

Community Update with Mayor Nickels

8-30-2009

“Non-Resident Fees for Aquatic Center”

This past week the Parks and Recreation Committee approved a recommended fee schedule for the Aquatic Center which is planning on opening the summer of 2010.



The fee structure would be \$4.00 for adults, \$3.00 for children ages 3 to 17, and \$3.50 for senior citizens. This fee would be for City of Manitowoc residents, as well as non-residents.

I have gone on record opposing this recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Committee. I am, and always have been, a strong proponent of implementing non-resident fees. I support that because I believe strongly that the citizens of the City of Manitowoc are already undertaking the burden of the bill.

The Herald Times Reporter had an editorial in yesterday's paper suggesting that the City should charge the same price for everyone. Their claim is that; "perception is everything, nobody likes to be charged a different price for the same service, and a two-tiered pricing system could drive away business in the long run if people perceive it as discrimination." They say this even though there already is a separate pricing system in place. As I said earlier, children would pay \$3.00, seniors would pay \$3.50, and adults would pay \$4.00.

On the point that they made about driving away business in the long run, let's look at a few examples of other communities with aquatic centers. The three aquatic centers that we used most often as comparables were; Fond du Lac, Brookfield, and Port Washington. Fond du Lac has a non-resident fee of \$3.50, I could not find their resident fee but they specifically pointed out their non-resident fee. Wirth Aquatic Center in Brookfield has an adult fee of \$3.75 (that's 18 and above) and a youth fee of \$2.75, that's compared to their non-resident fees of adult \$5.50 and youth \$4.25. Those are daily passes for morning and evening. Port Washington was the comparable that we used the most because it is much like Manitowoc in many regards. On their website under fees it states specifically at the bottom, "please be prepared to show proof of age and residency. All non-resident fees are \$5.00", their resident fee is \$3.00.

Johannes and Resch Aquatic Centers in Green Bay have a non-resident fee, Kenosha, Edgerton, Onalaska, Omro, Watertown, Plymouth, La Crosse, and Wausau are examples of communities that have a non-resident fee.

A non-resident fee will not drive away business and it will not be seen as a "we-know-best" attitude. It is a common practice amongst several communities throughout our state and country. The Aquatic Center is a service that we provide to the Citizens of the City of Manitowoc first and foremost.

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A non-resident fee is fair. Your and my tax dollars are going to build and support this facility, and I want the citizens of the City of Manitowoc to have a discount when it comes to using this facility, and reduce that extra burden upon them.

Also, please remember to slow down in school zones to 15 mph since school is starting this week.

