

MM19.3.19

Marilyn Toft - RE: Permit Fees

From: "Toronto Sports Council" <chair@torontosportscouncil.ca>
To: "Clerk" <clerk@toronto.ca>
Date: 3/6/2012 9:14 AM
Subject: RE: Permit Fees

Thank you Marjorie,

Yes, I would like this to be part of the public record.

Regards,

Karen

From: Clerk [mailto:clerk@toronto.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, March 06, 2012 8:59 AM
To: chair@torontosportscouncil.ca
Subject: Re: Permit Fees

Dear Karen,

Thank you for your email. You have addressed this email to the Mayor and various Councillors.

If you wish to submit this e-mail to all Members of Council as part of the public record for MM19.3 New Children and Youth Permit Fees for Sports Fields - by Councillor Sarah Doucette, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher (Ward All), please confirm back in an e-mail and we will include your correspondence.

Regards,
Marjorie
City Clerk's Office

>>> "Toronto Sports Council" <chair@torontosportscouncil.ca> 3/5/2012 9:12 pm >>>
Dear Mayor and Councillors,

On behalf of the sport groups in the City, we would ask you to approve motion MM19.3. Sport groups are prepared to be part of the solution but require proper notice and due process.

Please find attached a letter on the impact of permit fees.

Regards,

Karen Pitre
Chair
Toronto Sports Council



March 5th, 2012

Dear Mayor Ford and City Councillors,

I am writing to make sure that you fully understand how problematic the recent 2012 Budget imposition of hourly fees for children and youth sport fields is for the Toronto sport and recreation community, and invite you to join the discussion. The new hourly fees came as a complete surprise to everyone: sport groups, PF&R staff and Councillors. The fees represent a substantial increase without sufficient notice, consultation or consideration for the planning cycle of these volunteer organizations. This increase will have a significant impact on many of our neighbourhood sport groups across the City and will diminish sport opportunities for those groups who will not be able to afford the increases.

While we understand that the City sees a need to charge fees to all recreation users on a cost recovery basis, one could argue that these services are covered by our property taxes. Therefore the question becomes: Where did the numbers come from for the cost recovery analysis? Is the budget estimate of \$1.5M from permit fees a realistic number? The actual amount will most likely be significantly less. Therefore it would not be onerous for the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Department to absorb this until a proper process is put in place.

Notwithstanding these issues, the Toronto Sports Council's biggest concern is that charging the new user fees across-the-board will hinder many children and teenagers from participating in recreation activities and that the impacts of these fees will be felt most dramatically by the most vulnerable community members, at a time when it is acknowledged that recreational activities play a significant role in child and youth development. There is also a risk that this new policy will erode or demoralize the critical sport volunteer base in the city.

Without sufficient notice, the 2012 budget has left many organizations without recourse to recover what is now a significant gap in funding. The City's new user fees have not been included in organizational registration fees for the 2012 season because there was no notice of these changes. Some local sport groups have been given a bill for up to \$53,000 – with no notice. Right now we are hearing that it will be very difficult, especially for volunteer organizations, to revise all registration fees to accommodate these significant increases.

We are requesting that city councillors vote in favour of motion MM19.3 - submitted on March 5 and 6 by Councillor Sarah Doucette, seconded by Councillor Paula Fletcher

In addition, **we are requesting that Council:**

1. direct Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff to withhold collection of fees for one year to give these organizations the opportunity to build the new permit fees into their registration fees;

Toronto Sports Council
2255B Queen Street East, Suite 382
Toronto, Ontario M4E 1G3
Tel: (416) 691-7438
www.torontosportscouncil.ca

2. direct Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff to issue the permits necessary to commence the season and defer the date for releasing permit field time until after the April 10th community meeting; and
3. inform the sport community as to how the permit fees will be used to improve the quality of these facilities as many are in a state of disrepair.

We have found that it can be very helpful to involve sports groups in the decision making process before decisions are final, and we are often able to find ways to make changes that can be accommodated.

Under these circumstances, it would be extremely helpful for the planning cycle of sport organizations to be taken into consideration. **The Toronto Sports Council is hosting a meeting on April 10th from 7-9pm at the Metro Central YMCA** to discuss this issue with the Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff and affected sport organizations.

The main objectives for the April 10th meeting will be:

- 1) To develop a protocol between sport user groups and Parks, Forestry, and Recreation for advance notification and consultation regarding fee changes in the future.
- 2) To develop a process offering relief to those groups having financial difficulty complying with any new fee structure.
- 3) Review the numbers for the cost recovery analysis.

We welcome you to join us on April 10th to contribute to the discussion and support our valued volunteers who develop our children and youth and make this city a better place to live.

Yours truly,



Karen Pitre
Chair
Toronto Sports Council