



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 26, 2011
TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Proposal to Allow Alcohol at Carrillo Recreation Center

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission recommend to City Council that Resolution No. 08-057, regarding consumption of alcoholic beverages in certain City-owned public areas, be modified such that consumption of alcohol is allowed in the Carrillo Recreation Center.

DISCUSSION:

The Department has 15 community buildings of which ten are available for reservation. The facilities are desirable because they are affordable and generally well-maintained. Many of them include other amenities such as incredible views or settings, kitchens, ballrooms, conference rooms, parking facilities, and set up equipment. Alcohol is allowed by permit, which is an important consideration for most private rentals of these facilities. The Department recommends changing the municipal code to allow alcohol by permit at the newly renovated Carrillo Recreation Center to facilitate increased facility rentals and revenue at the renovated facility.

Background

Resolution No. 08-057 of the City Municipal Code permits the consumption of alcohol or the possession of an open container in certain City-owned public areas, including recreational facilities designated for reserved group use while such areas have been reserved and are being used in accordance with a valid group use reservation agreement or permit issued by the Parks and Recreation Director. Recreation facilities currently included in the resolution are:

- Cabrillo Pavilion Arts Center & Bathhouse
- Chase Palm Park Center
- Casa las Palmas
- Franklin Community Center
- Louise Lowry Davis Center
- MacKenzie Adult Building

- MacKenzie Lawn Bowls Club
- Ortega Welcome House
- Santa Barbara Lawn Bowls Club
- Westside Community Center

A spectacular \$7.3 million renovation of the Carrillo Recreation Center will be completed in March 2011, presenting an opportunity for new use at this facility. The size of the facility's ballroom and meeting rooms creates an attractive large scale indoor venue for non-profit fundraisers, weddings, and special events which would compliment the current use for programs, dances, and concerts. The Department has received numerous inquiries regarding dates and use policies for the facility, including whether alcohol can be served. As part of the Department's Fiscal Year 2012 expenditure and revenue budgets, the Department will be proposing a business plan to introduce new use of the facility for large events. Based on experience with other facilities, the ability to serve alcohol will greatly enhance reservations and revenue.

Rental Facility Alcohol Policies

In order to minimize the impact to residents and businesses in the surrounding neighborhoods and provide safe public and private events, policies regarding alcohol are implemented in a uniform way at recreation facilities. Policies include:

- Scope of event (type of event, number of attendees, type of music, additional equipment, etc.) is considered when determining whether the event is appropriate for the facility and surrounding neighborhood
- Alcohol sales require an Alcohol and Beverage Control permit and City approval
- Alcohol is not allowed at youth oriented events (birthdays, graduations, rites of passage, teen dances)
- Security Guards and monitors may be required by City staff

Proposal to Allow Alcohol at the Carrillo Recreation Center

The Department is interested in allowing alcohol by permit at the Carrillo Recreation Center for the following reasons:

- The recent renovation of the Carrillo Recreation Center has created new interest and opportunity at the site.
- Currently the Department's largest recreation facility that allows alcohol by permit, Cabrillo Pavilion Arts Center, has an occupant capacity of 250; Carrillo Recreation Center capacity is 500. This is anticipated to meet community demand for larger venues.
- Increased large scale event rentals will provide a new revenue opportunity for the Department.

Public Meeting

In order to receive feedback from neighboring residents and businesses, a public meeting was held on December 16, 2010. A notification letter was mailed to residents and businesses located within 500 feet of the property, a meeting announcement sent to the media, and an announcement was posted at the facility for one week prior to the meeting.

The meeting was attended by two citizens: one regular swing dance participant and one business neighbor, as well as two department staff. The following concerns expressed by attendees and staff responses to those concerns were provided as follows:

Will current recreation programs now be able to serve alcohol? This is the best place to dance "alcohol free". I don't want to see this change. The policy change is only for permitted special events. Policies for regular recreation dances and programs would remain the same.

Won't the introduction of beverages, food, and equipment used during a wedding or special event damage the floor? Staff have checked with several flooring companies (including the original installer) and confirmed there is not a problem with this type of use. The floor will need to be cleaned after use (which is done currently).

Will a "rock and roll" event be good for the floor? Will "mosh pits" be allowed? Historically, dances have had upwards of 500 participants. The spring loaded floor was designed for large dances and compatible with this use. Mosh pits will not be allowed due to their hazardous nature.

There is a shortage of large venues for concerts and dances in the city. Would the venue be available for concerts on a regular basis? Though the Department is interested in expanding events offered, we also want to preserve our current community programs and their access to the ballroom. As takes place now for all programs, we will continue to evaluate use of the ballroom for program viability and participation, and downward trends may initiate changes to program times, etc. New event requests will be directed to current available dates, approximately two to four evenings per month.

Staff also recognizes that noise and parking from this expanded use may also affect the neighborhood, but feels the impacts will be minimal for the following reasons:

- Near-by properties are businesses that are closed during the evenings when most events would take place.
- Two City parking lots are within one block of the facility with plenty of spaces.

Recommendation

Staff supports a recommendation by the Parks and Recreation Commission to City Council to amend Resolution No. 08-057, regarding consumption of alcoholic beverages in certain City-owned public areas, such that consumption of alcohol is allowed in the Carrillo Recreation Center.

PREPARED BY: Sarah Hanna, Recreation Programs Manager

SUBMITTED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director