

## Who decides what for others

Letter to the Editor,

I attended the pool information meeting October 18. While I didn't agree with many things that were said, I thought that for the most part the meeting was conducted in a polite, professional manner. The exception is that whenever certain questions were asked, the group of pool advocates that attended became very loud, interrupted everyone, and seemed to feel they were better qualified to answer the questions than the experts that were there for that purpose. The questions that seemed to get the loudest reaction generally had to do with money.

One question was regarding the big slide that is necessary to create lots of excitement. I asked the cost. I managed to hear the pool designer answer \$250,000. He also said that slide would not require extra certification for lifeguards, but that the proposed pool would require more life guards than Norton has been hiring.

The second question I asked was how much would the proposed bath house cost? The man who designed the pool and came up with the estimated cost said he didn't know. At this point it got so loud I really couldn't hear much else, but someone shouted that it was on the web site. From a different source, I have learned that it is expected to cost about \$770,000.

The third question someone asked was the total cost of the proposed pool. Both the bond man and the pool designer said a little over \$4,500,000. The host for the meeting said you have to remember that there will also be at least \$2,000,000 in interest over the

next 20 years. The pool advocates all shouted that he can't include that. One forcefully said that if someone buys a house or a car for \$60,000, no matter what the interest is, it is still only worth \$60,000. We all know interest matters. The new pool may cost \$4,500,000 to build, but the city of Norton will have to pay about \$6,500,000 for it.

The host of the meeting also started to say that the citizens of Norton should know that property taxes for the city, the county, and the school will be going up 25 mills. All the pool advocates started shouting and interrupting. They said that had nothing to do with the pool, so no one should even mention it. Once again, they were trying to tell others what they could say. We will be voting on a sales tax increase, and we should know what other taxes will be paying in order to decide how much more we can take. Besides increased property taxes, city utility rates go up three percent every year by ordinance, nobody knows for certain whether or not the state sales tax is going to go down, and if Governor Brownback's proposed income tax changes go through, the lower and middle income tax brackets will be paying more than they are now.

What really angered me the most was something that was said by one of the more out-spoken members of the pool promotion committee. She demanded to be given the floor to make a statement. She then said that anyone who wasn't for the new pool and wasn't willing to pay that little bit of sales tax shouldn't live in Norton. When she finished, all of the rest of

the pool advocates that were there actually applauded, agreeing with her. Apparently, the pool promotion committee feels that they not only get to decide who says what, but also who deserves to live in Norton and who doesn't. I thought we lived in a democracy where people are free to think for themselves and to vote as each one feels is right.

I mentioned to one of the other pool advocates how outraged I was by that comment, and she tried to say that wasn't what was said, and tried to rephrase it so that it wasn't quite so offensive. That is exactly what was said, and no matter what spin anyone tries to put on it, it is an insult to the citizens of Norton.

The actions of the pool advocates were so deliberate and organized that it looked like they didn't attend the public information meeting to ask questions, but to control what information was given to the public. Does the pool promotion committee have the right to decide what information the public should or shouldn't have? I can't help but wonder what it was that the pool promotion committee worked so hard to keep us from learning. Shouldn't the voters be given all available information and not just what a small group of people want them to have? Some of the information that they have distributed is not exactly accurate, but they were allowed to say it. Why do they think they have the right to stop others from saying that can be factually documented:

Marie Moritz, Norton



## A different perspective on the new pool issue

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen of the City of Norton. I am concerned about the not only the tax for a new city pool but also concern for the type of a pool that the other townfolk would like to proceed forward with getting. I am not against building a new pool, but I am against building outside the means of the population. I am also concerned with the state of our movie theater.

First, I have seen all of the other people that have wrote in for support of this new pool proposal. Second, there has only been one write in printed in your newspaper that was against the proposal for the tax. Third no one seems willing to admit that our movie theater is the only movie theater within 60 miles that is not digital or has 3D even Oberlin has 3D.

I feel that there are other people in town that feel the same way that I do and that it would be nice to have a new pool, but for this size of town the only way to pay for a facility that has a pool in it is if that facility is indoors and is open all year. To build a pool for over \$4 million and not have it in an indoor facility open year round is insane. The City of McCook is building a new facility that will house their new police station, fire station, and city offices that is taking up a whole city block for only \$6 million. Phillipsburg is building a new pool that will be INDOORS that will be able to have water aerobics year round and also be able to conduct physical therapy sessions year round for their hospital.

So for all of the people that say you should vote yes for the pool so that they can continue the water aerobics or so that we can keep up with the Jones' (other towns also putting in new pools), then maybe they can donate the money for the pool. But we know how the donations work just look at our way behind the times movie theater. I know there are other families that like me can't afford to spend more money in taxes while raising children in these times. Yeah it's not that much of a tax especially if the state lowers the sales tax, but who is to say that the sales tax won't be raised in 3 to 10 years after now.

Let me repeat this again. I am not against a new pool that would be in properly budgeted for the community or even a \$4 million that is inside a facility that has other activities in it. But I am against funding a pool that is for \$4million that is an outside facility that is only open for at most 4 months out of the year. So I am asking the other townfolk to think about their decision before they vote and ask "is funding a pool of that amount that is open for only 4 month as wise choice of where to send our money by creating a new tax code"?

I know for a fact that I am not the only person in Norton that likes to leave Norton to go shopping for groceries in Nebraska just so that I can get out of town. How many others really do this besides me? Because for those that are like me we are not going to contribute to this new tax from buying in town when most of what we buy is out of town.

Respectfully,  
Jeff Burton

## Keeping Norton a vibrant community

Dear Editor:

This coming Tuesday your citizens have an opportunity to keep Norton moving in a positive direction into the future when you vote on the proposal to build a new swimming pool in Norton. For any community to stay alive, it must continually strive to attract new residents, especially young families, who become the lifeblood of the city. Attractants include (but not limited to) great schools, a strong job market, and activities for both young and old to participate in outside the normal working day. Norton is in an enviable position in that you have so much to offer in these areas, including a quality public school system as well as post-graduate study in the new Nurse's Program at the Clinic Annex, a low unemployment rate with strong manufacturing, business and professional vocations, and activities that run the gamut from little league

sports, to an outstanding recreational lake, to an active Senior Citizens Center. All these make for a fabulous quality of life that makes it an obvious choice for either raising a family, working at your chosen profession, or choosing as a place to retire.

The building of a new pool will only enhance the many positive aspects of your town. The old pool has been of great value to you for over 60 years, but its days are numbered. Whether now or in the very near future, it will have to be replaced. With the current attractive interest rates available, plus a labor situation among contractors that is also very favorable, now would be a much better choice rather than waiting just a few years and have a structure failure dictate the terms. The Pool Committee has done an excellent job of assessing the needs and desires of the community, all with keeping a close eye on budget constraints, and has presented you an

option that will serve you well in the many years to come.

As someone who grew up in the Norton area (NCHS '65), and who spent many enjoyable days and years at the current pool, it is very gratifying to see that Norton is being given the opportunity to continue to stay progressive in actively attracting new and young families to your area. My generation can show their desire to keep Norton and Norton County as the vibrant, family-oriented living environment it has always been by supporting the vote FOR the proposed new pool on Tuesday, November 6. The sounds of joy and laughter coming from the new pool will let you know you made the right decision.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jay and Rita (Rasmussen) Rowh  
Former residents of Norton

## There must be a more affordable option

Letter to the Editor,

It seems like every one you talk to agrees that something needs to be done

about the pool. It would be great if we could have a nice brand new pool, if we can afford it. If...

Frankly, our utility bill is strained to the limit because of the huge debt owed on the water treatment plant and sewer system. The water delivery system is also very old, and will require a large investment to repair or replace it.

As I understand it, a bond issue is on the ballot intended to raise over \$7,000,000 including interest for the pool. It is suggested that a .75 percent increase in sales tax that may or may not be a net increase of only .15 percent, will fund the project.

I have always wondered if a less expensive repair would be more appropriate, but surely the city council has already looked into alternate remedies. Come to find out, there is a much less expensive option.

Mr. Bill Germaine from Stockton, Kansas owner of Pools by Germaine, has repaired many area pools with a fiber glass liner for less than (are you sitting down) \$100,000. He contacted Mr. Lawson, but to date has not received an invitation to present this option to the council.

This does not make sense. Vote NO, on the pool.

Len Coady, Norton

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## Athletes support the new pool

Letter to the Editor

We are writing this letter on behalf of most members of the Norton Blue Jays Football team to express our support for the new swimming pool and a vote of YES on November 6, 2012.

Conditioning is a very important component that contributes to the strength of our players. The swimming pool provides a safe venue for conditioning when the weather is extremely hot. The pool is utilized several times during the first weeks of practice.

In addition, many of us have fond memories of the time we spent at the pool during the summer months. It makes us sad to think that a town the size of Norton may no longer have a swimming pool that provides an affordable, refreshing summer activity for its youth and its families.

We have a TREMENDOUS community that supports the youth in wonderful ways, through support of the schools, activities and athletics. We believe that an investment in a new swimming pool is an investment in our young people, our community and our future. Please vote YES on November 6, 2012. Proud to be a Blue Jay!

Respectfully

Coach Melvin, Coach Fiscus, Coach Hawks, Coach Gordon, Coach Kendall Fiscus, John Risewick, Jacob Brooks, Dalton Miller, Andrew Ellis, Carson McKenna, Jared Bohl, Eli Bozarth, Treven Rossi, Lane Bigge, Lucas Engel, Dylan Sprigg, Toby Nickell, Drew Schrum, Austin Hager, Trever Lewis, Tanner Furbush, Ethan Ross, Travis Cressler, Cole Renner, Cody Temmel, Kolton Harting, Andre Valencia, Mickey Hahn, Kendall Miller, Derick Campbell, Kobie Unterseher, Christian Boser, Jared Tallent, Stewart Whitney, Breven Sondergaard, Derek Rowh, Tyler Kuhn, Jordan Karnopp, Wyatt Harting, Conor Cox, Riley Hager, Gavin Lively, Quinton Porter, Nick Peterson, Mike Kasson, James Berry, Cameron Heikes, DJ Nickell, Dalton Pfannenstiel, Tevin Brown, and Kyle Bell

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