

Agenda Report

TO: City Council
THROUGH: Public Safety Committee

DATE: May 10, 2004

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED POLICY AND GUIDELINES TO ESTABLISH A MAXIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK OF PERMITTED USE OF CITY FIELDS BY ORGANIZED SPORTS GROUPS, TO MAXIMIZE FIELD USE TIME WHILE ASSURING SAFE FIELD CONDITIONS

CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve adoption of a policy and guidelines that establish a maximum of 30 hours per week for permitted use of City turf sports fields by sports organizations, effective July 1, 2004. Sports with only minimal turf impact (e.g. baseball and softball) will be permitted to exceed this limit, based on field conditions and space availability.

RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The Recreation and Parks Commission endorsed the staff recommendation, described above, at their meeting of December 3, 2002.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Field Use Policy and Guidelines were considered by the Public Safety Committee on December 16, 2002. The Committee asked staff to monitor field scheduling and operations over the next 4 sports seasons to confirm that adoption and implementation of a policy which limits organized sports teams to 30 hours per week, would not result in a significant reduction in local sports organization opportunities nor create significant additional demand on PUSD fields. Public Safety received updates on June 18, 2002 and October 23, 2003 and on February 2, 2004, documenting that the Field Use Policy worked effectively in balancing the interest of providing a wide range of local sports opportunities while maintaining turf areas in working condition. Based on the findings during the year-long pilot period, with documented successful outcome over all 4 sports seasons in 2003 and 2004, it is recommended that City Council adopt this Policy and the related guidelines effective July 1, 2004.

BACKGROUND:

In response to concerns that the City protect recent investments in City sports fields and assure that these fields remain in safe, appropriate condition for sports play, on July 16, 2001, the Public Safety Committee of the City Council asked staff to report on the permitted use of the City's athletic fields as compared to the optimum hours of use that would keep each field in usable condition. The report indicated that the fields were permitted an average of 5 to 15 hours per week in excess of the optimum recommended 25 hours, and in some cases up to twice the recommended limit. The issue of optimum vs. actual hours of field was escalating due to the increased demand for permits from community user groups, and became an item for review and consideration by the Recreation and Parks Commission.

The Recreation and Parks Commission considered a recommendation from staff on October 1, 2001, to support drafting an ordinance to prohibit the use of City park sports fields by organized groups without approved permits, and adoption of a policy that limited the usage of permitted

hours for the sports fields to twenty-five hours per week. The Commission voted 7-0 in support of an ordinance requiring permits by organized sports, but requested more evaluation of the use issues before supporting a policy to limit the number of hours. The Commission formed an ad hoc Field Usage Subcommittee of the Recreation and Parks Commission to review this matter.

The Field Usage Subcommittee met over the next year to identify guidelines to establish a workable balance between the positive benefits of organized sports while assuring that fields remain in safe, playable condition. They considered such variables as types of sports played and turf impact, types of turf, data on local sports user groups and allocation of field time, demand vs. supply of field hours, assuring field time availability for casual use, coordination of field use and maintenance with PUSD fields, etc. The Subcommittee recommended adoption of a policy to establish a maximum of 30 hours per week for permitted use of City turf sports fields by sports organizations, effective for the Spring 2003 sports season (April 1 to June 30, 2003). Sports with only minimal turf use and impact (e.g. baseball and softball) would be permitted to exceed this limit, based on field conditions and space availability. Suggested guidelines for implementation are included as Attachment A, including additional items for consideration in further Policy development and implementation. The Recreation and Parks Commission approved this recommendation on December 3, 2002.

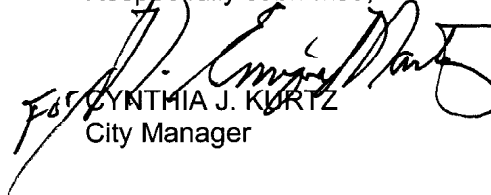
On December 16, 2002, Public Safety Committee considered the Field Use Policy and guidelines and expressed general support but requested additional information on potential impact on local sports user groups and on PUSD fields prior to taking further action on the recommendations. Staff was asked to report back to Public Safety Committee after a pilot test period (the Spring 2003 sports season), to review the Policy impact for this period as well as projected impact in scheduling sports groups for the Summer and Fall 2003 sports seasons. Of particular concern was the potential impact of the 30 hours per week limitation on major turf sports users as well as coordination with PUSD to assure that adopting such action would not result in additional demand on PUSD fields.

Public Safety Committee considered reports on the impact of the Policy and guidelines for sports field schedules during pilot periods covering each subsequent sports season, at four Committee meetings (May 7, June 18 and October 23, 2003, and February 2, 2004). In summary, the findings documented that the Policy and guidelines were workable without significant reduction in local sports organization activity and without significant additional demand on PUSD fields. Meetings with both the Joint City-PUSD Sports Fields Committee during 2003 and with PUSD Fields/Facilities management staff resulted in the recommendation that the City continue with the pilot or transitional approach through the Winter and Spring 2004 seasons, make adjustments if needed, and finalize the Policy and guidelines for adoption and implementation effectively July 1, 2004. Staff and user groups confirmed that the Policy and guidelines were workable and appear to be resulting in better field conditions. PUSD facilities management staff agreed to explore a similar Policy for PUSD fields, and reported no significant increase in field demand related to the City's proposed Policy and guidelines.

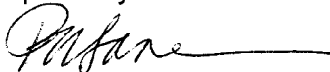
FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to the City of Pasadena with the adoption of this Policy.

Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

Prepared by:



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Attachment A