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INCORPORATED 1909

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Thank you for reaching out to members of Dormont Council and the Mayor with your concerns regarding the closure of Dormont Pool for the 2020 season. As you know, this is the 100th anniversary of the pool and we understand the disappointment and concern among the members of the community.

While it was not apparent from the post on the Borough of Dormont Facebook page, the decision was the product of borough staff and council consulting with recreation staff throughout Pennsylvania and our neighboring communities, as well as a review of state and federal guidelines and data provided by the CDC. Council deliberated on this decision during two public meetings: the Finance & Legal Committee meeting on April 28 and the May 4 meeting of the entire Council, both of which, while held via Zoom, were advertised and open to the public. In light of the information currently known about COVID-19, as well as Pennsylvania and Allegheny County's response thereto, Council decided that it was in the best interests of our residents, guests, and staff to keep Dormont Pool closed this year.

Pennsylvania has implemented a color-coded, phased system for the reopening of business and facilities in Pennsylvania (see attached). At the time of our meeting on May 4, Allegheny County was in "phase red," which meant that both indoor and outdoor pools could not open at all. We have since learned that Allegheny County will be transitioning to "phase yellow" on May 15, however pools are still not permitted to open during this phase. We would only be able to open the pool in the event that the County transitions to "phase green," and at that time we would be restricted to a total of 25 people per active zone, in addition to the CDC guidelines we considered above. We would only be able to open the pool without restriction once the County has been phased out of the color code system. There is no way for us to predict when the County will transition to green or phase-out, or if we will see a transition back to the higher restrictions of phase red, as other states have needed to do.

The CDC has published guidelines relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Council specifically had concerns with being able to comply with the following guidelines:

- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects each time they are used**. This would include at a minimum the bathrooms, showers, lockers, benches, slides, lifeguards' benches, deck chairs, picnic tables and swimming vests. It would be nearly impossible to manage cleaning and disinfecting each of these items after each use to comply with the CDC guidelines, and would likely require a considerable increase in the amount of necessary staff at the pool.

- **Testing the staff, lifeguards and cashiers daily before they can start work to confirm they have not been infected**. Widespread testing is not yet available in the United States, and measures such as temperature checks have been proven to be unreliable, as well as considered to be a medical procedure, which may require additional hiring of medical professionals on staff.

- **When pools open, we continue following social distancing**. Avoiding group events, gatherings, or meetings both in and out of the water if social distancing of at least 6 feet between people

who don't live together cannot be maintained. Again, it would be nearly impossible to keep children not related to each other six feet apart at the pool. Additionally, masks would need to be worn in all pool areas when not actively swimming.

- **Lifeguards who are actively lifeguarding cannot also be expected to monitor and enforce social distancing guidelines.** It's unreasonable, and unsafe, to expect lifeguards to enforce mask wearing and social distancing requirements, as this would distract them from their primary goal of protecting the safety of pool patrons in the water. The Borough would have to hire additional staffing to enforce social distancing guidelines as well.

- **Council had a serious concern that in the event of an emergency our lifeguards would be placing themselves in danger to exposure to COVID-19 if they had to render first aid to a patron.** We could not see how any community could ask a lifeguard, who in most cases are high-school aged children, to make a decision to place themselves in danger of infection in order to save a patron in distress.

We also considered the possibility of opening the pool at some later point in the season, but we did not think it would be a good use of taxpayer money to commit funds to open the pool when the future is so uncertain. Fixed costs to open and operate the pool include 1.5 million gallons of water, chemicals, supplies, equipment, parts, and labor to have the pool painted and inspected, as well as the hiring of lifeguards and staff. It is questionable whether we would be able to obtain needed supplies later in the summer if our suppliers have shut down; further, our pool management company has indicated that it is having difficulty finding people willing to risk their health for summer employment. While we could order the needed items today, we still do not have any guarantee that we will be permitted to reopen under state guidelines. Further, there is no guarantee that there would not be a reinstitution of more severe restrictions if new cases of COVID-19 increased after reopening

This was not an easy decision for any of us to make. Dormont Pool is a cherished community asset that is utilized by people all over the area. We recognize that this is not a popular decision, but we are confident that it was the right decision that was necessary for the safety of the community. We have been informed that at their May 11, 2020 meeting that Crafton Borough Council voted unanimously not to open their pool and would not be surprised of other municipalities in the area take similar actions.

We hope this letter has been informative and helpful for you to gain insight into our decision-making process with respect to the difficult decision not to open the pool. Please let us know if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Thank You,

Dormont Borough Council and Mayor Walsh