

Attn: Haines Borough Assembly
Re: Resolution 14-04-547

I am a 10 year resident of Haines and regular user of the Haines Borough Pool. The pool was one of the reasons I selected Haines to live in. For me it is a source of exercise, mental health and overall well being. It is a place for all ages of people, all levels of physical ability, for serious athletes, people desiring gentle physical therapy, and everything in between. It is not season or weather dependent, and is one of the most affordable and accessible forms of recreation in our community. As a life- long and once competitive swimmer who has experienced multitudes of pools, I can also testify that we have an awesome pool, as salt water system it's a facility of high caliber.

The pool is also hurting. On a small level, the building lacks needed updates: tiles are missing from the showers, the rust in the lockers is so extreme that there are actual holes between the stacked units, yellow police tape holds together the bathroom stalls and locker rooms are, in general, outdated. On a more significant level, funding for critical repairs needed for the actual pool in past years (such as plumbing and major leaks) have seemingly had to be defended and fought for to happen. The most significant indicator that the pool is not getting the financial support it requires are the reduced hours of operation resulting from recent budget cuts. My personal ability to use the pool has been compromised due to these cuts.

Based on these factors, the proposition of a sauna is completely irrational to me. If the pool already struggles to be maintained, how can this sauna not add to the problem? If the Borough struggles to care for what it has, why is creating another thing to care for (of which might be categorized as a total luxury item beyond the caliber of the facility and community) even being contemplated? I do not believe the sauna will increase facility use: there is not a large enough user group; I don't believe many people would pay for a sauna experience; conditions under which most people feel comfortable in a sauna will not be met in a public space; the locker room condition could discourage new users; and even if funds to create the sauna are found, where will the funds come from for inevitable repairs and maintenance if these are already hard to provide for the existing pool and its infrastructure? Repairs and increased maintenance are realities for any resource.

If the Borough has managed to find extra funds to apply to the pool facility, I'd like to be able to swim in the evenings again, see more promotion and activities at the pool, not need a tetanus shot to utilize the lockers and ensure the funds are there for the inevitable repairs and maintenance required. This Borough facility is a valuable resource, please consider supporting what we have before compromising it further with the burden of a sauna.

Thank you,
Andrea Nelson