

AYSO REGION 76 FIELD USAGE FEE FAQ'S

“It Ain’t Broken -- Why Are They Trying to Fix it?”¹

- 1. Q: Why does Region 76 view the youth sports usage fee, as presently implemented, as being punitive in nature?**

A: Historically, R&P has charged non Beverly Hills residents a surcharge for participation in its programs, of up to 25% over and above the rate charged to its residents. This ordinance assesses a **300%** surcharge for non residents. Furthermore, this ordinance further penalizes all youth sports leagues by charging an additional \$50 per player for non-resident participation over 40% of the total number of program participants. This adds up to a maximum surcharge of \$80 for some non-resident players, while residents are only charged \$10. The non-resident fee is punitive when the registration fee for AYSO is \$140. AYSO has a national policy of open registration. Little League has a national boundary area which is approximately three times the geographic area of Beverly Hills.

- 2. Q: Why does Region 76 view the youth sports usage fee, as presently implemented, as being oppressive in nature?**

A: As enacted, this fee corresponds to roughly twenty five percent (25%) of our region's total revenues. It also amounts to an inordinately high percentage of the total revenues of the other youth sports organizations. In some cases, the per-player cost charged for some sports is more than double the rate that was charged for the prior year.

- 3. Q: Is the youth sports usage fee even necessary?**

A: That depends upon your priorities. The City had already passed a balanced budget without this tax/fee. The budget deficit was reported at \$18.3 million. According to the analysis prepared by the R&P Commission, the total revenue from the youth sports use fee is expected to raise \$128,000 annually. There is no debate that the youth sports programs in Beverly Hills provide an enormous benefit to our children and our community. Since AYSO, Little League and the BHBL all operate at break even, it is fair to ask the question “How much

¹ This is Part 3 in a series of FAQ's ("frequently asked questions"), designed to provide in-depth information to our participants on the subject of field usage fees. All prior and future FAQ's will be featured on our website, www.ayso76.org.

should the City of Beverly Hills be willing to contribute in the form of field usage to realize the tremendous benefit the youth sports programs provide?"

4. Q: Is the youth sports fee directly related to park expense caused by the use of the fields or facilities by youth sports?

A: No, for the most part. The artificial turf fields at the schools and the basketball courts receive a relatively small amount of use due to youth sports. Blacktop basketball courts – as well as the gymnasium at Beverly Hills High School -- do not wear out due to use by our youth sports groups. AYSO has made a pledge to assist the Beverly Hills School District with the cost of maintaining the artificial turf fields. As for the grass fields at Roxbury and La Cienega there is of course wear and tear. The question is how much **additional** cost is incurred to maintain these fields because of their use by youth sports programs. Clearly, grass has to be fertilized, watered, cut, and even sown once a year. On the other hand, lining the fields, installing fences or goals, etc. are direct costs attributable to youth sports. These costs, however, are minimal. They are estimated at less than \$20,000 per year -- far less than the \$378,000 claimed by R&P. Additionally, the fields at La Cienega and Roxbury are used by R&P leagues for adult softball and flag football, as well as by high school baseball and soccer teams.

5. Q: How do you know the amount of the charges that are attributed to youth sports by R&P?

A: On June 6, 2009, after written request from AYSO, R&P provided our youth sports organizations with a cost analysis dated March 20, 2009. This analysis was the basis for the original proposal submitted to the City Council by R&P in May of 2009.

6. Q: Does Region 76 believe that the R&P cost analysis is flawed?

A: Yes – even a rudimentary review of its figures makes it clear that the R&P cost analysis contains numerous erroneous and misleading statements, such as the following:

- The misleading statement that AYSO and Little League use the Roxbury and La Cienega fields 52 weeks a year.
 - FACT: Actual usage is no more than 32 weeks in total -- 16 weeks for AYSO and 14-16 weeks for Little League.
- The statement that trash removal at La Cienega Park, directly related to soccer and baseball, requires 2 hours x 2 men x 52 weeks for weekdays, and 6 hours per day x 1 man x 52 weeks for weekends, corresponding to a total (according to the R&P figures) of \$80,920.

- FACT: Very little of the trash removal costs are attributable to youth sports. If trash removal at La Cienega were such a huge problem, it could have been addressed simply by buying more trash cans. The idea of spending 1,664 hours clearing trash is difficult to fathom, as is the notion of one person spending six hours on Saturdays and Sundays to continuously empty the trash cans at La Cienega.
- The statement that preparation and maintenance of the baseball fields at La Cienega Park entails 40 hours x 52 weeks x 1 man = 2080 hours per year (weekdays), and 13 hours x 52 weeks x 1 man = 676 hours (weekends), corresponding to a total (according to the Recs and Parks figures) of 2,576 hours @ \$48.63 = \$134,024.
 - FACT: This statement is equally unfathomable. Is it really more than a full time job to maintain three baseball diamonds when they're only used 16 weeks a year for youth sports? So long as a park contains grass of any kind, doesn't it stand to reason that it will need to be fertilized, mowed, weeded and maintained in some manner or another? The fact that it's being used for a youth sport does not necessarily add to its cost of maintenance.
- R&P claims that 100% of the following costs are attributable to use of the fields at Roxbury and La Cienega Parks by AYSO and Little League: mowing and weed eating – 52 weeks; fertilizing grass – 4 times per year, spraying – 4 times per year; Over seeding – annually; aeration with tractor – 4 times/year.
 - FACT #1: So long as a park contains grass of any kind, it will need to be mowed, fertilized, aerated and otherwise maintained.
 - FACT #2: For whatever reason, R&P failed or neglected to inform the City Council that, in fact, its fields are used by the general public and, in particular, by groups such as adult softball and football, and high school baseball and soccer. Thus, to attribute 100% of these costs to AYSO and Little League is inaccurate and misleading.

7. Q: What costs are actually attributable to youth sports?

A: Based on our experience over the years, these are the costs which would be attributable to youth sports, on a yearly basis:

- Painting of lines for fields
- Installation of fences and goals (once yearly)
- Emptying of a minimal number of trash cans per field during the season.
- Assembling soccer goals (once yearly).

8. Q: So how can we help AYSO and the other youth sports groups on these very important issues?

A: For now – just stay in touch with us, and continue to read your emails regularly. We will be organizing a community-wide response in the very near future, and that is where we are likely to need your help.

[Stay tuned for Part 4 of this series, entitled "Dispelling the Myths?" which will follow within the next few days.]