



Staff Report

ATHLETIC FIELD USE PLAYER REGISTRATION FEES ANNUAL REPORT

Honorable Mayor/City Council and Parks and Recreation Commission Members:

Summary

On November 27, 2007 the City Council approved (4-0) a recommendation to implement an athletic field use player registration fee in the amount of \$20.00 per resident player per season and per sport, and \$40.00 per non-resident player per season and per sport annually. These funds would be designated for deposit into a restricted fund account, and would be used for specific athletic field maintenance purposes only. The Athletic Field Maintenance Fund (207) was identified as the designated restricted fund account. It was also stipulated that the revenue generated from these fees would not supplant the existing Parks & Open Space budget. The City Council approved Resolution 9957 which identified January 1, 2008 as the effective date to initiate the collection of these fees. The City Council requested an annual update from staff on the revenue generated from player fees and how the player fees were being used to provide for additional athletic field maintenance.

Background

The demand for City of Belmont athletic fields has increased dramatically over the past 16 years, with year-round sports activity becoming commonplace. This coupled with an aging infrastructure, requires proactive measures to address the decline in the quality, safety and playability of City of Belmont athletic fields. Therefore, additional athletic field maintenance efforts are required. If the additional maintenance efforts are not provided in a timely manner, the athletic fields will reach a state of decline where traditional maintenance efforts will no longer be effective. To that end, additional funding sources have been researched and identified to provide this additional athletic field maintenance.

On September 1, 2004 the Parks & Recreation Commission appointed an Athletic Field Use Policy Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) to work with the Belmont Parks & Recreation Department Staff (Staff), to develop a policy that would establish fair and equitable field use prioritization. The Athletic Field Use Policy (Policy) was approved on March 3, 2005 by the Parks & Recreation Commission.

During a required review of the Policy, staff identified a growing concern of the youth sports community that the athletic fields were in a state of decline. The Committee determined that in

addition to field use allocation, athletic field maintenance should be addressed. The current level of City funding for athletic field maintenance was determined to be inadequate to address the need for additional maintenance efforts.

On August 7, 2007 a special meeting was conducted by the Committee and Staff, to address the athletic field maintenance concerns with representatives from the local youth sports community, Belmont Redwood Shores School District, and local Private Schools. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss alternatives for addressing the decline of the athletic fields, aging infrastructure, and to identify possible alternative funding sources that would facilitate additional maintenance efforts. The alternatives presented were formulated from research gathered from neighboring communities that are addressing similar athletic field maintenance concerns.

At the November 8, 2007 Parks & Recreation Commission meeting, staff proposed the implementation of an athletic field use per player registration fee. Youth sports representatives were in attendance and expressed their support of the per player registration fees, but recommended increasing the fee originally proposed by staff. Immediately following Commission discussion, the current player registration fees, of \$20.00 per resident player per season and per sport, and \$40.00 per non-resident player per season and per sport were designated and unanimously approved (7-0, with 2 Commissioners absent) by the Commission.

Discussion

At the January 31st, 2008 Athletic Field Scheduling meeting local youth sports representatives identified the following sites as top priorities for additional field maintenance: Belmont Sports Complex, Ralston Middle School Field and Nesbit Elementary School.

Potential athletic field maintenance items identified for funds:

- Upgrade porta-potties
- Purchase sod for worn turf areas
- Change out inefficient sprinkler heads
- Purchase temporary fencing for use during field closure periods
- Increased vector control applications
- Equipment purchases
- Purchase of materials

The Parks Division developed a maintenance schedule in an effort to improve playing surfaces on the athletic fields. The schedule outlines certain tasks that are necessary to achieve more uniform turf growth and safer playing surfaces for the scheduled activities at the sites. The additional maintenance includes aeration, fertilization, top dressing and over seeding which is now being done four times a year. This aggressive schedule is designed to bring the turf to a healthier level prior to the heavy use of organized sports. Belmont's turf management program will reduce the amount of large scale repairs that are unavoidable with deferred maintenance.

However, certain activities will have a negative impact on the condition of the fields. Historically, it is expected that soccer activity will wear out large turf areas and these areas will most likely need to be re-sodded to accelerate turf growth prior to the next scheduled use.

It is understood that additional maintenance programs have costs associated with the expectations of providing safer playing surfaces. Additional maintenance contributes to more frequent mowing, increased watering along with more staff hours managing and maintaining athletic fields.

The revenue collected by the player registration fees have contributed to the purchases of the following:

- New fertilizer spreader (equipment)
- Monthly vector control service
- Better performing sprinklers
- Materials (fertilizer, seed, top soil)
- Infield surface material
- Replacement of dugout roofs
- Repairs to backstops
- Purchase of sod

The fees collected were not used to pay for the watering costs associated with the four Belmont/Redwood Shores School District fields at Fox, Ralston, Central and Nesbit Schools.

The original revenue estimate of \$94,600.00 in player registration fees collected annually was based on maximum historical participation and potential field users. Several things have occurred to lower that estimate since the player registration fees were implemented. One of the largest field user organizations has released all of their field space and no longer uses City of Belmont athletic fields. This organization had a significant number of non-resident players. In addition, there were a few traditional field user organizations that had lower participation numbers, did not field teams, or made no field space requests. Subsequently, the FY2009 proposed budget for the Athletic Field Maintenance Fund 207 has been reduced to \$75,000.00. This proposed budget estimate could be further reduced if additional field user groups choose to relocate to other cities, participant numbers decrease, or groups do not field teams. However, while the revenue generated from the player registration fees will be lower than originally estimated, the wear and tear due to the high volume of activity will be greatly reduced. This in effect, will provide greater opportunities for athletic field closure periods, which will in turn provide greater opportunities for additional field maintenance efforts.

General Plan/Vision Statement

Natural Beauty

- Our actions today preserve and enhance Belmont’s beauty to make it even lovelier for our grandchildren.

Thriving Culture

- Our playgrounds and athletic fields are of high quality and high gear.

Fiscal Impact

FY2009 Athletic Field Maintenance Fund (207) has a current balance of \$25,385.00. The revenue is generated annually from player registration fees. Total player registration fees collected since implementation (January 1, 2008) total approximately \$40,800.00.

Public Contact

Posting of the City Council Meeting Agenda.

Recommendation

No action is necessary from City Council in this report.

Alternatives

1. Take no action.
2. Make other recommendations.
3. Refer to staff for further information.

Attachments

- A. Resolution 9957

Respectfully submitted,

George Brunson
Recreation Manager

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director

Jack R. Crist
City Manager

Staff Contact:

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RESOLUTION NO. 9957

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELMONT
IMPLEMENTING AN ATHLETIC FIELD USE PLAYER REGISTRATION FEE**

WHEREAS, the City of Belmont athletic fields are in a state of decline; and

WHEREAS, the need for additional athletic field maintenance is required to provide safe and playable athletic fields for the community; and

WHEREAS, the Parks & Open Space budget does not provide sufficient funding to provide the additional athletic field maintenance requirements as proposed by the Youth Sports Organizations; and

WHEREAS, the Youth Sports Organizations have agreed to support a per player registration fee for additional athletic field maintenance; and

WHEREAS, the funds collected from a per player registration fee will not be used to supplant the existing Parks & Open Space budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Belmont implements an athletic field use per player registration fee in the amount of \$20.00 per resident and \$40.00 per non-resident player per season and per sport annually, restricted for specific athletic field maintenance purposes only, effective January 1, 2008.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Belmont at a regular meeting thereof held on November 27, 2007 by the following vote:

AYES, COUNCILMEMBERS: Mathewson, Lieberman, Warden, Feierbach

NOES, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

ABSTAIN, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

ABSENT, COUNCILMEMBERS: Dickenson

Julie Cook
CLERK of the City of Belmont

APPROVED:
Coralin Feierbach
MAYOR of the City of Belmont