

CITY OF PIEDMONT  
City Council Staff Report

Date: March 21, 2005 City Council Meeting  
From: Mark Delventhal, Director of Recreation  
Subject: REQUEST FROM PIEDMONT SOCCER CLUB  
FOR SUNDAY USE OF BEACH PLAYFIELD

---

Staff Recommendation:

1. Conduct a public hearing regarding the request from Piedmont Soccer Club to amend the city code to permit use of Beach Playfield on six Sundays between the hours of 12noon and 2pm for soccer games for Under 8 players.
2. Consider the first reading of an ordinance which would allow such use.

Background:

On February 16, 2005 the Recreation Commission held a public hearing in response to a request from Piedmont Soccer Club to amend the existing use restrictions to permit use of Beach Playfield on Sundays as detailed in their letter of February 2 (Attachment #1.) Also attached is my memo of February 16 (Attachment #2.)

The Commission conducted this hearing and after consideration, voted 2-2 on a motion to approve use on 6 Sundays on a trial basis. Consequently, the matter comes to the City Council with no recommendation from the Recreation Commission. Please see the minutes of this meeting (Attachment #3.)

Prior Request – February, 2004:

On February 11, 2004, the Recreation Commission considered a request from the Soccer Club to amend the use restrictions to:

- Permit use of the field on 12 Sundays in the spring and 12 Sundays in the fall, and;
- Extend the field lighting curfew **from** 8:00pm **to** 9:00pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays in the fall, and;
- Permit lighted use of the field on Fridays in the fall until 8:00pm.

The Commission held a public hearing to consider this request. After consideration, the Commission recommended that the City Council only approve an amendment to the Use Restrictions to permit lighted field use of the field until 9:00pm on Mondays, Tuesdays,

Wednesdays and Thursdays. The Commission expressly denied Sunday use. ( Attachment #4.)

On April 6, 2004, the City Council approved the amendment to the Use Restrictions as recommended by the Recreation Commission. (See Attachment #5.)

#### Historical Background:

After much community dialogue and debate about grass playfields, Beach was converted from asphalt to grass in 1989. In 1988, the City Council adopted Use Restrictions to regulate field lighting. (See Attachment #6.)

It should be noted that Beach is the only city field with field lighting.

On February 20, 1996 the City Council considered a recommendation from the Recreation Commission to establish a second baseball/softball diamond at Beach Playfield. The City Council held a public hearing and after much testimony and discussion, the Council approved the creation of a second diamond at Beach. In doing so, they amended the Use Restrictions to prohibit use of the field on Sundays for organized sports. The City Council minutes clearly demonstrate the intention of the Council and that the Sunday closure to organized use was a “trade off” for expanded Saturday use. (See Attachment #7.)

#### Summary of Use – 2004 Chart:

Attached please find (Attachment #8) a chart which is a colored coded Summary of Field Use Hours by Organization, by Site and by Month for 2004 actual. The primary purpose/essence of this chart is to show field use site-by-site, by organization, by month and how many hours.

#### Sunday Use – 2004:

##### Dracena:

The existing use restrictions do not permit organized use of Dracena on weekends

##### Beach:

The existing use restrictions do not permit organized use of Beach on Sundays.

##### Coaches Field:

Coaches Field was utilized for organized sports on 23 Sundays for total of 137 hours, all of which were used for softball/baseball.

##### Hampton Field:

Hampton Field was utilized for organized sports on 25 Sundays for total of 135 hours, 78 for softball/baseball, 34 hours for soccer and 23 hours for Lacrosse.

##### Installation of Field Turf:

In April of 2004, Beach Field was opened for public use after installation of *Field Turf*. This project was made possible by State Park Bond Act Funds, city capital improvement funds and generous donations including that by the Piedmont Soccer Club.

In connection with the installation of Field Turf, the City of Piedmont filed environmental documents with the County of Alameda and the State of California which identified the environmental impact classification of the project as Categorically Exempt. This classification was based on two factors; the nature of the facility use was not to change nor was the quantity of use.

This matter was the subject of Council consideration on November 3, 2003 at which time the City Council approved the filing of a Notice of Environmental Exemption as a categorically exempt project. (See Attachment #9 – Resolution 113-03).

The Recreation Commission held public hearings on March 13, 2002, and April 10, 2002 regarding the proposal to install artificial turf at Beach Playfield. The public notices for these hearings stated that changes to the existing use restrictions were not being considered. (See Attachment #10 and #11.)

#### Sunday Use in General:

Should the City Council approve Sunday use of Beach Field on a trial basis as proposed by the Piedmont Soccer Club, the following should be anticipated:

- The number of Sundays requested for spring soccer will increase.
- There will be requests for Sunday use in the fall for soccer.
- There will be requests for Sunday use from the other sports groups.

#### Public Notice:

The Public Notice for this hearing was posted and distributed to the neighborhood (see Attachment #12.)

#### City Administrator's Comments:

As the City of Piedmont began development of new playfield space in the 1990's the city council attempted to balance the needs of the adjacent neighbors with the needs of the public for recreation facilities. Each playfield in the city is unique in its relationship to surrounding homes and a variety of solutions have been required to ameliorate neighborhood impacts. In some cases such as Hampton Field, the solution to "balance" was hiring a monitor for the basketball courts to reduce the noise. In the case of Dracena Quarry Park, organized field use was limited to younger children to eliminate the traffic and parking issues of competitive sports. The balance test is again important as this council considers the request of the Piedmont Youth Soccer Club. What is the proper balance between the need for recreational field space and the needs of homeowners for the quiet use and enjoyment of their property?

For the residents near Linda-Beach Playfield, the unique circumstances of their neighborhood include proximity to two municipal facilities: Linda-Beach Playfield and Linda Park off leash area (commonly called the dog park), plus an elementary school. As has been noted in Mr. Delventhal's report, earlier city councils expanded use at the

field by installing sports lighting and by creating an additional baseball diamond but gave respite to the neighbors by prohibiting Sunday use of the playfield.

The public policy question involved is whether or not it is appropriate to authorize use of Linda-Beach Playfield on all seven days of the week on the only playfield in Piedmont which has lighted evening use. Although the Piedmont Youth Soccer Club is the only organization currently requesting field space on Sunday, it is inevitable that other requests will follow if this request is approved. Fairness to the neighbors requires that the council determine the overall level of use which is appropriate for this field and not begin a domino effect of consecutive use requests.

If the council decides that daily use of the field is appropriate and that some or all Sundays should be open for organized sports, a further decision needs to be made regarding field allocation. Currently, the city allocates its available field space between many different sports groups. If new field space is made available by opening Linda-Beach Playfield on Sundays, a similar allocation process should occur to allow review by the council, the neighbors and the public.

Geoffrey L. Grote