



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: JULY 17, 2007

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: FIELD USE AND ALLOCATION POLICY

DATE: JULY 3, 2007

FROM: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES/RECREATION DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: JANA M. RANSOM, RECREATION MANAGER

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RECOMMENDATION

Approve recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Commission related to revisions to the Field Use and Allocation Policy.

BACKGROUND

The Field Use and Allocation Policy is reviewed annually and revised based upon changing circumstances, procedures and/or new direction from City Council, staff or the Parks and Recreation Commission. This past fall, at the direction of the Parks and Recreation Commission, staff undertook a series of meetings with all major youth sports user organizations (called the Ad Hoc Field Use Committee) to go through the entire Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy and review procedures to determine what works and what does not work in the policy, and to come to consensus regarding solutions to those procedures that were found to be wanting.

The Field Use and Allocation Policy Ad Hoc Field User Group recommendations were brought to the Parks and Recreation Commission on May 23, 2007 (see Attachment 1). The resolution of the item was tabled until a study session could be held to review the entire document for the benefit of new commissioners. The study session was held on June 13, 2007. At the following Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, June 27, 2007, the commissioners heard additional input from the public (Attachment 2).

ANALYSIS

The issues that the Youth Sports User Group Ad Hoc Committee identified were these:

- Group 1 user organization "Grandfather" status – the current policy designates two groups, Newport Harbor Baseball Association and AYSO Region 97, as "grandfathered" Group 1 user organizations, giving them the same status as the other Group 1 user organizations, but exempting them from the 90% or greater residency requirement.
 - The ad hoc committee felt that by using the term "grandfathered," that the so-designated organizations were vulnerable to having the privilege of receiving Group 1 benefits rescinded. Suggested remedy was to identify groups playing under the banner of a national youth sports organization that has the same playing philosophy as City youth sports programs and that have Costa Mesa

residents registered would be eligible to apply for priority in allocation of field time based upon the number of residents in their group based upon a percentage of all Costa Mesa residents registered in all user groups in that classification (Group 1 user organizations). This designation would also allow so designated groups to apply for fee waiver status (a Council prerogative). A further factor, as the organizations were discussing this item, is that Recreation staff, in discussing field use with NMUSD officials, found that use of NMUSD fields could not exclude persons who lived in Newport Beach if they also lived within District boundaries.

➤ In a meeting held separately with Pop Warner's new field representative, Pop Warner's Board of Directors has indicated that they do NOT agree with this new category and prefer to keep status of AYSO Region 97 and Newport Harbor Baseball Association as grandfathered Group 1 user organizations.

✓ *The Parks and Recreation Commission does NOT recommend making this change. Commissioner Harris' comments summed up the discussion when he said that Group 1 status should be difficult to achieve, and that groups desiring the same type of designation by Council have the right to seek the "grandfathered" status if they feel they qualify in the same way as AYSO Region 97 and Newport Harbor Baseball Association.*

- Group 1 allocation procedures – the current policy uses a formula that converts Costa Mesa residents to resident teams and then uses the number of resident teams in an organization as compared to all other resident teams in the other organizations in that classification (i.e., Group 1, 3, 5 and 6) to establish the percentage of field time a group is entitled to when two or more teams request the same fields.
 - The ad hoc committee indicated that simplifying the allocation procedures would be helpful. The proposed procedures takes the number of resident registrants in each Group 1 user organization and adds them together to determine the total number of Costa Mesa residents registered for that season of play. The percentage of each group's residents as compared to the total number of residents playing in all groups will be used to allocate field time *in the event that field demand exceeds supply or more than one Group 1 user organization requests the same fields/times and the groups can not reach accommodation with each other* (see Attachment 3 for impact of using the two methods).
- Change in allocation periods – the current policy provides for two use periods from January 1 to June 30 and July 1 to December 31.
 - The Ad Hoc Committee requested that the scheduling periods be February 1 to June 30 and July 1 to January 31 because baseball groups do not get started until February 1 while soccer groups have playoffs in January. Youth organizations representing both sports, along with unaffected organizations (football, softball) were fine with this change.
- Change inclement weather procedures – Group 1 user organizations that use Newport Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) fields requested that they be allowed to determine the playability of these fields during periods of inclement weather or for other poor conditions.
 - Group 1 user organizations that use Newport Mesa Unified School District fields requested that they be allowed to determine the playability of these fields during periods of inclement weather or for other conditions. Procedure provides for these organizations to establish their own criteria and to publish and maintain their own "mudline." In many cases the groups are able to perform maintenance to make these fields playable. Any costs that result from use of fields in inclement weather will be assessed to the responsible Group 1 user organization.

- Change in portable light procedures – the City has purchased several portable light units that preclude the need for the original Portable Lights Policy.
 - By purchasing these light units, the City can control placement, hours of use, maintenance and handling. Staff is working with NMUSD officials to discuss using these light units on District fields. The new procedure is intended to make neighborhood residents near proposed sites aware that lights may be used near them and to provide a process for hearing their concerns. Once heard, the Parks and Recreation Commission will determine where best to locate the units.
- Language revisions – several revisions have been made to “clean up” the Athletic Facility and Field Use Policy and to provide for the changes above. Wording for the grandfathered Group 1 user organization has been left in place because the Parks and Recreation Commission did not recommend approval of that proposed item.

During the study session held on June 13, two additional issues were raised. The Ad Hoc Field Use Committee did not discuss these issues, and thus have not endorsed them. They have not been included in the Field Use and Allocation Policy. *The Parks and Recreation Commission requested that City staff work with the youth sports user groups to provide future recommendation on these:*

- Equity in Field Assignments – Pop Warner asked that consideration be given to taking into account the annual amount of time requested by each Group 1 user organization. Pop Warner’s 300 registrants (anticipated) use fields intensely (10 hours per week in August, 6 hours per player per week for practice during the season and a 2 hour game on Saturday). AYSO combined 2,200 participants (average) use fields for one to two practices, depending upon age, for 1-1.5 hours per week and one game, 1-1.5 hours. Pop Warner uses two fields (currently) for 4.5 months. AYSO uses four fields (at The Farm) for 7 months, with some additional practice time for playoffs. Assuming they do not also play AYSO soccer in the Spring, each Pop Warner player has access to 106 hours of field time each year. Each AYSO player, assuming they play in both Fall and Spring, has access to approximately 88 hours of field time.
- Equity in Field Quality – Pop Warner requested the Farm Fields 3, 4, 5 and 6 for their Fall season. I have attached a staff assessment of this request (Attachment 3), as well as assessing their original request for Costa Mesa High School (CMHS) Fields. In meeting with the designated Pop Warner Field Representative, their request for the Farm Fields was presented to staff as their first choice, and the CMHS fields as their second choice. This secondary acceptance was based upon the City providing portable lights, rest rooms (flush style on a trailer – not “porta-potties”) and a snack bar/container (a slab already exists). The school district will be closing the CMHS fields for rest and renovation this Summer. City staff will be meeting with District staff to review their efforts to prepare the fields for Fall play.

Lastly, there was discussion about how the Field Ambassadors were monitoring field use. There have been occasions in the past when the Field Ambassadors removed youth groups from playing on fields because their permit had ended and they were still playing, even though no other group was scheduled to come after them, or because they were found playing on fields not permitted to them or not playing on fields that were permitted to them. Recreation Division training procedures are being developed to address these issues, and a rule has been added to this policy to accommodate this change in application.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- City Council could choose to select all, some or none of the recommendations forwarded for approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission
- City Council could make other recommendations for changes to this policy

FISCAL REVIEW

Changes to this policy do not have a material effect.

LEGAL REVIEW

No further legal review of this policy is required.

CONCLUSION

The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed this policy in three public sessions: regular Commission meetings of May 23 and June 27, 2007 and at a special study session on June 13, 2007. Their recommendation is to approve the Field Use and Allocation Policy revisions, which were suggested by the Ad Hoc Field Users Committee, with the exception of leaving the status of “grandfathered” Group 1 User organizations as stated in the current policy and for staff to work with the user groups on the issues raised by the Pop Warner Football Board representative of Equity in Field Assignments and Equity in Field Quality.

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ATTACHMENTS 1 [Excerpts from the minutes of the May 23, 2007 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting](#)
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2 [Excerpts from the minutes of the June 27, 2007 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting](#)
3 [Old versus New Formula Effect](#)