

**PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL**

SUBJECT: Proposed Policy Change for the Aquatic and Fitness Center

BACKGROUND: At the Park and Recreation Advisory Board's September 19, 2012 meeting, Recreation Director, Julie McHale, proposed raising the age to enter the pool without an adult from 7 years old to 12 years old. PRAB members wanted to know: how many children would be affected by the change in age criteria; how many 7 to 11 year olds are at the pool every day; how many are left unmonitored; how many have disciplinary actions against them; is there a legal opinion; is the city in violation of any state law? More data was requested. PRAB was concerned about alternatives for these children and whether this would hurt the "good" kids more than solve a problem. Several possible solutions were suggested.

At the November 28, 2012 PRAB meeting Ms McHale had some answers to the previous questions. The data pulled from Rec Trac showed 76 youth pass holders 7-11 years of age who might be affected by changing the age. But neither that nor point of sale receipts were able to show whether the youth came alone or with an adult. Nor did it show the exact age of the child. Staff estimates that perhaps a dozen or so children arrive at the pool alone each day. There was no way to calculate the exact number of children this policy change would affect.

Furthermore, there is no record of disciplinary actions against individuals who visit the pool. There does not appear to be any state laws regarding this issue. Recreation staff researched the age minimum at other pool facilities and found a variety of policies. Minimum ages ranged from 7 to 14 (youth entering unattended by an adult). M-NCPPC required children 11 and under to be accompanied by a paying adult who is responsible for their supervision at the poolside.

DISCUSSION: Ms McHale proposed new language which would raise the age of youth left unattended to 12 years of age as well as new language for other pool rules. PRAB felt a person 16 years old or older could be responsible to care for children 11 years of age and younger. The changes read as follows:

- ◆ Children *11 and under entering the pool must be within sight and accompanied by a responsible person 16 years of age or older in appropriate swim attire. (*Children 12 years of age and over are allowed to enter by themselves)
- ◆ Non-swimmers and all children age five (5) and under in the water must be directly supervised by a responsible person 16 years of age or older in appropriate swim attire.
- ◆ Use of the baby pool (outdoor) shall be limited to children five (5) and under with their parent or a responsible person 16 years of age or older in appropriate swim attire.
- ◆ Children 11 years or under must not be left unattended.

CONCLUSION: PRAB supported the proposed changes, noting that times have changed and that children must be given more direct adult supervision in public places than previously.

Vote: 6 to 0

Respectfully submitted by:
Lola Skolnik, Chair
Park and Recreation Advisory Board