

# Worksession

<b>Agenda Item #</b>	7
<b>Meeting Date</b>	April 7, 2008
<b>Prepared By</b>	Suzanne Ludlow, Deputy City Manager
<b>Approved By</b>	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager

<b>Discussion Item</b>	Piney Branch Pool Funding Update
<b>Background</b>	<p>An indoor swimming pool is attached to Piney Branch Elementary School. It has been operated by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation since 1971. The Silver Spring YMCA operated the pool under contract with the County between 2002 and 2007, but ceased operation in September 2007. The pool is closed at this time.</p> <p>The two major alternatives being discussed by Montgomery County regarding the facility are to reopen the pool or to close the pool and convert the space to a gymnasium.</p> <p>The City Council has adopted two resolutions urging the County to reopen the pool.</p> <p>This worksession discussion has been scheduled to provide an opportunity for Mayor Williams to update the Council and the public on the status of County funding for the pool.</p>
<b>Policy</b>	The Takoma Park City Council makes recommendations on Montgomery County facilities that serve the Takoma Park community.
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	N/A
<b>Attachments</b>	Resolutions 2007-35 and 2008-19
<b>Recommendation</b>	
<b>Special Consideration</b>	

Introduced by: Councilmember Seamens

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

**Resolution #2007-35**

**In Support of Continued County Operation  
Of the Pool at Piney Branch Elementary School**

**WHEREAS,** for many years, Montgomery County operated the indoor swimming pool at Piney Branch Elementary School; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** for the last five years, the Silver Spring YMCA, under contract with the Montgomery County Public School system, has managed the pool; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** the YMCA has declined to renew its contract to operate the pool and operation of the pool has been suspended; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** as stated in the 2005 update of the Montgomery County Recreation Plan, the pool serves the southeastern portion of the county, particularly south of the Beltway in the Greater Silver Spring/Takoma Park area; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** the Piney Branch Pool is the only Montgomery County indoor public pool inside the Beltway; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** residents of Takoma Park and southern Silver Spring have little access to other indoor public swimming pools; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** 35 persons, including many young people, and several individuals living outside the City of Takoma Park, spoke out at the Takoma Park City Council meeting of September 4, 2007, in favor of keeping the pool open; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** students at Piney Branch Elementary School testified that the pool is a special aspect of their school experience and helps make the school a unique place; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** other major users of the pool include the Blair High School swim team, the Masters swim team, area afterschool and summer camp programs, and individuals; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** petitions to keep the pool open were submitted to the City Council and included 781 names, approximately 300 of which are Piney Branch Elementary School students; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** the Montgomery County Council and the Montgomery County Public School system have been working hard to improve nutrition, increase physical activity within the community, and encourage a healthful lifestyle; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** providing recreational facilities is part of the County's commitment to public health; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** Takoma Park and southern Silver Spring are heavily developed, with little space available to build new public recreational facilities; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** the existing downcounty recreational facilities should be preserved, renovated and maintained; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** reopening the pool, and committing to good programming for and promotion of the pool, would serve the Silver Spring and Takoma Park communities which badly need this facility.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the City of Takoma Park strongly urges that Montgomery County keep the County pool at Piney Branch Elementary School open to the public.

**ADOPTED** this 10th day of September, 2007.

Introduced by: Councilmember Wright

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

**Resolution #2008-18**

**Second Resolution In Support of Continued County Operation  
Of the Pool at Piney Branch Elementary School**

**WHEREAS,** in 1969, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the lead representatives of the City of Takoma Park, the Montgomery County Council, the Montgomery County Board of Education, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, providing for the transfer of land at the intersection of Grant and Maple Avenues from the City of Takoma Park to the Board of Education for a school with community facilities for the Takoma Park-East Silver Spring area; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** as a result of that agreement and for 36 years, Montgomery County operated an indoor public swimming pool at Piney Branch Elementary School; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** operation of the pool was abruptly suspended in September, 2007, to the great dismay of many people in the community, as documented in Takoma Park City Council Resolution #2007-35; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** the County is now trying to determine if the pool should be reopened or converted into a gymnasium and has asked the Takoma Park City Council for input on this decision; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** as stated in the 2005 update of the Montgomery County Recreation Plan, the pool serves the southeastern portion of the county, particularly south of the Beltway in the Greater Silver Spring/Takoma Park area; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** the Piney Branch Pool is the only Montgomery County indoor public pool inside the Beltway and residents of Takoma Park and southern Silver Spring have little access to other indoor public swimming pools; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** the Takoma Park community has also been advocating for a new gymnasium and it has been determined that the pool facility is the same size as would be needed for a gymnasium; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** the Takoma Park City Council held a public hearing on February 11, 2008 to determine the sense of the community on the question of whether the pool should be reopened or converted into a gymnasium; **AND**

**WHEREAS,** all fifteen persons testifying at the public hearing or submitting written testimony

advocated for the reopening of the facility as a pool; **AND**

**WHEREAS**, Councilmembers who had toured the pool area with the school's facilities manager found the pool to be in generally excellent condition; **AND**

**WHEREAS**, to make best use of the pool throughout the course of the day, some changes to the school building may be advisable to better separate the pool and locker area from the rest of the school building; **AND**

**WHEREAS**, one of the persons testifying at the public hearing suggested that equipment be installed to allow disabled persons to safely enter the pool; **AND**

**WHEREAS**, many persons testifying at the hearing suggested programming and promotion ideas to increase usage of the pool from the level of usage in recent years; **AND**

**WHEREAS**, given the lack of available open land in the Takoma Park/Silver Spring area for the development of new recreational facilities, existing downcounty recreational facilities should be preserved, renovated and maintained; **AND**

**WHEREAS**, the public pool at Piney Branch Elementary School is one of these valuable downcounty facilities which should be saved.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the City of Takoma Park again strongly urges that Montgomery County keep the County pool at Piney Branch Elementary School open to the public; **AND**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City Council requests Montgomery County to allocate funds to perform all required improvements to the pool, its supporting equipment, and the school it resides in, to make the pool a fully functioning community pool; **AND**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City Council requests Montgomery County to allocate funds to allow the pool to be reopened in the very near future and to be well programmed with aquatic activities, so that it will be an effective community resource.

**ADOPTED** this 19<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2008.