

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 4, 2014**

Present

Councilor Mike Beilstein, Chair
Councilor Bruce Sorte
Councilor Penny York

Staff

Jim Patterson, City Manager
Steve DeGhetto, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director
Carrie Mullens, City Manager's Office

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

	<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Information Only</u>	<u>Held for Further Review</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
I.	Council Policy Review and Recommendation: 97-4.09, "Guidelines for Free Use of Parks and Recreation Facilities"		Yes	
II.	Council Policy Review and Recommendation: 07-4.16, "Code of Conduct for Patrons at Parks and Recreation Facilities, Events, and Programs"			Amend Council Policy 07-4.16, "Code of Conduct for Patrons at Parks and Recreation Facilities, Events, and Programs"
III.	Other Business	Yes		

Chair Beilstein called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

- I. Council Policy Review and Recommendation: 97-4.09, "Guidelines for Free Use of Parks and Recreation Facilities"

Mr. DeGhetto said the policy provides staff with guidelines to evaluate requests from the public for free use of facilities. Free use requests for social gatherings, networking, and/or citizen training activities are frequently received by staff. Three criteria are applied to determine if the activity is exempt from paying fees:

- City sponsored or co-sponsored events, meetings, or activities (verifiable through a signed agreement or memorandum of understanding).
- Current separate agreement involving the use of City Parks and Recreation facilities.
- Benton County activities (with reciprocation of County facilities).

The City's financial policies identify established user fees for park facilities in accordance with the Parks and Recreation cost recovery methodology. Staff proposes amendments to reflect current cost recovery methodology and to improve administrative efficiency.

Mr. DeGhetto described a few examples of recent requests and noted that the policy allows for flexibility. He referred to the handout submitted by Councilor Hervey (Attachment 1) regarding the Public Participation Task Force (PPTF) efforts to encourage active neighborhood associations (NA) and agreed that there may be facility

use opportunities for NAs. He clarified that not every non-profit organization qualifies for free use of facilities, per policy guidelines. The Department collaborates with non-profits and other organizations to identify activities and events that are mutually beneficial and result in positive community outcomes. Providing additional free use (beyond this policy) will require more guidelines.

Mr. DeGhetto provided examples of when co-sponsorship is appropriate, such as activities related to Benton County's Healthy Kids Healthy Communities project. Shared use agreements are convenient when co-sponsoring events. He noted that fees for most community-wide events are within the lowest two tier amounts.

Mr. DeGhetto clarified for Chair Beilstein that Fall Festival is considered a co-sponsored community event that is exempt from paying a fee. The Department's budget includes Fall Festival support. It may be appropriate for Council to discuss the amount of services provided by Departments. He added that the cost recovery method includes higher-fee tiers that assist in covering the true costs of lower-fee tiers.

Councilor York said PPTF intends to make recommendations to Council in May. One PPTF consideration has been how to strengthen NAs as neighborhoods and people versus land use groups. Barriers for NAs include access to meeting facilities, accurate information on the City's Web site, availability of a listserv, and assistance to form NAs. Some neighborhoods have useful meeting facilities (City-owned and others) and some have members who have a relationship with a City Department making it easier to reserve space. She stated agreement with Councilor Hervey's written comments (Attachment 1).

Councilor York added that language allowing free use of facilities for NAs will need to be carefully worded and include definitions of City-accepted NAs, appropriate uses, frequency of use, and other considerations. Council will need to decide if NAs should be acknowledged as an asset to livability. How the process and criteria is developed and defined will be important. A PPTF subcommittee is exploring NAs and it may be useful for the subcommittee to meet with Mr. DeGhetto.

Mr. DeGhetto explained that City facilities are not equal. The Senior Center has a paid building attendant due to the size of the facility, required setup/take-down activities, and building security. Walnut and Tunison Community Rooms are accessed via a door keypad and code. Incurred costs of building use must be considered.

Mr. DeGhetto agreed that, if the goal is to get people involved, they need a place to meet. The City may not have enough space centrally located for all neighborhoods. Other organizations may be willing to offer space, such as the Corvallis School District.

Councilor Sorte requested the methodology for fees at the Senior Center. He said fees for services are important and the rate should correspond with the service. He would prefer a policy that clearly identifies base services.

Councilor Sorte suggested that the term "business purposes" be replaced with another term, such as "public purposes" or "community purposes." He opined that the term "business" means the Downtown Corvallis Association can use the facility and

Community Alliance for Diversity cannot. Community social activities may have good reasons for using City facilities and it may be appropriate to allow free use when there is a special interest extending across the community.

Councilor Sorte said Council wants decision-makers on staff. He encouraged staff to make the decisions about the different levels of service and appropriateness of facility use without Council second-guessing the decision(s). He added that it may be appropriate to review all facilities to determine if the City has too many expensive, high-maintenance facilities (e.g., Corl House) versus offering four or five structures that require little or no maintenance.

Regarding "business purposes," Mr. DeGhetto said a better term might be "community benefit." He agreed to send Councilor Sorte a copy of the Department's cost recovery methodology. It will answer questions about how fees are developed, identify different service levels, and include information about excess revenue generated from higher service levels. Those revenues become part of the Department's operations fund in-lieu-of property tax funds.

Councilor Sorte opined that government should not make a profit and revenue in excess of cost is profit. If government cannot cost recover and convince the public it is worth the service, government should not provide the service.

Mr. DeGhetto noted that direct costs are defined in the cost recovery methodology. Excess revenue is not considered profit because administrative costs are not included in the methodology and other cost components are not considered direct costs. Most facilities impacted by this policy are in the lower cost recovery tiers that have the highest community benefit. Fees attached to park facilities recover costs for services, such as pre/post-cleaning and setup/takedown. Mr. DeGhetto added that the Department is trying to increase the ability to be self-sufficient and not rely on property tax revenue.

Councilor Sorte opined that government has overdone self-sufficiency. Government needs to maintain what it has as a community. Self-sufficiency is appropriate for the private sector, not the public sector.

Councilor York reported that a PPTF focus is equity, access, and fairness. PPTF does not talk about participation quantity as much as finding methods to reach out to the community that are effective with all groups. One issue PPTF will consider is the proximity of meeting space for neighbors. The availability of facilities for use in specific areas of the community will be considered in terms of equity, access, convenience, and costs.

Mr. DeGhetto responded that the use of facilities may need to be communicated differently for different groups. It is more than looking at what is equitable and just.

Councilor York agreed and said "reasonable accommodations" could be included in the language. All facilities may not be the same; however, all members of the community should be able to attend a NA meeting. She inquired about next steps.

Mr. Patterson said there is a tendency to only focus on City facilities. Many neighborhoods have public school buildings that could be used for meetings and/or activities. The City collaborates with the Corvallis School District for recreational sports facilities. Often, schools have janitors in their facilities during evening hours, making schools one of the best places to hold neighborhood meetings. As the lead organization in the public participation effort, the City needs to reach out to the School District, explain the need, and discuss ways the School District can assist. Additionally, the use of private sector meeting rooms should not be overlooked. Businesses often allow community organizations to use their meeting rooms. The City needs to talk to the community about this effort to identify what is available. The focus should not be only on what the City can control.

Councilor York said PPTF has also discussed letting NAs do real work. She agreed that the City needs to take the lead in discussing shared-use with the School District and other large organizations. It may be appropriate for NAs to work with smaller organizations to locate meeting space.

Mr. DeGhetto announced that he would talk with PPTF about this issue. The Department has been very successful placing groups into school buildings and other facilities. There is capacity at the Majestic Theatre and The Arts Center. The number of internal and external resources needs to be identified.

Chair Beilstein said the policy needs to identify when free use is not appropriate or available. He supports allowing free use for a broad public interest meeting. He inquired whether the policy provides staff with the ability to decide when a request is appropriate for free facility use.

Mr. DeGhetto said staff has the latitude to meet the elements of the policy. Free use for NAs has always been an issue. It is hard for a NA to enter into an agreement with the Department since it is not always practical for NAs to offer volunteers for a specific project.

Councilor York said if a NA is working on a neighborhood emergency plan they should be able to use City facilities to talk about their safety. Crafting an emergency plan provides a service to the City. Mr. DeGhetto agreed and noted that policy language would need amended to clarify this use.

Chair Beilstein said if a NA is drafting an emergency plan, they would most likely want involvement from the Police and Fire Departments which makes it a City function allowing free use. He supports amending the policy as recommended with the assumption that staff can implement it appropriately. He would also entertain postponing the recommendation until NAs can be added and other amendments can be crafted.

Councilor York said it is likely the policy will require additional amendments following PPTF recommendations. She would prefer to have more interaction with staff and PPTF before forwarding recommendations to Council.

Mr. Patterson suggested the Committee recommend approval of the amendments as presented by staff, acknowledging that the policy may come back for review following PPTF recommendations.

Councilor Sorte said the purpose statement needs clarification. The reader needs to know what "appropriate" and "Business purposes only" means. The policy does not address community benefits, the broadness of those benefits, and the tiered methodology.

Mr. Patterson and the Committee discussed several hypothetical examples of groups requesting free use of facilities and how City staff would address those requests. Mr. DeGhetto explained that staff would initially evaluate the overarching community benefit of each request.

Mr. Patterson said a clearly defined policy will eliminate issues of discrimination when evaluating requests that test "community benefit." The policy should make a staff decision easy.

In response to Councilor Sorte's comments about offering private sector alternatives, Mr. DeGhetto said up-selling facilities keeps citizens engaged in using City facilities. The School District has a use prioritization and fee schedule and not all of the School District's rooms are at capacity. The Parks and Recreation Department may need to incorporate use prioritization into its programs. The primary mission is to provide venues for programs.

Councilor York noted that Linn-Benton Community College has a tiered approach and facility use prioritization with flexibility, depending on the request.

Chair Beilstein noted that most park use is free and only facilities need to be reserved. The Committee can consider amendments now and review the policy again after the PPTF recommendations or postpone recommendations until Councilor Sorte can work with City staff on amendments, as long as that work is completed fairly quickly.

Councilor York suggested Mr. DeGhetto work with Councilor Sorte on policy amendments to be brought back to this Committee as soon as possible. When Council considers the recommended changes, they can be reminded that the policy may need additional review based on PPTF recommendations.

II. Council Policy Review and Recommendation: 07-4.16, "Code of Conduct for Patrons at Parks and Recreation Facilities, Events, and Programs"

Mr. DeGhetto referred to the meeting materials and explained that he obtained clarification and language suggestions from Benton County regarding tobacco use and e-cigarettes per the Committee's request. The proposed amendment is consistent with the updated Municipal Code.

The Committee unanimously recommends Council amend Council Policy 07-4.16, "Code of Conduct for Patrons at Parks and Recreation Facilities, Events, and Programs."

III. Other Business

The next Human Services Committee meeting is scheduled for 2:00 pm on Tuesday, February 18 in the Madison Avenue Meeting Room.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Beilstein, Chair

From: Ward 3
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2014 10:19 PM
To: Holzworth, Carla
Cc: Patterson, Jim; Ward 5; Ward 7; Ward 1
Subject: Council Policy Review and Recommendation:97-4.09, "Guidelines for Free Use of Parks and

Carla,

Would you include this email in the materials available to the Human Services Committee meeting Tuesday, February 4th?

HSC, the Public Participation Task Force is looking at a number of ways that the City can be encouraging of healthier, more active Neighborhood Associations (NAs). While the whole Task Force has not yet reviewed the potential recommendations for supporting NAs, I'm guessing that one recommendation will be free use of some City facilities for NA meetings and gatherings.

While the full process for how specific recommendations that would impact Council Policy 97-4.09 will move forward is not yet established, you may want to delay making recommendations to Council on this policy until council has had an opportunity to review the recommendations from the PPTF. If such a delay does not create current problems for staff, it may save staff time in the long run.

Richard