






Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Ward and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Richard Thompson, Interim City Manager 

FROM: Richard Gill, Director of Parks and Recreation 
 Idris Al-Oboudi, Recreation Services Manager 

DATE: September 21, 2010

SUBJECT: Consideration of Approval to Reduce Fees for the Parks and Recreation Department After School Playground Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the reduction of fees for the Parks and Recreation Department's After School Playground Program to \$100 per semester and the fees for the walking program from the schools to the park reduced to \$98 per month.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-2011 After School Playground Program anticipated a net profit of \$11,875 with 100 registrations at the current fee structure. The City received only 3 registrations at the deadline which would result in a net loss of approximately \$40,000 if the City continues the program. If the recommended fees are approved, staff anticipates additional revenue will be generated to help offset the cost of the program.

BACKGROUND:

In 1986, the City's Parks and Recreation Department established an after school program from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Heights, Marine, Live Oak and Sand Dune Parks for children ages 6 – 12. The program was called "the Playground Program." For the past 24 years the Playground Program has provided a safe, positive, active, and wholesome environment for children ages 6-12, during the period of time when most parents are not home from work. Each afternoon staff offers quality recreational and educational activities such as arts, crafts, outdoor recreation games, tutoring, homework time, cooking instruction, and skill building.

Numerous studies have shown that this period of time (3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) is vulnerable for this "at risk" age group. Crime statistics increase dramatically for this age group during the after school hours.

Until FY 2008-2009, this "drop in" program was free for Manhattan Beach residents. The average attendance at each of the four park sites was approximately 20-30 children per day.

The City's After School Playground Program is different from the Manhattan Beach Unified School District's after school Extended Day Program (EDP). The School District's program has an emphasis on education and extra curricular activities such as music lessons. The City program has more of an emphasis on recreation activities, arts and crafts, sports, homework and character building. The EDP costs between \$300-\$600 per month depending on the age of the child and the special activities they sign up for. The School District does not believe our program competes with theirs, as they assist us with advertising and implementing our program.

DISCUSSION:

In FY 2008-2009, staff started implementing fees for this program to help offset the City's budget deficit. In the last three years we have gone from a free program to \$300 per month (including the walking program). In addition, staff consolidated the four Playground Program sites to two so that staff could be used more efficiently. The result has been devastating to the program. As stated previously, the program averaged 80-120 children per day over four sites and as of two days before the deadline to sign up this year, we only had three registrations for two sites. Staff received close to 20 emails from parents stating that they could not afford the fees and were desperate for a program for their children after school. Of note is that over 99% of the parents are residents of Manhattan Beach. We may have one or two non resident children in the program per year and they are charged a 10% surcharge.

During the budget process staff proposed the fee increase thinking that people would pay for this quality service. When staff saw people were not signing up and writing negative emails over the fees, staff wrote to interested parents stating that we would go to City Council to reduce the fees. In the meantime, staff asked parents to pay for the month of September hoping to have a reduced fee in place for the month of October. As a result, 23 parents responded by signing their children up for the month of September.

According to the City's "Fees and Charges" adopted by City Council; the Parks and Recreation Department has the ability to adjust its fees for the programs to cover what the market will bear. Staff did not feel comfortable adjusting this particular fee downward because it was presented to City Council during the budget process as a revenue enhancement.

Staff is recommending to return to the nominal fee that was charged last year which was \$100 per semester (equal to \$20/month) instead of the current \$160 per month.

Last year, as an option for the After School Playground Program, staff started a walking program for students from the school to the park. Staff worked with and received permission from the Manhattan Beach School District to walk students from Pacific and Pennekamp schools to Live Oak and Heights respectively. We are working with the School District to add Meadows and Grandview. Last year we charged \$98 per month for this service and many parents took advantage of this option. This year we raised it to \$140 per month on top of the \$160 basic playground fee and we only had one sign up. Again because this was a revenue enhancement during the budget process staff did not feel comfortable lowering the fees without City Council knowledge.

Staff recommends the City Council reduce fees for the Parks and Recreation After School Playground Program to \$100 per semester and the fees for the walking program from the schools

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to the park reduced to \$98 per month, which is consistent with what the City charged last year.

ATTACHMENTS:

Emails received from the public.

Richard Gill

From: Jim and Evelyn Brandon [JimandEvelyn@roadrunner.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2010 6:41 PM
To: Richard Gill
Subject: RE: Request for 2009-2010 After-school REC Program Operating Cost Statements & Cost to operate Grandview Walking Program

That is awesome news...thanks so much Richard for all of your help.
We will await your staff report and look forward to a positive outcome for all.
Thanks again

From: Richard Gill [mailto:rgill@citymb.info]
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2010 11:54 AM
To: Jim and Evelyn Brandon; Richard P. Montgomery; tracychaney@gmail.com
Cc: ed.skebe@dhl.com; shaaland@fedindustries.com; Mitch Ward; Nick Tell; Portia P. Cohen; David Ibarra; Idris Al-Oboudi; Richard Thompson
Subject: RE: Request for 2009-2010 After-school REC Program Operating Cost Statements & Cost to operate Grandview Walking Program

Hello, I'm sorry for the delay in getting back to you, but there's more involved with the after school budget than what may appear. First I'd like to inform you that we are going to city council next Tuesday Sept 21 for a reduction in fees. The staff report for this subject will be available on the city web-site under city council agenda items Friday afternoon. If you have any questions regarding the report Idris Al-Oboudi 310-802-5404 and myself 310-802-5402 will be available Monday to answer any questions you may have.

From: Jim and Evelyn Brandon [mailto:JimandEvelyn@roadrunner.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 5:11 PM
To: Richard P. Montgomery; tracychaney@gmail.com
Cc: Richard Gill; ed.skebe@dhl.com; shaaland@fedindustries.com; Mitch Ward; Nick Tell; Portia P. Cohen; David Ibarra; Idris Al-Oboudi; Richard Thompson
Subject: RE: Request for 2009-2010 After-school REC Program Operating Cost Statements & Cost to operate Grandview Walking Program

All,
The answers to all of these questions have been asked of Mr. Gill and no reply has been given. In light of the fact that he cannot guarantee this program will even continue past Sept, leaving our children high and dry with no after school program, I suggest this be brought before city council sooner, rather than later.
Sincerely,
Evelyn

From: Richard P. Montgomery [mailto:Rmontgomery@citymb.info]
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 4:13 PM
To: tracychaney@gmail.com
Cc: Richard Gill; ed.skebe@dhl.com; Jimandevelyn@roadrunner.com; shaaland@fedindustries.com; Mitch Ward; Nick Tell; Portia P. Cohen; David Ibarra; Idris Al-Oboudi; Richard Thompson
Subject: Re: Request for 2009-2010 After-school REC Program Operating Cost Statements & Cost to operate Grandview Walking Program

Tracy,

The correct person to answer all questions relating to the After School program is the Parks & Rec director Rich Gill.

9/17/2010

It is his program in his department.

When his staff report is ready he will bring it to city council to be heard.

until then council will not be discussing it.

Sincerely, Richard

Richard P. Montgomery

Mayor Pro Tem

P: (310) 802-5053

E: rmontgomery@citymb.info



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1400 HIGHLAND AVENUE, MANHATTAN BEACH, CA 90266

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Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: Tracy Chaney <tracychaney@gmail.com>

To: Richard P. Montgomery

Cc: Richard Gill; Ed SKEBE (DHL US) <ed.skebe@dhl.com>; Jim and Evelyn Brandon

<Jimandevelyn@roadrunner.com>; Solange Haaland <shaaland@fedindustries.com>; Mitch Ward; Nick Tell; Wayne Powell; Portia P. Cohen; David Ibarra; Idris Al-Oboudi; Richard Thompson

Sent: Tue Sep 14 15:52:47 2010

Subject: Request for 2009-2010 After-school REC Program Operating Cost Statements & Cost to operate Grandview Walking Program

Hi Richard,

Thank you again for your help with the After-school REC Program a few weeks ago. We really appreciate your time - and during the Manhattan Open no less!! True dedication to your commitment to the citizens of Manhattan Beach:)

We are writing today to ask for your help as we gather information which will help us better understand the financial challenges at hand. We have many questions and concerns about the After-school REC Program's funding and the City's intentions with the Program as a whole.

Some questions which our Committee members have posed are:

Does the City feel the children's after school program should be used as a profit center?

Should fees be based on break-even cost?

Why wouldn't the city subsidize the program as they have in the past? (If not at last year's levels, certainly at a level which does not constitute an 800% increase in price to the working parents whom rely on this program).

Is 800% considered a reasonable pricing increase? Is a 300% price increase reasonable?

Why is the teen after school program only \$20 per YEAR? Clearly subsidized by the city.

Why was the decision made to increase fees for children and not the teen program?

What numbers do we need in terms of enrollment in order to add the Walking Program from Grandview to Live Oak Park?

We aim to be a part of the SOLUTION - as a collective group of parents, citizens & individuals who are passionate about our children's futures - we truly BELIEVE in the After-school REC Program & are 100% dedicated to saving & growing this wonderful program.

David Ibarra has done an amazing job with this program!! It is a shame to see what happened to the pricing of the After-school REC Program - the pricing increases (which do not seem to accurately reflect evenly across the programs offered by the City Parks & Rec) practically shut down the program - one which has been growing & keeping our children safe, happy & enriched for many years!

Please see the email chain below which reflects our efforts in obtaining the above-mentioned financial information - any help you can give us in obtaining this information would be greatly appreciated:)

9/17/2010

From: Ed SKEBE (DHL US) [mailto:Ed.Skebe@dhl.com]
Sent: Monday, August 30, 2010 10:47 AM
To: Richard Gill
Cc: Idris Al-Oboudi
Subject: After School Program Financial Statements

Richard,

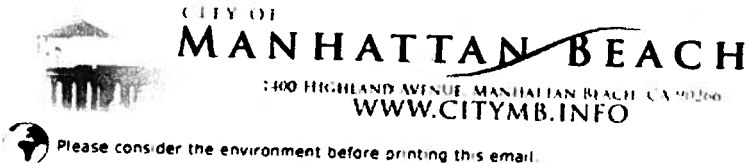
Request to provide the 2009 - 2010 After School Program Operating Cost statements (the costs to run the program). Please also provide the cost projection to operate a Grandview Walk Program.

Thank you,
Ed Skebe
Home 310-545-3839
Cell 310-895-4235
210 Kelp St
Manhattan Beach, Ca 90266

From: Richard Gill [mailto:rgill@citymb.info]
Sent: Monday, August 30, 2010 10:55 AM
To: Ed SKEBE (DHL US)
Cc: Idris Al-Oboudi; David Ibarra
Subject: RE: After School Program Financial Statements

Sure Ed, this may take a couple days as we have a lot of staff out this week.

Richard Gill
Parks & Recreation Director
P: (310) 802-5403
E: rgill@citymb.info



From: Ed SKEBE (DHL US) [mailto:Ed.Skebe@dhl.com]
Sent: Monday, August 30, 2010 11:00 AM
To: Richard Gill
Cc: Idris Al-Oboudi; David Ibarra
Subject: RE: After School Program Financial Statements

Thanks Richard,

Will this be the data you will provided to council to justify lower fees based on actual costs?

Regards,
Ed Skebe

From: Richard Gill [mailto:rgill@citymb.info]
Sent: Monday, August 30, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Ed SKEBE (DHL US)
Subject: RE: After School Program Financial Statements

This will not be the emphasis. I will mostly concentrate the report on declining attendance. We used to have a lot of kids in this program. We thought we could raise some revenue to help the city budget. This is not the age group you want to

9/17/2010

lose. Statistics show that children left alone from 3-6 are the ones most at risk. The budgets for the last several years will be discussed along with their impact on attendance. Hope this helps

Richard Gill
Parks & Recreation Director

P: (310) 802-5403
E: rgill@citymb.info



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From: Ed SKEBE (DHL US) [<mailto:Ed.Skebe@dhl.com>]
Sent: Monday, August 30, 2010 4:44 PM
To: Richard Gill
Subject: RE: After School Program Financial Statements

Thank you Richard,

Still appreciate you sending the requested information later this week:
Request to provide the 2009 - 2010 After School Program Operating Cost statements (the costs to run the program).
Please also provide the cost projection to operate a Grandview Walk Program.

Thanks,
Ed Skebe
Phone 310-895-4235
210 Kelp St
Manhattan Beach, Ca 90266

From: Richard Gill [<mailto:rgill@citymb.info>]
Sent: Tuesday, August 31, 2010 10:52 AM
To: Ed SKEBE (DHL US)
Cc: David Ibarra
Subject: RE: After School Program Financial Statements

Hi Ed yes we are working on getting that information for you

Richard Gill
Parks & Recreation Director

P: (310) 802-5403
E: rgill@citymb.info




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from  Ed SKEBE (DHL US) <Ed.Skebe@dhl.com>

to

9/17/2010

cc × Richard Gill <rgill@citymb.info>
 × Jim and Evelyn Brandon <JimandEvelyn@roadrunner.com>,
 × Tracy Chaney <tracychaney@gmail.com>,
 × "shaaland@fedindustries.com" <shaaland@fedindustries.com>,
 × shaaland <shaaland@roadrunner.com>
 date × Fri, Sep 3, 2010 at 11:19 AM
 subject × RE: After School Program Financial Statements
 mailed-by × dhl.com
 I

Richard,

Will the 2009 - 2010 After School Program Operating Cost and budget projection to operate a Grandview Walk Program be available by next Wednesday?

Additionally, a group of parents interested in the After School Program have formed a committee to campaign for lower costs and a Grandview Walking Program. Please review the request below and provide a draft outline of the proposal you intend to present to council.

Dear Richard,

On behalf of the After School Rec Steering Committee, we are looking forward to presenting our position at the City Council meeting on Oct 5.

We appreciate your taking the initiative to accomplish this and we do expect to be on the agenda. We would ask that you provide us with an update as to how that is going and if we can be of any help in facilitating this.

As we prepare, it is important that we are all on the same page and ask that you outline your goals and objectives that you intend to present so that we might reinforce them with our own. We would like to have this outline in advance of the meeting. We appreciate your assistance and thank you for joining us in this cause.

Finally, we received an email from Richard Gill back in late August which outlined the intended process of requesting funding adjustments to this program. The plan was as follows:

- "1. Keep the afterschool playground program going at the current fee through the month of September
2. Request to go before City Council in late September or early October for a reduction in fees (including those that use the walking program)

Depending on the outcome of the discussion for a fee reduction, if approved the changes would be implemented as soon as early October. We will keep you informed as things progress."

Has this item been placed on the agenda for the September 21st City Council meeting? If not, we respectfully request that it be considered for the October 5th agenda. Any information you can provide us as to the progress of this agenda item would be greatly appreciated.

9/17/2010

Thanks so much & CONGRATULATIONS on your upcoming term as Mayor of Manhattan Beach!! We are lucky to get to live in such a wonderful community!!

Respectfully,
Tracy Chaney
C.A.R.E.
Citizens for
After-school
Recreation &
Enrichment

Richard Gill

From: haaland [haaland@roadrunner.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 10:19 PM
To: Richard Gill; Richard P. Montgomery; Ed.Skebe@dhl.com; Mitch Ward; Nick Tell; Portia P. Cohen; dibarra@citymb.info; Idris Al-Oboudi; Richard Thompson; tracychaney@gmail.com; 'Jim and Evelyn Brandon'
Subject: RE: Request for 2009-2010 After-school REC Program Operating Cost Statements & Cost to operate Grandview Walking Program

Dear Mr. Gill,

As a working parent with one child left in the Afterschool Rec Program and the end of September looming, I feel it fair to ask when this item will be placed on the agenda.

As of Aug. 20th, I was informed this program was cancelled in its entirety. A few days later the program was reinstated thru September with the issue of the price increase (which warrants serious discussion) to go before Council. I think we can all agree that canceling after school care is not the same as canceling other Parks and Rec activities and requires sufficient notice.

At the present time, I have no clear idea of the City's intent for this program. I can only hope this matter can be concluded before Council soon so that we can all move on.

Best regards,

Solange Haaland

Those who stand for nothing fall for anything. ~Alexander Hamilton

From: Richard P. Montgomery [mailto:Rmontgomery@citymb.info]
Sent: Tuesday, September 14, 2010 4:13 PM
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Cc: Richard Gill; ed.skebe@dhl.com; Jimandevelyn@roadrunner.com; Solange Haaland; Mitch Ward; Nick Tell; Portia P. Cohen; David Ibarra; Idris Al-Oboudi; Richard Thompson
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