

South Pittsburgh Reporter

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This week's poll

How do you feel about the South Side Summer Street Spectacular?

- I love it and go every year
- I think it's okay, but don't always make it
- I don't care one way or the other
- I find it a minor nuisance
- I don't like it at all and hope it goes away

Residents brainstorm on saving rec facilities

By Al Lowe

Contributing Writer

Mount Washington resident Ann Massucci said she goes to that community's Olympia Park and to Ream Swimming Pool so often that the mailman ought to deliver her mail there.

"My pool is going to be open," Massucci said at a brain storming session held Feb. 27 at the Duquesne Heights Community center, where 11 residents talked of ways to stop any plans city officials may have to close swimming pools and recreation centers.

The attendees, mostly from Mount Washington, were concerned about Ream Pool and the Olympia Community Recreation Center, both in Mount Washington, but said they also cared about similar places closing in other areas due to the city's budget crisis.

Mark Rauterkus, who helped organize the meeting, passed out flyers, which explained his concerns on the matter. "Grass roots efforts to better handle the places and programs where we all come to play are starting," the handout said. Rauterkus can be reached at his cell phone at 412-298-3432 and at Mark04@Rauterkus.com, <http://Play.CLOH.Org>.

He invited attendance at two upcoming meetings. Pool and recreation center cuts, among other issues, will be discussed at a South Side Planning Forum session on March 9 at the Brashear Center starting at 5:30 p.m.

Rauterkus hopes to get more than 100 city residents to attend the next meeting at the Duquesne Heights Community Center at 6 p.m. on March 24. He is also inviting various public officials so they can respond to questions.

The brain storming session was sponsored by Boosters for the Duquesne Heights Community Center.

Mary McCoy told the group she was a veteran of a similar battle when everyone rallied together to save Whittier Elementary School from closing.

"We have to have a rally and have kids out there so the cameras can pick them up and so people will look at those poor kids with no place to go," McCoy said.

"We have to keep in touch with other groups in the city," Rick Bobak added.

Massucci said she and other parents volunteered to work at the parks and pools for free but city officials rejected their offer.

"There's a conflict brewing between the unions and volunteers," Rauterkus said, adding that some union officials might not be too happy that volunteers want to take union jobs.

"We have to hold city officials accountable," Massucci said. "We got to get off our duffs," she said.

She was concerned that if pools and community centers close, "we'll never get them back."

The Duquesne Heights Community Center on Sweetbriar Street is run by the Mount Washington Community Development Corporation and should not be affected by the cuts.

Rauterkus talked about the programs offered there and heard compliments about how nice the center was.

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- 02.MAR.04 New program helps congregations determine 'public value' properties
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- 02.MAR.04 Bible Study group forming in South Side
- 02.MAR.04 One local hearing this week before the Pgh. Zoning Board

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