



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** January 27, 2016

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Revised Facility Use Policies for Neighborhood Centers

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission receives a presentation regarding the implementation of revised facility use policies at the Parks and Recreation Department's three Neighborhood Centers.

#### **DISCUSSION**

##### Background

The Neighborhood and Outreach Services Section of the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) provides programs and outreach services to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children and youth with the goal of creating a stronger community.

The Department's three Neighborhood Center facilities, including the Westside Community Center, Franklin Center and the Louise Lowry Davis Center, provide: (1) the location for a great variety of beneficial programs and services for youth, seniors and families; (2) lease space to small local non-profit organizations; and (3) affordable rental facilities for family-oriented parties and some non-profit events and meetings.

The fees received from the rental of the Neighborhood Centers helps the Department cover facility operating costs and generate revenue to fund the free programs offered at the centers. This allows the Department to broaden the services provided to the community.

##### Facility Rentals

In 2014 due to an increase in neighborhood complaints related to noise and garbage, the Department suspended facility rentals that included the service of alcohol and/or amplified music. With this change community use of the centers dropped dramatically and the corresponding rental revenue dropped by \$25,000 annually.

In the last several months, the Department reviewed and revised the rental policies for the Neighborhood Centers and recruited and trained a team of facility monitors to oversee the events. In addition, the duties of the Neighborhood Outreach Recreation Coordinator position (currently vacant) were revised to include the overall coordination of the Neighborhood Center

rental process to ensure that the new policies are applied in a consistent manner at each center. Department staff are ready to implement these new policies for a three-fold benefit: to fulfill the community's need for affordable rental space, to manage any impacts to the neighborhoods, and to give staff improved tools to enforce the new rules.

### Neighborhood Meetings

In anticipation of implementing new facility-use policies, residents who live in close proximity to each of the Neighborhood Centers were invited to attend informational meetings in early January. Meeting notices were mailed to approximately 180 residents in mid-December 2015. Staff scheduled meetings at each center to present the proposed new policies and provide neighbors with the opportunity to meet City staff, ask questions, give their feedback and share any concerns.

The Westside Center meeting had six people in attendance. The Louise Lowry Davis Center meeting had one attendee, and the Franklin meeting had no one attend. Prior to the Franklin Center meeting, staff received two telephone calls and one email after residents received the meeting notices. All three contacts expressed positive comments about the Neighborhood Centers and support of the changes. The Department believes that the low turnout at the meetings is an indicator of the overall neighborhood compatibility of facility operations.

Neighbors of the Westside Neighborhood Center were supportive of the public's use of the facility and the changes in facility use policies. Neighbors reiterated their concerns about noise, trash left behind after rentals, need to quickly identify the Facility Monitor on-site during the event, and notification of renters about the limited parking at and surrounding the center. Staff from two nearby churches stated that they appreciated the improvements completed in and around the Westside Neighborhood Center over the past two years including new security lighting, playground and mural, and an improved, cleaner appearance of the facility. The attendee at the Louise Lowry Davis Center expressed her pleasure about the new programs being offered at the center.

### How New Rules and Regulations Address Neighbors' Concerns

Staff revised the Neighborhood Center facility use policies, building on the policies that are successfully utilized at other Department facilities, including the beachfront facilities and the Carrillo Recreation Center) and taking into account the specific concerns expressed by neighbors of the centers. The chart on the following page addresses how specific concerns have been addressed in the new policies.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS	RULES ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS
How can noise and its impacts be reduced in the neighborhood?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rentals must end earlier (9:30pm) with cleanup to follow</li> <li>• Live Amplified bands are prohibited/ only DJ music permitted or acoustic groups</li> <li>• Facility Monitor will monitor sound levels with decibel meter, if sound too high, renter must reduce volume</li> <li>• Security guards required for private parties</li> </ul>
How can trash be reduced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security Deposit increased to \$500, refunded if facility is left in clean condition</li> <li>• Facility Monitor to closely supervise renter during cleanup after event concludes</li> <li>• Additional trash and recycling containers purchased for all facilities.</li> <li>• New facility lighting and security cameras at Westside Center to discourage littering</li> </ul>
How do we contact Facility Monitor on site during event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City to provide cell phone to on-site monitor</li> <li>• Monitors easily identifiable with City shirt and nametag</li> </ul>
How can renters be notified about limited parking and encouraged to carpool?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional information has been added to the new rental information</li> </ul>

Lastly, when an individual or an organization rents a City facility, they sign a Rental Contract and Cooperation Statement which lists the policies of the facility and the penalty if they are not followed. Penalties include the City retaining a security deposit if policies are not followed and/or extra facility cleaning or staff time is required. For serious cases, an event could be shut down early with no refund of rental fees or security deposit. This has happened only in rare instances.

### Timeline

The Department plans to move forward in February with outreach and promotion of Neighborhood Center rentals to the community with the goal of booking a limited number of rentals starting in March 2016. Marketing efforts will target low to moderate income residents seeking an affordable space to celebrate birthdays, wedding receptions and other family gatherings. Staff plan a very soft opening to ensure that the Department is successful in this endeavor with the goal of eventually adding no more than 1-2 rentals per week, per Center. Staff will continue to work closely with neighbors of the centers to maintain good communication and address concerns as they arise.

**ATTACHMENTS:** 1. Neighborhood Center Rental Information  
2. Neighborhood Center Cooperation Statement

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**APPROVED BY:** Jill Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director