**Comments on Updates to Rules Regarding Permits for the Use of Ballfields and Courts**

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My name is Jerry Katzke and I am the Director of Permits and Scheduling for the Parade Ground Baseball League and the Athletic Director of the Bonnie Boys Club. The Parade Ground League and the Bonnie Boys Club have held almost all of the baseball field permits at the Parade Grounds for over 60 years.

I was not able to attend today’s August 8th Hearing on the Updates to the Rules Regarding Permits for the Use of Ballfield and Courts but I wanted to offer some comments and suggestions based on my personal experiences over the last 60 years. I have spent a huge amount of time at the Parade Grounds since I first participated there as a 12-year-old player back in 1960 and have continued to participate as a manager, coach, Athletic Director and League Director.

My concerns are as follows:

**Games/Practices**

I have never seen a clear definition of what constitutes a Game or a Practice. While I do believe that Games should take precedence over practices in terms of prioritizing field permits, I believe that there should be some leeway in permitting practices under Game Permits and games under Practice Permits. Most Leagues/Teams that hold Game Permits are also looking for a place to practice over the course of the season, particularly at the start of the season (March/early April) before the League Games have started. I would suggest that Leagues/Teams that apply for Game Permits be allowed to use them for practices 20% of the time so that they do not have to apply for separate Practice Permits. I would also do the same for Practice Permits – that they be allowed to be used for Games about 20% of the times over the course of the season. I think that this is a more realistic mix that would better satisfy the needs of the Leagues and Teams.

**Activities Allowed on Permitted Fields**

I would propose that Permits only be given out for the in-season sport/activity for which the field is intended. So during the baseball season for instance, permits for soccer, frizbee, softball on a Regular Size Field should not be permitted and should not be allowed. It prevents the intended sport/activity from being played and also has a negative impact on the condition of the field as soccer and frizbee can wear out the outfield grass with extended use, and softball played on a regular size field can wear out the infield grass.

**Adult Non-Profit Fees**

While I certainly understand the necessity to charge for Adult Permits, I think the fee proposed for Synthetic Turf Fields of $28/hour is a bit much particularly for non-profit organizations. In addition, the turf baseball field at the Parade Grounds, that was constructed with a dirt infield, is totally worn down and the black underpinnings of the turf are showing through. The new turf fields that are all turf are much more worthy of that type of charge. The cost of Adult Natural Fields of $24 for non-profits is a bit much as well. Non-Profit Adult activities are far different than those fields whose permits are held by profitable corporations.

**Maintenance**

While I appreciate the effort on your part to tighten up the Field and Court Permit Rules, I continue to be disappointed that you are not addressing the Field Maintenance Conditions whatsoever. The fields at parks like the Parade Grounds, Paedergat Park, Marine Park and Joffe Park are virtually unplayable. At the Parade Grounds (which I am most familiar with) the grass is not cut on a regular basis. It is supposed to be cut every two weeks but almost never is and on most occasions we have to call up to get it cut when the fields have become unplayable. In addition, there are weeds covering the infield dirt on almost all Fields and Weeds against the fences of all Diamonds as well. On fields that have trees overlooking the home plate and first base areas, the trees stick out into fair grounds and significantly impact the ability to play the game. And of course there is no maintenance whatsoever in rain situations. I know that the Parks Department is very short-handed but the fields have become virtually unplayable.

These are some of the topics that I feel strongly should be addressed. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me or text or call me at 301-704-7436.

Thanks in advance for your willingness to hear my thoughts.

Jerry Katzke

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