



Staff Report

TWIN PINES FENCE SIGN POLICY

Honorable Chair and Commissioners:

Summary

The Parks and Recreation Commission directed staff and the Twin Pines Fence Committee to evaluate the current sign policy and to discuss alternatives to present to the Commission for consideration. The Fence Committee's meeting resulted in presenting four options to the Commission for discussion and direction.

Background

In March 2008, the Twin Pines Fence Replacement Project was completed which resulted in a newly configured fence. The current sign policy and city ordinance outlines the parameters for placement of signs on the Twin Pines fence at the intersection of South Road and Ralston Avenue.

During the design and project approval process, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission and the City Council were concerned whether to allow posting of signs onto the new fence. The Parks and Recreation Commission discussed whether to amend the current sign policy at the April 2, 2008 meeting. The Commission was unable to reach consensus and directed the Fence Committee to look into alternative options.

The current sign policy has been suspended since the beginning of construction and will remain suspended until the evaluation process is complete. However, banners can still be displayed on the poles provided and the reader board has also remained available.

The current policy does not allow the public to post signs onto the fence but provides an opportunity for community groups to announce their events. All sign posting requests must be presented to the Parks and Recreation Department for approval and city staff is responsible for hanging and removing the signs.

The City Council recently requested that the City Attorney conduct a comprehensive review of the city's sign ordinance. Most of the sign regulations are in the Zoning Code, but sections 22-81 through 22-83 of the Municipal Code regulate political signs.

The City's Municipal Code, Section 22-81 through 22-83 of the Municipal Code regulates political signs. Section 22-82(b) specifically allows political signs on "the three 6' high panels and three 4' high panels of the fence bordering Twin Pines Park opposite South Road. The ordinance would also need to be amended to reflect the changes to the fence.

On February 13, 2007, the Council adopted a policy regarding signage in Twin Pines Park, following a unanimous recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission. That policy does not directly address political signs on the Twin Pines Fence, and it could not in any event modify the current ordinance.

The current sign policy allows posting of signs onto three 6' high panels and three 4' foot high panels near the intersection of South Road and Ralston Avenue. The overall length of the six panels is forty eight linear feet. The current fences configuration is only four feet high and therefore the policy and ordinance would need to be amended to reflect the changes to the fence.

Discussion

The current policy was adopted to establish guidelines to avoid over saturation of signs in one area, provide framework to establish consistency and to improve the quality of signage in and around the Civic Center and Twin Pines Park.

The intent of the current policy is to:

- Provide the community with a space to announce special events, meetings, or information of community-wide interest.

The Fence Committee discussed several options or amendments to the policy which resulted in these four options for the Commission to consider:

Options:

1. Amend the fence policy and repeal the ordinance to no longer allow posting of signs onto the fence.
2. Limit the signs to a three panel section (formerly six), install I-hooks, and require signs/banners to have grommets which can only be fastened using the provided hardware. This would require amendment to the sign policy and ordinance.
3. Redesign the reader board to provide a space to post signs on the lower portion of the structure. The reader board has lighting and is behind a locked gate.
4. Move the reader board west to where there is no fence.

The Commission should consider these options or make other suggestions to during their discussion. The City Council will be reviewing the city's sign ordinance in it's entirety in the near future and the Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council as part of those discussions.

Public Contact

Posting of agenda

Recommendation

Staff is recommending that the Commission discuss the alternatives presented in regards to the Twin Pines fence policy. It is recommended that the Commission reach a consensus to be forwarded to the City Council for their consideration.

Alternatives

1. Take no action
2. Make other recommendation
3. Refer to staff for more information

Attachments

- A. Sign Policy adopted by Council February, 2007
- B. Municipal Code Article VI

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Ourtiague
Interim Co-Director Parks and Recreation Department

Staff Contact:

Daniel Ourtiague
(650) 595-7441
dourtiague@belmont.gov