



STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 4, 2018

DISCUSSION

AGENDA ITEM: Park Use Fees

SUBMITTED BY: Kristina Handt, City Administrator

BACKGROUND:

The Parks Commission last looked at the Park Use Policy at their May 16, 2014 meeting. It was brought up in regards to plans for Volksmarch. It is not clear if the changes proposed were ever adopted as staff can't find record of it coming to a Council meeting. Council members have requested the issue of park user fees (the only ones of which are found in this policy) be discussed particularly as they pertain to the use of the ballfields. The City has been fairly lax in following this policy as it pertains to reservations for the ballfields. Teams are able to reserve time more than 10 days ahead of time, no fees are collected for more than 2 hours of use or the use of the lights.

ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:

Should the Council make any changes to the Park Use Policy and/or fees?

PROPOSAL:

Some items in the policy staff would seek direction on:

- Should we say reservations are only made 10 days in advance? That is not happening as the baseball associations will reserve the fields for the whole season once they know the schedule. *Suggestion:* Open reservations for any park on January 1 for that year.
- Should there be a fee for usage of the parks? While the policy says that a \$20 should be collected when a reservation exceeds 2 hours and will be refunded if no one else reserves it during that time, that language is very cumbersome and never followed. Either allow a reservation for the whole day at no costs or institute a fee structure that is charged without the option of a refund if no one else is interested. If the Council chooses to institute a fee, staff would suggest no more than \$50 for the day. Woodbury, for example charges \$50 per day for the use of their outdoor fields according to their fee schedule. Stillwater charges \$15-20 per game.
- Should a deposit be collected? One of the items discussed back in 2014 (shown in red) was the option of taking a deposit for the use of parks for events. The idea being if the park was not cleaned up after the event the city would retain the deposit. This summer the public works department or residents have had to clean up after Lake Elmo baseball on occasion.
- Is the policy on charging for lights only if they are left on adequate? Since lights are an added amenity that not all park users need, should there be a charge for those who do use it to help offset electricity costs?
- Any other areas of concern for the council?

FISCAL IMPACT:

Currently the city collects no fees for the usage of parks except under separate agreement (tennis camp) so the fiscal impact would be dependent upon council direction to make changes.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Park Use Policy with edits from 2014