

Adult Drop-In Soccer Fees

As background to the Fee Policy, the Board of Commissioners implemented it in January of 2013, stating that “user fees help support the intensified use of parks facilities by various user groups.” The definition of “incremental use” was amended July 8, 2014 to include the following: “A use is not incidental if... a group consists of 5 or more players on athletic field facilities (does not apply to non-athletic facility parks).” The reason for the change was to address the excessive wear and tear that occurred from the adult drop in groups’ use twice per week, adding to the need for additional seeding and aerating.

Adult Drop-In Soccer wish to remove this requirement for the following reasons:

- 1) All the drop in players pay property taxes.
- 2) The players volunteer hours of time to the sport groups as coaches.
- 3) The players understand the need for field rotation.
- 4) The players respect the need for closed areas except when they are told nothing is available.
- 5) A distinction needs to be made between fees paid by organized club sports vs. drop ins. Drop ins are casual and should be considered akin to a group having a game at a picnic. Those who use gyms or lighted fields should pay, as these facilities require an employee for access.
- 6) Having a point person available for fee collection and/or communication is not desirable. Rather, the preference would be that a posting be made on the VPD Calendar communicating the field that is available for drop ins.
- 7) Seattle Parks does not require payment for drop ins, but it is understood that paid reservations take priority, and the drop ins frequently get bumped.
- 8) Does the policy put Robin in an untenable position? The policy creates a flash point.
- 9) What is the revenue for adult drop in? Is the revenue worth the problems it creates?
- 10) We supported the recent passage of the levy, but future votes could be affected by this.

Revenue collected from drop in soccer:

10/1/13 – 9/30/14 = \$608.24

10/1/14 – 9/30/15 = \$950.45

Total annual facility rental revenue = \$53,000

VPD rationale for charging fees to drop-in groups on sport fields:

- 1) All Vashon-Maury Island property owners pay property taxes for the general use of parks and facilities. Those who utilize the facilities to a greater degree (and, therefore, increase the need for additional maintenance) should pay for that privilege.
- 2) The following quote from Commissioner David Hackett summarizes the discussion surrounding volunteer time in lieu of paying fees at the time that the fee policy was being crafted: “The bottom line is we need revenue to support operations. The concern with in-kind is that we need the cash. In-kind is done for its own sake; no exchange is offered. If groups decide they don’t want to offer in-kind, their facility will suffer. Valuing in-kind services is difficult. How do we value in-kind volunteer coaches, for

example? People are free to work on their facility – the benefits are to the facility, not to the fees they owe.”

- 3) Will the players respect direction surrounding field rotation? For example, at VES it has been noted that they park their cars in the West lot and play on the field nearest the lot despite having been directed to play in another section.
- 4) Occasionally, no fields are available, particularly when preparing a field for the next club sport season.
- 5) Drop in soccer plays twice per week and creates notable wear and tear on the fields due to the size and weight of the adult players. If they were playing ½ a dozen times a year, as would occur in the context of a picnic, the need for fees would not be an issue.
- 6) A paid reservation would guarantee space at a designated time. Taking the time to manage available space and posting it on the VPD calendar does require employee time.
- 7) Most park districts do charge fees to drop ins and do have a designated point person for billing and communication. Mercer Island, for example, actually employs a “code enforcer” who calls the police if drop in groups continually utilize the athletic fields without a paid reservation.