

FLIP Unveils Pool Plans in “Friend-raiser”

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Nancy Bingham designs her dream pool at the table provided for children’s activities during the informational evening hosted by the Friends of Lopez Island Pool.



A crowd of more than 60 Lopez residents attended the 2nd annual Splash party, organized by the Friends of Lopez Island Pool (FLIP), June 27 at the Community Center. The evening, termed a “friend-raiser,” focused on updating the community on FLIP’s progress and future plans.

Opening with the history of efforts to build a public pool on Lopez, FLIP Steering Committee member Lori Taylor noted, “We’ve been very busy since our last Splash event a year ago.” She proceeded to outline the 15-year effort, culminating in the formation of FLIP two years ago. The past year marked numerous milestones, including acquisition

of donated land adjacent to the school, successful fund raising, county permit applications, and water and septic planning, all accomplished with the untiring efforts of a half-dozen dedicated Lopez residents.

Richard Lundstrom, project manager from Heery International, and Dennis Berkshire from Aquatic Design Group, discussed what a pool facility on Lopez might include. Variety of uses, eco-friendliness, and Lopez-appropriate design, constrained by climate, water availability, and regulatory requirements were all discussed. Details of construction materials, filtration systems, revenue and expenditure estimates, staffing considerations, and landscaping all focused on minimizing costs while meeting the needs of the diverse Lopez community. “We spent a lot of time looking at what works on Lopez,” Lundstrom commented.

The presentation culminated in unveiling a conceptual site plan that includes a 25 yard long, 4 lane wide lap pool and a warmer, shallower instructional and therapy pool. Reception and administrative space, mechanical rooms, bathrooms and meeting/activity areas are included in the design. Estimated construction costs based on other completed facilities would run \$4-5 million, and ongoing maintenance could cost up to \$200,000 annually. Many construction expenses could be mitigated by island resources and are dependent on volunteer participation. Financials will be more specific as plans become more solid with community input.

A question and answer session addressed several challenging issues as specifically as possible given the phase of concept development. Copies of the site plan, frequently asked questions/answers and feedback forms will be available in the next few weeks in several places around the community. FLIP will also be holding home meetings to gather input. Audience response was engaged and inquisitive, including this comment by Asha Lela to FLIP volunteers:

“We really appreciate all the hard work the group has put into this, and the thoroughness of the plans so far.”

The evening concluded with a warm “thank you” to all the wonderful support FLIP has received and a reminder that the next critical phase includes transitioning from a steering committee to the formation of a board of directors with an Advisory Committee, and developing the capital building and operational endowment fundraising strategy. Before leaving the Center, many islanders signed up to assist with fundraising, planning and construction. As a community pool is an asset with widespread benefits, FLIP is asking everyone to “dive in” with whatever help they can give. More information is available at www.lopezislandpool.org.

Gene Helfman photo