

Email from Barton Hills Neighborhood Association to CM Ann Kitchen and Paige Ellis, City of Austin Environmental Commission, Watershed Protection Department, Save Our Springs Alliance, Save Barton Creek Association, Friends of Barton Springs Pool, et al

Subject: WPD Project-Upper Barton Springs Dam "Portals" for Creek Water to Flow Into Barton Springs Pool
Date: 2019-08-18 19:44

Dear Friends:

I am writing you on behalf of the Barton Hills Neighborhood Association to express concerns with the proposed project to cut holes ("portals") in the upper Barton Springs dam to allow creek water to flow into the pool.

* The attached report indicates that the water temperature in the creek can reach 51.3 degrees in the winter and 85.5 degrees in the summer. In addition, the data also appear to indicate that e coli can spike dramatically in the creek water to levels that are multiples of the highest levels in the pool across 17 years of data. This data alone demands much deeper research and consideration by the public prior to any consideration of the engineering or design of portals in the dam;

* The defining characteristics of Barton Springs Pool: clean, consistently temperate water would be placed at risk by this project, with no specific compelling justification having ever been presented for the addition of creek water into Barton Springs Pool;

* The Parks Department has not presented the public with any proposed plan of operation to assure the public that the essential character of Barton Springs will be preserved and that the swimming community will have a say in those operations on a formal and regular basis;

* It is important to remember the tragic death of a young man sucked into a portal in the upper dam in the mid 1960's that led to litigation and judgment against the City of Austin in a reported case;

* It is our understanding that the City has not tested the water above the Upper Dam for the blue-green algae; we request that this testing be undertaken at the earliest possible time;

* Consideration of the portal project should be kept separate from and not delay the priority safety improvements recommended by Mr. Joe Riddell in his recent recommendations to the Parks Board.

We ask that you postpone additional consideration of the portal project until October at the earliest so that the attached report and the yet-to-be-release preliminary engineering report can be reviewed by the public and the tests of the creek algae are concluded and results released to the public.

Respectfully,

Mark Gentle, President
Barton Hills Neighborhood Association