

From: Michael Ganem - Park&Rec Director <parkrec1@southbury-ct.gov>

Sent: Monday, April 13, 2020 12:48 PM

To: George Bertram <Selectman.Bertram@southbury-ct.gov>; cdrosa7304 <cdrosa7304@charter.net>

Subject: Edgewood Pool and Tennis Club

I appreciate the passion displayed by the residents of Southbury about the consideration for the Town of Southbury to purchase the Edgewood Pool and Tennis Club. Discussions about the condition of Ballantine Pool are not new among the Southbury Parks and Recreation Department and its Commission, the Board of Finance, the Board of Selectman and the Strategic Planning Commission.

In June of 2019, a pool committee was established to begin the process to determine the options of “good, better, and best” for the Southbury Town Pool at Ballantine Park. After several meetings that included Dan Colton, Director of Finance; John Cottell, Director of Public Works; Jeff Manville, First Selectman; John Michaels, Chairman of the Board of Finance; Maria Papiro, Aquatics Supervisor; Charlie Rosa, Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission; Michael Rosen, Selectmen and Liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission; Michelle Rosen, Member of the Parks and Recreation Commission; and myself, it became apparent to many of us that the scope of any project at Ballantine Park would be greater than anticipated.

The pool committee contracted with the architectural firm of Weston & Sampson with whom the members of the committee discussed the town’s needs and wants. From my perspective, a couple of points derived from Weston & Sampson became clear to me. 1) The projected costs associated to repair or replace the pool at Ballantine and to create an ADA compliant facility were eye-opening and a project done correctly will likely take at least several years to complete. 2) The costs associated to upgrade or enhance the pool and its surroundings so to realize a few wants, such as a splash pad, additional security measures and additional parking, would be double.

At the point where an additional and significant investment of time and money would have been required to ascertain bid specs to conclude what industry knowledge tells at least me, and that it was prudent at this juncture for the Town to investigate further options. Part of this investigation included the feasibility of Edgewood.

At a minimum, there is an opportunity to, expand recreational opportunities for the citizens of Southbury with the acquisition of additional facilities. Southbury Parks and Recreation currently has very few scenarios where we can light courts or fields; there are zoning restrictions and economic considerations to account for. Edgewood offers 6 illuminated tennis courts, an illuminated full size basketball court, and two illuminated paddle-tennis courts. Parks and Recreation programing under the lights can be expanded to include:

- Tennis leagues and tournaments
- Basketball leagues and tournaments
- Pickle ball leagues and tournaments
- Paddle-tennis leagues and tournaments

These programs would be geared to our 18 years and older patrons whom are currently underserved due to limited hours available on weekdays from 6:00PM to sunset. All Southbury Parks, with the exception of Community House, are open from sunrise to sunset. There is only one field that is permanently illuminated at Community House; a softball field.

The pool at Ballantine has well served the community. The Parks and Recreation and Public Works staffs will continue to maintain the pool, the pool equipment, the pool fixtures, and the facilities and grounds to the best of their ability. However, there will come a day when a substantial investment is required to keep the current pool running. Should the town acquire Edgewood, the plethora of parks and recreation swim programs will continue without interruption to produce beneficial results. In addition, we will have the ability to serve a more diverse demographic who will enjoy the zero-entry and the ever-more popular water spray and splash features.

The building at Edgewood could also provide an opportunity to expand programs and offerings. There are several areas of interest. Including but not limited to:

- Kitchen and snack bar
- Exercise equipment room
- Multi-purpose room
- Staff offices and breakroom

Then, because of the expansion of facilities, there will be new opportunities at Ballantine Park. Opportunities so exciting that the “ad hoc task force to study the Edgewood property” has committed to further volunteer their time to study the next steps at Ballantine. Given the passion that was displayed by the community about the potential purchase of Edgewood, I am optimistic about the future of Ballantine Park and for the future advancements of our parks and our recreational offerings.

Sincerely,

Michael Ganem, Director

Southbury Parks and recreation