



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
CITY OF ALBANY
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Calapooia Room, City Hall, 333 Broadalbin Street SW
Thursday, January 15, 2009
6:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. APPROVE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 3, 2008
3. BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC
4. ACTION ITEMS
 - a. None
5. DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - a. Refund Policy updates
6. REPORTS AND UPDATES
 - a. Capital Projects report
7. ANNOUNCEMENTS
8. NEXT MEETING DATE
The next regularly scheduled meeting date is Wednesday, February 4, 2009.
9. ADJOURNMENT

City's Web Site: www.cityofalbany.net

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2009\AGD 01-15-09.doc

The location of the meeting/hearing is accessible to the disabled. If special accommodations to attend or participate in the meeting/hearing are needed, advance notice is requested by calling 917-7506.



**CITY OF ALBANY
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Calapooia Room, City Hall
Wednesday, December 3, 2008
6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Commission members present: Mike Graham, Sharon Edwards, Russ Allen, John Vandepas

Commission members absent:

Staff present: Ed Hodney, Parks & Recreation Director; Katie Nooshazar, Parks and Recreation Program Manager; Dick Conolly, Parks and Recreation Facilities Maintenance Manager; Craig Carnagey, Parks and Recreation Facilities Maintenance Manager; Tari Hayes, Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant

Guests present:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Graham called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the October 1, 2008 meeting were approved.

3. BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC – None

4. ACTION ITEMS - None

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Alcoholic beverage policy discussion—survey of other cities

The Commission was presented with a spreadsheet detailing Albany's policies as well as policies for parks departments in other communities. The spreadsheet included hours of operation, rental periods and fees, alcohol and refund policies.

The Commission has been discussing the alcoholic beverage policy in City Parks for several months. The current ordinances provide for alcohol use without a permit at some parks, while having alcohol by permit only at others. This creates an enforcement issue for city staff. The Commission discussed an absolute ban in some parks while offering an alcohol by permit in others. The ban would apply to the areas of the city that have issues with alcohol use. This was discussed and vetoed over possible neighborhood concern of moving the problem to certain areas.

Many of the cities on the survey do not allow alcohol in their parks, with or without a permit. The rest of the majority allow alcohol by permit only.

The Albany Police Department would like to see a policy of alcohol in city parks by permit only. Very few permit requests have ever turned down in the past, usually because of concerns with prior police records or

because of lack of licensed servers. For large gatherings, or gatherings with a larger percentage of minors the city can and does request licensing and controls as established by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC).

Park and Recreation staff processes all alcohol permit requests. It's possible to do a tiered approval process whereby permits for simple events such as a family picnic could be processed over the counter while larger events such as reunions, parties, etc would follow the existing process. The process for all permits, alcohol, sound, parade, road closure, etc. is going to be done electronically starting in the spring of 2009. This should speed up the approval process from two weeks to just a few days. Fees could be based on a sliding scale.

The Commission discussed Albany's existing park hours of operation policy and areas that it could be clarified. Currently parks are open unless posted otherwise. This requires multiple signs and causes enforcement issues. Many communities use "dawn to dusk" or something similar. Given the changes in sunlight during the winter months, this was rejected by the Commission. Families enjoy their neighborhood parks in the evening, after work and school. The policy needs to be one that can be applied consistently, assisting neighbors and police in determining who is supposed to be in the parks after hours and the reason for being there after hours.

Staff is currently reviewing the refund policy for classes, shelter and facility rentals and the sports program. There are several issues that have caused the need to review and revise current practices. They include consistency, difficulty in administering, penalization of other users, and lost opportunities. Staff is working to ensure that use of parks and facilities and program resources are maximized and that the policy is equitable, fair, consistent, and customer friendly.

JANUARY AGENDA ITEM: Staff will share refund policy edits and implementation wording with Commission at January meeting.

JANUARY AGENDA ITEM: Staff will share hours of operation policy wording with Commission at January meeting.

FEBRUARY AGENDA ITEM: Staff will bring back a draft alcohol policy for the Commission to review at the February meeting.

b) Park rental policy—survey of other cities (handout)

Park and Recreation staff is considering ways to improve the park shelter and open space rental system. Demand for park rentals reached 99% in 2008, with staff having to turn away rental requests. Currently renters have use of the shelter from dawn to park closing the day of their rental. City staff is investigating the benefits of moving to rental blocks, with a minimum of two rental periods each day and a maintenance break between rentals. Based on staff research, Albany is one of only two cities that have full day rentals. The majority of parks have between two and three rental periods per day.

There were 207 daily rentals during the 2008 rental season from late April through October. Of those rentals, 20 – 25% were 4.5 hours or less in duration, 23% were 5 – 6.5 hours in length. Accurate data for rentals over 7 hours was not available. Staff believes that few renters actually use the shelters and open spaces the full rental period.

FEBRUARY AGENDA ITEM: Staff will prepare rental policy wording for Commission review at January meeting.

6. REPORTS AND UPDATES

a) Capital Projects Report – Hodney (handout)

- Veteran's Memorial – Progress continues on the walkways. The project is seeking revenue sources for landscape and irrigation installation.
- Kinder Park– Bids were opened and the contract was awarded to R&R Construction. The contractor has taken advantage of the dry season so far to move the project ahead of schedule. Grading and sub-rock work should be completed by the end of December 2008. The Parks Department hopes to have ball fields completed by the end of June 2009.

The Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) schedule may need to be revised due to the economic turndown. State grant funding is slowing down due to a decline in Lottery dollars. System Development Charges (SDC) on new housing is virtually frozen. The Commission will be updated as changes progress.

b) Report on 2008 Pool Season – Romancier (handout)

Rob Romancier provided the Commission with attendance and revenue statistics for the 2008 summer season, which runs from June through Labor Day. The aquatics program includes Waverly Lake boat rentals, Takena Wading pool, COOL! Pool and the Albany Community Pool (ACP). The first three are open in the summer only, ACP is open year round.

- Summertime community attendance at aquatic facilities increased by over 4,000 users in 2008
- COOL! revenue saw a 9% increase, even though the season was 5 days shorter in 2008 than in 2007
- The aquatics programs served over 446 children at no cost through the Boys and Girls Club of Albany, CAP and P&R summer camp programs
- An additional 148 scholarships were provided through an anonymous donor totaling almost \$3,000.
- ACP special events this summer brought more than 8,700 athletes and 13,000 spectators to Albany. A conservative estimate shows 865 motel rooms rented in conjunction with these events.

Staff will work the Albany Visitors Association to better track revenue brought in by visitors and attendees to not only aquatic events, but Park and Recreation special events, sports programs, and extraordinary park rentals.

Federal and state mandates will require the closing of the Takena Wading pool in 2009. Staff is already planning on ways to communicate the change with the neighborhood and community as well as planning promotional ideas for alternatives such as COOL! Pool.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

8. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is January 15, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the Calapooia Room in City Hall.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tari Hayes, Administrative Assistant

Albany Parks and Recreation

Refund Policy

Refund Policy Philosophy

In order to provide the best possible service to all our customers while ensuring that use of our park, facility, and program resources are maximized, it is essential that we establish a refund policy that is:

- Equitable
- Fair
- Consistent
- Easy to Administer
- User/Beneficiary Pays Costs Associated with Cancellations
- Doesn't Penalize Other Participants
- Doesn't Jeopardize Revenue Streams
- Complies With Audit Standards and State Guidelines for Refund Distribution
- Customer Friendly

Issues

There are several issues that have caused us to review and revise our current refund practices. They include:

- **Consistency:** Currently, there are a variety of refund policies in place throughout the department. A person signing up for one program might receive a full refund if they cancel at any time or for any reason while another participant might forfeit all of their fees. There has not been a consistent, department-wide approach to the refund issue.
- **Difficulty in Administering:** In some program areas, refunds have "sat on the books" for multiple years. This creates both tracking and auditing issues as well as puts us out of compliance with state guidelines for "unclaimed funds".
- **Penalization of Other Users:** Because many of our programs are paid for by user fees, it is imperative that class minimums are met in order to be able to have the program take place. Cancellations may cause the class to fall below the minimum and therefore be unable to be offered. This penalizes customers who didn't cancel, had made arrangements, and were ready to participate.
- **Lost Opportunities:** We have limited number of days available for shelter or facility rental and often have limited program spots. In the summer, our weekend rentals are often at maximum capacity. If we receive a last minute cancellation, we have often lost the opportunity to provide the resource to someone else who might have wanted to use it.

Plan for Implementation

The revised refund policy will be implemented with spring quarter offerings. (Note: This policy is currently in place and being applied successfully in several of our programs.) The revised/standardized policy will be featured prominently in our brochure so potential users have full information prior to making registration decisions. The refund policy will also be placed on the Parks and Recreation Department website as well as distributed with each registration in order to ensure customer awareness.

Staff will be trained on new policy as well as the philosophy behind the policy in order to ensure a consistent application of the policy. Staff will be provided with a set of FAQ's in order to assist them in providing a consistent, customer friendly response to questions which might be raised.

Refund Policies

Facility/Park Rental Refund Policy

Our mission is to be good stewards of Albany's parks and facilities. Occasionally, we may need to cancel a rental reservation. In the event the department cancels a facility or park reservation, a full refund will be offered.

Parks, Shelter, ACP, and COOL! Rentals

All fees and deposits are due at the time of reservation. If a renter decides for any reason to cancel more than 30 days prior to the rental, a full refund will be given, less a \$25 processing fee. Cancellations made less than 30 days before the rental will result in a forfeit of the rental fees, however, deposits paid will be returned.

Rental fees and deposits may not be transferred to another date or facility.

Senior Center and Tournament Rentals

All deposits are due at the time of reservation. Rental fees are due 30 days prior to the date of rental. If a renter decides for any reason to cancel more than 30 days prior to the rental, a full refund of paid rental fees will be made, less the deposit. Cancellations made less than 30 days before the rental will result in a forfeit of the rental fees, however, deposits paid will be returned.

Rental fees and deposits may not be transferred to another date or facility.

Individual/Team Refund Policy

Our mission is to provide quality recreational experiences. Occasionally, we may need to cancel a program or experience. In the event the department cancels a recreational service, a full refund will be issued.

If a participant decides to cancel, a refund will only be given if another participant is found. If a replacement is found and the participant is entitled to a refund, they may choose either a certificate of credit or a refund by check less a \$10 processing fee. Refunds of less than \$5 will automatically be issued as credit.