

**Mayor and Councillors**

TO: MAYOR & EACH  
COUNCILLOR  
FROM: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Schedule 4 to the Minutes of the  
Parks, Recreation & Cultural  
Services Committee meeting of  
Richmond City Council held on  
Tuesday, March 23, 2021.

**From:** Jim McGrath <jimcmgrath@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** March 22, 2021 12:03 AM  
**To:** Mayor and Councillors  
**Cc:** Louise Shaffer  
**Subject:** Petition Team Feedback on Steveston Pool proposed 2021 Schedule - PRCS-76  
**Attachments:** Petition Team Feedback on Steveston Pool proposed 2021 Schedule.pdf  
**Categories:** - TO: MAYOR & EACH COUNCILLOR / FROM: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

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To the Mayor and Council, City of Richmond:

We are 2 Representatives from the Petition Group that seeks to improve utilization of the Steveston Pool. Louise Shaffer and Jim McGrath are acting as a Delegation to the March 23, 2021 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Meeting on the topic of:


"PROPOSED 2021 OPERATING HOURS FOR STEVESTON OUTDOOR POOL - PRCS-76"

The attached document provides detail in support of the information that we will present to the Committee.

Thank you for reviewing this information.

Louise Shaffer: email [shaffer7@telus.net](mailto:shaffer7@telus.net)

Jim McGrath: email [jimcmgrath@gmail.com](mailto:jimcmgrath@gmail.com)

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MAR 23 2021  
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Date: March 21, 2021

To the Mayor and Council, City of Richmond

Subject: Petition Feedback on the proposed 2021 schedule for Steveston Pool

The Aquatic Services Department has submitted a proposed 2021 schedule for the Steveston Pool to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting of March 23, 2021.

As representatives for the Steveston Pool Petition Team, Louise Shaffer and Jim McGrath have concerns with this proposed schedule. The following outlines the background and detail for those concerns:

Background:

A Petition was presented to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee in the Fall of 2019. This Petition requested the following for the next season at the Steveston Pool:

- That the season and associated hours of operation be extended.
- That Length Swimming Hours be protected and continued for the duration of the new extended season.

The Committee at the January 28, 2020 meeting requested that Aquatic Services work with the Petition Representatives Team to create a "hybrid" schedule more suited to the needs of the public and with consideration of budget constraints.

After working together, a new schedule was created for 2020. This schedule was presented to the Petitioners through the use of "Focus Groups" requested and organized by the Aquatic Department. The schedule was accepted as presented and was to be presented to the Aquatic Advisory Board for the next approval. To our knowledge, this was never completed as no meetings occurred due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The 2020 swimming season saw no swim clubs or schools use of the pool. Instead, the Steveston Pool was solely opened for length swimming due to pandemic restrictions and appeared to be booked solid for the entire time the pool was open.

In January, 2021 the Petition representatives were asked to attend a Webex meeting where we were informed that no additional hours would be available for length swimming for the 2021 season. We were told that there would be no funds available for any additional length swims because swim clubs, school groups and lessons will have precedence.

A very unsatisfactory Pool schedule was subsequently presented to us despite the counter proposals that we submitted during 2 subsequent meetings with the Aquatic Services Team. Our objections to the final proposed schedule submitted as a "Staff Report" is the reason that the Petition Team are presenting at the March 23 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting.

Concerns and Information:

1. We recognize the challenges and restrictions of operating public swimming pools. These are exacerbated by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Outdoor activities are, however, both promoted and supported by public health authorities; this includes swimming pools (noting again that the outdoor pools were the only facilities open for use last Summer).

We feel that the pandemic will also affect this season of swimming in that further adjustments to schedules may be required.

2. The pool schedule submitted by Aquatic Services to the Committee reduces the number of hours allocated for Steveston Pool public/length swimming. It instead recommends that 2021 Public Swimming be scheduled for 457 hours over only an 88-day season.  
*Our concern is that this is 66 hours less than the 523 Public Swim hours over 104 days that were in place for 2019.* This reference to 523 hours is from Aquatic Services' Staff Report to the January 28, 2020 PRCS Committee Meeting.  
The Steveston Pool Petition was created towards the end of the 2019 swim season with the primary intention to increase (not decrease) public/length swim hours from the 2019 totals!
3. The schedule proposed by Aquatic Services appears to use 2018 as a baseline which is both inappropriate and very outdated. The demographics have changed in three years to include a population that is older and where more people work from home – both may now be able to swim more often.
4. The 2021 schedule proposed by Aquatic Services does not lend itself to improving Public attendance at the Steveston Pool. The afternoon swim sessions previously scheduled in 2019 for Public and length swimming (particularly in July and August) are irregularly replaced by swim club times. This inconsistency in scheduled hours of operation can be expected to cause the following impacts:
  - a. Reduced attendance by length swimmers, despite the majority of occupants in the Steveston Pool for 2020 being length swimmers.
  - b. Many Seniors will stop using the Steveston Pool.  
For instance; Seniors generally prefer weekday swimming, not weekends. *The proposed schedule does not accommodate this preference.*
  - c. Less working people may attend because they can only length swim during their lunch break, on weekdays. The new schedule removes many noon hour length swim opportunities.
5. The Schedule proposed by Aquatic Services states that the Steveston Pool “may stay open in September...”. This is contrary to the widespread belief that there should be a commitment now to keep the Pool open throughout that month. The rationale for this logical extension to the Pool season includes:
  - a. The weather in Richmond is still fine for outdoor swimming.  
The historical average Richmond temperature for September is 16 c. The average rainfall is 82 mm for that month. Source: *weather-atlas.com*.
  - b. We made it clear in this year's meetings with the Aquatic Services team that the 2021 schedule for the Steveston Pool should begin on the Victoria Day weekend (not May 1 as originally requested in the 2019 Petition) in order to ensure:
    - More public swimming hours in June; and
    - That the pool will be open to the public in September.

6. We have found it difficult to offer more reasons for our recommendations because of the unavailability of basic budgetary information (e.g., operating costs and revenue for the Steveston Pool). This fundamental information has been repeatedly requested from Aquatic Services since 2019.

In summary, we believe that the Steveston Pool schedule proposed by Aquatic Services should be revised to improve the utilization of this valuable facility and accommodate more public and length swimming.

We are not expecting nor suggesting that any changes be made to limit the access of any group's use of the Steveston Pool. We ask that the hours of operation be optimized to allow more equitable access for everyone to the facility.

We continue to be committed to working with the Aquatic Services Team in order to find more public swim hours and length swimming; and fully utilize the significant resource that is the Steveston Pool !

Thank you.

Louise Shaffer and Jim McGrath  
Representatives for the Steveston Pool Petition