

# REPORT / RECOMMENDATION



**To:** City Council

**Agenda Item #:** VIII.B.

**From:** Ann Kattreh, Parks and Recreation Director

**Action**

**Discussion**

**Date:** January 22, 2013

**Information**

**Subject:** Edina Swim Club Residency Requirement

## **Action Requested:**

Change the Edina Swim Club's current 75% residency requirement to 60%.

## **Information / Background:**

At the December 20, 2011 City Council Meeting:

**Member Sprague made a motion, seconded by Member Swenson, reaffirming the Edina Swim Club as the youth sports organization having primary access to City-owned swimming facilities and directing staff to draft an edited relational document and priority Aquatic Center Facilities Policy with a 75% residency requirement.** The Council discussed the motion and asked

questions of Mr. Keprios who explained the first priority was given to City programs, the second priority was designated to sports organizations and remaining pool time was offered to other users. Historically, the Edina Swim Club had not used evening hours, so that time had been offered to the Aquajets Swim Club.

Ayes: Bennett, Brindle, Sprague, Swenson, Hovland

Motion carried.

At the May 1, 2012 City Council Meeting:

Mr. Keprios presented staff's recommendation to adopt the proposed Priority Use of the Edina Aquatic Center Facility Policy and Relationship Document that reflected a 75% residency requirement for the Edina Swim Club and granting it first priority access. In addition, the Edina Swim Club must maintain its status as a nonprofit corporation in accordance with Minnesota law, and may not discriminate based on ability; however, may make team assignments based on demonstrated ability to swim 25 yards in both the freestyle and backstroke. **Member Swenson made a motion, seconded by Member Sprague, approving priority use of the Edina Aquatic Center Facilities Policy and Relationship Document, with corrections to grammar and capitalization.**

Ayes: Bennett, Brindle, Sprague, Swenson, Hovland

Motion carried.

As they prepared their request for Edina Aquatic Center hours for the 2013 season, the Edina Swim Club administrators realized that they were not meeting the 75% residency requirement which grants them priority access. In December 2012, the Edina Swim Club discussed concerns regarding the residency requirement with staff.

Current Edina Swim Club participants:

- are 71% Edina residents
- under age 12 are 85% Edina residents
- over age 12 are 52% Edina residents
- over age 14 are 41% Edina residents

Highly competitive swimmers are an elite group. Non-competitive swimmers typically opt out of Club swimming around age 13 due to time and energy commitments of competition. Those who stay in competitive Club swim 5-6 times per week, frequently race, often qualify for sectional and national meets, and often are recruited for college swimming. Due to the relatively small total number of teenage competitive swimmers, all clubs in the metro draw from outside their communities.

Board members from the Edina Swim Club will be present to make a brief presentation and answer questions.

Attachment A:

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 - Letter from the Edina Swim Club to Ann Kattreh

December 17, 2012

Dear Ann,

This letter is to provide you, the Park and Recreation Department, and the City of Edina with an update from Edina Swim Club and **to propose a revised residency requirement level of 60% for the Edina Swim Club to be named the independently incorporated youth athletic association for the sport of competitive swimming in Edina** per the Priority Use of The Edina Aquatic Center Facility Policy implemented April 4, 2012.

As you recall, a new policy for the priority use of the Edina Aquatic Center facility was developed and approved by the City on April 4 of this year. This new policy was the result of many discussions between the Edina Swim Club and various City staff as well as input from other swim clubs and City Council members. A key issue in the discussions was the “residency requirement” language for the new policy. The final document includes a 75% residency quota as one of the tenets to ensure the Edina Swim Club will have prioritized scheduled access use of the Edina Aquatic Center facility’s available rental times and sections.

At the time of the discussions, our historical data for residency showed levels around the 75% mark. Subsequent to the new policy approval in April, we put a new process in place for annual enrollment to ensure 100% accuracy tracking residency status (or the equivalent of residency i.e. attending school in Edina) for the 2012 – 13 season and all future enrollments.

As we prepared to submit our request for the Edina Aquatic Center hours for the summer of 2013 we pulled our residency data details and realized that we currently do not meet the 75% requirement. Importantly, to meet the 75% requirement would mean turning away not only fledgling swimmers but also top-level, competitive swimmers who reside in other communities. Turning away these swimmers has the perhaps unintended consequence of significant negative impacts on the Edina Swim Club, including:

1. Lost revenues (at \$800 - \$1500 per year, per swimmer)
2. Adversely affecting the ability of the Edina Swim Club to maintain national status as a top-tier swim club.
3. Competitive swimmers we turn away then join the very club(s) we are vying with for Aquatic Center time.

### Initiatives to Increase Resident Participation

We are implementing programs to continue to boost the number of Edina residents who are in the Club. **However, even with these initiatives we do not project we will be able to attain and sustain the 75% mark.**

Two key initiatives underway to boost resident participation in the Club:

1. A new “fitness and prep” program for high school swimmers.
  - a. There are many swimmers on the Edina high school swim team who do not participate in Club swimming. These are teenagers who participate in other sports and activities and do not have the time or financial resources for full-on, competitive Club swimming. Our new program will include several short sessions per year, at reduced pricing and time commitments, to encourage teens to prepare for the high school swim season or cross-train for other sports.
2. A “feeder” program in conjunction with Community Education swim lessons.
  - a. We are working with the Community Education staff to include Edina Swim Club advertising in the Community Ed brochures, develop a new “Competitive Swimming Readiness” class, informational fliers, and “education nights” for young swimmers who have finished the highest level of Community Ed swimming classes and are candidates to join Edina Swim Club.

### Club Costs Are Not Comparable to Park and Rec Sport Costs

While Club swimming has some similarities with other Park and Recreation sports, there are important cost differences that are critical factors when making decisions about the Club and its status within the City. **Loss of revenue from turning away non-resident swimmers can have significant negative impact on Edina Swim Club’s sustainability and growth.**

#### 1. Facility Costs

- a. Unlike baseball where fields are plentiful and free to use, Edina Swim Club must compete for limited pool space with other groups in the community such as school gym classes, high school swim teams, synchronized swim clubs, and community education.
- b. Edina Swim Club spends approximately \$126,000 per year renting pool space at Edina pools. Our annual expenditures for Edina pools increased this year as we shifted significant pool rental hours away from Blake and into the Edinborough pool.
- c. Edina Swim Club is currently in agreement with the City of Edina to pay an annual guarantee of \$53,000 for pool use at Edinborough Park. This agreement ensures a revenue stream to the City that helps allow the park and pool to continue to operate.

## 2. Professional Coaches and Management Costs

- a. The largest expense for the Edina Swim Club is paid coaches. Unlike Park and Rec sports where coaches are volunteers or receive nominal per diems, the Edina Swim Club has three salaried, professional coaches and 8 – 12 part-time paid coaches throughout the various seasons.
- b. The Club leases office space and pays an Office Manager for 30 – 40 hours per week.
- c. Additional employee costs include travel and per diem for coaches for “away” events such as regional and national meets, which can include air travel and hotel.

## 3. Oversight and Costs from Multiple Organizations

- a. Edina Swim Club must meet the requirements and follow policy guidelines not only for the City of Edina Park and Recreation Department, but also for Minnesota Swimming and the national organization, USA Swimming. These organizations require insurance, background checks on coaches, coach certifications, and administrative policies. This means costs for the Club that need to be covered by revenue.

A key point to note about the Edina Swim Club: **we are and will continue to strive to be a strong partner with Edina Park and Rec to provide a top-level swimming program for Edina youth.** The Edina Swim Club is based in Edina and will continue to be an integral part of the Edina athletic community. The vast majority of our younger swimmers are Edina residents or attend Edina schools.

**We are also a nationally recognized swim club.** This national recognition comes from our conscientious and diligent pursuit and retention of top coaches and top swimmers. This national status brings a positive light to the City of Edina: when newcomers move to Minnesota and look for the best schools and best communities to live in, Edina is one of the top communities on the list. As a nationally recognized club, the Edina Swim Club can add to the overall draw of the city.

A 75% residency target may have worked for the Edina Swim Club 10 or 15 years ago when the residency target of 75% was initially proposed– the Club was smaller and not as robustly developed as it is today. However, 75% is an untenable target going forward. **We respectfully request an amendment to the Aquatic Facility Policy for a residency rate of 60%.**

Sincerely,

Cyd Perszyk  
President, Edina Swim Club