

# **Work Together To Keep Pools Operational, Community and Councillors Urge**

**More than 60 deputations expected at City Hall today  
with proposed pool closures only weeks away**

**Toronto, Ontario – April 15** – With half of the 79 Toronto District School Board pools slated for closure in June, residents from across Toronto will stand before the City’s Community Development and Recreational Committee today to express their concerns about the loss of this important recreational resource and urge the City to work in partnership with all stakeholders towards a shared goal of keeping the pools open.

“I agree with the residents of my ward and the thousands of people from every corner of this city who have shared their perspectives with councillors that preserving a robust network of pools is important to families and to communities across Toronto” stated Councillor Karen Stintz. While I recognize that each of the stakeholders – The City of Toronto, the Province and the School Board - has financial limitations, I believe that our pools are too valuable to lose.”

“All too often it is too easy to push the onus to act onto other levels of government claiming it is somebody else’s responsibility,” Councillor Stintz continued. “I disagree with that approach and believe that the responsibility lies with each of the stakeholders involved to collaborate to find a way to keep our pools open. This is not just about our pools – it is about finding a new way of working together to deliver the services that the families of Toronto count on. I hope that the Committee will agree with that approach.”

Last year, the Toronto District School Board established the Aquatics Working Group (AWG), to find long-term alternatives closing school pools. The AWG, led by former Mayor David Crombie, outlined a plan in March to reduce costs, increase revenues and strengthen the management of the school pools. Although a part of these recommendations include closing at least seven pools considered beyond repair, funds are still required to rehabilitate the remaining facilities and maintain regular pool programs.

Councillor Stintz and Councillor Bill Saundercook, both faced with potential pool closures in their wards, tabled a motion for the City to engage in discussions with stakeholders. The matter was referred to the Community Development and Recreation Committee.

## **Should the City Contribute?**

While the Province has made promising overtures regarding financial assistance, Mayor David Miller has publicly stated that it is not appropriate for the City of Toronto to assume any financial responsibility for the pools slated for closure. Instead, the Mayor has indicated that the matter falls to the Province, who is responsible for education funding. Not everyone at City Hall agrees with this thinking.

“To turn our back on this issue is inconsistent with our historical involvement in providing swimming facilities for Toronto residents,” said Councillor John Parker, a member of the Community Development and Recreational Committee. “The pools were first built with Toronto property tax dollars and I believe residents want us to find a way to keep them operating.”

### **The Community Demands to be Heard**

The intention of the TDSB to close pools generated a significant cry of protest from Toronto residents. For the past year, a non-partisan coalition of parents, students, concerned citizens and members of not-for-profit sports organizations from across the City have become united by a common interest to save the school pools from closing. With a database of over 2,000 individuals, ‘Let’s Make Waves’ has been able to alert community members about the pending closures in June and need for stakeholder discussion.

Over 60 people are expected to address the Committee today and insist immediate action be taken to develop an aquatic plan for the City, before any school pools are closed.

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### **For more information, please contact:**

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