



## Westbrook Water Talk: Your Voice Matters!

### Meeting One - Craig's Notes

Where are we now? A Retrospective on  
Westbrook's Water Amenities

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6pm to 8pm, Spruce Room, Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street, Westbrook

## About the Meeting

### Context and Objective

This is the first of three meetings to inform the public and collect public opinion about the future of our public outdoor aquatic amenities. The objective of this first meeting is make sure everyone understands why the Cornelia Warren Outdoor Pool was decommissioned in 2020 and the options and opportunities going forward.

### Water Talk Public Engagement Process

Meeting One	August 15	Where We Are Now
Meeting Two	August 28	What Do You Think?
Survey	Aug 28 – Sep 15	What Do You Think?
Meeting Three	November 14	Leading Options Feedback

### Today's Agenda

- 6:00      **Opening**
- Westbrook's Assistant City Administrator Angela Holmes will welcome everyone and kick-off the meeting.
  - Facilitator Craig Freshley will explain the public input process and the format for this particular meeting.
- 6:10      **Where We Are Now**
- Angela will provide an overview of Westbrook's past outdoor public water amenities (including outdoor pools over the years and the use of the Presumpscot River for recreational swimming), the circumstances that led to the decommissioning of the Cornelia Warren Outdoor Pool, an overview of citizen-led initiatives, available grant funding and limitations on how it can be used, and options and estimates that have been gathered thus far.

- Westbrook elected officials and other City Staff will be invited to share their own perspectives on where we are now.
- Members of the public will also be invited to share perspectives on where we are, and ask questions.

7:45      **The Process Going Forward**

- Craig will remind everyone of upcoming meetings and plans for the public input survey.

7:50      **Final Comments**

- Angela and Robyn will offer final comments and adjourn the meeting.

8:00      **Adjourn**

## Ground Rules

- This first meeting is all about understanding. Opinions later.
- Let's assume best intentions and demonstrate respect.
- We want to hear all questions and all views.
- Please be recognized before speaking and honor the process.
- Neutral facilitation and notes.

## Presentation

Westbrook's Assistant City Administrator and City Clerk Angela Holmes presented a slide show outlining the history of outdoor aquatic amenities in Westbrook, circumstances that led to the decommissioning of the Cornelia Warren Outdoor Pool, an overview of citizen-led initiatives, available grant funding and limitations on how it can be used, and options and estimates that have been gathered thus far.

See Angela's slides, provided separately.

## Clarifications

Following the presentation, Craig asked elected officials, city staff, and members of the public to ask questions and provide further clarifications, as follows:

- We don't have to have the same size or kind of pool that we had last time.
- At the last public meeting we had on this topic, there was no clear consensus.
- People in our community need access to water.
- The City Council wants to be as informed as possible.
- The team at City Hall are doers.
- No one at City Hall has a hopeful outcome.

- We at City Hall just want our marching orders.
- It's important to reach non-English speakers as part of this process.
- It's important that Westbrook continue with some sort of outdoor place to swim.
- The river is an asset of the state. We can't make alterations without state permitting. Further, changing the profile of the river would require involvement of the Army Corps of Engineers and approval of the Federal Government.
- Dundee Park in Windham is a good example of a municipal swimming facility in a river.
- People currently swim in the river all the time.
- The rivers water quality is safe for swimming.
- The most important thing is the safety.
- It would be good if we had some history of pool usage and projections for the future, should we build a new pool.
- Let's use this opportunity to think bigger than just a pool.
- A \$10 million project would probably require the City to come up with \$5 million, hopefully from non-tax sources.
- Building a cheaper amenity wouldn't mean that we would have leftover money for other things.
- Access to the indoor pool is currently quite difficult because it's used so much.
- Let's ask people how much they value swimming.
- The indoor pool is 50 years old. Last year it hosted thirty parties, 150 family rentals, open swim every Saturday, and 350 children were enrolled in swimming lessons with another 322 on the wait list. The pool is currently used from 5:30 AM to 10:00 PM.
- The School Department is currently working on a \$6-\$10 million update to the Athletic Complex. Could this be combined with a pool?
- It's critical that all kids in Westbrook learn to swim.
- Sanford has a municipal swimming place on their river.
- If we build a new pool, we need to consider what we're displacing.
  - If a new pool was built at the Westbrook Community Center, it would likely displace a soccer field.
- It's not about learning how to swim, it's about learning how to save your life.
- Let's not take too much time with this process. A decision needs to be made.
- Let's look at teaching 4th graders to swim, not just 3rd graders.
- Transportation is a huge factor in getting kids to the pool to teach them how to swim.
- We should have more coordination with the schools.
- It would be good to understand what grants we might be able to apply for.
- Older kids need to learn how to swim too, not just 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4th graders.
- The Westbrook Community Center is a good location for immigrants who live nearby.
- Not sure if there will be a public vote in the end; it depends on the scale of the project. If it's a very small scale or no project at all, the council will likely make that decision.
- The presentation was great. Now I have a better understanding of why we did away with the old pool.

- Please make sure that there is a public referendum on this decision.
- Please consider the tax impact.
- Consider the boat launch on Lisbon St.

## Take-Aways

City of Westbrook Project Manager Robyn Saunders reflected the following list of top take-aways that she heard, and that she intends to act on:

- Look into Tank 2.0 - A safe place to swim in the river
- Understand the dangers of the river
- Re Look at the top five locations
- Important to explore Synergy with the school department
- Consider usage. Projections
- Consider impact on taxes
- Get estimates for a splash pad
- Our indoor pool is good, but there's. Too much demand
- Research funding options

## Closing Comments

Angela Holmes thanked everyone for participating and encouraged attendance at the next meeting.