

Memo



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TO: Honorable Irma Anderson, Mayor
Richmond City Council

Through: Leveron Bryant, Acting City Manager

FROM: Jesse Washington, Recreation & Parks Director

SUBJECT: West Contra Costa Youth Soccer League Permit & Field Issues

DATE: April 24, 2002

This memo is in response to the request for information on April 23, 2002 from Mayor Anderson and correspondence which the Mayor and City Council received from Mike & Linda O'Neill of West Contra Costa Youth Soccer League (WCCYSL). As indicated in the follow up e-mail from Trina Jackson on April 24, 2002 a resolution was reached with the field coordinator, Jodie Bryant that would allow all 22 teams in the Spring League (Under 6, Under 8, Under 10 age groups) to play at Country Club Vista Park (CCVP).

Permit #2284 will allow WCCYSL to keep all divisions at the same location in Richmond as was part of their original request. It also includes the remaining available times at La Moine on Saturday afternoons and Fairmede Saturday mornings should it be needed. Adequate parking is more available at CCVP than Fairmede since the school district restricts parking on the basketball courts adjacent to Fairmede Park. In addition, the city parks division has moved the soccer goals with permission from WCCYSL and has arranged for portable toilet to be set up at CCVP. We have been respectful at each stage of this process and do support youth throughout the city with other valuable recreation and park programs. We hope that we can continue to work with WCCYSL at the new location to establish a history of responsible and continue use in the new park.

Clarification of Points Raised.

WCCYSL reportedly uses fields in four West Contra Costa cities and has approximately 1300 youth participants of which 320 are Richmond residents. WCCYSL through Jodie Bryant, requested use of La Moine Park and Fairmede Park for their Spring League with use from March 1 through June 30, 2002. Initial contact was a February 12 phone call followed by call and faxed request in writing on Feb 13 after 5:00 pm. Usually requests are made on a field permit application form. No form was completed for Spring. The faxed request with dates and fields requested were deemed sufficient. We have had fairly positive communication in the past with previous permits issued, and any problems dealt with resident complaints and field maintenance.

Initial issues with processing and accommodating the request for field use began February 25. The first challenge concerned after school practice times at La Moine. El Sobrante Boys and Girls Club (ESBGC) was already issued permit #2019 for La Moine ball field 1 and 2 use from March through June 15 for their Spring League. Conversations with ESBGC did not produce a sharing of the La Moine Field and a later start time on Saturdays was not agreeable to WCCYSL.

The second issue to appear concerned “availability.” While it was reported by staff to WCCYSL (Jodie Bryant) that the Fairmede field was “available,” due to staff error when viewing the field availability computer screen, Fairmede was available Saturday Mornings and was not available for Full Saturday use. A computer glitch in the recent upgrade of the Class system further compounded this error since the selected bookings could not be made on permit #2277. The system did report a conflict in bookings, but no conflict was visible on the computer screen. Staff contacted the software vendor who reported that it should be deleted and replaced with a new booking. Permit #2284 accurately shows both Country Club Vista and the times for La Moine (Saturday afternoon) and Fairmede (Saturday morning).

A third issue concerns the interchangeable use of “Highland School” and “Fairmede Park”. Miscommunication can be accounted for in that some people refer to Highland as Fairmede. The properties are not the same, nor both under city. Staff is now aware of the usage. So, when asked if Highland was available, staff reported that we did not permit Highland and Highland was not in the system.

A fourth issue concerned the printed permit itself. Permits are issued in the order in which the requests are received and customers complete the process of providing deposit, insurance and requested information. For the fields in question, requests were processed in the following order as received: El Sobrante Boys and Girls Club for use of La Moine Park Fields 1 & 2 (Permit #2019), United Cricket Club for Fairmede Park (Permit #2203), Caribbean Cricket Club for La Moine (Permit #2226), and WCCYSL for Country La Moine and Fairmede, (Permit #2277 cancelled due to computer errors, now Permit #2284). While United Cricket showed their tentative schedule on 4/20/02, they did have a permit, where as WCCYSL did not.

WCCYSL technically did not obtain a permit prior to issuing its spring schedule, and the city did not review the schedule prior to going out to participants in the league. The city has received a copy of the schedule on Monday, April 22, given to staff on Saturday, April 20 who was called in by the cricket group to help resolve the issues.

A fifth issue concerns the perception of who the Cricket participants are. Cricket involves teams from throughout the Bay area who have come to know Richmond as a positive place to play. They are adult men and they are American. They do invite teams from as far away as U.C. Stanford, just as WCCYSL has $\frac{3}{4}$ of its players from outside Richmond. There are two cricket pitches in Richmond and it is a sport that requires a large playing space. One of the only two pitches in the Bay Area that are permitted on Saturdays is in Richmond, Fairmede Park. La Moine, while it has a cricket pitch, it crosses two baseball diamonds that are permitted for youth organization use every day except Sunday. There is nothing wrong with this picture of diversity. The current arrangement allows United Cricket to continue playing at Fairmede Park as it has for the past 19 years.

A sixth issue involves how the city responds or has the ability to respond to conflicts on fields over use when they occur. On Saturday, April 20 2002 an incident occurred at Highland School Field

(aka Fairmede Park) between United Cricket Club Ramesh Vasireddi and members of the WCCYSL. Our Adult sports staff, Frank Lacey who formerly issued permits, was contacted by cell phone five times by Ramesh Vasireddi of United Cricket beginning at 10:30 am. Jodie Bryant called and left message with James Teixeira, Community Services Program Manager at 11:40 am. at his work phone. Returning from San Jose to address the issue, Frank was at Fairmede by 2:30 pm and called James Teixeira at 2:50 pm as the soccer play was ending. They met Monday morning at 8:30 am to discuss the permit issues. Mr. Teixeira spoke with Jodie Bryant and Linda O'Neill. They agreed that he should work with Jodie to resolve the field scheduling.

A seventh issue deals with the preparation meetings leagues hold with cities and school districts to clarify basic rules and procedures. The WCCYSL memo spoke of countless hours meeting with cities. To date she has never met with the facility booking staff, nor manager. The clarification of permit and move to Country Club Vista has been handled by phone and fax with Jodie Bryant. Prior permit meetings, written communication and phone calls have been held by the city and particular issues with home owners addressed by staff and City Council in the past.

The following corrective actions have and will be taken to avoid this in the future:

- 1) Convene bi annual meetings in June and December each year with all permitted leagues utilizing school properties and City of Richmond ball fields to discuss with designated field league representatives the plans for the next season to identify potential conflicts in requested use.
- 2) Continue to work with the software provider to address any further computer issues related to the upgrade.
- 3) Highland School will be added as part of the Fairmede designation in the Class permit system
- 4) Continue to adhere to the Comprehensive Rental Policy and Fee Schedule.
- 5) The booking staff will request that a copy of any schedule going out to league participants be reviewed by the Community Services Program Manager prior to distribution so that any conflicts or errors can be corrected or resolved before the program is underway. This will minimize the impact on participants.
- 6) New staff are currently being trained on the Facility Reservation and Program Registration Software. Additional staff will be trained to alleviate any back log of requests.
- 7) Continue to explore the possibility of an assigned park ranger who can enforce permits and resolve any emerging issues at all city parks on weekends
- 8) Continue to work with WCCYSL on any unresolved issues such as field conditions, bathrooms, parking, Fall season, etc.
- 9) The Recreation & Parks Department has moved the soccer goals to Country Club Vista for WCCYSL and will purchase the line marking paint/chalk that was already used at La Moine Park.

As a final note, staff will contact WCCYSL Board Officials to see if a sit down meeting is necessary for continued dialogue.

I can be reached at 620-6951 if you have any questions about this issue.