

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

APRIL 5, 2011

4:15 P.M.

Councilman Gilbert, Chairman, called the meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee to order with Councilmen Murphy, Rico, Berz, Ladd, Scott, Robinson, Benson and McGary present. City Attorney Michael McMahan and Shirley Crownover, Assistant Clerk to the Council, were also present.

Others present included Dan Johnson, Larry Zehnder, Vickie Haley, Daisy Madison, David Johnson, Ulystein Oates, Richard Beeland, Chief Parker, and John Bridger.

On motion of Councilman Murphy, seconded by Councilman McGary, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as published.

Ordinance VI(a) amending the City Code by establishing the event fees for usage of various Chattanooga Parks and Recreation facilities was discussed. Mr. Zehnder stated that they were seeking passage of an Ordinance indicating changes. He explained that they operate County facilities and City facilities, and some are shared with the County. He passed out recommendations for new fees, stating that they tried to come up with what is reasonable in providing programs. He noted that many programs are free and some programs have a net return. He noted that there are many different ways of establishing fees. He provided a guideline as to what is free. He noted that the fee given the Council allows a 15% discount for city residents—that this is a major change. He went on to say that many communities have special fees for residents and non-residents, and this will give a benefit to city residents. He noted that this does not apply to areas that they maintain with the County and does not apply to facilities that we know are predominantly used by the City. He noted that some would say that people might live elsewhere but pay taxes here. He stated that they could figure out a way to administer fees.

Mr. Zehnder noted that there are new fees for Greenway Farms because they would like to put more money in it. He noted that the golf courses are the major area where they are offering city residents a discount, which is great; that the golf courses serve everyone, and we have to balance what is going on with the rest of the industry; that high fees will push people out, and we want ours to be quality facilities. He stated that there would be discounts for city residents already taking part and city residents would benefit with the season passes; that it will be a considerable discount for city residents. He noted that this division covers its own costs.

He mentioned that the Outdoor Chattanooga Building rental of rooms will offer 15% off of the new fee to encourage more uses on Saturday and Sunday. He noted that the recreation center classes are attuned to the inner city and most of the swimming pools are used by inner city. He noted that Summer Day Camp is going up a bit and that the Champion Club Tennis is used by un-incorporated.

Mr. Zehnder talked about OutVenture Programs that are happening at Greenway Farms, stating that there is not a big volume, and they would rather not do this. He noted that what he had talked about were the ones changing but not all our fees will change.

Councilman McGary mentioned that Mr. Zehnder's handout was different from the packet the Council received. Mr. Zehnder noted that fees were changing, and the actual Ordinance will be revised to incorporate these changes. Councilman McGary asked if the 15% discount would offset revenue? Mr. Zehnder stated that it was rather difficult to do a projection; that he hoped they could begin tracking, but they don't have the data. Councilman McGary asked how this figure was chosen? Adm. Zehnder explained that they looked at the golf courses and were offering some percentage at other facilities.

Councilman Benson stated that this discount fee was long overdue; that it was a tremendous psychological thrill for city residents and will make city people realize that they have paid for this; that it is long overdue, and he thanked Adm. Zehnder. He stated that it worried him that at Brown Acres they did have an annual membership fee. Adm. Zehnder noted that the discount was on the pass. This prompted Councilman Benson to say that when a person pays \$400 or \$500, they can play as much as they want to and wanted to know where the discount comes in? He questioned why a person who just wanted to play 18 holes could not get a discount?

Mr. Zehnder explained that it would be difficult to certify whether a person is truly a city resident and his credentials. Councilman Benson responded that everywhere one goes, they have to show their driver's license. Mr. Zehnder noted that a driver's license does not say whether one is a city resident. Councilman Benson did not feel it would be a logistical problem for Mr. Zehnder. Mr. Zehnder explained that they were just trying to get started, with Councilman Benson stated that starting should include everyone. Mr. Zehnder explained that this is just a start to get us to this point. Councilman Benson stated that Mr. Zehnder could just take their word that they are a city resident for awhile.

Councilwoman Scott stated that one of her questions was how did the Auditor view the fee structure? She added that she did not understand what would be wrong with a driver's license and student ID—that it did not seem that difficult to her.

Mr. Zehnder explained that a driver's license only shows an address and zip code; that they had to come up with a process to quickly identify whether or not one is a city resident because there would be people standing in line waiting.

Councilwoman Scott still felt that a driver's license should suffice, noting that the city's website will show what district the address is in. Adm. Zehnder noted that it would be difficult to go to a website with a line standing waiting.

Councilwoman Scott stated that it probably could be worked out and would not take long. Adm. Zehnder still felt it would be too difficult. Councilman Gilbert stated that Adm. Zehnder could look into this.

Councilman Murphy stated that he had worked in the Parks and Recreation Dept. in a different part of the country; that people have other choices than just public golf courses; that it is good customer service to be able to move the line in a timely fashion, and it would take time to see if one was a city resident; that it could be a beautiful afternoon with lots of people in line, and it would be hard to validate who lives in the city and who does not; that the way we were starting made sense to him. He noted that Councilman Benson's suggestion to just take their word would not work because this is subject to audit. He stated that he trusted what Adm. Zehnder was doing.

Councilwoman Berz thanked him for the fee structure, stating that he had done a great job; that we are not giving a discount by a head now and when we do it, we need to do it right; that it would be saying to the city taxpayer, "you paid for this, and we are giving you a break". She mentioned that when one pays taxes they could get some sort of a card as opposed to using their driver's license.

Councilman Benson stated that people were not standing in a long line to pay green fees. Adm. Zehnder stated "not yet"! Councilman Benson stated that he still felt this was wrong; that if the line is long, the one making these people wait would be a city taxpayer. He went on to say that the line would go quickly if they did not charge anything; that he did not want city taxpayers sponged on by those outside.

Mr. Zehnder responded that city residents at some of these facilities, will get a discount, and we will give a discount for other fees as they come on board; that we can't change quickly with good results and need to be able to implement this easier—residents versus non-resident fees. He noted that we had not had this here, and it will be embraced overtime.

Mr. Zehnder stated that the Auditor had been consulted about fee ranges—that the fee structure provided flexibility; that once the fee is established, all will pay this fee. He noted that the question had been asked "why the range"? He explained that every program has a different level of capacity, and there are transportation costs charges; that when they establish a program, it might not fit the fee schedule; that this is all somewhat new; that it used to be that Administration could set fees but now all fees have to be approved by the City Council by State Law.

Councilwoman Scott stated that she specifically wanted to know what the Auditor said about this? Mr. Zehnder responded that the Auditor wanted to have a sit-down and go over the fees; that what had been provided him, so far, was this range, and he does not fully understand and wants more information. He reiterated that they needed to get these fees established.

Councilwoman Scott asked if we could approve a portion of this that does not include the fee range and allow this to go forward?

Adm. Zehnder noted that this would call for a special Ordinance and asked the advice of Attorney McMahan. Attorney McMahan stated that it would be better if Adm. Zehnder tried to work this out in a week with the Auditor rather than having two Ordinances.

Councilman Scott asked the total impact of the fees and was told from \$800,000 to \$2 million. In view of the amount of money involved, Councilwoman Scott stated that we needed to do this right and make it something that the Auditor can audit. She asked that Mr. Zehnder's department work this out with the Auditor.

Adm. Zehnder went on to **Resolution (b)** that authorizes a two-year Lease Agreement with Darde Long for the use of the barn on the Brown Acres Golf Course property with a rental rate of \$200.00 per month. He noted that this had been recommended for deferral, and we can do this. He noted that the barn is at the Brown Acres facility, and this is available and RFQ's were sent out—that they made this public, and this is the only response we have had; that it has been a long term arrangement. He noted that there had been an article in the newspaper concerning this and a week would give them time to explore issues.

Councilwoman Berz stated that she had no questions; that this was a good idea; that because of the article in the newspaper, she had had phone calls and between now and next week, we could talk to some of these people; that she could give names. She stated that she had no problem voting for this.

Resolution © authorizes a Lease Agreement with Ballet Tennessee for the ground level wing of the John A. Patten Arts Center at the rate of \$1,400 per month, which included utilities. Adm. Zehnder explained that this was a long-term lease and was for one year. Councilwoman Scott noted that there was a discrepancy in the document—that it says \$1,400 one place and in another place says \$1,000. Mr. Zehnder assured that it was \$1,400. Councilwoman Scott stated that she thought it said one figure in the caption and another inside the Resolution; that it might have been changed by now. Attorney McMahan noted that he would address this if there is an error.

Resolution (k) authorizes an agreement with the Boys and Girls Club of Chattanooga, Inc. for the use of the South Chattanooga Recreation Center. The Club will furnish the supplies, and we will pay the utilities. They will maintain insurance. Councilman McGary asked about the \$15,000 fee and was told this goes towards supplies.

Resolution (l) authorizes an agreement with the Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults for use of the East lake Recreation Secondary Building located at 3701 Dodds Ave. for the purpose of operating a Community Resource Center. There is a parking lot involved with a portable building for storage, and this will be converted for use by the Partnership for Families and Children. They will be able to be a referring agency. He stated that he hoped as they rebuild, they would build with the idea that we are consolidating to more of a central location. Councilman McGary asked if they were viewing the Hixson center with this philosophy in mind, and the answer was "yes"—however they are larger.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR APRIL 12,2011

Resolution (b) authorizes an Agreement with Ooltewah Nursery to install an irrigation system at Warner Park in an amount not to exceed \$17,759.00. Adm. Zehnder stated that they had three bidders and this was the low bid.

Resolution © authorizes an Interim Management Agreement between the University of Tennessee and the City of Chattanooga allowing the University of Tennessee to use Engel Stadium between now and the transfer date of the property. Adm. Zehnder related that in 2004 we started talking about turning this over to UTC, and it has taken since 2004 to go through all the paperwork, and we still are not there yet. There is an issue with the facility continuing to decrease in value and liability increases. It has been closed off to the general public and has been in poor condition for five years. It is unsafe, and we need to wrap this up. He went on to say that the County also has to agree and give the University the opportunity to get something moving, and UTC will manage this facility. He noted that this agreement had been passed by the County, and the Council should also see fit and understand this is finally accomplished and totally in the hands of UTC.

Councilwoman Scott asked what he was asking this Council to do? She stated that she thought the Council in the past had given him the green light. Adm. Zehnder stated that they gave the green light for disposing of this to UTC; that all have signed it, and this is an interim approval by local representatives and UTC instead of waiting on Knoxville.

Councilman Benson asked when was the last time Mr. Zehnder had talked to Dr. Brown? Mr. Zehnder indicated that he had received an e-mail. Councilman Benson stated that Dr. Brown told him he was going to move on this. Adm. Zehnder stated that this had gone on for three years; that there was a lot to cover.

Councilman Gilbert asked if we were going to defer the Fee Schedule? Councilman Murphy stated that would be subject to motion at tonight's meeting.

Attorney McMahan noted that he would have the discrepancy in Resolution © corrected by 6:00 P.M.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.