



Memo

To: Board of Commissioners
From: Doug Coutts, Director
Date: 7/16/2021
Re: Sports Fields-Discussions

We have had two items regarding Sports Fields come up in the past few weeks that staff would like to discuss at the board level:

1. School District Usage-In the Past week, staff received 2 separate requests from SWHS Coaching staff to use our fields because School District fields were unsafe or not maintained well enough. Staff has dealt with both of these requests as best we can during the off-season and working with the School Athletic Director. There is a deeper issue here of field maintenance that has been ongoing with having the Park District fields used by School District teams instead of their own fields for the simple reason that they are not maintained to a high enough standard. I have touched base with the High School Athletic Director to re-start the Conversation on this topic- suggesting we take another look at it and see if we can find a solution-maybe one that involves us in some way taking over or directing the maintenance on the School's Sports fields. Details would have to be worked out on all of this, just a conversation to start.
2. Private Sports Instruction-Staff have observed some individuals teaching private lessons for sports on our fields, mainly soccer and pickleball, but other sports could be grouped in here as well. The issue is twofold, first, allowing someone to charge money for a class on District property without compensating the District for that use, is gift of public funds and we have a specific policy in our Code of Conduct that prohibits any commercial activity without written authorization from the District Director. This, however is very difficult to enforce, as we have approached some of these instructors and they say that they are teaching for free. The other aspect of this is that we need to be able to schedule work on

fields and facilities. Sometimes our staff will show up to mow or aerate or perform another field maintenance task when the schedule says the field is empty and it is set up with cones and other equipment for a lesson. We can and do ask people to move once we have no other option but to mow that area, but it is an imposition to both our staff and the person using the field.

This is a discussion item at this point but we may want to update or implement policies in the future with regards to these issues. A suggestion that Matt came up with when I discussed the idea with him was to require all people teaching lessons to register their lessons in the office. We could then have them declare that they are/are not being paid, set their times, and possibly provide proof of insurance. This is just an idea and more research would need to be done, but could be a good starting point for discussion.