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Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee Policy Review Working Group

22358 S. Ellsworth Rd., Queen Creek, AZ

Municipal Services Building

San Tan Conference Room

December 13, 2011

6:00 p.m.

1. **Call To Order and Roll Call:** Meeting started at 6:01 pm.
Members present: David Dobbs, Daniel Babcock, Dru Alberti, Michael Shirley and Sylvia Tarin

Working Group member Michael Shirley left at 7:20 pm.

Members absent: None

Staff present: Debbie Gomez, Adam Robinson, and Tracy Corman

2. **Introductions:** None.

3. **Public Comment:** None.

4. **Items for Discussion:**

A. Consideration and possible approval of the November 22, 2011 minutes.

Motion: Mike Shirley

2nd: Daniel Babcock

Vote: Unanimous

B. Discussion and possible recommendation on existing partnership guidelines, field allocation processes and fees for youth sport organizations.

Debbie Gomez reviewed the Purpose of the Youth Sports Organization Partnership, and asked the group to confirm that they agreed with it. The group consensus was to add "Town of Queen Creek Recreations Services" to the title; and remove the word "all" from the first bullet point under "Partnership status is open to:", so that it reads "Any organization that complies with the listed requirements in the partnership guidelines."

Ms. Gomez reviewed changes to the Partnership Guidelines from the last Working Group meeting.

- Item #2: Sylvia Tarin asked why the National Youth Sports Coaches was specified rather than stating "a nationally accredited organization." Adam

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Robinson stated that including this organization provides a point of reference for organizations to see the requirements.

- Item #5: Ms. Tarin asked if a different word than disadvantaged could be used. Ms. Gomez stated that she would check on whether there was other acceptable terminology. Ms. Tarin asked how families would prove a hardship. Dru Alberti stated that most organizations don't ask for proof beyond the family requesting assistance.
- Item #12: Ms. Gomez stated that after the last meeting she reviewed the existing Partnership Guidelines, and found there was an omission regarding the School District in the document the Working Group reviewed at the last meeting. She said that students of the Queen Creek Unified School District counted as residents in these guidelines because of the Town's partnership with the School District for installing lights at the school fields. As part of that agreement, the School District wanted all of their students to be able to use the fields. David Dobbs asked that Ms. Gomez rework this sentence to make it clearer. Daniel Babcock asked if residency was determined by utility bills, and so part year residents could be considered residents? Adam Robinson responded that was correct, and anyone who owned a home in Queen Creek was considered a resident.
- Item #12.b.: There was a group consensus to change 12.b. to state "Rosters must be submitted two weeks before division games begin."
- Item #13: There was a consensus to change the wording to either Code of Ethics, or change the title of the Code of Ethics to Code of Conduct so that both documents would be consistent.
- Item #14: There was a consensus to leave the language referring to state and federal laws in the document to allow for broader interpretation.

The Working Group discussed the minimum play rule and the no cut policy. There was a group consensus to delete the words "with each player given equitable play time."

Mr. Dobbs asked that staff reorganize the Partnership Guidelines so that items are naturally ordered and grouped together by subject.

Ms. Gomez reviewed the Field Allocation Comparison between the Town of Gilbert and the Town of Queen Creek. Mike Shirley stated that he did not believe the Town was currently following the tiers because although Tier 3 states that general users can make 10 consecutive reservations off season, staff will only allow four consecutive reservations. Mr. Robinson said that he would follow up with customer service staff. Mr. Shirley stated that they needed to ensure staff understands policies and are communicating them correctly. He said that staff is also telling the public that the Desert Mountain Park baseball/softball complex is off limits year round. Ms. Gomez said that these policies may need to be reviewed, and perhaps they were not working

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well in actual practice as things have changed over the years and Town has grown. The Working Group concurred that what is in practice should be reviewed against the written policies to ensure they were still working as intended and keeping up with the current demands.

Mr. Dobbs stated that a lot of pressure on the Town fields would be alleviated if there was a better working agreement with the Queen Creek School District, as this could almost double the baseball and softball facilities. He said that volunteers did a lot of work to install lights on the school fields providing \$100,000 worth of labor, and the Town paid for the equipment. He said that he would like to see a serious effort to approach Mr. Lindsey, the current Superintendent, who was principal at the time the lights were installed. Mr. Dobbs said that he believed that there was an opportunity to revisit agreement and get better cooperation for access and programming. Ms. Gomez stated that she is currently working with Town management and the School District on existing agreements with the School District. She said that if the committee would like to see something specific included to let her know, and that she would bring the agreement back to them at a later time.

Ms. Gomez reviewed the Identified Seasons as they are currently being operated. She said that these have changed over time as different organizations have begun offering programs. There was discussion on whether to change the seasons in order to try to attract new partners for programs such as soccer. There was also discussion that opening up a season for soccer may affect the tackle and flag football season, but at the same time may allow the opportunity for more sports participation by girls. The Working Group came to a consensus to add the words "Subject to change as programs change" to allow for future flexibility.

Ms. Gomez reviewed the Field and Light Use Fees for Youth Sports Groups comparison of other cities. Ms. Gomez also presented the staff recommendation for changing the fees for partners that were in compliance with the residency requirement and partners that were considered in non-compliance with the residency requirement.

There was a consensus to change effective date from July 1, 2012 to state "for those organizations that have registration after July 1, 2012" so that the recommendation would not go into affect mid-season, and allow organizations to make adjustments to their fees.

The Working Group discussed the proposed fees and expressed the following concerns:

- The fees should not subsidize the cost for maintaining other Town properties and facilities outside of the athletic fields, lights and associated facilities.
- If an organization is considered a partner, why not give them the full benefit of being a partner? Ms. Gomez stated that the policy would be to the benefit of Town residents, and that groups in this tier who were in non-compliance would still receive the priority benefit for field allocation and receive a

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discounted rate by paying the normal resident rate rather than the non-resident rate.

- There was concern that the girls' athletic softball organization would be more affected by this policy, because they had a smaller percentage of resident participants. There was a group consensus that this should be considered in the context of any changes made to the fees and residency requirements.
- There was concern about having the flexibility to partner with organizations that meet the intent and purpose of the recreation philosophy, but are unable to meet all of the Partnership Guidelines; at least initially. Ms. Gomez stated that there was a need for a policy to be in place so that staff can treat all organizations fairly, and respond to organizations' questions consistently. Ms. Gomez suggested that the Working Group may want to consider allowing a specific time period for groups to come into compliance in order to allow a new organization time to grow.
- There was concern that increasing the fees by such a large percentage would cause a hardship on the participating families, and that it was important to understand the implications of the price points. There was also concern that by increasing the fees to decrease the amount of Town subsidy, there may be less participants and therefore less dollars coming into the Town in the long run.
- The possibility of paying a per-child fee was discussed, and that this would be easier for the end user to deal with but may be problematic for Town staff to administer.
- The financial need of the Town to increase fees in order to lower the subsidy needs to be balanced by the end users' needs and their ability to pay the fees.
- Currently there is no field fee, and fields are blanket reserved and may sit empty at times. With a field fee users would likely be more specific with reservations, and this may open up fields to more users.
- A graduated increase in the fees over time may allow for the end users to adjust to the new fees rather than such a large increase at one time.

The Working Group asked staff to come back with more information so that they could understand the impacts of increasing fees, as well as the current costs for maintaining the athletic facilities, and make a fully informed decision. The Working Group asked for the following information:

- The fees that Town partners currently charge participants.
- How much the fee increase would cause the partners' fees to go up with the recommended changes.
- Current costs for maintenance of athletic fields, lights, and associated facilities.

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Ms. Gomez said that increasing the fees was a difficult conversation, but due to the Town's current budget situation the Working Group needed to have this discussion. Mr. Dobbs commented that other larger cities may make up for subsidizing youth programs through revenue from adult programs, and Queen Creek is almost completely youth programs. Ms. Gomez agreed that it may not be practical to get to a 0% subsidy for youth programs, but that the Town needed to move farther in that direction.

The group discussed whether to allow exceptions for certain priorities, such as allowing exemptions for girl based sports. Ms. Gomez asked the group to consider all ramifications during their discussion, and to develop clear direction within the policy and when exemptions would be allowed in order to provide direction for staff to deal with all organizations equitably.

Ms. Gomez stated that the Working Group had time to continue to discuss the fees at further meetings. She said the more urgent issue was finalizing the Partnership Guidelines so that a Request for Proposals could be issued to find a soccer partner.

5. **Announcements:**

The group decided to hold the next Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting on January 10, 2012. Ms. Gomez said that she would contact the Working Group members to schedule their next meeting once she knows how long it will take to gather the information requested by the Working Group. She said that staff would strive to be prepared to meet by the end of January.

6. **Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn: Daniel Babcock

Second: Dru Alberti

Vote: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 8: 16 p.m.

PREPARED BY: Tracy Corman December 13, 2011

PASSED ON APPROVED ON: February 21, 2012



David Dobbs, PRAC Chair