

Pool again hot topic of discussion at Council

By Anthony Welch

If they were ever in a swimming pool together, Manitou Springs City Councilman Michael Gerbig and Manitou Pool Director Roy Chaney just might splash water on one another.

Chaney was at the Council meeting Tuesday to discuss the pool's business plan for a proposed weight room addition and answer any questions. Gerbig was the most vocal on Council regarding pool matters. He questioned pool rates and possible conflicts of interest with Chaney using the pool for the Manitou Springs High School swim team and his Torpedoes swim club.

City Administrator Jack Benson expressed his support for Chaney and the pool in a memo to Council. He said he didn't see any conflicts of interest. While Chaney overlaps his duties as pool manager with coaching the Torpedoes and the high school team, both activities actually benefit the pool on the revenue side, Benson said.

He mentioned he also spoke with city attorney Jeff Parker and personnel policies, and Parker concurred that there was no conflict of interest.

Gerbig said he thinks Chaney has done a great job for the city. His main concern was the Torpedoes and if that organization was taking up precious community time in the pool.

"It's about a particular business operating-within our pool," he said. "I'm talking about how to make this more a community pool."

Gerbig agreed with Chaney that he wants the pool to be a top-notch recreation center for the community. He added he would like to see open swim hours for the public around the hours of 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Gerbig also questioned the \$20 an hour rental rate and whether it was where it should be compared to other similar facilities.

Benson said fees are something maybe City staff should look at, especially as Council moves into the budget planning process. He suggested that perhaps the pool could charge different fees for residents and out-of-town patrons using the pool.

When Chaney first came onboard, he said he observed the time period Gerbig spoke of for a year. He discovered it was the deadest time of the day for the facility.

"In my first year, we had a pool with nobody here," Chaney said. "A lot of pools are shutting down and you have to find ways to bring people."

Chaney doesn't feel neither of his swim teams' practice schedules affect pool business because only a handful of people come in during the evening hours.

"If anyone is using it now, it's Torpedo kids. They're the ones who are paying and coming during open swim," Chaney said.

He added that Torpedo parents often use the weight room, and that additional revenue is made from Torpedo swimmers buying concessions at the pool as well.

"All I did was try to make a program and try to get the kids involved," Chaney said.

It was suggested that perhaps the City draw up a written agreement with Chaney for use of the pool by the Torpedoes. Councilman Rick Barry and Councilwoman Aimee Cox liked that idea.

"I think that's really good to have in the future," Cox said. "And we need to have a model of how we develop fee structures, so it doesn't look like (Chaney), who operates the Torpedoes, are keeping rates down for yourself."

"We have a private entity using the facility. We need to have a contract," Barry said. "That's just a common sense issue. We do it here with rental of city hall."

In other business, Council...

- Approved an ordinance to adopt the 2011 Pikes Peak Regional Building Codes on first reading.

- Approved a resolution to end mandatory watering restrictions. Storms have filled Manitou's reservoir allowing for the restrictions to be lifted. Residents will be asked to voluntarily follow Level 1 restrictions.

- Approved an ordinance to amend the 2011 budget.

- Upheld a decision by the HPC to approve construction of a home at 5 Keithley Place.

- Heard from Avenue Hotel Bed and Breakfast owner Randy Hodges, who announced he plans to run for an at-large Council seat in the November election.

[Return to Article Index](#)