



March 29, 2023

Old South Community Organization

Plan to Decommission Thames Pool: Update

The past several days have seen a swelling of community reaction to the City's initial proposal to decommission Thames Pool. As a beloved fixture in the Old South since 1927, an overwhelming sense of disappointment has resonated throughout the community accompanied by many opinions. Thames Pool's service as an accessible gathering space for all ages, combined with its role in teaching water-safety, first aid, and swimming skills, has made Thames a critical component to the Old South neighbourhood and to many communities throughout the City of London.

Given its significance, the initial City proposal to decommission Thames Pool was not favourably received within the Old South community and beyond. The most commonly cited issues with the initial report was the absence of community consultation in the planning process of Thames Pool's future and the narrow range of options presented in the report. Of further concern was the compressed timeline in which the report was released and then sent for voting to the CAPS committee followed shortly by City Council. This rapid succession of events has left little room for citizens and the community to voice their concerns, let alone provide an opportunity to explore alternative options.

While it is not a perfect solution, the proposal presented by Councillor Ferreira at the March 21 2023 Community and Protective Services Committee meeting both acknowledges and directly addresses two primary concerns of the community being the need for community engagement and a window of opportunity to explore viable alternatives. The multi-step plan, which permits minor repairs to maintain pool use for 2024 while providing time to seek other options for the site with thorough public engagement, has largely been well-received within the community.

From discussions within the community, the new proposal is generally viewed as a positive first step, in what is hoped to be a collaborative process moving forward. The Old South Community Organization is confident that through cooperative engagement from the community and City, a sustainable solution can be developed for Thames Pool.

Sincerely,

Nicole Phillips
(she/her)

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