City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2015

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, ACTING CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CHINQUAPIN AQUATICS CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY

Through the FY2014 budget discussions, City Council approved $500,000 in funding for a feasibility study to determine the viability of constructing a 50 meter competition pool and renovated recreation pool at the Chinquapin Park Recreation Center and Aquatics Facility. The City released a Request for Proposals (RFP) and selected the firm of Hughes Group Architects (HGA) to complete this study. HGA began the work in February 2014.

In May, 2014, City Council received the HGA report for Task 1A of the study, which included a preliminary assessment of the existing site, constraints of the location, and an initial analysis of the market for aquatics in Alexandria. This preliminary work determined that a 50 meter pool addition is feasible based on the physical conditions/constraints, that Alexandria's market could sustain an expanded aquatics facility, and that the projected cost was consistent with the City's proposed capital improvement budget of $20 million for the Chinquapin expansion (assumes private fund raising of $2.5 million). Based on these findings, HGA began Task 1B and additional tasks were completed to further determine feasibility including, a detailed market analysis, constructability and estimated overall cost.

Building on their earlier work, HGA began Task 1B by directly engaging Alexandria residents and aquatics stakeholders in order to better understand the program needs and opportunities for expansion. Additional site concepts were presented and evaluated by the community. The report details additional potential schematics and an in depth market analysis. The preliminary findings highlighted in the report include:

- Survey results show sufficient demand for new aquatic programs and a 50 meter pool;
- Market profile supports a two pool system that meets operational cost recovery goals (i.e., excludes capital cost recovery);
- Demand for lap and recreational swimming in Alexandria is very strong;
- Only 4 of the 12 pre-concept site schemes meet the "go/no-go" criteria for further analysis; and
- Community input (through public meetings and online engagement) allowed HGA to shape a single preferred scheme for cost analysis and additional design development.

Both Task 1A and 1B Reports can be found at: http://alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default-78867.html

Based on the findings and the ability to focus on one site alternative, staff recommended that the consultant refine and provide more detailed cost estimates, including both hard and soft expenses, for an expanded facility in order to ensure that the project was within the available capital budget.

In November 2014, HGA provided a cost estimate for the new 50 meter pool and renovated recreation pool, with a caveat that they were not at the design phase yet, so the estimate is of rough magnitude. It has been my experience that early estimates of capital costs for any type of project are optimistic and tend to migrate upward over time. This November 2014 cost estimate was significantly higher than the $20 million previously projected in Task 1A, and staff noted a number of elements that were not included in the estimate, but would likely increase the cost when addressed. Staff requested additional information, and HGA provided an updated cost estimate, including items requested by staff. The updated estimated cost for the 50 meter pool (i.e., 25 yards x 50 meters) expansion now totals $30.7 million. The estimated cost for both the 50 meter pool and renovations to the existing Chinquapin recreation pool totaled $41.7 million. In addition to the estimated cost of a 50 meter pool expansion, subsequent to receiving the $30.7 million estimate for a 50 meter pool staff then requested an alternative estimate for the addition of 25 yard x 25 meter pool (regulation size), which totaled $20.5 million. The FY2015-2024 CIP provides for $20 million, including $2.5 million to be raised by the stakeholder group, Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics. Based on these estimates a 50 meter x 25 yard pool far exceeds the planned CIP investment, but a 25 meter x 25 yard pool exceeds, but not by a great amount the $20 million planned in City CIP. A summary of the cost estimates is attached.

HGA noted that the budget estimate is intended to capture a line item budget cost for the project at a very early stage of the feasibility process and is based on assumptions informed by historical data to quantify the as yet to be designed elements of the building, the site, its surroundings and the condition of the existing building. In particular soil conditions in the Chinquapin area have often been problematic and at this stage in the planning no soil borings have been undertaken.

Based on the findings from Task 1B and the subsequent cost estimates, staff requested that HGA pause/stop work on the feasibility study to allow for a discussion with City Council and the public regarding how and if to proceed with the project. A public meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2015, at which time the consultant will present their findings to and answer questions from the public. Staff will continue discussions with Council as part of the FY2016 – FY2025 proposed CIP consideration process.

Attachment: Chinquapin Aquatic Center Feasibility Study Cost Estimates

cc: Emily Baker, Acting Deputy City Manager
James B. Spengler, Director, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Jeremy McPike, Director, Department of General Services
Laura D. Durham, Open Space Coordinator, RPCA
Chris Bever, Assistant Budget Director, OMB

Chinquapin Aquatic Center Feasibility Study Cost Estimates

	Soft Costs	Hard Costs	Total Cost
50 Meter Pool Addition	$6,430,130	$24,287,488	$30,717,619
Improved (Existing) Recreation Pool	$2,226,865	$8,742,425	$10,969,290
50 Meter Pool Addition and Improved (Existing) Recreation Pool	$8,656,995	$33,029,914	$41,686,909
25 Yard x 25 Meter Pool Addition	$4,373,153	$16,118,463	$20,491,615