

FOR COUNCIL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

Honorable Mayor and Members
of the City Council
Torrance City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the City Council:

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT -- APPROVAL OF THE PLUNGE
USAGE POLICY**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks and Recreation Commission and the Acting Community Services Director recommend that the City Council approve the usage policy for the Victor E. Benstead Plunge.

Funding

None is required.

BACKGROUND

On May 22, 2007, Mayor Scotto requested that the Parks and Recreation Commission formulate a "usage policy" for the Victor E. Benstead Plunge. The Commission subsequently referred the item to the Programs Committee to organize and facilitate public hearings. The Committee met on three occasions with representatives from interested user groups in attendance at each meeting. On September 12, 2007, the Programs Committee recommended approval of the Plunge Usage Policy to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

ANALYSIS

As part of the policy development process, the Committee evaluated interest through public input at community meetings and through the results of a survey of potential user groups. The Committee members also discussed the Mission of the Aquatics Program, the policies used for renting City Facilities, and rental policies for municipal pools similar to the Benstead Plunge. The Committee also took into consideration that recent improvements to the Plunge were partially funded by County of Los Angeles Proposition A Open Space Funds, which prevents a residency-based policy.

The Plunge Usage Policy (Attachment A) is consistent with the year-round Plunge operating plan. The City will schedule its programs based on the maximization of pool time to satisfy the needs of as many participants as possible. After scheduling the City's

own programs, the Torrance Unified School District's swim and water polo teams will be scheduled. Any remaining time will be offered to non-profit rental groups, and then to private groups, provided the applications meet the criteria defined in the policy and in the Mission of the Aquatics program. By utilizing the application and appeals processes identified in the Torrance Municipal Code, the Department can determine user groups in a fair, consistent, and transparent manner.

Upon approval, applications will be sent to all groups that expressed interest in using the Plunge. Permits will be approved for the period of November 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008. In February of each year, applications will be accepted for the following Fiscal Year (July 1 to June 30). In the future, all potential user groups will be expected to apply on a yearly basis. The Parks and Recreation Commission has requested that staff bring the item back in six months in order to evaluate the policy and the maximization of the pool.

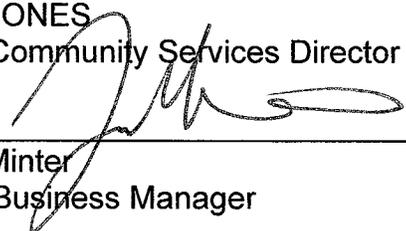
Respectfully submitted,

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



Jenna Smoot, Chair

JOHN JONES
Acting Community Services Director

By 

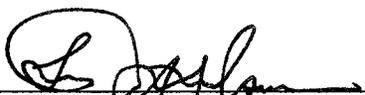
Jason Minter
Senior Business Manager

CONCUR:



John Jones
Acting Community Services Director

NOTED:



LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager

- Attachments: A) Plunge Usage Policy
B) Copy of Application for Plunge Usage
C) Excerpt of minutes from the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting-
September 12, 2007



ATTACHMENT A

City of Torrance, Community Services Department
Policy & Procedures:
PLUNGE USAGE POLICY

The Victor E. Benstead Plunge is a municipally operated pool intended to provide recreational aquatic activities to the community. In operating the Plunge the City schedules programs that meet the needs established in the Aquatic Program Mission Statement. After City sponsored programs are scheduled, certain hours are set aside for the Torrance Unified School District that are in accordance with the City and School District's Recreation Agreement and that are consistent with the goals of the Aquatics Program Mission. Any pool time that is remaining will be available for both short and long term rentals, with priority given to non-profit groups.

Interested groups are to submit a Rental Application for the Victor E. Benstead Plunge to the Community Services Department Director (TMC 49.3.2). The application must be completed and submitted by a recognized representative of the organization (i.e. president, board member or superintendent). The Director will approve or deny all applications based on the criteria established in this policy. If an application is denied, the individual or organization will have the opportunity to appeal the decision in writing to the Parks and Recreation Commission (TMC 49.3.4). Should the Commission deny the appeal the individual or organization will have the opportunity to appeal the decision in writing to City Council.

All applications will be held for a period of one year from the application date. Regular scheduling of pool hours will take place on a Fiscal Year basis (July 1-June 30). The following are the criteria that will be used to determine which organizations will be issued permits to use the Plunge:

1. Does the program requested satisfy a need identified in the Mission of the Plunge and the Aquatic Program?
2. Is there time and space available for the program to be offered?
3. Is this activity perceived as an effective use of the facility, based on maximization of pool space?
4. Has the user group been issued a permit in the past? Is the group in good standing with the City in both accountability and performance?
5. If applicable, is the group in good standing with its sponsoring organization or association?
6. If applicable, has the user group been denied usage in the past? (Applicants who have applied and been denied in the past will be granted priority over first time user groups.)

In the event that additional time becomes available during the year, priority will be given to groups with applications on file. Applications will be considered based on the criteria established above.

The goal of the Department in renting the Plunge is to maximize usage in order to meet the needs of as many participants as possible. The City of Torrance reserves the right to grant a portion of the pool, if necessary, in effort to maximize usage. Pool time allocated to City programs will be balanced with time offered to rental organizations as a means of bringing in revenue to assist the Department in covering operating costs of the Plunge. All long-term user groups will be subject to a quarterly review regarding their performance and maximization of the pool. The application process and criteria have been established to distribute available pool time in a fair and equitable manner.

To receive an application, please call the Community Services Department at (310) 618-2930.



City of Torrance, Community Services Department
PLUNGE USAGE APPLICATION

ATTACHMENT B

Application for Use of Victor E. Benstead Plunge

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN ALL COPIES TO:

City of Torrance
Community Services Department/Facility Booking Office
3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503
(310) 618-5982 • Fax (310) 781-7598

NOTE TO APPLICANT: Please type or print firmly using a ball point pen. Any person applying for the use of City property on behalf of any society, group or organization must present satisfactory credentials or proof of authorization to the Community Services Department representative in charge of permits, prior to the filing of such applications.

Date of Application: _____

- Name of Representative: _____ Title: _____
Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____
- Name of Organization: _____ Wk. Phone: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____
- Type of Organization: Private Commercial Non-Profit 501(c)3 # _____

Please Note:
NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OF ANY TYPE ARE ALLOWED
AT ANY OF THE CITY PARKS OR PARK FACILITIES PER MUNICIPAL CODE 49.2.6

- Date Requested: _____ Day of Week: _____ OR Continuous Dates From: _____ to: _____ inclusive.
- Time Requested: _____ A.M./P.M. to: _____ A.M. Total Number of Hours: _____
- Type of Activity: _____
- Estimated Attendance: _____
- GROUP IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SET-UP AND CLEAN-UP; failure to do so may result in PARTIAL/FULL loss of security deposit. *Please initial here:* _____
- Group is responsible for observing all facility Rules and Regulations and for maintaining an acceptable standard of behavior; failure to do so may result in partial/full loss of security deposit.
- Signature of Person Requesting Reservation: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

FEES		Date Paid: _____ Check # _____ Receipt # _____	OTHER
Pool ____ Hrs. @ _____	\$ _____		
Refundable Deposit	\$ <u>250.00</u>		_____
Lifeguard Fee ____ Hrs. @ _____	\$ _____		_____
Total Fee	\$ _____		_____
			Refund Process Started Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Refund Denied: See attached

The above application IS IS NOT granted per the Community Services Director.

By: _____ Date _____

WHITE-File YELLOW-User PINK-Plunge

EXCERPT OF MINUTES

~~Minutes Approved~~
 Minutes Subject to Approval

September 12, 2007

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
 TORRANCE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Parks and Recreation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:03 p.m. on Wednesday, September 12, 2007, in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Cook, Gilbert, Hazell, McGee, Ning, Orpe, Robbins, Taniguchi, and Chairperson Smoot.

Absent: Commissioner Numark.

Also Present: Councilmember Nowatka, Acting Community Services Director Jones, Senior Business Manager Minter, Park Services Manager Wilson, Acting Cultural Services Manager Kelso, and Acting Recreation Services Manager Wand.

MOTION: Commissioner Cook moved to grant an excused absence to Commissioner Numark for the September 12, 2007 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. Commissioner Taniguchi seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner McGee, moved to grant an excused absence to Commissioner Robbins for the August 8, 2007 Commission meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. APPROVAL OF THE BENSTEAD PLUNGE USAGE POLICY

Commissioner Cook, Chairperson of the Programs Committee, provided background and analysis on the item included in the material of record. He noted that the biggest issue that came out of public input was the lack of a clearly defined application process for usage of the Plunge. He stated that the Committee tried to define criteria and priorities regarding usage and reviewed the Mission Statement for the aquatics program. He noted that the goal of the Policy is to maximize pool time in order to satisfy the needs of as many participants as possible. He stated that the biggest hurdle was that there was not enough time, and that it would be staff's responsibility to take the Policy and give times to appropriate applicants. He requested that the Commission approve the proposed Plunge Usage Policy and forward it to City Council for their review and approval.

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Chairperson Smoot initiated a brief discussion regarding a timeline for resolution for the appeal process.

In response to inquiries by Commissioner Hazell, Acting Community Services Director Jones explained that the Plunge Usage Policy pertains to long-term usage and that a fee structure for long and short term usage was previously approved by City Council.

Chairperson Smoot, with concurrence by Commissioner Taniguchi, suggested that the Plunge Usage Policy be kept on the agenda for the next few meetings to review its implementation.

Commissioner Taniguchi received clarification from Commissioner Cook that the Usage Policy was developed from considerable input from the public at three public meetings on July 10, August 6, and September 4, 2007.

Commissioner Robbins pointed out that this was the first time there has been a Usage Policy and that the process could be amended if it did not meet the needs of the public, the Plunge, or the City.

Commissioner Ning noted that this was a policy, not day-to-day instructions. He stated that the Parks and Recreation Director would determine how the Policy is interpreted and recommended an evaluation process in six months.

Chairperson Smoot welcomed public comment.

Jeff Zabludoff, West Gaucho Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, thanked everyone who has been involved in the development of the Usage Policy. He expressed hope that creative ways would be implemented to maximize use of the Plunge and noted that pools needed to be built for Torrance schools.

Connie Begovich, Dorset Drive, representing Swim Torrance, pointed out that the development of the proposed Usage Policy has taken a summer away from swimmers. She thanked the Committee and staff for their efforts and stated that needs of the current tenant of the pool should be considered. She stated that the City needs another pool and questioned if most appeals are actually valid.

Candice Matsui, Wilma Street, thanked the Committee and stated that there were other dedicated swim families in the City other than Swim Torrance. She stated that she is glad there is now a Usage Policy and hopes that the City will better serve Torrance residents as well as residents living outside the City.

Senior Business Manager Minter clarified that information regarding who is responsible for submitting applications and the distinction between giving priority to non-profit organizations over private organizations was in the item but not in the Usage Policy. He recommended that this information be added to the Usage Policy for clarification purposes.

Commissioner Hazell expressed concern that an organization that has good standing would be given priority over new groups that may want to start up a program. He suggested the possibility of setting term limits for long-term usage.

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Acting Community Services Director Jones responded that prime time would always be a challenge but that following the Mission Statement and keeping a balanced, equitable opportunity for the community was their priority.

Commissioner Ning stated that Commissioner Hazell's concern was also a concern of the Committee and stressed the importance of having a review process to make sure the Community Services Director was interpreting the spirit of the policy. He noted that two checks and balances were integrated into the policy to specifically disallow the scenario that Commissioner Hazell mentioned.

Commissioner Robbins noted that setting term limits could effectively set a date for the extinction of a program.

Tina Maltz, Southfield Drive, Rolling Hills Estates, stated that stability is the key to success of a swim program and expressed concern that setting term limits would be unfair and detrimental to the program.

Commissioner Cook thanked the public, Commission, and staff.

MOTION: Chairperson Smoot moved to recommend that the proposed Plunge Usage Policy, with amendments noted by Senior Business Manager Minter, and to include a six-month review process, be forwarded to City Council for review and approval. Commissioner Ning seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Numark).

Acting Community Services Director Jones advised that the item was scheduled to go to City Council on September 25, 2007.

8. STANDING COMMITTEE UPDATES

8C. PROGRAMS COMMITTEE – BENSTEAD PLUNGE USAGE POLICY

Previously considered at this meeting.

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