



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the General Committee

From: Sheldon Laidman, Commissioner, Community Services

Meeting Date: June 6, 2022

**Subject: Review of Permitting and Ball Diamond Process
Report CSRS22-001**

Purpose

To provide Council with information on the recommended 2023 process associated with permitting, user fees, and future development of ball diamonds related to the planned construction of the twin-pad arena at Morrow Park.

Recommendations

That Council approves the recommendations in Report CSRS22-001, dated June 6, 2022, of the Commissioner of Community Services as follows:

That effective starting in the 2023 season:

- a) Prime time hours be defined as 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., and non-prime time hours be defined as 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.;
- b) Consistent time blocks be utilized for rental allocations and permitting on outdoor sport facilities;
- c) Northcrest Level C ball diamond be removed from the permitting inventory;
- d) That outdoor sport facilities, such as ball diamonds and fields, be defined as follows;
 - i. Level Premier – facilities include sport field lights, bleachers, and additional amenities not included in Level A sport facilities;

- ii. Level A – facilities include sport field lights, and bleachers as a minimum standard;
 - iii. Level B – facilities do not include sport field lights;
 - iv. Level C – facilities do not include additional amenities and are designed for youth-level play;
- e) That adult level play is not permitted on Level C sport facilities;
 - f) That user fees are applied to all sport facility permits, including games, practices, and/or tournaments;
 - g) That user groups that are designed to provide access to sport for youth and/or persons with disabilities are provided a discounted rate, approved through the annual budgetary process; and
 - h) That staff review the 2022 and 2023 usage of ball diamonds following implementation of the new permitting processes and provide Council with recommendations for capital improvements of ball diamonds in the 2024 capital budget related to the removal of three (3) Level B diamonds at Morrow Park scheduled to begin at the end of the 2022 season.

Budget and Financial Implications

The recommendations in this report have no anticipated impact on the annual municipal operating budget and are drafted to maximize permitted hours available within existing outdoor sport facilities. 2023 budgetary processes related to user fees will include adjusting the approach to user fees to reduce financial barriers associated with extra fees such as sport lights, adjusting the non-prime time hourly fees to be inclusive of all user types, and establishing a consistent approach to permitting and classification. The adjustments and changes are not designed to increase revenues but rather to ensure full usage of each facility and equitable costs for the use of the ball diamonds

Background

Through Report CSAD21-006 dated June 14, 2021, Council approved the Morrow Park location for the twin-pad arena project resulting in the removal of three ball diamonds. Staff was asked to review the impacts of the loss of these diamonds and provide recommendations. In response to this review a thorough review of the permitting process was completed, including meetings with ball diamond user groups.

The current practice is sport user groups submit an annual allocation request for hours, locations, and overall season requirements by February 1 to Recreation Division staff. The season is defined as May 15 through October 15, with adjustments based on

weather and facility maintenance status. The requests are reviewed, and an annual schedule of sport league use is drafted. Once the annual schedule is created, staff provide each user group with a summary of requests. Further adjustments are made before the start of the season based on membership numbers, tournaments, practices, and game schedules.

Permitting hours were not defined previously, and therefore users could request individual start and end times as part of the schedules, which historically begin at 6:00 p.m. during the week. Sport user groups, for example, would be able to request a 6:15 p.m. start time with an 8:45 p.m. end time. These inconsistent permitting times created some gap periods within the overall season schedule preventing staff from maximizing the allocation of the sport facilities. Establishing prime and non-prime permitting hours, along with established time blocking creates consistency within the permitting process.

Morrow Park

In Fall 2022 construction is scheduled to commence on the twin-pad arena, resulting in the loss of three Level-B ball diamonds. During the construction period in 2022 to 2024, one Level-B diamond will remain in inventory, allowing at least 12 games to be played during prime-time each week. As most facility rentals at the Morrow Park ball diamonds consist of Slo-pitch games, and based on the 2019 usage data, the user group requests can be accommodated within existing inventory elsewhere in the 2023 season. Leagues can be accommodated by adjusting current permitting times, and permitting additional locations, such as the Kinsmen ball diamond.

Fire Station and Northcrest Ball Diamond

With the fire station placement at the former Northcrest arena site, the available parking and access to the Level-C Northcrest ball diamond will be limited and removal of this diamond from inventory is recommended. The ball diamond will remain available for community use. Analysis of Level C ball diamond usage indicates that sport user requests for Level-C ball diamonds can be accommodated within the remaining inventory.

Sport User Fees

Permitting fees are based on level of play (adult or youth), time of permit (sport lights) and the actual fees being set though the annual budget cycle. It is recommended that outdoor sport facilities establish hourly fees related to the classification of the sport facility and the fee be applied for each permitted hour based on prime and non-prime hours. Those user groups providing access to sport for Youth and/or Persons with Disabilities would continue to be subsidized through a discounted rate, established through the annual budget process, and remains in accordance with the Sport, Recreation and Leisure Policy.

Sport field lights are currently charged as an extra fee to the hourly permit rate and is applied during low-light periods through the season to continue game play past dusk. It is recommended that the sport light fee be incorporated into the hourly fee structure, reducing issues associated with its administration both for the City and the sport user groups.

Sport user groups engaging in practice-related activities currently do not pay an hourly permit rate, regardless of the category of play or classification level of sport facility, resulting in permitted hours without a cost recovery. Historically this process results in approximately 30% of permitted hours being provided at no cost. In the initial requests for the 2022 season staff have seen an increase in requests for practice-related permitting times, resulting in sustained allocation of hours with a reduction in revenue. It is recommended that sport facility permitting is provided at the established hourly rate regardless of the purpose of use. This is consistent with other city facility practices (e.g., arenas) and is appropriate as the cost impacts for the provision and maintenance of a ball diamond is the same regardless of its use as a practice or game. It is also anticipated that charging for all usage of ball diamonds will lead to greater maximization of the available ball diamond hours. Without a cost to rent the field for a practice, there is no disincentive for sport user groups to overbook fields beyond their basic needs. Staff have completed a scan of other municipal sport field booking policies and have determined that this approach is the industry standard elsewhere in Ontario.

Example of hourly fee structure changes

	2022 Rental Fee	2022 w/ Light Fee	2023 Non-Prime Time Rate	2023 Prime Time Rate
Adult: Level B	\$ 25.75	\$ 51.50	\$ 20.00	\$ 25.00
Youth: Level B	\$ 7.25	\$ 33.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 6.25
Practice: Level B	\$ 0.00	\$ 25.75	\$ 20.00	\$ 25.00

The above is an example of the change in fee structure proposed. The full fee schedule for all diamond levels would be provided as part of the 2023 budget and fees schedule.

The new fee structure was developed using an analysis of the following data from 2019:

- The total number of hours user groups were allocated on the fields;
- The number of hours the fields were used; and
- The number of hours in which fees were applied.

The 2023 proposed fee structure was then compared to the 2019 analysis, with the goal to ensure that the changes to the fee structure would not result in significant increased costs for user groups overall

The 2023 adjusted hourly fee structure incorporates sport lighting, games, tournaments, and practice hours, resulting in sport facility fees being lowered overall, while maintaining consistent revenue. In preparation for these adjustments, it is anticipated that sport user groups will complete an in-depth analysis of their actual field requirements as they prepare to pay for all rented time in 2023.

Sport user group consultation

Throughout March of 2022, staff consulted with ball diamond user groups on the 2023 recommended adjustments. Items included:

- Paying for all rental times, regardless of purpose of use;
- Adjustments to lighting fee structure; and
- Incorporating consistent time blocking procedures for field rentals.

User groups responded positively to the recommendations. Those user groups who have historically high practice times were responsive and understanding of the 2023 recommendation to pay for all used time. Some user groups noted that historically their rental requests have been limited to daytime use due to affordability issues regarding the lighting fees. Leagues focused on providing sport to persons with disabilities requested consideration for discounted rates to support continued play for their users. The new adjusted fee structure will remove some barriers related to affordability, potentially resulting in an increased level of play overall.

Future development

As the development of the twin-pad arena progress, three of the Morrow Park Level-B ball diamonds will be removed in the 2022 season, with a single Level-B ball diamond remaining in use through the 2023 season. Staff will review the 2022 and 2023 usage of the ball diamonds and provide recommendations in the 2024 capital budget related to the remaining ball diamond at Morrow Park. If usage in 2023 under the revised permitting and fee structure exceeds available ball diamond inventory availability, staff will then evaluate options to include in future capital budgets which may include additional ball diamond construction or additional amenities at existing ball diamonds such as the provision of lights to increase diamond availability of the existing diamond inventory.

Review of the Arenas, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (APRAC)

APRAC reviewed a report on ball diamond policies, user fees, and future diamond development at its May 17, 2022 meeting and made the following recommendation:

That the recommendations received in Report APRAC22-010 Review of Permitting and Ball Diamond Process be endorsed by the Arenas, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee as received.

Summary

The recommendations within this report were drafted through review of the permitting process related to outdoor sport facilities and has determined that adjustments to the permitting process, including user fees, hours of use, and intended use of facilities, will provide staff the ability to maximize the use of the existing facilities, prior to recommending future capital development projects.

Submitted by,

Sheldon Laidman
Commissioner of Community Services

Contact Name:

Rob McAulay
Recreation Services Division and Peterborough Sport and Wellness Centre Manager
Phone: 705-742-0050 Ext. 2204
Toll Free: 1-855-738-3755
E-Mail: rmcaulay@peterborough.ca