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The Practice of Permitting Fields Associated with Recreation Centers

August, 2002

Background

Through the years, the neighboring communities of several parks complained that athletic fields were booked so much that there was no time for local, casual use. They also pointed to the fact that permitting both field use and recreation building use simultaneously put too much demand on existing parking, thus forcing park users onto roadways, sometimes blocking driveways and small streets. Frequently, building users complained that parking was limited during their use when games were also scheduled. Sometimes building users wanted to also permit the field for their activity.

Practice

In the early 1990's The Park Permit Office, in conjunction with County-wide planning staff and park managers, developed a practice of not permitting fields next to recreation buildings between the hours of 2-6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, unless the permittee rented the recreation building. This practice was intended to provide casual use by the community on weekend days and to minimize parking conflicts.

The practice was applied to all recreation buildings which have permittable fields in the park. The exceptions are the buildings at Clarksburg, Wheaton-Claridge and Camp Seneca Local Parks, which have no fields. In parks where there was a building and more than one field, the practice was applied only to the field closest in proximity to the building, while the other one or two fields were permitted in the usual manner.

User Needs

Historically, sports groups such as MCRD & MSI used these fields for league games. In recent years as some sports leagues such BCC expanded rosters they began requesting permits for Rec. buildings in order to acquire additional field use. Currently BCC is the only group booking recreation buildings (North Chevy Chase & Lynbrook) on Sundays between 2-6pm specifically to gain field use. In addition, the Maplewood Sports Association has always permitted the building and field for both indoor and outdoor use for home games. This fall the Parks Department agreed to allow the City of Takoma Park use of the Argyle recreation center ballfield from 9am-3pm to accommodate additional games.

Proposed modifications to the Practice

While staff has no reliable mechanism for assessing the amount of casual use time by community neighbors a park field has experienced, we can document the growing demand for field space, particularly in the Southern Region. The challenge is to provide additional field space while still providing casual (unpermitted) community use on weekends. We must also recognize that the two recreation buildings in question (North Chevy Chase and Lynbrook) are air-conditioned and are in high demand in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area.

The intentions of any modifications to the current practice would be:

- to still allow for casual community use,
- to add more field time for games and practices and
- to eliminate any undue financial requirements on sports groups needing field time.

Therefore, staff would propose that the following items would apply to all parks where there are recreation buildings adjacent to athletic fields:

- Lift the requirement of permitting the building in order to have access to fields on Saturdays and Sundays between 2-6 p.m.
- Allocate the 2-4 p.m. block on Saturdays and Sundays to permitting either to a building user or to a field user
- Allocate the 4-6 p.m. block on Saturdays and Sundays to be unpermitted, casual community use on a first-come, first-served basis

In preparation for the Fall 2002 season, the Permit Office rejected 33 requests for baseball practice time. By allowing an additional 4 hours of permitted use on Saturdays and Sundays at local park fields, we will gain additional hours of field use for leagues and individuals. On the other hand, we may lose several hundred dollars in revenue if we don't make permitting the buildings a priority over permitting the fields.

ATTACHMENT F

Notes from Ballfield Maintenance Meeting

March 19, 2004

Mary Ellen Venzke, Brent Conner, Gary Harman, Art Nelligan

1) Estimating restoration costs of local and regional ballfields.

Private operators have approached the department to utilize local and regional fields to operate camps or training sessions. As such, we have determined that we would need to refurbish the ballfield one extra time at the end of the session to bring the field back to the optimum level. Normally, we would restore each field one time per year. By allowing camps to utilize our fields, it would be necessary to refurbish the fields once in the spring and again in the early fall.

We developed a range of costs associated with ballfield restoration. For the purposes of this exercise, restoration includes the following:

- Aerating
- Top dress turf
- Fertilize
- Lime
- Seeding
- Drag and restore infield
- Repaint lines
- Misc. repairs and replacements as needed

Regular maintenance tasks (mowing, dressing, lining and trash removal) are not included.

Range of local field restoration \$1,700 to \$2,300

Range of regional field restoration \$1,700 to \$2,000

Note: Regional fields are normally maintained at a higher standard during the course of the year; therefore, they require slightly less restoration costs. Additionally, the areas of the regional fields may be smaller than the overlay areas of local fields.

2) Cost comparisons of school ballfield contract to departmental costs

	Contract	Department	Annual Savings
Infield Maintenance (Weekly)	\$50	\$64	\$508
Infield Maintenance (Monthly)	\$30	\$51	\$253
Infield Maintenance (Annually)	\$900	\$1,650	\$750
Mowing (per acre)	\$26	\$26	\$0
Lining	\$130	\$85	(\$981)
Total cost savings per field			\$530

The ballfield contract does not contain the following tasks performed by the department:

- Top dressing
- Blue Stone
- Litter removal (other than directly in the mowing path areas)
- Misc. repair and maintenance

Applications – Quick Guidelines

- ★ Visit our website at www.parkpermits.org for applications and updated information
- ★ Walk in or mail request to 9500 Brunett Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20901
- ★ Fax Request to 301-495-2484 or call the office at 301-495-2525

Submission Dates For Spring/Summer 2005

(Per MNCPPC Ballfield Policy)

Spring/Summer:

League game requests may be submitted December 15-January 15, 2005. If requests are not received by January 15, 2005, priority status over practices will be lost. Leagues have priority use based only on the previous year's game schedules. Remember to include a copy of your schedules, final standings and rosters from Spring/Summer, 2004, or the application will be returned to you UNPROCESSED.

Applications for tournaments and special, one-time use functions may be submitted as of December 1, 2004 for the Spring/Summer season.

Submission Dates For Fall 2005

(Per MNCPPC Ballfield Policy)

Fall: League game requests may be submitted on June 1-15, 2005. If requests are not received by June 15, 2005, priority status over practices will be lost. Leagues have priority use based only on the previous year's game schedules. Remember to include a copy of your schedules, final standings and rosters from Fall, 2004, or the application will be returned to you UNPROCESSED.

Applications for Tournaments and Special, One-Time use functions may be submitted May 15-June 1, 2005 for the Fall season.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!!

ATTENTION ALL USERS OF LOCAL PARK ATHLETIC FIELDS

This fall the Montgomery County Planning Board will be considering a change to the Local Park Permitting Policy. Staff is recommending that "use of all local park athletic fields will require a permit after 5 p.m. weekdays and all day on Saturdays and Sundays." If approved these recommendations will go into effect for the Spring/Summer season.

Notification of the exact date for the public hearing on this issue will be sent to all League contacts. However, we welcome your input prior to the hearing by writing to: Les Straw, Superintendent of Parks, MNCPPC, 9500 Brunett Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20901 or at les.straw@mncppc-mc.org.

Have A Successful 2004 Fall Season. MC-Park Permit Office Staff