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City of Richmond

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Public Notice – June 4, 2020

From: Jon Moore, City Manager
jmoore@cityofrichmond.net

Re: Camp Richmond and Community Pool – Summer 2020

It is with deep regret and after considerable review by the City Manager, Recreation Director and Pool Director of 19 years we have made the determination that it is not feasible to open the Richmond Community Pool or Camp Richmond this late in the summer season. We have come to this decision based on the health and safety of our residents and staff.

The review began after the sudden timing of Executive Order 2020-110. Richmond like many communities across the state has been rapidly trying to adjust to the unexpected decision to open pools and summer camps. This sudden unexpected change by the Governor has many communities searching for qualified lifeguards. The pool takes one week to drain, clean and make operational. It then takes up to two weeks to stabilize the water for the County inspection.

The Richmond pool normally advertises positions in March, hires staff in April, trains in May and opens in early June. With the uncertainty of many of the early Executive Orders the City in good conscience could not hire lifeguards in April for a pool that at that point did not appear would open. As a result many of the potential lifeguards found other employment for the summer. This has left Richmond without enough qualified lifeguards to open safely.

Along with the critical staffing issue, the safety of our lifeguards having to rescue or perform first aid on someone who may not show symptoms is of deep concern to the Pool Director. The City of Richmond is not alone in making this difficult and unfortunate decision as more cities and counties are coming to the same conclusion.

Camp Richmond presents similar problems with staffing. At this point in the summer we are normally fully staffed at camp and have had our camp inspection. We have the same hiring issues for camp as the pool.

In addition to the staffing issue, we face social distancing requirements that will be very difficult to comply with. Although the Camp staff we have are excellent, trying to keep children aged 6-12 socially distant does not seem feasible.

We also have facility issues that make running Camp Richmond not possible. Currently, indoor recreation centers such as our Richmond Community Center are still closed to the public based on the most recent Executive Order. During inclement weather, the Community Center was used as safe shelter for the campers. Without the Center we would need to rely on the pavilion. The City's outdoor pavilion is not sufficiently sized to be able to handle the camp staff and campers while still complying with the social distancing guidelines. Even if Recreation Centers are opened later there is no guarantee that the occupant load would handle camp.

Due mainly to the staffing and social distancing guidelines still in place, we will not be able to open Camp Richmond or the Richmond Community Pool this summer. These are difficult decisions and we hope that everyone understands they were not taken lightly.

In a more positive move, under Executive Order 2020-110, the City has begun to open other amenities in the City Parks. Play structures are already open and the City is working to open the Skate Park, basketball courts and bathrooms the week of June 8th as outlined in a public notice issued the morning of June 4th. We hope that you take a moment from your busy schedules to get out and enjoy the parks that we have in our community.

The Recreation Department is developing on-site and virtual programing that will allow residents to enjoy recreation in a safe environment. Please follow the Recreation Department on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/RichmondRecreationDepartment> and the City website www.cityofrichmond.net to stay informed of new offerings by the Department.

During this time when Camp Richmond and the Pool are closed, the City Council, Recreation Board and staff are reviewing all of the park facilities and equipment to determine if this downtime may also present an opportunity for park improvements. We will share any developments from this review through Facebook and our website.

For additional information or questions related to the Richmond Parks, please contact the Recreation Director Margo VanHove at 586-727-3064 or parksandrec@comcast.net.