

## Manheim Community Pool Update

As many of you know, the borough has been considering the future of the Manheim Community Pool for a number of years. In 2021, the parks/pool committee and borough council have been evaluating both the immediate needs and the long-term needs and plans for the pool facility. In recent years, the borough has been performing repairs and patching the pool surface to keep it operational. The facility, which was originally built in 1958, has reached a point where the temporary measures are no longer adequate to open the pool safely. The main pool, for example, is in need of complete resurfacing. This, along with a number of other necessary repairs, will be very costly. Cost estimates and quotes for all of the immediately needed repairs were obtained from several sources, including contractors and representatives from the YMCA. The total cost has been estimated to be \$350,000 - \$400,000.

It is important to note that this does not include any upgrades or repairs to the lap pool or the bath house, and it does not include any added or upgraded amenities or water features. Since the cost for maintaining, repairing, and operating the pool is borne solely by the taxpayers of Manheim Borough (**the annual operating deficit has been approximately \$100,000**), council has been concerned about this financial burden on the Borough's residents and businesses, especially since **only approximately 8% of borough residents utilize the facility.**

Council has sought ways to continue to have a pool for the community, including researching possible grants, as well as evaluating various partnership opportunities. With the YMCA operating the pool during the 2021 pool season, discussions about a potential partnership with the YMCA have occurred, including during recent parks/pool committee meetings that have been open to the public. Borough council and the YMCA believe the potential exists for a long-term partnership which could include additional services and facilities beyond just a 3 month per year outdoor swimming pool.

At the October 26 borough council meeting, council unanimously voted to pursue this partnership, as well as pursue grant opportunities, which would include a detailed, extensive feasibility study following the standards and scope of work established by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). This study is a requirement for applications for DCNR and will support applications for other grants as well. This study will be take place over a 6 – 9 month period after the consultant is selected, and will include a complete evaluation of the pool facility, the needs and wants of the community, and the financial viability of various options. This study will not begin with pre-determined outcomes, and will evaluate not only the outdoor swimming pool but other possibilities as well. The process will include opportunities for community input, and more details will be provided after a consultant is selected and the study begins.

To accomplish this in the most cost-effective way, Council also unanimously voted to not open the pool for the 2022 season. With the excessive amount of funds necessary to open the pool in 2022, council did not believe it would be fiscally responsible to expend those funds for what may be a temporary fix only to be later removed. Council felt that it would be more prudent to use funds that may be available to support the outcome of the feasibility study. Depending on the outcome, it should be noted that the pool will likely remain closed for at least the 2023 and 2024 seasons as well to allow for completion of the study, the securing of funding, and the implementation of the selected alternative(s).

This was a difficult decision that has been under consideration for many years. Council believes this path provides the best chance for a continued presence of a community pool as well as for improved recreational and public service facilities and programs.