



# *PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT*

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MEETING DATE: September 22, 2004

ITEM NUMBER:

**SUBJECT: JOINT USE AGREEMENT**

**DATE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2004**

**FROM: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT, RECREATION DIVISION**

**PRESENTATION BY: JANA M. RANSOM, RECREATION MANAGER**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission review the Joint Use Agreement, discuss areas of concern, and receive and file this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

A Joint Use Agreement between the Newport Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) and the City of Costa Mesa (City) has been in existence at least since 1990. A few years ago, in discussing the renewal of this document, an accord was reached between the parties in which the following major elements appeared for the first time:

- City and NMUSD provided each other with the opportunity to use facilities, equipment, and other resources (such as school buses) at cost or free.
- NMUSD agreed to allow the City to permit fields, gyms and pools for the Community's use at 22 schools.
- City agreed to "mow and blow" turf areas (excluding ball diamond infields) at these schools to help mitigate the impact of the Community's use of the fields.
- City agreed to monitor permissible school fields, gyms and pools during the hours available for Community use and to enforce NMUSD rules and regulations.
- City would collect fees for permitted uses, with revenue from use of fields going to City and revenue from use of pools and gyms going to NMUSD.

The City subsequently revised and adopted the Athletic Facility and Field Use Policy to provide the procedural tools to implement the Agreement. This policy sets forth the criteria for assignment of a Group Status for charging organizations and user groups fees for use.

Lastly, the Costa Mesa Municipal Code regarding permits was revised in 2002 to reflect that any group of ten or more persons was required to get a permit in order to use fields (among other amenities and facilities).

Prior to this latest iteration of the Joint Use Agreement, organizations, even team coaches, would go directly to individual principals or athletic directors in order to gain permission to use fields. There was no across the board policy that dictated priority of use, there was no one monitoring weekend or afterschool use and "pirate league" use was rampant, and there was no collective method to offset costs associated with the community's use of fields with fees collected.

## DISCUSSION

In late August, a meeting was called by Costa Mesa Mayor Monahan and Council member Mike Schaefer to address concerns that the Joint Use Agreement was deficient. Invited were key members of the parks and recreation Commission, the NMUSD School Board, City management and District administration. At this meeting there was consensus that the Joint Use Agreement, by itself, was not flawed (“It ‘ain’t’ broke...”). NMUSD officials indicated that they were fully supportive of the Agreement’s provisions, but were having trouble getting their field staff to do things differently than they had done them in the past, and to get the field staff to understand that the fields were NMUSD property, and not “the coach’s”. Many of the procedures that coaches complain about are related to rules put in place by the District. The responsibility for improving or maintaining school fields to a higher level also falls to the District.

At the end of the meeting, there was an accord struck to form an ad hoc committee to try to define ways in which NMUSD field issues could be addressed. Membership and date of first meeting of this ad hoc group had not been determined at the time this item was written.

The City currently provides permits for almost 70,000 hours of field use. Revenue for field use has increased annually. In the first year of the revised JUA, field revenue was \$97,000. This fiscal year, staff projects that amount to double. As the actual incidence of field use has not substantially changed over the past few years, staff attributes monitoring usage as the greatest factor affecting the increase. Fees are waived for over 18,000 hours of Group 1 organizational uses.

Field Ambassadors are scheduled in the 2005 budget to provide an average of 90 hours of coverage each week, at a cost of almost \$90,000 (including benefits). At a minimum, it takes a field ambassador 2.5 hours to make an unimpeded circuit of permitted sites. The maintenance contract for school sites will cost the City almost \$200,000 this fiscal year. Park Rangers provide an additional 80 hours of coverage each week, but their main focus is parks – they respond to requests from Field Ambassadors as needed.

The biggest problem that both entities face is holding user groups accountable:

- City requires user groups to permit fields in advance of all uses, pick up fields and surrounding turf areas after all uses, and to be good neighbors;
- District requires that school user groups get all uses of fields outside of their operating hours approved by their administration prior to getting a permit from the City.

Both NMUSD and the City agree that the maintenance level of the District’s fields needs to be raised – but that this is not an issue of the JUA.

## CONCLUSION

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission receive and file this report.

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**JANA M. RANSOM**  
Recreation Manager

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**HOWARD PERKINS**  
Acting Administrative Services Director

Attachments: 1 [Joint Use Agreement](#)