**Field Fund Working Group  
1.13.21**

**Meeting 5 Notes**

**Goal:** Review Field Fund implementation options and discuss final recommendation

1. Meeting 4 Follow-up: CPI increases
   1. Not consistent with DPR fees in other areas
2. Player Assessment – Flat Rate Option
3. Sliding Scale Player Assessment

**Player Assessment Fee Option Discussion**

* Why is option 2 have an increase at the 8 to 9-year-old level? This option tracks with the field fund guidelines where 8/9 year old’s have more field time and therefore a fee increase (i.e.; more field time = increased fee).
* Option 2 travel player fee; How did we come to the $40 fee and how is it implemented in in travel leagues external from recreation leagues, but required in rec leagues (e.g.; ATB)?
  + ATB might be unique situation here where the players are exempt from paying two fees since they are required to play rec.
  + We want to have a cap on how high the fees go, so right now the most a player would pay is $40. Comment, that travel players do receive a significant more time on fields than rec players. At $15 and $40 there is not a huge gap considering the gap in field time.
* General question: Should rec player usage be captured in assessment or just the travel players?
* Options put Arlington in line with other local jurisdictions
* Member Opinions
  + Players who use the fields more should pay more, but should be defensible (Kim)
  + Prefers Sliding Scale because of discrepancies in field quality and generates more money (Alex)
* Concern:
  + Make sure we do not make the fees too high that it prevents participation – fee proposals don't feel high but need to think through equity. DPR does not plan to charge player assessment fee to those requesting scholarships from leagues.
  + Resident Recreational fee feels slightly high (a couple of dollars) based on where it falls proportionally with the non-resident fees. Should it be $12 or $13 and does that make sense?
* Seasonal Charges – based on spring and fall
  + DPR – we will talk to leagues to discuss best ways to implement the fees season to season with considerations for winter and spring
  + Leagues are charged to registration cycles and often do not have separate registrations for seasons that “bleed” into summer and winter

**Implementation Options**

* Athletic Field Maintenance – Priorities overview
* Implementation Option 1: Staffing
* Implementation Option 2: Field Conversation
* Implementation Option 3: Contracted Field Maintenance
* Implementation Option 4: Minor Capital Improvement Projects
* Implementation Option 5: Major Capital & Synthetic Turf Conversions

**Implementation Discussion**

* What is the outcome difference between contracted and DPR staff? You only get specific jobs on synthetic fields with contracted jobs versus more flexible FTE’s that can do synthetic and natural grass. Contracted version is more expensive and only do specific work. FTE’s can be trained to do multiple functions with proper training.
* Option 2 seems less restrictive than Option 4. Preferably for Option 4, but concern that synthetic field investment would no longer be an option. (Kim). Answer: Option 1 allows for us to bring on staff for on-going maintenance of current inventory as well as have on-going funds for future investment.
* Clarify that we would likely not be using funds to augment APS Elementary fields or non-scheduled athletic fields (e.g.; drop in fields).
* DPR would gather input from Sports Commission to discuss “front burner” fields to convert with funds.

**Working Group Principles**

* It is reasonable to assess a fee for the dedicated use of a public asset (field/facility).
* The amount of the fee should be anchored to an underlying rationale (i.e., we should be able to explain why the fee is set at any given level).
* The amount of the fee should be reasonable and should not create a barrier to participation.
* It is appropriate for the fee structure and amount to reflect differences in field access among users (i.e., it is reasonable for more frequent users to pay more).
* Fee levels should not be raised solely for the purpose of collecting more money, and the County should have a plan for how to spend current and new revenue.
* Fields are a County asset; the Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for determining how to best maintain and manage these assets.
* Field users should reasonably expect a clearly defined standard of care in exchange for their contributions; this standard should be transparent and measurable.

**Principles Comment**

* Quality of field maintenance must be transparent and defined to the greater community
* Reconsider the word “contributions” since it isn’t optional on the last principle
* How do we ensure that the FTE positions are not later cut from the budget? Might need a principle to address that the positions are additional positions and the county should not cut position to be net zero.
* Consider how this would be received from the broader community that there is funding going towards very specific purpose that the general community does not benefit from

**Recommendations**

* **Fee Recommendation** –
  + **Option 1: No votes**
  + **Option 2:** 
    - David – some concerns over $15, but may make sense with round numbers
    - Kim – should the fee be tweaked some but also fine (make the jump from $8-15 make more sense)
    - Steve - good
    - Alex - good
    - Pete – good; two seasons of $15 are less than the $40
    - Shirley – good; as long as DPR charges 2 seasons and not 3 or 4 seasons. $12 could be justified as well. Matches philosophy that fee lines up with use time.
* **Travel Fee** 
  + Per team fee presented issues with travel players paying less in some scenarios and hard implementation
  + Consensus from group opinion
* **Diamond v. Rectangular**
  + Option 1 allows for staff and capital investment (as well as option 5); need to consider how the money is spent in capital. The group might need to build in flexibility on how the money is spent to ensure both types of fields are represented. It should generally represent where the money comes from (diamond v. rectangular) without being restrictive. The current set up with diamond v. rectangular is inflexible. We need to recognize and focus on maintenance, often diamond, and capital, often rectangular.
    - Note – some of the maintenance proposed here is for synthetic maintenance which is mostly rectangular
    - Vote: All agree they should be combined
* **Diamond Field Committee –** Agreement to disband the diamond field fund committee because of combined fund
* **Implementation Recommendation**
  + David – Prefers additional field maintenance staff; no strong opinions on additional funds, but leans towards Option 1 and second is option 2
  + Kim – Option 1 is first and second is Option 4
  + Alex – Option 2 and then Option 5 (also would be good with Option 1)
  + Steve – Option 1 and then Option 2 then Option 5
  + Pete – Option 1 and Option 5
  + Shirley – near term and longer-term implementation so Option 1 with a couple of 2 and 4 over the next 5 years with the remainder into large capital. After 5 years, all would go into large capital. This allows the user to see their money in use sooner.
  + DPR –
    - Option 1 would provide all users noticeable difference
    - We would still be saving, in capital, the same amount as before because of the fee increase as well as increasing the maintenance. We will get to conversion faster because of combined funds.