessibility and Parking. This pool has no steps and that was great help to Veena and I prior to our knee replacement surgery and after.

***“We are so proud of our pool that when our family visits us from anywhere we bring them to swim.”*** Families who have visited the pool ask about pool ladies after they return to their homes. You cannot take this away from us. We sincerely hope that it will not be demolished.

Thank you  
Neel Ahuja and Veena Kumar  
October 2023 ↑

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To Whom It May Concern:

I understand that the Council may be looking at the future of the facility and possibly planning to close the site. I am writing to express my thoughts about the importance of this facility and its services for the community.

***“The pool offers an affordable option for many seniors and others”*** that are not financially able to afford to exercise at other facilities.

- The aquacise classes provide a valuable service again primarily for seniors
- Many of those in my aquacise classes do not drive (again seniors and those who cannot afford cars) and either walk or take the bus to the pool
- Many of the older adults who use the facility are unable to do other physical activities. I am constantly amazed by the seniors and others (many disabled) that are able to exercise in the water, but have a difficult time getting around on dry land.

Finally, here are a few examples of folks I have observed at the pool:

- An older man that is blind, but is able to swim laps and comes weekly when I am in class
- Several women in my class that are in their 80's and 90's
- Several people that must use canes or walkers, but are able to swim and exercise at this pool

As you can see, I am quite passionate about Centennial Pool. It is essential for the community, especially retired, low-income, disabled, and those with limited resources. Further having this resource for the community promotes health, which has ripple effects for the health care system. For myself, it has been a Godsend for me to have an affordable option to get aerobic exercise through aquacise, which keeps my arthritic body going!

Thank you,  
Elaine Ply  
October 2023

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To Whom It May Concern:

I have been going to the pool for exercise after a knee replacement for about 4 1/2 years. As a senior I feel great after an hour in the pool. I take two buses to get to the pool and the cost is very reasonable. The people are very friendly *"and I feel like I belong."* I support the pool to stay open.

Thank you,  
Sharon Cameron  
November 2023

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To Whom It May Concern:

I'm presently sitting in the bleachers watching my granddaughter at her diving program. She dedicates two evenings a week to a program that she loves. Other areas of the pool have swim teams training. Thank goodness for the great facilities available to these clubs.

I've been a swimmer and aqua-sizer at Centennial for at least a decade. *"It has been an important part to my personal health"*, as I maneuver through my sixties and seventies. I presently am in the water five mornings a week. Here I have made many friends, all who attend to maintain their health and aging bodies.

I know that there are a few other pools here in Halifax. This one is important to keep. It's central; it offers a great variety of programs with fabulous teachers; it's needed for diving and other swim teams; it's managed by a great team; and so much more. With nothing truly in place to meet what we treasure here at Centennial.... I find it hard to believe that our city leaders are short sighted enough to close it. Come join us in the pool and realize what a treasure it is!

Sincerely,  
Jackie O'Hearon  
November 2023

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To Whom It May Concern:  
Re: Centennial Pool

I was part of this pool on opening day, 1967. My daughter was a diver, and I did what I could to help the team, even as an adjudicator. My other children also swam.

Donna Evans' submission continues below...

My now best friend, who just turned 100 years old, and I, plus different more friends over the years, attended aquaize classes three times a week over about forty years. Molly is 100, I am 86. We both have felt over the years that our ability to carry on our productive lives (Molly attends St. Matthew's Church every Sunday and sings in the choir, both for over 70 years, I still teach piano.) Add to this the ability of Centennial to offer generous prices, for all, but especially for seniors, so many for whom money must be carefully spent.

This pool has given us our lives.

Peace,

Donna Evans



*(image: Molly Austen and Donna Evans; August, 2023)*

*“My now best friend, who just turned 100 years old, and I, plus different more friends over the years, attended aquasize classes three times a week over about forty years. Molly is 100. I am 86. We both have felt over the years that our ability to carry on our productive lives (Molly attends St. Matthew’s Church every Sunday and sings in the choir, both for over 70 years. I still teach piano.) Add to this the ability of Centennial to offer generous prices, for all, but especially for seniors, so many for whom money must be carefully spent.*

***“This pool has given us our lives.”***

*Peace,  
Donna Evans  
October 2023*



# *Centennial Pool History*

- A 52-year Legacy
- Chronology of Upgrades, Reparations, Renovations and Refurbishments
- Major Historical Features
- The Architecture of the Centennial Pool Building

## **A 52-Year Coaching Legacy**

TO: Save Centennial Pool Committee

FROM: Nigel Kemp, Head Coach, and Halifax Chronos Masters Swimming Club

RE: Motion June 28, 2022 - Proposed Disposal of Centennial Pool and Process for construction of new 50m pool

Date: 4th December, 2023

It has been my privilege to have had the opportunity to coach the Halifax Trojan Aquatic Club 1971-1981, the Dalhousie University Varsity Swimming Teams 1971- 1998 and the Halifax Chronos Masters Swimming Club 2000-2023. Varsity swimmers utilized Centennial Pool for both training and competition for the period 1971 -1979 whilst Physical Education students, in the B.P.E. program, also used the pool, under my instruction as a Dalhousie faculty member, during this period.

Over the past fifty-two years I have witnessed numerous changes, upgrades and renovations to the Centennial Pool, and its equipment, which have represented investments that have added to the effective functioning of this recreational amenity as well as to its longer-term viability. (Please refer to the appended document listing in approximate chronological order the major changes effected during the past 52 years). I am not aware of the actual costs, with some exceptions, of these upgrades, and reparations, but records confirm a request was made on June 2022, of HRM staff, to provide Council with a costing of Pool investments over the past twenty year period.

The legacy of this City of Halifax Centennial Project and that of the hosting of the inaugural Canada Games in 1969 has been, and continues to be significant. In 2019, for example, a 65 year old member of the Halifax Chronos Masters Swimming Club, Linda Hunt, won the 100m Backstroke, in the 65-69 years age group at the World Masters Swimming Championships in South Korea. Her training over the past two decades has taken place exclusively at Centennial Pool except on occasions when the pool was closed for renovation and upgrading. Earlier in the same year the Halifax Chronos MSC finished fifth of 105 teams at the Canadian Masters Swimming National Championships at the Claude-Robillard Pool in Montreal. In 2013 a Masters swimmer from Ottawa, Lynn Marshall, established two world records when competing in the Annual Halifax Chronos Long Course Invitational. In the 1970's the accomplishments of Halifax Trojan Aquatic Club swimmer Nancy Garapick, Canada's Female Athlete of the Year 1975,

World and Olympic record holder and double Olympic Bronze medalist, precipitated several upgrades at Centennial Pool including the installation of Electronic Timing and a double-sided bulkhead.

Upgrades including the completion of a three-phase capital rehabilitation completed in 2014 indicated the extension of the useful life of Centennial Pool through 2034 whilst the HRM *Long Term Aquatic Strategy* identifies it to be in the top category of the FCI (Facility Condition Index). This hardly describes a public facility fit for disposal. I believe due consideration be given to the continuation of the function of Centennial Pool as well as the construction of a new 50m Aquatic facility.



## *Chronology of Upgrades, Reparations, Renovations and Refurbishments*

- c.1974 Glass Doors and windows removed and bricked over.
- c.1974 Courtyard Walls demolished.
- 1975 Original Wooden one-sided Bulkhead replaced with Aluminum Floatable Bulkhead. Proving unstable to move Canada Aluminum Co. re-designed Bulkhead with wheels for mobility, and "T" ends for stability.
- 1975 Original painted pool deck and pool tiled.
- 1976 Electronic Timing System installed.
- c.1980 Ventilation upgrade installed to highest intersection of wall and ceiling.
- c.1980 Centennial Pool building reroofed
- c.1990 40 Yard slide from 10m Tower to shallow end installed
- c.1995 Solar panels installed on south side of building
- c.2000 \$3 million Ventilation upgrade completed
- 2005 Pool Diving Bubbler System installed
- 2014 New Starting Blocks installed at deep end
- 2013 - 2014 New changing rooms and foyer refurbished (\$1MM +)  
-Seven month closure - Subsequent \$15,000 fee for Electrical engineer confirmed pool Illumination level negligently low.
- 2016 Third Bulkhead installed.
- 2020 - 2022 Centennial Pool closed for 2 years and 7 months for COVID and installation of new (\$300,000) filtration system plus pool leakage reparation. (\$250,000) Mar. 2020-Oct. 2022

## **Centennial Pool: Major Historical Features**

*Compiled by Judith Fingard, November 2023*

In June 1966 Halifax City received a \$185,000 1967 Centennial grant from the Federal Government. It was initially to be spent on an aquarium which was estimated to cost \$600,000 but a tender that September amounted to \$984,000. Because of the high cost, the project was defeated by Council and by December 1966 a pool, for which planning had started in 1964, was adopted as the Centennial project. It was also needed for the 1969 Canada Summer Games which were to be held in Halifax.

On June 7<sup>th</sup> 1967 Halifax Mayor Allan O'Brien turned the first sod for the \$700,000 pool, pointing out that it was a joint project of the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Rabbi Joseph Deitcher blessed the site. At that time the plan was to have a walled, 6000 square foot outdoor patio on the west side with direct access to the pool. The 50 metre pool was designed by Halifax architect Peter Mettam of Mettam, Wright Associates and built by Stevens and Fiske Construction Company. The dedication and official opening ceremony occurred almost a year later on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1968. Mayor O'Brien was joined on this occasion by the Hon. Allan J MacEachen representing the Government of Canada, Hon. R.A. Donahue representing the Government of Nova Scotia and E. Finlay MacDonald representing the upcoming Canada Games for which the new pool would host the water sports program. Alderman H.W. Butler 'accepted' the pool in his capacity as chairman of the Halifax Recreation and Playgrounds Commission. Spectators were treated to a display of diving, medley races and synchronized swimming. One of the pool's attractive original features, still enjoyed, is its ceiling and north wall of stained and laminated pine beams. Users also benefit from daylight through the windows set high in the east and west walls.

At the time of its construction Centennial Pool was the second largest pool in Canada and the first major public indoor pool in Halifax. The first pool manager, George Wiskin, was joined by a staff of 12 full-time employees as well as 15 part-time lifeguards and instructors. The chief instructor and lifeguard was Rita Cahill. The pool's importance to the province as the centre for diving was aptly demonstrated during the 1969 Canada Games, when Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau did a somersault dive off the diving tower.

Since then Centennial Pool has been the major training and competition pool in Nova Scotia. In 1999 the pool became a non-profit organization operated through a Centennial Pool Association with funding from HRM to supplement user fees. For its users it is open every day from 6am to 9:30pm which allows for every type of water exercise and team sport at assigned times of day.

Centennial Pool is appreciated as a well-kept facility. It was tiled in the 1970s and for a decade or more solar panels on the outside south wall have enhanced the pool's efficiency. About ten years ago it was closed for several months while the user facilities were being updated. The vitally important ventilation system has been upgraded twice since the original installation. The grant of significant funds from the federal government for this purpose underscores the pool's national status. For its users of several generations the location is convenient, and the cost of admission remains reasonable.

(references: *Mail Star*, 8 June 1967, p.8; *Chronicle-Herald*, 24 May 1968. p.11; Recreation & Playgrounds Commission for the City of Halifax Official Dedication program, Centennial Swimming Pool, May 25, 1968, 2 P.M., Nova Scotia Archives, mfm 788; the accepted tender for the pool was actually \$725,183, The Centennial Project in the Built History of Halifax blog posted 30 July 2021; recollections of Nigel Kemp)

## **The Architecture of the Centennial Pool Building**

### **David Garrett, Architect December 2023**

The extraordinary geometric shape of the Centennial Pool is its most distinguishing exterior feature, which along with its soaring interior pool space makes it one of several exemplary late modern buildings in Halifax. It was designed in the mid-60's by Halifax architect, Peter Mettam and built in 1967 by Stevens and Fisk Construction Company. Its structural system, enclosing an Olympic-size pool and diving platforms, was at the time, and remains, daring and progressive.

Unfortunately, surrounded by parked cars, poor landscaping, and few architectural upgrades, it seems formidable with little to engage our eye or give us an indication of its purpose. Recent improvements to mechanical systems, while being beneficial to the operation and efficiency of the building, have done further disservice to the appearance of the building. It is little wonder that many these days scratch their head and wonder if the site might be put to better use.

This point of view, however, is extremely limited by overlooking the tremendous public benefit and resource currently provided by the building, especially given its Central Halifax location and public ownership. It also overlooks the interesting possibilities of expansion and improvements to the building. Its 6-lane Olympic-sized swimming pool could be expanded within the existing building bays to the currently-mandated 10 lanes for Olympic-level swimming competitions, which, combined with its current 3 and 6 meter diving boards and the only 10 meter diving platform in the Province, would allow national and international competitions. New washrooms, public spaces, splash pools, saunas, exterior features, and proper landscaping could be added.

Perhaps most importantly, the building could be opened to the exterior with large areas of its now 55 year-old sloping north wall replaced with high-efficiency glass such as at the new Central Library, allowing significant natural light into the buildings as well as interior views from adjacent streets, while still maintaining the needed level of pool privacy.

For a fraction of the cost of building a new facility elsewhere, the building could become, with proper treatment, a public architectural gem on a significant corner at the entrance to downtown along with the currently under development Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre and the Halifax Citadel. Also overlooked in dismissals of the building and calls for its removal is the loss of significant recent financial investments, substantial embodied carbon, and the architectural and historical significance of a major civic building. This would not be in the direction of sustainability.

# Appendix

## Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) Submissions

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PRESENTATION BY
TREVOR BRUMWELL

ON BEHALF OF THE

SAVE CENTENNIAL POOL COMMITTEE

TO THE COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STANDING COMMITTEE

JANUARY 18, 2024

Good morning, Madam Chair, and Councillors. I am Trevor Brumwell and I am presenting on behalf of the Save Centennial Pool Committee.

Our committee was formed in response to a motion by Councillor Wayne Mason asking for a staff report that presents a plan to dispose of Centennial Pool in order to build a new 50m competitive pool off the peninsula and rebuild the Needham Community Centre pool.

The motion references the Long Term Aquatic Strategy of 2019, which concluded that HRM does not have enough aquatic facilities to meet the interest and demand.

The motion does not consider Centennial's value as a public asset, centrally located on the peninsula. It is essential for our recreational swimmers but critical for swim teams to train. The motion does not consider Centennial's swimming legacy, which includes national and world record holders and Olympic medal winners.

The notion that Centennial Pool is at the end of its life is false. HRM has invested in Centennial. It is in good condition after a history of renovations and recent refurbishments. It is important to note that the Long Term Aquatic Strategy has Centennial Pool **in the top category** of HRM's Facility Condition Index.

The motion is clearly one-sided and designed to produce the outcome sought by Councillor Mason, **the disposal of Centennial**. It does not consider any other options for the future of this facility, one of only two 50m pools in HRM.

The motion was tabled with little, if any, meaningful public engagement. Our committee has been actively gathering information and engaging with the Centennial Pool community. The profound effect of the loss of Centennial is evident from the testimonials and impact statements provided in our supporting documents.

Our petition to Save Centennial already has over 1,200 signatures.

As HRM Councillors, you are in an enviable position as you are able to shape the future of our city. Can you imagine an enhanced Centennial Pool with additional public recreational and community spaces, perhaps integrated with the new Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre and connecting to the redeveloped Cogswell area? This would create an urban park extending from the waterfront to the Halifax Common. We all could be proud of this!

Why should you, as Councillors, choose to save Centennial Pool? For the following reasons:

1. Economic Impact

The current and future economic value of Centennial Pool to the swimming community and the general public is tremendous. It is short sighted to sell Centennial, the lost economic potential far exceeds the \$10M surplus Councillor Mason expects to realize from the sale.

The anticipated usage and demand for the pool justifies keeping it as a public resource. Selling Centennial Pool property would ignore the long term interests of the public.

HRM is in a financial crisis. All efforts must be made to maintain the existing recreational facilities we have.

It is important not to give in to private greed over public need.

2. Public Need for Public Facilities

Centennial Pool is a vital part of our public infrastructure. Former Councillor Sheila Fougere put it succinctly when she said “Stop selling off public assets. Building age is **not** a determination of capacity to serve the public need.”

HRM’s population is expected to increase by 35% by 2037 and much of this increase will be on the peninsula. It is obvious that we will need **additional** pools going forward, not the same number.

The growing population has already resulted in increased use. HRM needs another 50m pool but that must be in addition to keeping what we already have. Replacing Centennial, with another privately owned high rise, would be a regrettable, **foreseeable** mistake.

3. Accessibility and Affordability

Location is everything. How can it be responsible to remove a public, year-round recreational facility that provides equitable access for every citizen, regardless of age, physical ability or socioeconomic status.

Members of the Canadian military swim at Centennial without cost. They have no other pool readily accessible to train and keep fit since the Stadacona Pool closed.

Visually impaired swimmers are regular, organized users of Centennial. New Canadians to HRM also enjoy the benefits of Centennial Pool at no cost.

4. Health and Wellness

The motion does not consider the impact on community health and wellness of losing Centennial Pool. It is not just about swimming, it is about promoting healthy life styles, fostering social interactions and providing an essential recreational space that contributes significantly to the quality of life in Halifax.

Swimming is a cost effective, healthy activity across one's lifetime. The World Health Organization recognizes that regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do for a healthy life.

The potential savings to the health care system now and in the future cannot be ignored.

5. Heritage, Culture, Architecture

The motion does not consider Centennial's historical and architectural significance. It was built in 1967 to commemorate Canada's 100th birthday. It represents an important part of our local and national history and stands proudly as a distinctive example of 1960's mid-century modern architecture.

We are not very good at recognizing and maintaining our heritage. The disappearance of this iconic landmark robs Halifax of an integral part of our cultural identity. It is plain wrong to get rid of a Canadian legacy facility that celebrates Canada's Centennial.

6. Climate and Environment

We are in a climate crisis. Demolishing buildings adds to increased greenhouse gas and can lead to further controversies over the disposal of construction material. .

Recent financial investment of approximately \$1M into Centennial Pool and its history of being a well-managed facility have resulted in Centennial Pool being in its "best ever" condition.

There are many concrete pools all over the world, including in Canada and even in Nova Scotia, that are older than Centennial. HRM has an obligation to ensure that it has researched new technologies that extend the life of concrete pools by decades. Myrtha Pools is a resource for doing so and information about it can be found in our supporting documents.

Now that we have provided reasons to save Centennial, what is it we are asking you to do?

With the support of Swim Nova Scotia, we request that HRM staff prepare a comprehensive report that explores the option of maintaining Centennial Pool. Centennial is critical for accommodating swim teams, other organized aquatic sports and recreational users.

We ask that Council have staff examine operational business models and pursue funding from all levels of government that ensures the development of a new 50m pool without relying on the decommissioning of Centennial Pool.

Thank you.

From:
Dan Thompson, OLY
Country Manager Canada, Myrtha Pools

Trevor Brumwell,

Save Centennial Pool Committee,

It's my pleasure to serve as a resource to the Save the Centennial Pool Committee. I have a long history with swimming in this country, having served on the National Swim Team back in the 70's and 80's, while serving volunteer roles as Swimming Canada's President from 2004 to 2009 and the Swim Ontario President from 2018 to 2020. Since 2018 I have served as Country Manager for Myrtha Pools.

For context I have read:

- Halifax Long Term Aquatic Strategy 2019
- 2018 inspection report/2021 Radar scan report of the Centennial Pool

My aquatic experience is extensive with a deep understanding of the Swimming Canada Hosting policy and on the ground understanding of the ICIP and Green Canada funding requirements. While my hope would be to have the City of Halifax build a new Sport Training Complex I am motivated to help save the Centennial pool using Myrtha's [RenovAction](#) system if warranted.

The 2019 report confirmed:

1. Strong interest in Aquatics
2. Not enough Facilities
3. Renewed interest given geography in learn to Swim (aquatic learning centres)
4. Demand for pool time is strong.
5. Current facilities do not meet needs and need capital improvements.
6. Beaches are closing.
7. Call for Regional Centre

A few observations:

1. ICIP (Infrastructure Canada Funding) & Green Canada Funding (inclusive Community Building Grant- new and retrofit) are in high demand and require strong multi layered Political will (Mayor, Counsel, MMP, MP). Applications need shovel ready drawings and plans. (1/3 Fed, 1/3 Prov, 1/3 Municipal)
2. Historically municipalities do a poor job of developing revenue-based business plans that capture third party rentals and revenue generating business partnerships. Often staff adopt a same as mentality- plus 10%) All too often pools are considered a Cost of doing Business which is an outdated paradigm?
3. Broad based community advocacy is critical for project success the sell isn't just about Sport Training but also Swimming for everyone focusing on the need to create Aquatic Learning centres for all (pond to podium).
4. Covid has pushed off capital planning and cost have risen a minimum of 30%

5. While ICIP funding is historically community based a push to including regional infrastructure funding is starting to surface (eg ie [Parry Sound](#) where regional communities contribute to capital and operating costs).
6. Operating models are starting to change with facilities being operated by 3rd parties (Europe i.e. Aquamore) and community partnerships(Toronto Pan am sport Centre (TPASC)- University of Toronto, City of Toronto, CSIO high performance)
7. Generally, municipalities are decommissioning older out of date facilities and building fewer larger community recreation centres (ie City of Toronto) with one or two Regional centres(i.e. TPASC, Markham Pan am) Citizens travel further but get. Better experience.
8. Some communities Point Claire (6 lane 50 metre Canada Games Pool plus new 10 lane 50 metre pool) have been able to renovate older facilities and incorporate newer larger competition facilities to create regional training centres. Often dependent on available space and especially parking for special event facilities)
9. A new trend is incorporating wellness components into facilities (community health services, Hydrotherapy, Physiotherapy, Cold plunges, Sauna's , steams, Nutrition counselling, etc.)
10. The sad reality across Canada especially for many rural communities is they will never be able to afford a new pool so renovating the current pool is the only viable option. (Eroding tax base, other social issues, housing, health care, infrastructure costs, etc.)
11. The Atlantic provinces should be hosting rotational major championships (Aquatic Nationals, Juniors, U sports and major invitationals). The Canada Games used to be a source of infrastructure funding, but this program has been reduced of late. While the city should pursue the Canada Games it does not have the same capital potential it once had.

Potential Scenario's Considerations

1. Order of Magnitude Costing

a) As outlined in the 2019 Aquatic Strategy order of magnitude (2024 dollars) cost for a 10 lane 50 metre tank with an 8 lane warm up leisure pool and associated meeting rooms, changerooms, fitness centre and gym would be in the \$75M to 110M range or higher depending on the lay out, site challenges and sustainability features.

2. Public Private Partnership Model

a) One model the City could look at is issuing an RFI (like was done recently in Ottawa) to solicit a public private partnership. In Halifax, the logical partnership is between The City, Dalhousie university and potentially the CSIA Canadian sport Institute Atlantic (CSIA). A good partnership model to study is at (TPASC) Toronto Pan Am sport Centre. It is my understanding that only Municipalities can apply for ICIP grants. The logical location for the natatorium would be on the university campus. Given the needs for the student population, proximity to hotels for Sport Tourism and potentially built in allocation of community programming. As with TPASC the ownership of the facility would be split between partners and managed through a community board. A part of the time being allocated to the City a portion to the university and a portion offered to third party rentals. The management of the facility would be with an independent agency reporting to a community board with representatives of all stakeholders. City staff and university staff would work collaboratively within the building.

3. Twinning Centennial Pool

a) In reading the 2018 inspection/radar report the building seems to be in pretty good shape for a structure of its age. While not an expert it appears, the basin is in good shape and has lots of life in the structure. Again, not being an expert, I feel the basin capital improvement costs could be underestimated (tank \$91,000 in tile costs every 7 years and mechanical). Regardless of it would be prudent of the city to not decommission the facility unless they have a confirmed and funded alternative strategy. One possibility would be to twin the current facility with a secondary 50 metre tank the Cavet being space and especially parking. Beyond the build you would need x number of parking spaces based on the square footage. I would estimate an incremental 300 spaces especially needed for Sport tourism events. This does seem a stretch.

It appears to be one thing to sell a piece of land and repurpose that land quite another to cover the replacement costs. This will all become clear over time. The committee's job is to ensure due diligence is being done in all options and that whatever moves have firm outcomes and do not reduce the available water space in both the short and long term.

Respectfully,



Dan Thompson
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January 9, 2024

ATTN: Halifax Regional Municipality
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of Swim Nova Scotia to express our support for the efforts of the Save Centennial Pool Committee and their invaluable work in advocating for aquatic facilities on the peninsula.

Our organization stands behind their requests for HRM Staff to prepare a comprehensive report exploring the possibility of maintaining Centennial Pool as an aquatic facility accessible to the growing community. We believe this option is crucial for accommodating swim teams, other organized aquatic sports, and recreational users who benefit from the facility.

Furthermore, we endorse and encourage HRM Staff to examine operational business models and pursue funding from all levels of government. This approach aims to ensure the development of a new aquatic facility with a 50m pool, meeting the diverse requirements of competitive and recreational users across all levels. Importantly, we emphasize the need for such initiatives without relying on the decommissioning of Centennial Pool.

As the Executive Director of Swim Nova Scotia, I am available to address any additional questions or provide further information on our organization's perspective.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bette El-Hawary
Executive Director
Swim Nova Scotia

HALIFAX

JANUARY 18, 2024

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

10.3.1 Save Centennial Pool Committee

Nigel Kemp, Halifax

It has been my privilege to have had the opportunity to coach the Halifax Trojan Aquatic Club 1971-1981, the Dalhousie University Varsity Swimming Teams 1971- 1998 and the Halifax Chronos Masters Swimming Club 2000-2023.

Upon my arrival in Halifax in September 1971, to take up a teaching and coaching position at Dalhousie ,I was approached to coach the Trojan Aquatic Club. It was apparent to me that without age-group swimmers there would be no varsity swimmers.

Varsity swimmers utilized Centennial Pool for both training and competition for the period 1971 - 1979 whilst Physical Education students, in the B.P.E. program, also used the pool, under my instruction as a Dalhousie faculty member, during this period.

Over the past fifty-two plus years I have witnessed numerous changes, upgrades and renovations to the Centennial Pool, and its equipment, which have represented investments that have added to the effective functioning of this recreational amenity as well as to its longer-term viability.

For example:

[Chronology of Upgrades, Repairs, Renovations and Refurbishments](#)

c.1974 **Shallow End Glass Doors** and windows removed and bricked over

c.1974 **Courtyard walls** demolished

1975 **Original, wooden one-sided bulkhead replaced** with Aluminum Floatable Bulkhead. Proving unstable to move, Canada Aluminum Co. re-designed bulkhead with wheels for mobility, and “T” ends for stability

1975 Original painted **pool deck and pool tiled**

1976	Electronic Timing System installed
1980	Ventilation upgrade installed to highest intersection of wall and ceiling
c.1980	Centennial Pool building roofing reinforced
c.1990	40-yard slide from 10-metre tower to shallow end installed
c.1995	Solar panels installed on south side of building
c.2000	\$3MM ventilation upgrade completed
2005	Pool Diving Bubbler System installed
2014	New Starting Blocks installed at deep end
2013-2014	New changing rooms and foyer refurbished (\$1MM+) (seven-month closure) Subsequent \$15,000 fee for electrical engineer confirmed pool illumination level negligently low.
2016	Third bulkhead installed
2020-2022	Centennial Pool closed for 2 years and 7 months for COVID and installation of new, \$300,000 filtration system, plus \$250,000 pool leakage reparation

I am not aware of the actual costs, with some exceptions, of these upgrades, and reparations, but records confirm a request was made on June 2022, of HRM staff, to provide Council with a costing of Pool investments over the past twenty year period.

The legacy of this City of Halifax Centennial Project and that of the hosting of the inaugural Canada Games in 1969 has been, and continues to be significant.

In 2019, for example, a 65 year old member of the Halifax Chronos Masters Swimming Club, Linda Hunt, won the 100m Backstroke, in the 65-69 years age group at the World Masters Swimming Championships in South Korea. Her training over the past two decades has taken place exclusively at Centennial Pool except on occasions when the pool was closed for renovation and upgrading. (HCMSC currently has over 70 members.)

Earlier in the same year the Halifax Chronos MSC finished fifth of 105 teams at the Canadian Masters Swimming National Championships at the Claude-Robillard Pool in Montreal.

In 2013 a Masters swimmer from Ottawa, Lynn Marshall, established two world records when competing in the Annual Halifax Chronos Long Course Invitational.

In the 1970's the accomplishments of Halifax Trojan Aquatic Club swimmer Nancy Garapick, Canada's Female Athlete of the Year 1975, World and Olympic record holder and double Olympic Bronze medalist, precipitated several upgrades at Centennial Pool including the installation of Electronic Timing, a double-sided bulkhead and deck and pool tiling.

Further upgrades including the completion of a three-phase capital rehabilitation, including locker room refurbishment, completed in 2014 indicated the extension of the useful life of Centennial Pool through 2034.

Today the long course Pool typically averages 42 hours per week of open lane swimming and aqua-cise, whilst multiple competitive swimming, diving, artistic swimming, water polo, masters and other aquatic club teams utilize an average of 48 hours each week for training purposes. In 2023 Centennial hosted 16 competition events of up to two days in length.

The HRM *Long Term Aquatic Strategy* identifies it to be in the top category of the FCI (Facility Condition Index). This hardly describes a public facility fit for disposal. Given the significant investments made I believe due consideration is merited to the continuation of the function of Centennial Pool as well as the construction of a new 50m Aquatic facility.

Nigel Kemp
December, 2023

Subject: SAVE CENTENNIAL POOL

Public Participant Submission to:
Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Committee

January 18, 2024

Good morning. My name is Nancy Mahoney.

I have led water Aquasize classes at Centennial pool for nearly 20 years. I began at the pool myself as a participant and for many years I had suffered with severe sciatica. I have always found the water to be my most successful form of keeping fit and keeping my chronic pain at bay. I have had two successful back surgeries within that time period with obvious success. I delight in leading many toward continued good physical and mental well-being.

As we age, aches and pains are common elements of the process. Once one participates in an Acquasize class, a regular comment is... that they are 'good for the rest of the day. '. Think about that.....not a drug, not an expensive form of physiotherapy or psychotherapy... Just the movement of the body in the best medium possible... In the water, with its soothing and freeing properties which allow joints to move... Joints which on land are limited by gravity and weight. I have witnessed first hand the delight that participants experience being able to move, to exercise somewhat effortlessly in the water. It buoys them on a daily basis throughout a variety of physical and mental impairments I have had over these past 20 years at least six medical doctors who have been active participants in water acquasize classes and this, to me, speaks to the success of water programs not only for the aging but for all. To quote Dr. David Emrie, a regular centennial pool acquasize participant, a few medical facts backed by research:

#1 exercise helps older adults preserve their mental function as it helps prevent, or at least delay , the onset of dementia insusceptible individuals.

#2 because of the reduction of the weight of gravity, acquasize enables older adults, especially those with joint problems, to exercise at a much more intense and therefore more effective aerobic level.

#3 intense aerobic exercise like Aqua size helps to prevent coronary coronary artery disease.

#4 exercise classes preserve social functioning in the elderly.

#5 Acquasize is not just beneficial to seniors.... it is an excellent exercise in pregnancy especially late trimester

#6 it is helpful for rehabilitating injuries and those and for those with chronic diseases.

A few of my personal experiences and observations. ONE). Recently a woman who regularly swims wherever she can as she has severe MS has decided to participate in water Aquasize. Witnessing her joy at being able to join in gives me tremendous satisfaction at having helped to make her life somewhat richer.... I see it in her smile and in her determination!

Many of the exercise participants who come to this pool are seniors on fixed incomes who truly appreciate the affordability of the pool..... the costs of which are largely offset by the growing swim club

memberships, diving clubs, synchronized swimming, and other water sports. These people come by bus in all types of weather..... arranged drives, self driving and parking in the pools parking lot. to be able to come through that doorto walk in off the street....all at one level is a real bonus to those who come in walkers, with canes, and even one Doctor who himself used to come regularly on a striker bed lowered into the water with mechanical aids. In recent weeks, I have seen this same doctor coming in a wheelchair.

Given the large percentage of seniors living within the boundaries of the peninsula, many of whom, as I have mentioned , are on fixed income endeavouring to live their best lives, it would be devastating to them to lose this lifeline!!!

I would hasten to guess that this pool has saved the health care system millions of dollars as people have found alternate methods of coping with a variety of ailments.

To lose this community pool would be devastating to many on the peninsula. It is the only community pool of its size offering the diving capabilities and training for swim teams with its lane length as well as the water clubs and programs.

I have true passion for the well-being of those who attend water exercise classes at Centennial pool I would be happy to address any or all who are involved in the process of decision making regarding the future of this pool.

I have spoken to several participants regarding the possible closure and they are fully prepared to petition and protest in large numbers should that be necessary if the efforts move forward regarding the closure of Centennial pool.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my words.

Nancy Mahoney

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Subject: SAVE CENTENNIAL POOL

Public Participant Submission to:
Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Committee

January 18, 2024

Hello my name is Marilyn Pincock,

I am writing to ask for your help regarding the potential closure of Centennial Pool and the development that may occur on the Centennial site in the middle of HRM.

Since I moved to Halifax in 1989, Centennial Pool has been “my pool” – it’s where I learned the front crawl, where I trained as a triathlete for nearly 10 years, and where I now enjoy Aquasize classes three times a week.

I am a 67-year-old who lives in the West end and would be deeply disappointed to see the Centennial Pool site become just another ‘real-estate development.’”

I firmly believe the funds HRM Council used to fix Centennial Pool’s deficiencies in recent years have made the pool more useful than ever. I disagree that Centennial Pool is nearing the end of its useful life.

It begs the question: Why did HRM Council incur those expenses knowing it was for a pool that would be replaced elsewhere? At 55 years of age, Centennial Pool still has a large customer base and is one of the best pools in town. Surely, that was known when the renovations were undertaken.

We have the new YMCA pool where it’s difficult, expensive and time consuming to find parking, and it’s an expensive option compared to Centennial.

The population base on the Peninsula is not shrinking and will increase by thousands of new residents based on the apartment units under construction. That alone means the need for an existing 50-meter pool will remain consistent or be higher than ever.

Needham, at just 18 meters, is small for lane swims and Aquasize classes. DalPlex is often 100% at capacity (as is the parking situation there). The Canada Games Centre pool is often at capacity, and for seniors who live on the Peninsula, poses a barrier to getting there and for affordability.

I’m asking you to please re-visit the motion to replace Centennial Pool. We need it and it’s in the best condition it’s ever been in, thanks to the funds spent by our Council.

I support the construction of a new 50-meter super pool off the peninsula, as well as the revitalization of Needham Pool. However, more pools, not less, are needed and for different reasons to support our growing population - just not at the cost of disposing of the Centennial pool for economic development. Once it’s lost as recreational space in the heart of the City, it will never be regained.

A few reasons why Centennial Pool makes sense, not just for seniors who live on the Peninsula but also for many other residents who may not have vehicles or deep pocketbooks:

- Affordability - Financially, Centennial Pool works on a “pay-as-you-go” system, for the reasonable cost of \$3.00 per swim. There is no need for class participants or other swimmers to buy a membership, pre-register or provide any other up-front costs. No costly membership fees (sometimes exclusive) that include exercise facilities that are not used.
- Accessibility - The Aquacise participants very much appreciate the efficient and safe access to the pool. Right from the parking lot, the building entrance, into the locker rooms and washrooms and to the pool deck everything is on one level. This is a huge advantage for people who have difficulty walking, use walkers or wheelchairs, or people who have other health problems. There even is a therapeutic chair lift for those who are disabled.
- Location – Physically, it is centrally located on the peninsula and the downtown core, close to a number of residential neighborhoods. People walk, cycle, use public transit and drive to the pool. Free parking is available for those bringing their own vehicles or car-pooling.

HRM Council advocates for physical and mental health and its importance to its residents of all ages. From maintaining physical strength to avoiding social isolation for seniors, Centennial Pool’s Aquacize and lane swims improve the lives of many a senior. Well, I am speaking as one senior who cannot easily get to the Canada Games Centre or the Sackville or Dartmouth sportsplex complexes. And I am just one of the many!

Please keep Centennial Pool – we need it far more than a new luxury high-rise.

Thank you,

Marilyn Pincock

Subject: SAVE CENTENNIAL POOL

Public Participant Submission to:
Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Committee

January 5, 2024

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jim Parsons. Before I get to the purpose of this letter, I will say that I'm also sending copies of it to Lindell Smith and Suzy Hansen because in the past they have both been very helpful to the tenants after a fire destroyed a low-income rental property on Bloomfield Street across from where I live. I'm not sure how things are organized in city politics, but I want to make sure that Mr. Smith and Ms. Hansen read this letter.

I am writing in support of the Centennial Pool Committee in its campaign to save the pool from being sold to a developer who will tear it down and replace it with "possibly" (I am quoting a councillor) affordable housing.

First of all, I agree that Halifax needs more affordable housing. But I do not agree that Centennial Pool should be destroyed for the building site. The pool plays a very important role in the health and happiness of a large local community –people from all walks of life and income levels. Destroying it and building another off the peninsula would leave these citizens without a place to exercise and engage in positive social activity. I will comment more on other building sites, but first I'd like to address the unique usefulness of Centennial Pool.

Yesterday, as I was walking to Centennial Pool for my regular swim, I saw a man I sometimes chat with at the pool in the receiving line at The Parker Street Food Bank. I'm sure he wouldn't be travelling off the peninsula to swim if Centennial Pool closed. He couldn't afford the cost or the travel or the extra time.

There are hundreds of low-income families, some with people who have disabilities, all living within easy travel distance (I mean walking and biking) to Centennial Pool.

Children learn water safety every summer in the "Swim to Survive" program. Learning to swim is a beautiful gift that lasts a lifetime. I'm speaking from personal experience. It can also save a life.

Centennial Pool is very well used, thanks largely to its size and unique location in the heart of the peninsula. Over Christmas holidays, the pool was especially full and lively with coaches and children taking diving lessons, and of course the regular lane swimmers and aqua-fit participants.

Today at the pool there were several military personnel taking what appeared to be a survival course. Military personnel share swim lanes with the rest of us every day. Centennial is conveniently near the navy base and it keeps the soldiers in shape, as it should! And also, it connects them with each other and with the local community through healthy physical and social activity. Halifax is a military town, has always been. Let's continue, as a city, to give them our support.

Centennial Pool is situated such that many who use it can get there without needing a car. This helps reduce the traffic on our streets and the air pollution caused by car engines. And Centennial Pool uses solar energy.

Despite what some have claimed, Centennial Pool is not nearing the end of its life. The engineers and builders who just completed updating and repairing the pool –at the cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the citizens of Halifax –did not find anything wrong with the basic structure of the building.

Regular maintenance is normal and to be expected with any pool. On their website, the Centennial Pool Committee provides a long list of other pools that are much older than Centennial. Centennial Pool is not nearing the end of its life cycle.

The city is proposing to sell to a developer the land on which Centennial Pool stands for new housing. Apparently, a buyer is already waiting in the background.

Once sold, the land is lost to the citizens of Halifax forever. This deeply concerns me, as it should everyone.

There are other sites on the peninsula still left to fall into ruin that are perfectly situated and available for new housing. If history is any judge, developers cannot be trusted to build the housing they promise. We citizens are certainly aware of this. Please do not sell any more publicly owned land to developers.

For example, sites like Bloomfield School, still standing, though barely, and more dangerous every day. You can watch amateur videos on line made of the interior by people who have broken in. And there are random videos available on line of St. Patrick's Alexander School, too. And then there is the huge vacant lot where St. Patrick's High School once stood many years ago. All golden opportunities that have so far been wasted by developers who apparently care very little for the housing needs of our low income citizens.

I heard that a city counsellor claimed Needham Pool could serve the people who now use Centennial. I've been to Needham Pool. It is totally inadequate and is not a reasonable replacement for Centennial Pool. It speaks volumes when a city counsellor would say otherwise.

As everyone knows, Centennial Pool is a monument commemorating Canada's one-hundredth birthday. But it's more than something pleasant to look at (though it's architecture is indeed beautiful). It also contributes to the physical and social health of the people who live here.

Please do not sell more public land to a developer. Keep Centennial Pool so that in another fifty years it will still stand there beside the Citadel as a treasured landmark of our historic city.

Thankyou.

Jim Parsons

Subject: SAVE CENTENNIAL POOL

Public Participant Submission to:
Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Committee

January 18, 2024

Good morning. My name is Tanya Dutton.

I am writing to you today with dismay of the ongoing discussion of levelling Centennial Pool and potentially relocating the pool off-peninsula. As Councillor Smith represents my riding, and Councillor Mason has the land that the pool occupies, I felt it important to reach out to both of you. I have yet to have any engagement opportunities from the city related to this issue despite the fact that the pool is in my community and I have been a long time user.

I have a long history of using the Centennial pool. I learned to swim here in elementary school, being bussed in to use the facility from Fairview. As an adult, my husband and I have swam with the Masters swim team for over 20 years. I consider this facility to be a major reason why we are as healthy as we are today. We see a wide variety of community members using this space, not only teams but individuals of all ages from all over the peninsula. My 80 year old mom went to water aerobics for the first time in her life at Centennial Pool after my father passed. Currently this provides an inexpensive place for recreational activities for many people who can get here by public transportation or walking from many different neighbourhood.

As a physiotherapist x 32+ years working for the public health care system, it is unfathomable to me that, as we work to increase population density on the peninsula, that we would take away recreational facilities from these growing communities. We do not have adequate public transportation and roadways on and off the peninsula to be putting these recreational resources further away from the people! Especially those from lower economic situations who will be left with nothing in their neighbourhood- this would include my water-aerobic 80 year old mom. Walkable communities need to be that - walkable - if we are to make a dent in our communities health. We no longer can depend solely on the hospital fix-it shop and communities need these facilities to stay healthy and manage chronic disease. I do feel strongly that part of the municipalities mandate is to contribute to the health of it's citizens through good city planning.

What is the municipalities recreational plan as population density rises sharply over the next several years?

Halifax council does not have a great history of timely use of land for housing - Bloomfield school being an example of such. Due to provincial-municipal malfunctions, here we sit with a dilapidated school on a large property smack dab in the middle of the peninsula - prime property for affordable housing which is now serving as an unofficial, unsafe shelter for unhoused people. How long did the Red Cross building next to Centennial Pool sit abandoned

and it still is not usable for the community yet? How about the old library land for affordable housing - a heritage building, yes, but not being used and currently vacant vs a well-used Pool? How long has it sat idle? What other land spaces are available on the peninsula? Perhaps the previous St Pats land, which continues to sit vacant in the hands of a private developer, could have been a great spot for affordable housing too?

So are we to understand that council, contrary to past experience, will now be able to quickly flip the land that Centennial Pool is now on and will miraculously (and quickly) turn it into affordable housing to help with our current crisis in....when? So vacant land will sit where Centennial Pool once stood for years and years on end, with return to community use at what point?

In my neighbourhood I have seen so many smaller apartment complexes plowed to the ground, only to sit vacant and flattened, owned by private developers, with no plans to build for the next 4-5 years. So while the apartments lost were small in number they were greater than zero, as I look at three of such lots from my front porch. It is disheartening to see any rental properties levelled and not replaced for years by private developers, which seems opposite to an affordable housing strategy and getting our unhoused population housed.

Yet focus seems to be on levelling a well-used recreational facility, and that is the answer?

Thank you for your time,
Tanya Dutton, PT