

Garden Hills Pool & Park Association, Inc.

Sunday, June 14, 2020

Garden Hills Pool Community,

COVID-19 has had an unimaginable impact on every aspect of our lives – and the Garden Hills Pool is no exception.

Back in February, the 14 volunteer members of the Garden Hills Pool & Park Association (GHPPA) Board were excited and ready for the 2020 season having lined up an exceptional team of managers, lifeguards and swim coaches. By early April, it became clear that we could not predict the impact of the virus on the operation of the pool and we began making plans to delay the 2020 season. Garden Hills Pool is a City of Atlanta facility funded completely from annual membership sales. Despite concerns about selling memberships this year, the Board chose to use our facility improvement reserves to maintain our full-time staff and continue to prepare to open to the public.

On May 21st, Mayor Bottoms released a five-phase reopening plan for the City of Atlanta. You can find the specific details of this plan at: www.AtlStrong.org. The City of Atlanta is currently in Phase 2.

During a conference call with the Parks & Recreation Department on June 1st, Garden Hills, Chastain Park and Piedmont Park pools were informed that, based on the five-phase plan, the City did not anticipate any of their outdoor pools to open sooner than July. The Chastain Park Pool leadership and I informed the City that by not opening our pools before July, the 500+ youth who participate on the Atlanta Swim Association (ASA) swim and dive teams hosted at these two facilities would miss a qualification deadline and be forced to miss the entire season. The City acknowledged the situation and allowed us to present proposals to utilize the facilities for the teams while minimizing the risk of spreading the virus.

The Garden Hills CoolSharks Swim & Dive Team Coordinator, Sharon Bray, worked tirelessly to prepare a well-conceived plan to meet the guidelines concerning the spread of COVID-19. The plan addresses the requirements for public pools from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Georgia Department of Public Health, the Fulton County Board of Health and the City of Atlanta.

The City reviewed the plans from Garden Hills and Chastain Park and on Thursday, June 11th granted approval to open both facilities to the swim & dive teams. Our plan specifies highly supervised access with no more than 25 swimmers & coaches in the facility. It restricts anyone not on the swim team, including parents, visitors and/or siblings, from entering the facility. Swim lanes are limited to two swimmers. Traffic into the facility is one way, with the gate to the Garden Hills Playfield used for exiting the pool... and much more. The City will monitor the implementation of the plan with unannounced inspections.

The GHPPA Board has spent the past few months preparing to open the pool to the entire community as soon as permitted by the City of Atlanta. While we continue to work with the City to allow public access, we have the facility and staffing ready to allow the swim & dive team to start practicing – in this limited capacity – as soon as Monday, June 15th. Please note that registration for the teams has closed for the 2020 season and we are not able to accommodate any additional members.

We recognize that you are anxious to enjoy the fun and relaxation of the Garden Hills Pool that has been a part of our lives for many years. Until we have more details from the City of Atlanta, the GHPPA Board has decided to not sell 2020 annual memberships. We simply do not have enough information to make any commitments.

We are hopeful that in a few weeks the City will allow us to open. When that happens, we will act quickly to communicate how we will handle admission, memberships and abiding by whatever guidelines the City presents to us.

Until then, thanks for your patience and support. Please sign up for our Splash newsletter at www.gardenhillspool.com so we can keep you updated on our progress.

Jack Alexander
President, Garden Hills Pool & Park Association