

Flin Flon and Creighton public take a closer look at pool's future

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Wins Bridgman of BridgmanCollaborative Architecture went over options for the future of the Flin Flon Aqua Centre during an information meeting Tuesday.
- PHOTO BY KELLY OSWALD

Residents from Flin Flon and Creighton voiced their opinions about the future of the Flin Flon Aqua Centre at an information meeting Tuesday night.

Previously, BridgmanCollaborative Architecture had recommended two options for the facility, including the same pool basin being reused with added features like a fitness room, or a new building with similar features and a larger price tag.

The majority of those attending previous information meetings agreed with option 4, which would reuse the pool basin and carry a price tag of \$7.7 million.

Tuesday's meeting, held in Flin Flon's city council chambers, saw some discussion carry past option 4 and into options 5 and 6 – which would both see brand new buildings and, with option 6, a larger facility.

Arts council **POLL**

What would you like to see the Flin Flon Arts Council do next?

- One of the acts that visited Flin Flon recently
- More major productions like musicals and festivals
- More shows involving Flin Flon performers
- Expanding existing events like Culture Days and Blueberry Jam
- Something I've never seen before - surprise me

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The options carry a price tag of \$11.7 million and \$17 million respectively.

Concerned parent Melissa Danis currently has her two children in swimming lessons at the Aqua Centre but worries about the size of the current pool and its features like the platform.

"The safety of the pool and the way it is right now, and if it's going to stay that way, in my opinion, is absolutely reckless," said Danis. "There were 16 little kids in the pool at one point. There was a 4:1 [ratio] of little kids, which was great, but they were all in the pool on these two little docks. It just doesn't seem to make sense to me to stick with the same thing [and] to just give us a few more rooms but the pool is going to basically be the same."

Marcella Poirier, also with Bridgman Collaborative, pointed out Danis' concerns could be covered under options 5 or 6.

Not pragmatic

Danis said she would love to see option 6, the brand new facility, in the community, but it didn't sound pragmatic.

"Realistically," Poirier said, "option 5 with a new basin would not be designed for an under-Olympic sized pool. We wouldn't put in a new basin with the exact same specifications of your existing basin."

Other concerns heard Tuesday night included accessibility to the current pool as well as the future pool for those with special needs.

City councillor Karen MacKinnon asked if there was an option to have a portable lift available at the Aqua Centre, relaying a concern that had been brought to her attention.

"As a city, you should have a portable lift," said Poirier, "because under human rights legislation it's known as 'undo obstacles' [and means] someone cannot use that pool."

While Poirier says the lift is not the best solution available because it does not support the independence gained from a zero-entry level pool, "it absolutely removes an undo obstacle for someone to use the pool."

Lifeguard and instructor Katie Kozak shared her concerns over the concept of the pool designs, ranging from how slippery the pool deck gets to a proposed therapeutic pool and barrier-free entrance.

"There are all kinds of options to look at for a barrier-free approach," said Poirier. "And if you did look at building new, we would really encourage that. It's a really important feature."

The current basin, which is about four decades old, would not support a zero-level entrance because that would eliminate at least one lane from the pool.

"You do have the length, but you can't give up the lanes because otherwise, how do you have a swim meet?" Poirier asked rhetorically.

Some of the discussion surrounded the current basin and the option of having a new one installed, as in option 5.

Poirier explained that the current Aqua Centre building shell is at the end of its life cycle. The basin, however, is not. At 40 years old, the basin could still have another 40, or more, years in its life cycle.

City of Flin Flon recreation manager Mike Dubreuil said the life cycle is hard to determine on a concrete basin, as often other factors like the rebar fail well before the basin.

In studies conducted, he said, the basin and its components looked good.

Steering committee

A meeting will be held in May to determine a steering committee for the future of the Aqua Centre.

Dubreuil encourages area residents to attend the meeting, for which a date has yet to be set.

Poirier agreed, as she said the steering committee needs to be diverse in age, gender and ability.

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