

Two Whom It May Concern:

The history of the pool as shown on the GSHPRD website explains that the pool was built in 1939 during the depression as a project of the WPA established to get people back to work. What this history omits is why the citizens of St. Helens appealed to the WPA to build them a pool.

The previous summer **3 people drowned** in the Columbia River off St. Helens. The community was brought together by grief and worry to take action to prevent further tragedies. This was the reason the pool was built, to protect children and to save lives. Over time, some people have forgotten this, some have never been aware.

The pool was built next to the High School on property owned by the St. Helens School District, so it became part of the school district. Admission to the pool was free to the public. The City of St. Helens made its contribution to the welfare of the community and to support the pool by never charging for water.

In 1985 the pool was shut down by the school district due to budget cuts. Again the community rose up as the pool had become an integral part of its assets. Assessing the situation and determining the best option for sustainable operations of the pool, a measure to establish the Greater St. Helens Park and Recreation District was placed on the ballot. Most public pools in Oregon belong to Park and Recreation districts and the formation of such a district would allow growth and expansion for the services of the district in the future. The measure passed easily and a tax base was established for the pool. The admission fee, which had been 50 cents at that time, was raised to be comparable to similar pools and to increase the pool's self-sufficiency, but the City of St. Helens kept its promise of a free water supply.

In its almost 79 years the City has never charged the pool for water. It has been a gentlemen's agreement. Unfortunately, those unaware of this history might think that the city has made an oversight, or that the operation of the pool is something to exploit, rather than to support.

It is important to keep in mind that it is a public safety issue to ensure that the pool remains accessible and affordable to all members of our community.

Christine Eisenschmidt

Former Chair of the E.P.P.C. (Eisenschmidt Pool Patrons Committee) and "Pool and Rec 1990", the committee that worked to establish GSHPRD.