



## STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 9, 2019

### **DISCUSSION**

**AGENDA ITEM:** Park Use Fees

**SUBMITTED BY:** Kristina Handt, City Administrator

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#### **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. Last 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



## **City of Lake Elmo**

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### **Lake Elmo Park Use Policy**

#### **Purpose & Intent:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a fair and equitable distribution of the limited City of Lake Elmo park facilities. The City of Lake Elmo's Parks Commission oversees and governs the use of fields, shelters, and other facilities that reside in our park facilities by the City itself, school districts, athletic organizations, community groups and the general public.

It is the intent of this policy to classify & guide potential users / residents of Lake Elmo of these facilities that may wish to use these facilities exclusively for their activity for a specific amount of time into a priority system that best meets the ever changing needs of the City of Lake Elmo.

#### **User Priorities**

- Priority 1 – City of Lake Elmo**
- Priority 2 - Affiliated School Districts**
- Priority 3 - Affiliated Youth and Adult Athletic / Civic Organizations**
- Priority 4 - Non-Resident / Non-Resident Groups**

#### **Parks Available for Field Reservations**

**The City of Lake Elmo will begin taking park reservations on January 15<sup>th</sup> each year.**

The City of Lake Elmo has (6) distinct parks available for field reservation and exclusive use. They are:

- **VFW Park**
- **Lions Park**
- **Tablyn Park**
- **Pebble Park**
- **Reid Park**
- **Demontreville Park**

For the purpose of fairness and equitable access each of the above parks can be reserved up to (2) hours per reservation, with reservations made up to 10 business days in advance. Athletic organizations seeking larger blocks of time or for the purpose of a tournament / scheduled competitive sporting event may schedule in

advance (10 business days) at a cost of \$20 per each additional two hour block of time. If the park facility is not scheduled for additional time by another organization / resident within the 10 business days, the organization may use the facility up to an additional (2) hours at no charge. If an organization that pre-reserves a field or facility, determines that they no longer have a use for the facility, the organization must release the time back to the City of Lake Elmo within 48 hours of the reservation time or be charged \$20 per hour of unused time.

All other parks with recreational fields can be used on a first come first serve basis. Hardcourts (tennis and basketball) are also provided on a first come, first serve basis.

Any special requests for amenities and or services (ie additional restrooms, soccer goals, dumpsters) must be requested at the time of reservation.

If two entities are vying for the same fields, the entity with the higher priority rating will prevail. If two entities are vying for the same field and have the same priority rating, the entity that serves the higher number of Lake Elmo residents will prevail.

## **Park and Shelter Reservations for Events and Other Uses**

Lake Elmo city parks and shelters may be reserved for exclusive use to accommodate small events requiring additional space beyond field use. Examples may include run/walks, company picnics, family reunions, wedding receptions, and other events with less than 100 attendees. Parks can be reserved for up to 6 hours per reservation, with reservations made up to 10 business days in advance. A \$50 deposit (\$100 - \$50 deposit and \$50 use fee for non-Lake Elmo residents) along with a park event reservation form must be presented at time of reservation. Users of parks are required to clean facilities after use including picking up all refuse on and around grounds and shelter, wiping off tables, and sweeping the hard surface of area used. Failure to clean the area as defined above will result in the loss of the \$50 security deposit.

Public events that are expecting more than 100 people in attendance, may be required to attain a special event permit.

## **Sportsmanship / Behavior**

The City of Lake Elmo has provided (17) parks and open spaces for public enjoyment. To insure that park use is fun, comfortable, and pleasant experience the following rules of use have been established:

1. In the use of athletic fields, good sportsmanship rules apply to all players, parents, coaches and fans involved;
2. Programmed youth sports activities must be chaperoned by adults;
3. Electronic amplification for music or voice projection and artificial lighting not provided by the City of Lake Elmo must be approved in writing and must cease at dusk;
4. No smoking, alcohol or illegal drugs;
5. No Open fires;
6. No glass beverage containers
7. No picking of flowers, plant materials, or physical contact with shrubs or trees unless otherwise designated as part of a nature education program;
8. All pets must be leashed at all times;
9. No solicitation of funds or sales of merchandise;
10. Litter pick-up and disposal in the responsibility of the reserving entity. Trash must be bagged, sealed and placed in the park's trash receptacle. Entity may be charged if the City staff has to provide this service;

11. No parking on turf areas, with the exception of unloading and loading of sporting equipment or gathering supplies. Parking in only assigned areas;

## City Provided Lights

Field illumination is provided at Lions Park. Organizations using the facility under reservation must turn the lights out (20) after completion of activity or be penalized \$30 to offset utility costs.

## Shelters

~~Parks with shelters can be reserved for (4) hour blocks, with reservations made up to (7) days in advance for special events such as company picnics, family reunions, wedding reception, etc. The cost for Lake Elmo residents is \$50 deposit and \$100 (\$50 deposit / \$50 use fee) for non-Lake Elmo residents. Users of the shelters are required to pick up all refuse on and around the shelter, wipe off tables, and sweep the hard surface area used. Failure to clean the area as defined above will result in the loss of the \$50 security deposit.~~