

Selah City Council
Study Session
December 13, 2005

Council Members reviewed copies of the following use agreements:

- Wood Field at Carlon
- GYGSA Carlon Park
- Selah National Little League – McGonagle Park
- Joint Use Agreement – Selah School District

Mayor Jones opened Study session at 3:05pm.

Councilman Scott Smeback noted in the agreement for McGonagle Park Item 7 recognizes Selah National Little League as a priority user of the facility.

Councilman Allen Schmid stated when we started looking at agreements for Carlon Park, we began questioning what existed in all parks contracts and identified the need to look at the continuity. Three of these contracts were written for users rather than for the City. The City is required to do more than the users are. He stated we need to look at expenses involved in provision of herbicides, pesticides, fertilizer and water for park facilities. Another issue is lighting. He emphasized the importance of ensuring the relationships described in each contract are fair and equitable. He stated the Little League contract was written before the building process started, and it likely includes items that shouldn't even be in the contract.

Frank Sweet noted that in the agreement for Carlon Park Wood Field, it appears the school has a lot of use and that the City does not have a lot of recreational activities happening there. Perhaps the contract should state that the School District should pay some of the maintenance costs. He noted the Joint use agreement between City and School should somehow address the fact that those within the city limits pay the same amount of school tax as the people in the unincorporated areas, and on top of that school tax they also pay the property tax that helps to pay for some of these park facilities. He suggested that might be negotiated with the School District as well.

Mayor Jones stated this issue started when Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Hagler was cleaning gym after basketball program. That raised the issue of why the City does all the maintenance after parks are used. He suggested that to be fair, the school should pay for cleanup after use of their facilities.

Councilman Schmid stated that according to the school district agreement, we provide services such as garbage cleanup and removal. He referred to Item 3.6 in that agreement which states, "at a time agreeable to the administrators of both parties discuss reimbursement of expenses." He stated he is not sure such discussion has taken place.

Jeff Hagler stated it has not been done.

Herb Schmidt asked if this has been discussed with Superintendent Parsons.

Frank Sweet stated he believes the Superintendent is aware of specifics.

Mayor Jones stated a lot of it is oversight because of the growth of programs and use. He stated we should have a meeting with the school board members to point out some of these shortfalls. He said it's not something we want to get into a pushing match about; we just need to address inequities. He emphasized, "It's for the kids."

Councilman Schmid stated we all need to be more aware of what is in these agreements. He noted the School District is only one example of relationships that need to be discussed. He stated the Council need to know where it wants to go with these issues.

City Supervisor Frank Sweet stated the purpose of today's study session is to give direction to staff so when we hold a joint meeting with the school board we can be on the same page.

Councilman Jerry Kobes stated about half-way through the School District contract items such as 3.97 allow for adjustments.

The Parks & Rec Director stated he has put together use numbers for the various fields. He passed that information around.

Councilman Brian Harris, noting GYGSA pays a set fee per hour for lights, asked Mr. Hagler if others have a similar practice.

Jeff Hagler responded affirmatively, stating when Legion Baseball plays on Wood Field, they have a similar arrangement whereby they pay \$25 per hour for lights to the Parks Department.

Councilman Schmid asked if we have the ability to charge for light usage on Wood Field if the school district uses that field in the spring.

Jeff Hagler responded affirmatively, suggesting the District in turn might want to charge City for lights at Lince during soccer.

Councilman Scott Smeback asked Mr. Hagler about the use report, questioning whether the programs were for the City or for residents of both the City and the unincorporated areas.

Jeff Hagler responded the latter is the case, but it is the City's Parks & Rec program. He noted he gave a copy of these figures to the School District. He stated he examined use 3 - 4 years ago and the usage between the School District and the City was similar, just about equal. He stated School District usage is now greater.

Councilman Allen Schmid noted the statistics do not seem to include Wood Field.

Frank Sweet stated high school baseball uses Wood Field.

Jeff Hagler stated the figures are preliminary.

Frank Sweet said the figures need further clarification, particularly between usage of Carlon Park and Wood Field.

Councilman Herb Schmidt stated it is not just a matter of use of school facilities by the School or by the City. It's what is incurred with that use, a quality of use issue, not just hours.

Mayor Jones stated there is a difference between living in the City and living in the County. Union Gap's budget for Parks & Rec is about 2%, while in Selah 20.4% of our budget is involved with youth activity. He stated we must get beyond the "ours" and "theirs" issue. City residents are double investing in the City and the schools. He stated we need to come up with an equitable agreement and keep kids first.

Councilman Schmid stated he likes the way we've done the contract with GYGSA where every cost, duty, and responsibility is spelled out.

Mayor Jones stated he has asked Mr. Henne to track how much of the Public Works budget goes to parks.

Councilman Keith Larson asked Councilman Schmid if he envisions the School District coming up with rates for use of their facilities, gymnasiums, classroom, etc. He noted this could work against us if we take the position that all should be equal.

Councilman Schmid stated he sees the Catch 22, but unless we sit down and review the costs, we will never know. He said he agrees we're here for the kids to provide facilities at a cost that is reasonable. He said he likes the agreement that states we should keep track of this for a year and every 12 months get together to discuss the relative usage and expense. He stated Woods Field is one of the best fields of its kind in the state. Legion takes care of it, but the City is still responsible for water, fertilization, herbicides, pesticides, etc. Legion uses that field from the latter part of May through end of their season.

Mayor Jones stated that after Legion baseball, baseball camps are held there. He asked who are the insurers during that time, who's liable in case of an accident. He said it should not be the City because that's not part of the City's recreation program.

Frank Sweet stated we need to clarify the use, because no one should be able to hold a camp for personal gain on City property. That needs to be spelled out in these agreements. He stated that there should be a way to determine the percentage of the School District's total tax dollar spent on gymnasium costs to determine the difference between that and what our people are spending try to equalize it. Perhaps that amount could be paid to the City to offset the cost that City residents pay twice. If we try to equalize it based on the total tax base, we can find out how much should be contributed to the City for maintenance. He stated that is perhaps another step in the Parks and Rec service Area.

Councilman Kobes stated that would work better than everybody trying to charge everybody else.

Councilman Schmid said it would be interesting to study the relative costs.

Councilman Harris stated the school district holds parents and participants responsible for clean-up.

Mayor Jones stated the City holds rest rooms open in the fall when they close the high school.

Frank Sweet stated if we equalize the tax base, we can get past issues like that.

Mayor Jones stated the County should establish a budget for each community and participate in a recreational fund.

Frank Sweet stated Mr. Noe, Mr. Hagler and he could look at these issues, involve Mr. Novobielski for tax information, and bring a report back to the Council.

Councilman Schmid said he would like to include the Public Works Director.

Frank Sweet stated we should also include in the contract that the facilities are not to be used for private benefit.

Mr. Hagler pointed out that both the GYGSA and SNLL are asked for a financial statement at the end of each year, but Legion is not asked for that.

Mr. Sweet stated they should all be consistent through the agreements.

Councilman Kobes stated it is key that the contract also include an option for review and adjustment.

Jeff Hagler asked if the Council received a copy of the skateboard agreement.

Councilman Harris suggested the skateboarders need to learn to shovel snow.

Jeff Hagler stated the school wanted it to be a temporary (two-year) location. He reported he went to school board meeting last week. He noted the skate park is working out well in that location.

Councilman Harris it depends on how it's used, and if it's positive, perhaps it could be extended.

Councilman Schmid questioned item No. 4 regarding the need for a fence.

Jeff Hagler stated there is a fence where they do the discus throw, but a fence should be added so no skateboards go into traffic. It was suggested they put barriers to the east.

Bill Harris addressed the Council stated GYGSA has kicked in \$5,000 into improvements at Carlon Park that are not specified in the contract.

Mayor Jones stated both GYGSA and Little League have set a precedent for helping improve the facilities. He said every time we add more grass, Joe Henne cringes. Mayor Jones adjourned the study session.