

PENNSYLVANIA'S BEST HOMEPAGE 2013

Pool leaks challenge Shippensburg officials

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Leaks at Shippensburg Borough's Memorial Park pool continue to challenge the pool's operators.

Parks manager Kip Fordney and Councilman Joe Hockersmith - who serves on a park advisory board - are taking a close look at a second repair option after hopes soared two weeks ago after discussion of a proposed fix from a Florida company.

Consideration of a fiberglass epoxy and matching paint surface was abandoned when the distributor of the product was unable to provide references for its product or a warranty for the results.

Further investigation led Fordney to what is touted as a revolutionary product called UltraGuard, manufactured and distributed by Pool Restoration of New Jersey.

The cost of repairs appears to be increasing, but initial reaction from borough officials suggest a reliable fix may justify the price.

"We're still trying to figure this out," Hockersmith said following a meeting with Fordney at the pool Thursday morning. He says the cost of materials could run as high as \$20,000, but the work will come with a 10-year warranty.

The volunteer Friends of Memorial Park Pool have offered \$10,000 they have in their account, and are working to raise more contributions in the community.

Council President Earl Parshall says it may be advisable for the borough to hire a contractor to apply the UltraGuard material.

"We have a lot going with our borough people," Parshall says. "This is a busy time of year. They're working on the ball fields at the park, our mandatory curbside garden waste collection is coming up and we have a week of bulky collections to do. Contractors would be experienced at this and have all the safety equipment needed for the job."

Time is a growing concern. The pool is slated to open May 26 and operate on weekends for the first few weeks of the season.

That opening date could be at risk.

"We're not giving up on opening for Memorial Day," Hockersmith says. "It's possible to get it done, but in the end what we want is a long-term fix that will save water, chemicals and money in the future. That's what we have to sell to council."

Hockersmith he wants a complete proposal available when council meets again May 1 - the next opportunity to get the expenditure approved.

Ken Bankoff, a partner in Ultraguard, says he's sure his product will solve the leaks.

"I have the answer to their problems," Bankoff said in a telephone interview. "This is an amazing product. It's used on the noses of space ships and the decks of ships. It's 17 times stronger than concrete."

Bankoff says he's confident that borough personnel can apply the product if they can fit it into their schedule.

"It's not hard to do. They can do it do it themselves, but the devil is in the preparation."

Preparation includes an initial scrub with a tri-sodium phosphate material, an acid wash of pool surfaces to etch the surface, a second tri-sodium phosphate wash and a sanding phase.

Bankoff says no do-it-yourself project can start without at least two instructional conferences with company personnel.