

League of Women Voters Edina

Local Study Report:

**Private Access To and Use Of Public Facilities
In Edina**

February 2010

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INTRODUCTION

Mission of the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters (LWV) is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Since the late 1950s, the League of Women Voters Edina (LWVE) has undertaken many local studies and has been the driving force behind many local initiatives, including support for: acquisition of land for our parks, financing on bond issues for our school system, maintaining our Edina Community Library, the establishment of the Edina recycling center which led to today's pick-up recycling service, the establishment of the Energy and Environment Commission, and the formation of the Community Center.

LWVE has always been concerned and involved in City issues when it comes to open and fair access, as well as the financing of local government.

About LWVE Program: Study, Consensus and Action

Program is LWVE's reason for being, the basis for both education and action efforts. League program consists of those governmental issues that LWVE members choose for concerted study and action. The program process begins at the grassroots with selection and adoption by the members. It continues with study, discussion, and consensus by members at LWVE meetings, and culminates with a position on which we take action and promote change.

This report is a product of the study of *Private Access To And Use Of Public Facilities In Edina*. It is provided to LWVE members and the Edina community solely for educational purposes.

Acknowledgements

The study committee thanks City Manager Gordon Hughes, Park and Recreation Director John Keprios, and Communications and Marketing Director Jennifer Bennerotte for their willingness to be interviewed, provide documents, and answer our many questions. Their assistance was invaluable in providing information for this report.

Thank you, also, to Mayor Hovland and City Council members Joni Bennett, Mary Brindle, Scot Housh, and Ann Swenson for providing answers in response to our emailed questions.

ABOUT THIS LOCAL STUDY

This study focuses on the facilities of the City of Edina’s Communications and Marketing Department and Park and Recreation Department. The study identifies which facilities are available to be accessed and used, by whom they are accessed and used, what they cost, what the terms of access and use are, and how the City has made decisions in specific cases related to access to and use of these facilities. Only City of Edina facilities are considered.

The undertaking of this study was recommended at the LWVE 2007 Lively Issues meetings. The recommendation stemmed from an interest in repeated efforts by private entities to operate private facilities in public parks. This included the proposal to open a coffee shop at Lewis Park¹ and a proposal in 2006 by developers to privately fund and operate an indoor athletic facility at Braemar, called the Edina Field House.²

Neither of these issues was the first attempt at privatization of parkland. The Edina Golf Dome was one example.³ Using the Golf Dome experience, some members believed if the City allowed the coffee shop at Lewis Park, the City would be at risk for having to take responsibility for its business operation if the owners walked away from it, if it became unprofitable, or for any other reason. Could the public afford the cost? The discussion shifted to the other “costs” associated with privatization of public land and unique private uses of public facilities in general.

Members noted other occasions when it appeared an individual or group was granted unique access to or use of a public facility. Sometimes this access involved the City reducing or waiving the fee for that use. Sometimes this was transparent—such as the outcome of a discussion by the Park Board—and sometimes it was not—such as the result of staff discretion. As the membership discussed the scope, it broadened beyond physical facilities—such as outdoor athletic fields and hockey rinks—to communications *facilities*—such as the City’s website and video productions. Questions were raised about whether the City had policies to address these special requests.

With approval to do the study given at the May 2008 Annual Meeting, a study committee was formed. The committee set out to more specifically define the scope of the study and key study terms.

Editor’s note: Over the years, LWVE has used many City facilities, including City Hall meeting rooms, the Arneson Acres meeting room, the Art Center, and video production services for taping and airing candidate forums.

¹ The proposed coffee shop would have been located in a new warming house, paid for by a private donor. The donation was contingent upon the City allowing the donor to operate a coffee shop in the donated building and control rental or use of that building for a period of time, after which the coffee shop operation and control over the building would be given to the City. See Appendix O for more on the Lewis Park warming house/coffee shop.

² See Appendix N for full discussion of the Edina Field House.

³ The Edina Golf Dome opened in 1982 and was a private venture, owned and operated by Golf Dome Associates, on public land owned by the City of Edina and leased to Golf Dome Associates for a period of 15 years. In 1988, the City purchased the Dome and operations for \$575,000. See Appendix M for more on the Golf Dome.

Study Scope and Definitions

The committee determined that the study would focus on private access to and use of public Communications and Marketing Department facilities and Park and Recreation Department facilities in Edina. *Private* meant any non-governmental individual or organization. *Public* facility was limited to mean a facility maintained and/or operated by the City of Edina. School District and County facilities were not the focus, but would be looked at for purposes of comparison. Facilities were divided into two categories: *physical facilities*, such as parks and meeting rooms; and *communications facilities*, such as the City website, print materials, and video productions.

Access was defined as the opportunity to experience or make use of a facility. Opportunity, as it relates to access, is conditioned upon the user being *aware* that the facility is available for a particular use, knowing who to contact about that use, the intended use fitting within the guidelines of policy or practice, and the ability of the user to pay a fee for that use if required.

Use, in the case of physical facilities, was defined as occurring when a private individual or group physically occupies a facility or controls access to or use of that facility.

Use, in the case of communications facilities, was defined as occurring when a private individual or group *receives* the content of a City communications facility (*content recipient*) or *provides* content for that facility (*content provider*).

Policy was defined as any set of guidelines, rules, fee structure, or other description of requirements that currently appears in written form. Although this is a broad definition, it takes into consideration all written language that defines how, when, whether, for what duration, for what cost, for what purpose, and by whom City facilities can be accessed and used.

Practice was defined as a way of doing something in accordance with guidelines or rules of procedure that, although accepted and understood, is not in written form.

Study Process

The committee took a variety of approaches to researching the topic. These included:

- Interviews and email exchanges with key City staff and review of documents provided by staff;
- An email questionnaire to City Council members;
- Searches of the City's website for policies, meeting minutes and other documentation related to private access to and use of public facilities;
- Review of neighboring City's websites for similar information, for general comparison;
- Search of *Edina Sun Current* article archives;
- Experiential approaches to facilities, including viewing programming on cable channel EDINA 16, visiting parks and recreational facilities, reading City of Edina publications, receiving "City Extra" emails, and using the City website to view web streamed videos, access publications, and seek information;
- Monitoring of City Council and Park Board meetings for issues relevant to the study;
- Interview with St. Louis Park Communications Coordinator Jamie Zwilling; and
- Review of Edina Public Schools policies related to school facility use and fees for purposes of comparison.

The process yielded a large number of documents, articles, and web pages, the most relevant of which are listed at the back of this report.

As the study progressed, new areas of inquiry related to the study emerged. A proposal to allow a private vegetable garden at Chowen Park is one example.⁴ The City also added new communications facilities, such as video public service announcements and the video programs *Agenda: Edina* and *Beyond the Badge*.

In all, the Communications and Marketing Department produced 139 video programs between May 2008 and December 2009, excluding City meetings.⁵ During this time, the Department also developed two new policies: *Video Production Policies*, adopted by the City Council in January 2009, and *Submitted Photo and Original Artwork Use Policy*, effective September 2009.

As new areas of inquiry and content relevant to the study emerged, the volume of data to be considered for this report grew. This report contains an overview of much of the data considered by the study committee and provides a framework for discussion. The report, by necessity, cannot offer a detailed picture of all City facilities or all ways private entities access and use these facilities. The examples provided in this report are considered those most relevant to the study's scope.

⁴ Edina resident Mary Helen Franze approached the Park Board in April 2009 on behalf of her organization, YEA (Young Enterprising Agents) Corps, with a request to turn a section of Chowen Park into a vegetable garden that would be used exclusively by YEA Corps. The proposal raised a wider discussion on community gardens. Discussions of the YEA proposal or community gardens took place over a period of six months at five Park Board meetings and one City Council meeting. With each meeting, additional documentation needed to be reviewed. See Appendix P for full discussion.

⁵ As shown on the City website, these were:

- 17 episodes of *Agenda: Edina* (average running time around nine minutes)
- 59 episodes of Edina Rotary's program that is part of their weekly meeting (average running time around 30 minutes)
- 20 episodes of *In Edina* (average running time around 27 minutes)
- 25 public service announcements (average running time around one minute)
- Nine commercials for City facilities or promotional videos (average running time less than one minute)
- Five League of Women Voters Edina candidate forums (average running time around 50 minutes)
- 10 miscellaneous "other programming," including 4th of July Parade, Employee Appreciation video, Public Works video (average running time varies)
- Three episodes of *Beyond the Badge* (average running time around 17 minutes)

Editor's note: Website content as cited throughout this report is current as of this writing and may have since been updated or changed.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING DEPARTMENT

The City's Communications and Marketing Department was formed in 2006; Jennifer Bennerotte was named Director. Before 2006, communications activities were part of the Administrative Department and Director Bennerotte served as the City's Communications Coordinator. The rationale for forming a new department was relayed in an April 2006 City press release:

In response to the growth of the City's various communications efforts, City Manager Gordon Hughes recently created a new Communications and Marketing Department and named Jennifer Bennerotte to lead it.

The City's communications activities had previously been part of the Administration Department. "Although the City is not a 'business', we strive to operate in a business-like way," Hughes said. "That means communicating with our customers and marketing our services and facilities to enhance their value to our residents. Jennifer Bennerotte has displayed exemplary skills in these areas and we look forward to her continued growth in our organization."⁶

The Communications and Marketing Department employs "a full-time Communications and Marketing Director, full-time Communications Coordinator, full-time Cable Coordinator, part-time Communications Intern, and eight part-time Cable Production Assistants," according to a 2008 business plan prepared by the Department. Personnel expenses more than doubled between 2005 and 2007, according to the same report.

Department activities are funded, primarily, by cable franchise fees.⁷ Cable franchise fees provided \$647,466 in 2008, according to the City's 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).⁸ Income from cable franchise fees is accounted for in the City's Communications Fund and is not legally restricted for use for communications.⁹

⁶ The press release continues: "As Communications and Marketing Director, Bennerotte will help other City departments and facilities identify what information and messages need to be conveyed to Edina's diverse audiences and make sure that it is done in the most effective manner possible. Another important responsibility of the Communications and Marketing Department is finding opportunities to promote what makes Edina the great community that it is and the successes of City government. Specifically, the Communications and Marketing Department is responsible for media and public relations; publication of the City's newsletters and magazines, including *About Town* and *About Business*; maintaining the website and administering Edina Community Channel 16."

⁷ Cable franchise fees are added to Edina Comcast cable customers' bills for cable television services (not Internet or expanded services, such as DVR). The charge can be found on the back side of the bill, under "Taxes, Surcharges, and Fees." The law allows the City to set the amount of the fee—currently and historically at 5%. The City is a member of the Southwest Cable Commission (with Eden Prairie, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Richfield), which negotiates the fee on the City's behalf.

⁸ The Communications and Marketing Department receives additional revenue from investment income and other activities, such as advertising sales. Investment income, according to the 2008 CAFR, was \$62,781 in 2008; other revenue was \$98,326; and total revenue was \$808,573. Expenses in 2008 were \$661,803, leaving a fund balance of \$146,770, which remained in the fund to be carried over to 2009.

⁹ The Communications Fund is one of three of the City's Nonmajor Governmental Funds (others are the Community Development Grant fund and the Police Special Revenue fund). These funds, according to the 2008 CAFR, are "used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are legally restricted to expenditures for specified purposes." The Communications Fund "was established to account for funds received from the franchise fee of the local cable television service." Although the Communications Fund accounts for the funds as described, it is not legally restricted for use for communications.

The City has noted some concern about whether cable franchise fees will be a reliable source of income going forward. The 2008 Business Plans note: “During most legislative sessions, there is a lobbying effort to reduce or eliminate cable franchise fees. Such elimination would threaten all projects of the Communications & Marketing Department. That threat, coupled with increasing expenses for current projects, suggests the City might want to consider alternative funding for the department.”

Currently, the General Fund is not used to fund communications.

Communications Facilities

The Communications and Marketing Department has a number of communications facilities that private entities may access and use. These are:

- The City website, found at <http://www.cityofedina.com>
- Print publications, including *About Town*, *Council Connection*, *EFD Pulse*, and *City Slick* (employee newsletter)
- Video productions, including *In Edina*, *Agenda: Edina*, and *Beyond the Badge*, public service announcements, Edina Rotary meetings, City meetings, commercials for City facilities and promotional videos, and various “other programming”
- City Extra (subscriber-based email notifications)
- EDINA 16 cable TV channel (bulletin board and video programs)
- Electronic message board outside City Hall
- Media relations/press releases
- Video production services¹⁰
- Advertising
- Social networking/new media, such as YouTube and Twitter

These facilities may be accessed and used in two ways by private individuals and organizations: as *content recipients* and as *content providers*.

The first way—as a recipient of content—is most obvious: print publications are accessed and used when read, video productions when watched and/or listened to, and the website when viewed.

The second way—as a content provider—is less obvious. A content provider *supplies* or is the *subject of* content in a print publication, video production, notice board, or on the website. An advertiser accesses and uses a print publication by supplying content for the publication in the form of an advertisement. An organization accesses and uses the bulletin board on EDINA 16 by supplying content for a notice. An individual accesses and uses a publication or video production by being the subject of a feature, mention or listing.

A content provider who is the subject of a feature, mention or listing in a City print publication or video production may have initiated being included in the publication or production or may have been selected by the editors or producers based on an editorial determination that the subject has “broad community appeal.”

¹⁰ LWVE has used the City’s video production services for taping and airing candidate forums and has paid fees for these services.

The editorial standard of “broad community appeal” used by the Department to determine whether content is suitable for a City print publication or video production is of primary importance in a discussion of access and use as it relates to content providers. A more detailed discussion will follow.

Access and Use—The Access Bar

The ease of access and use is a primary consideration when discussing access and use by content recipients—in other words, how easy is it for a user to gain access to a City communications facility? Once access has been gained, how easily can that facility be used to accomplish the purpose (a) for which it was designed, and (b) for which the user is accessing? The more a recipient has to *do* to access or use a facility, the higher the *Access Bar*.

Print Publications

As a rule, the most easily accessible facilities are print materials mailed to every Edina address, without the recipient needing to request them. An example of this type of facility is *About Town*, which is automatically mailed quarterly. *Council Connection* is mailed automatically upon request.

In late 2009, the Communications and Marketing Department discontinued the publication and automatic mailing of *Park and Recreation Insider* to all Edina residents. The publication has been replaced by an *Activities Directory* of park and recreation programs, a limited number of print copies of which are available upon request; the information will also be posted on the City’s website.

Website

For many people the website is as accessible as, or more accessible than, print publications. This is because those who have access to a computer with required software and an Internet connection, and who have adequate computer skills, can access the City website by simply typing in the URL. About 40,000 people do this every month, according to website activity reports prepared by the Marketing and Communications Department in 2009.

The *Access Bar* for the website, however, is higher than for print publications, especially those that are automatically mailed. This is because the recipient bears responsibility for the means of accessing the content. There are costs associated with this responsibility: purchasing and maintaining computer hardware and software and paying for an Internet connection, plus the needed computer skills.

EDINA 16

A similar point can be made about EDINA 16. For residents who have a Comcast cable TV subscription, the *Access Bar* for viewing notices and video programming on Edina’s community television channel is fairly low. The bar is higher for residents who do not have a Comcast cable TV subscription, because they cannot afford it, do not want it, or use a different service instead.

Some video programming is available on DVD at the Edina libraries. DVDs can be requested from the Communications and Marketing Department. Video programming is streamed on the City’s website (more on this later) and some programming is streamed on YouTube. In these ways, residents are not required to have cable TV to watch video programming.

City Extra

City Extra is a subscription-based email notification service. Residents can sign up to automatically receive email notices related to various topics—from updates on public works projects and public safety alerts, to upcoming City Council meeting agendas and Senior Center or Art Center classes and events. The service requires an account; to create an account, residents go to the City Extra section of the City’s website and enter an email address and password. Residents then select from a list of topics about which they want to be notified.

Twitter

Although a very different service, residents can also sign up to receive content from the City via Twitter. Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as *tweets*. “Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers, who are known as *followers*,” according to an entry on Wikipedia. Residents can follow the City on Twitter by creating a Twitter account—a link to which is provided from the homepage of the City’s website. As of December 17, 2009, the City had 595 followers and posted 211 “tweets.”

Challenges Related To Access for Content Recipients

Over the course of the study, members of the study committee used the City website extensively, not only to search for information but also to view video programming and access subscription services, such as City Extra. Committee members also discussed the website with other users to get their anecdotal experiences.

Comments heard frequently about the website were that it is “not intuitive,” that information is “too difficult to find,” and “I can’t watch the videos.” The committee found some reasons for these comments.

Website Search Feature

First, the “search” feature on the website tends to return multiple copies of the same document.¹¹

The volume of redundant and out-dated pages makes a search for information on the site more difficult. Communications and Marketing Director Bennerotte noted in an August 10, 2009 interview with committee members that the search feature can “be confusing.”¹²

¹¹ For example, a search for the term “rules and regulations” returned 57 documents. The top eleven were:

- Pages 1 and 11: City Code Section 110, Incorporation of State Law
- Pages 2, 7, & 9: Adventure Peak season pass information for 2009
- Pages 3, 6, and 10: Edinborough swimming pool and track season pass information for 2009
- Pages 4, 5, 6 & 8: Edinborough swimming pool and track season pass information for 2006

¹² See Appendix D.

Website Navigation

There is a commonly accepted rule of website design that says the information a web user seeks should be no more than three clicks away from the home page. The number of clicks, however, may not be as important as whether the trail the clicks lead the user on is logical and whether it leads to the information the user is looking for.¹³ The committee asked an experienced web user to search for specific information on the City's website and record how many clicks it took and whether the clicks lead to a successful search:

- Ten steps to find the hours of operation and daily admission rate for Adventure Peak;
- Six steps to find whom to call with a question about a water bill. A search for the term "water bill" returned 19 pages, but none went to the Utilities page;
- Six steps to find the hours of operation and daily admission rate for the Aquatic Center. A search for the term "Edina Pool" returned five pages, but none went to the Aquatic Center page;
- Five steps to find out when a resident can use a leaf blower, and another two steps to find who to call with a complaint about the noisy leaf blower next door;
- Four steps to find out who to call about a barking dog; and
- Two steps to find contact information for the City Council.

Accessing Videos on the City Website

Users have noted difficulty accessing videos on the City's website. The City contracts with Granicus, Inc. for video streaming. Users accessing videos from the "Watch A Meeting" page of the City's website are automatically taken to a Granicus page for video viewing. This page mirrors the look of the City's website, so users may not be aware they are on a Granicus page.

The Granicus product was designed for PC computers. Until recently, Granicus did not support video viewing on Mac computers. Some Mac users were able to view videos anyway, but the menu feature did not work. The Granicus solution to this problem was to enable their system to work with a Microsoft software product called Silverlight. With Silverlight, Mac users should be able to watch videos and use the menu feature without difficulty.

Silverlight, however, requires Mac Operating System 10.5 or newer (2007 or later). A Mac user running an older system would be required to upgrade their system to view videos. The cost of an upgrade can run several hundred dollars. In contrast, a PC user can view videos on a system that is more than ten years old.

EDINA 16 Broadcast Schedule and Programming

Accessing video programming on EDINA 16 requires only that a resident (a) have a cable ready TV and (b) have Comcast cable television service. Knowing when programming airs, however, can be more difficult. Only a limited broadcast schedule is posted on the video bulletin board and viewers must wait through a variety of other notices before hitting on the broadcast schedule for a specific program. The schedule is posted on the City website and could be printed for later reference.

¹³ See *Testing the three-click rule* at http://www.uie.com/articles/three_click_rule/

Current City Council meetings, Edina Rotary meetings, and episodes of *In Edina, Agenda: Edina* and *Beyond the Badge* run three times per week throughout the month. Current advisory boards and commissions meetings (Planning, Park, and Transportation) run three times a week for the two weeks following the meeting. As a rule, select public service announcements, promos and commercials for City enterprise facilities run for a period of about ten minutes before scheduled programming.

The City does not have a way to determine how many people watch programming on EDINA 16. Comcast provides a report that includes viewer numbers for all Southwest Cable Commission member cities that broadcast on channel 16 (different programming appears on channel 16 in Minnetonka, Richfield, Eden Prairie, and Bloomington and the viewer numbers for all this programming is shown in aggregate).

Communications and Marketing Director Bennerotte noted in the August 10, 2009 interview with study committee members that she believes “what people watch on the website is a good indication of what people watch on Edina 16.”¹⁴

Monthly website activity reports prepared by the Communications and Marketing Department on an as-needed basis provide a list of videos viewed most frequently from the website during the month and the total number of visitors to the site.

To get an idea of what percentage of monthly visitors to the City’s website view videos from the website, the number of times a video was viewed can be divided by total number of visitors, assuming that each time the video was viewed it was viewed by a unique visitor.

For example, the July 2009 web activity report shows that 43,128 visitors accessed the City’s website. The top viewed program that month was the 4th of July Parade with 234 views. Using the above calculation, this video was viewed by less than 1% of website visitors.¹⁵

These numbers may not represent the percentage of viewers of the same or similar programming on EDINA 16. According to the 2008 Business Plans, “there is high viewership on the government access channel.”

User Preferences and Acceptance of Communications Facilities

How well the vehicle (print, web, video) for content delivery is embraced (used or favored) by content recipients is an issue that needs to be considered when selecting the media through which the City will convey its messages.

In 1999 the City commissioned a survey of 400 randomly selected Edina households. Results of this survey were used as a basis for the City’s *Vision 20/20* strategic plan.

¹⁴ See Appendix D.

¹⁵ The committee reviewed ten website activity reports, dated November 2008 to November 2009. In all but one month, the top viewed video was accessed by less than 1% of visitors to the site. The exception was in November 2008. That month, there were 35,356 visitors to the site; the top-viewed video was a Kids’ Voting Recap, with 394 views—or just over 1% of total visitors.

About six out of 10 respondents to the survey said they owned a home computer with a modem. One out of 10 had visited the City's website.

The same survey asked residents if they recalled receiving *About Town* in the past year. Eight out of 10 said they did. About seven out of 10 said they read the publication regularly.

(In other words, the print to website access ratio was 8:1.)

Lack of new data makes it impossible to know to what degree things have changed in the past ten years.

Access to print information about the City's Park and Recreation programs was altered with the decision in late 2009 to discontinue printing and automatic distribution of *Parks and Recreation Insider*. The Department will publish an *Activities Directory* of parks and recreation programs twice a year instead.

The rationale for discontinuing publication and automatic distribution of *Park and Recreation Insider* was stated in a memo attributed to Director Bennerotte excerpted in a December 18, 2009 email from City Manager Gordon Hughes:

Technology seems to dominate the way in which people receive information. Because the majority of people register for Park & Recreation programs online, we know they are using the City's website to get information. As time goes by, I suspect that fewer and fewer residents will rely on the printed piece for this info.

The City's 2006 "Community Attitude & Interest Survey" asked residents to indicate all the ways they learn about City Park and Recreation programs and activities.¹⁶ Sixty-six percent responded they get this information from *Park and Recreation Insider*. Thirty-six percent said they get it from the City's website.

In October 2009, the Communications and Marketing Department conducted an online survey of residents regarding *Park and Recreation Insider*/park programs and activities information preferences.

The online survey of City Extra subscribers had 264 responses. The survey results are statistically invalid because the survey sample was selected from City Extra subscribers, as opposed to the general population. Respondents were asked to indicate all of the ways they learn about City Park and Recreation programs and activities. Ninety percent responded they get this information from City Extra emails. Thirty-eight percent responded they get it from *Park and Recreation Insider* and 39% from the City's website.

When asked how important it is to respondents to receive information from *Park and Recreation Insider*, 68% responded it was very important, somewhat important, or important; 32% responded it was not very important.

¹⁶ The "Community Attitude & Interest Survey" was mailed to a random sample of 3,000 Edina households; 865 surveys were returned. Survey results had a "95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-3.4%," according to the Survey report.

Even though the survey sample was heavily skewed toward email users, the results indicate residents continue to value access to Park and Recreation programs and activities information in print form.

Access and Use By Content Providers

A content provider *supplies* or is the *subject of* content in a print publication, video production, notice board, or on the website. An advertiser accesses and uses a print publication by supplying content for the publication in the form of an advertisement. An organization accesses and uses the bulletin board on EDINA 16 by supplying content for that notice. An individual accesses and uses a publication or video production by being the subject of a feature, mention or listing.

A content provider who is the subject of a feature, mention or listing in a City print publication or video production may have initiated being included in the publication or production or may have been selected by the editors or producers based on an editorial determination that the subject has “broad community appeal.”

The committee asked Communications and Marketing Director Bennerotte to define “broad community appeal” as it is used for editorial decisions for print and video productions. She provided the following response in an August 4, 2009 memo:¹⁷

First, it is important to note that the first priority of print publications, video productions and all other projects of the Communications & Marketing Department is sharing news of City programs, services and events. Additional *About Town* content, for example, is included only as space and time allow. Video production for other non-profit organizations is not considered if we do not have staff available for such jobs.

Content is chosen for production and broadcast based on the interest and value it may have to residents of Edina. All content is meant to promote the goal of making Edina the premiere place for living, learning, raising families and doing business. My criteria for making editorial decisions for non-City of Edina stories and videos are based on reasonableness of the request and benefit to the community. The City Manager sets an example of saying “yes” whenever a request is not at odds with public purposes or perception.

The committee asked Director Bennerotte what formal or informal process she uses to inform her understanding of “broad community appeal.”

[Director Bennerotte responded that she] is very open to feedback. There is no formal process for soliciting feedback but the department regularly gets emails and letters from residents commenting on publications and video productions.

Residents frequently request that the City publish City Hall phone numbers/contact information for staff in *About Town*. This is by far the most frequent request. Contact information is published if/when there is space available.

A review of *About Town* publications from 2006 through 2009 showed a Department directory with names and contact information (telephone and email) for City staff has not been published. A limited directory of City facilities was published in Spring 2007, Spring 2008, and Winter 2009. This directory included names and phone numbers for facilities such as the fire department and

¹⁷ See Appendix A.

golf courses. The Winter 2006 edition included a 3 ½-page special feature directory of community resources. This feature included a limited directory of City departments and telephone numbers.

City of St. Louis Park

To get a broader understanding of editorial discretion as it relates to selecting content for City communications, committee members met with Jamie Zwilling, Communications Coordinator for the City of St. Louis Park. The interview took place on September 25, 2009.¹⁸

Committee members asked Mr. Zwilling if he uses a concept such as “broad community appeal” when making editorial decisions.

Mr. Zwilling said, “No.” As explained in the approved interview notes:

[Mr. Zwilling] uses his “news” judgment—what’s happening now, what are people talking about, what do people need to know? He uses the concept of “refrigerator journalism”—is the information something someone would cut out and post on his or her refrigerator? He also looks to tell the story of what the City does and how they do it, and covers seasonal and cyclical events and notices.

He noted, “The department does not publish many features.”

Committee members asked Mr. Zwilling how he informs his understanding of what the community wants or needs with regard to communications.

Mr. Zwilling explained:

The City did a survey in 2008, as part of its visioning process. The department also worked with a consultant on the City’s brand—values were identified in that process. [Mr. Zwilling] formed a communications production group that consists of representatives from every City department. Most representatives are front-line staff (administrative assistants) because these are the people who have frequent direct contact with residents. They know what questions are being asked, what people want to know. This group meets three times annually and communicates more often via email.

The “communications production group” is one example of an ongoing advisory body used to help inform the content and direction of City communications.

Edina Public Schools

Edina Public Schools provides another example. The district formed a Communications Council in 2008. This volunteer advisory body, made up of communications professionals, meets quarterly to provide feedback and guidance on district communications. Since its inception, the Communications Council has produced a brand identity manual, completed a communications audit, and conducted focus groups to help determine the community’s attitudes and needs as they relate to the communications they receive from the District.

¹⁸ See Appendix B.

Challenges Related To Access By Content Providers

Challenges related to access to and use of communications facilities by content providers fall into two primary categories: (1) *accessibility* and *availability* of policy, and (2) editorial standards.

Accessibility and Availability of Communications and Marketing Policies

The City has the following policies that relate to access to and use of communications facilities by content providers:

- Communications and Marketing Department Video Production Policies
- Contract for Video Production
- Website Links Policy and Application for Website Link
- Outdoor Sign Request Form
- *About Town* advertising specifications and advertising rack card (rates)
- Submitted Photo and Original Artwork Use Policy

In a December 10, 2009 memo to committee members, Director Bennerotte noted that she would not define the Contract for Video Production, advertising specifications or advertising rack card as policies.¹⁹ These documents, because they provide guidelines for access and use, fit within the broader definition used in this study.

Accessibility of these policies is influenced by two main factors: (1) *awareness* of the policies, and (2) *ease* of obtaining the policies.

Video Production Policies

The Video Production Policies were adopted in January 2009. These policies define the Department's priorities for video production, guidelines for editing and playback of meetings and programming, guidelines for public use of City-produced content, advertising and sponsorship guidelines, a list of organizations eligible to contract with the City for video production services, and a referral to Southwest Community Television's public access channel for content not eligible to be broadcast on EDINA 16.

The Contract for Video Production includes rates for video production services and a description of how those rates will be calculated.

The Video Production Policies can be accessed from the City's website, and they are available upon request, as explained by Director Bennerotte in her August 4, 2009 memo:²⁰

When contacted by a non-profit organization for video production services, we explain and/or provide copies of the video production policies to the representatives. If the topic has broad community appeal in our opinion and the organization is willing to pay the fees associated with such a production, the Cable Coordinator develops a contract, which must be signed before work begins.

¹⁹ See Appendix C.

²⁰ See Appendix A.

Director Bennerotte also noted:

Since formal video production policies were established in early 2008²¹, the Communications & Marketing Department has completed just one new contractual project—a 30-second promotional video for the Edina Morningside Rotary Club’s “Edina Bike Parade.” The Club was charged \$500 per the policy.

Several organizations have inquired about the possibility of Edina 16 taping their event or program, but have not moved forward with contracts after being made aware of the associated costs for our services.

The Rotary Club of Edina has paid the Communications & Marketing Department for productions of its weekly meetings for over a year. The program length typically ranges from 20 to 30 minutes. The Club had been charged \$50 per week until July 1, 2009. The new weekly rate is \$75, since a Production Assistant is typically at the meeting for over an hour. Note that the City of Bloomington films and broadcasts a weekly Rotary meeting in that community at no charge.

In approved notes from the August 10, 2009 interview, Director Bennerotte explained:²²

All video productions for outside organizations must fit the department’s mission and have broad community appeal. Per the video services contract, all productions will be aired on EDINA 16 and streamed on the website.

Although several organizations, including League of Women Voters Edina, have contracted with the City for video production services, the Rotary Club of Edina (Edina Rotary) is the most extensive user of this service.

As a result, the Edina Rotary has a regular spot on the EDINA 16 broadcast schedule and a prominent place on the “Watch A Meeting” page of the City’s website.

Edina Rotary meetings air three times a week throughout the month. As of December 18, 2009, 57 Edina Rotary meetings were available for viewing on the City’s website. Eighteen editions of the Edina Rotary Club newsletter, the *Barker*, could also be downloaded from the City’s website.

One reason for the Edina Rotary’s extensive use of the City’s video production services may be their increased awareness of these services. Communications and Marketing Director Bennerotte was also the Edina Rotary’s volunteer Public Relations Director. As such, she was likely able to raise awareness of the City’s video production capabilities within the Club.

Outdoor Sign Request Form

Awareness of this communications facility has deliberately been kept low. As Director Bennerotte explained in her August 4, 2009 memo:²³

²¹ Video Production Policies were adopted by the Edina City Council on January 6, 2009.

²² See Appendix D.

²³ See Appendix A.

An “Outdoor Sign Request” form [for the electronic message board outside City hall] is available for any City staff member to fill out or is made available to the public upon request. Because the sign board is not widely available, we do not advertise its use to the public.

Website Links Policy and Application for Website Link

A policy that is available on the City’s website can be, for practical purposes, inaccessible if it is difficult to find. This is the case with the Website Links Policy. While this policy can be linked to from most pages on the City’s website, the link (“About Information on This Site”) is at the very bottom of each page in tiny type.

A website link is a connection between one website and another. The Website Links Policy defines the types of websites to which the City will provide a link.

Examples of organizations’ whose sites are linked to from the City’s website include Bloomington Public Health, Edina Public Schools, various youth sports associations, 50th & France Business Association, Edina Rotary and VEAP.

Not allowed are links to organizations which are considered political, such as League of Women Voters, candidate websites, religious institutions, businesses, personal or individual homepages or websites, or websites which are considered pornographic or that include offensive materials.²⁴

About Town Advertising Specifications and Rates

Advertising specifications and rack card (advertising rates) are available on the City’s website and upon request. As is standard practice, advertising rates are commonly discounted for advertisers who make commitments to advertise in multiple issues of a publication.

Submitted Photo and Original Artwork Use Policy

The Submitted Photo and Original Artwork Use Policy was implemented in September 2009 in response to this study’s inquiries.²⁵ The policy states:

To ensure consistency and fairness, the City of Edina prefers not to use submitted photographs in any publication for news, advertising or promotion purposes. In video produced for Edina Community Channel 16, on its website(s); or in any other media. Instead, staff will attempt to take its own photographs whenever necessary. Photos appearing with the historical column in *About Town* or other printed historic accounts and of original artwork are exceptions. When use of a submitted photograph is necessary, the signed release form below is required from the photographer. A photo for which a signed release is not obtained will not be used. The photographer will not receive credit for his or her work in the product for which the photograph is used. Submitted photos used in printed publications will be marked “Submitted Photograph” alongside the artwork.

Some aspects of City copyright policy are inconsistent with the practice in other publications. Although publications generally prefer to use photographs taken by their own staff, staff time and

²⁴ LWV is a non-partisan political organization; City policy, however, does not distinguish non-partisan from partisan political organizations and treats both the same.

²⁵ See Appendix E.

opportunity limitations often preclude this. Other publications' non-staff, non-commissioned photographs do typically default to a "submitted photo" cut line, but if the photographer requests that their name be used in the cut line, publications such as the *Edina Sun Current* and *Edina Magazine* honor the request.

When photographers waive payment for their submissions, giving them a cut line, when requested, encourages good relations with photographers and higher quality submissions, according to Art Center Board members and personnel.²⁶

Published Guidelines for Use of the City Seal

The City does not have a written policy on private use of the City seal but the practice is that the seal cannot be used without permission. Improper use of the City seal was noted on campaign materials during the 2008 City elections and was brought to the candidates' attention, according to the Director Bennerotte in an August 4, 2009 memo.²⁷

Guidelines for Written Submissions to EDINA 16 Bulletin Board

A lack of policy can also affect access to and use of a communications facility by content providers. The absence of guidelines for submitting and handling submissions to the EDINA 16 bulletin board is an example.

Access to and use of the EDINA 16 bulletin board by content providers has been, anecdotally, unreliable. An October 2008 email exchange with Director Bennerotte highlights the difficulty one neighborhood association had getting a notice to air.²⁸ A representative from the association informed Director Bennerotte that the notice she submitted was not airing on EDINA 16 and asked for a clarification of the policy. Director Bennerotte stated the notice was currently airing and offered to give the association direct access to the system for a \$175 fee (to post future notices directly, rather than through Director Bennerotte). The association's representative restated that the notice she submitted was not airing and suggested there may be a problem with the system. Director Bennerotte subsequently identified a "glitch in the system" that caused not only the notice in question not to air, but also 28 additional notices from other organizations.

Content providers may become aware of the bulletin board by viewing it on EDINA 16. As of this writing, the bulletin board does not show a notice inviting submissions. The EDINA 16 page of the City's website directs content providers to contact Director Bennerotte to request a notice on the bulletin board.

²⁶ Email exchange of December 18, 2009 to Diana Hedges from the following Edina Art Center Board members: Megan Norman, "I would agree that the photography section should be altered. I think that photographers should get credit for their images and that the City shouldn't be able to use the images anytime they want"; Bev Soshea, "I also think the photographers should get a cut line that gives credit. It is the professional courtesy thing to do"; Edina Art Center Graphic Designer Mariam Hill, "Seems short-sighted on the part of the city both for quality of images in publication (which represent the city) and of course a step backward for artists."

²⁷ See Appendix A.

²⁸ October 17, 2008 email exchange between Morningside Neighborhood Association steering committee member and Director Bennerotte.

Interpretation of Editorial Standards

Between May 2008 and December 19, 2009, the Communications and Marketing Department produced at least the following:

- 139 video productions (excluding City meetings);
- 87 video productions of City meetings;
- Six editions of *About Town*;
- Five editions of *Park and Recreation Insider*;
- Nine editions of *EFD Pulse*;
- 35 editions of *Council Connection*;
- About 163 tweets on Twitter;
- And numerous press releases, bulletin and electronic message board postings, and updates to the website

These publications, productions, and notices represent a large amount of content.

Content, according to the August 4, 2009 memo, is selected “based on the interest and value it may have to Edina residents.”²⁹ Content that has interest and value to residents has *broad community appeal*. These are the City’s editorial standards.

Three kinds of content seem to fit within this standard.

- First, content that shares “news of City programs, services and events”;
- Second, content that promotes “the goal of making Edina the premiere place for living, learning, raising families, and doing business”; and
- Third, content that is not City-related but reasonable to include and of “benefit to the community”

As a rule, Edina residents are interested in news about City programs, services and events. This type of information has obvious broad community appeal and is the foundation of an effective communications program. A review of City communications found the City provides this kind of information. *Council Connection*, *City Extra*, and the new video program *Beyond the Badge* are examples.

The review also showed a focus in City communications on content not directly related to City programs, services or events. For example, six episodes of the City’s video magazine, *In Edina*, featured segments on Edina Chamber of Commerce programs or events. Eleven episodes featured the Edina Rotary or Edina Rotary members. The Edina Rotary or Edina Rotary members were mentioned, listed, or featured in 14 issues of *About Town* from 2006 through 2009.

Access to a facility is improved with awareness of that facility. This could be why organizations with close associations with the City of Edina are frequent subjects of content in City video productions and publications. Organizations with which the City has a close association appear in practice to fit the definition of “broad community appeal” and are included in publications and video productions “as space and time allow.”

²⁹ See Appendix A.

PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The vision statement for the Edina Park and Recreation Department is, “we create community through people, parks and programs.” The Department, headed by Park and Recreation Director John Keprios, is responsible for:

40 parks totaling 1,553 acres of park property, revenue facilities (Golf Courses, 3 indoor ice rinks at Braemar Arena, Aquatic Center, Art Center, Edinborough Park, and Centennial Lakes Park), administering and programming a Senior Citizen’s Center, adaptive recreation program, administering and scheduling adult and youth recreational programs and fourteen athletic associations and working closely with and in support of the Edina Garden Council, the Edina Historical Society and the Edina Museum.³⁰

The administration area of the Park and Recreation Department employs 6.8 full-time personnel and occasional seasonal part-time help.³¹ The park maintenance area employs 16 full-time, year-round personnel, a part-time contract forester, part-time weed inspector, and shared full-time maintenance worker.³² Additional employees support the Senior Center and recreation programs.

The City’s parks are categorized and explained in Chapter 9 of the City’s 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update.³³

The City has six recreational enterprise facilities (revenue facilities). These facilities have their own managers and staff. The following explanation of enterprise facilities was provided in a July 29, 2009 email from City Manager Gordon Hughes:³⁴

In general, enterprises have a goal of self sufficiency without reliance on tax revenues. In addition, the accounting standards for such enterprises require typical business standards such as depreciation of assets. From a management perspective, designation as an enterprise also carries with it an obligation for the city manager and facility managers to manage them in a more business-like manner while recognizing that each enterprise is unique. For example, our goals and practices for the liquor enterprise is quite different from, say, our Aquatic Center or our utility department. Yet all have a common goal of self sufficiency.

The City’s six recreational enterprise facilities, according to the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update, are:

1. Edina Art Center
2. Braemar Golf Course and Fred Richards Golf Course
3. Braemar Golf Dome
4. Edina Aquatic Center
5. Edinborough/Centennial Lakes Park
6. Braemar Arena

³⁰ 2010 General Fund Budget page 100.

³¹ 2010 General Fund Budget page 100.

³² 2010 General Fund Budget page 108.

³³ 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update, Chapter 9, pages 6-10.

³⁴ See Appendix F.

The department also offers a variety of recreational programs, including Adaptive Recreation, tennis lessons, adult sports leagues, firearm safety training classes, playground programs, and ongoing special events, such as concerts in the parks, and Family Jamboree. These programs and activities are not a focus of this study. The department also oversees over 352 acres of natural resources open spaces that also are not the focus of this study.

The City's parks and recreational facilities are primarily financed through the General Fund; enterprise facilities are primarily funded through operating revenues.

The General Fund is the City's chief operating fund. According to the proposed 2010 General Fund Budget, revenue for the General Fund is gained through property taxes, licenses and permits, intergovernmental aid, fees and charges, fines and forfeitures, other revenue, and other financing sources.³⁵ The General Fund budget is reviewed and approved by the City Council each year. According to the proposed budget, \$3,755,473 from the General Fund has been allocated to the Park and Recreation Department in 2010.³⁶

Enterprise Funds are used to "account for the financing of self-supporting activities of governmental units which render services to the general public on a user-charge basis" (2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report [CAFR]). Enterprise Funds are also referred to as *proprietary funds*, which account for the City's "business-type activities." Enterprise Funds are not accounted for within the General Fund; they are distinct from the General Fund.

Two Major and three Nonmajor enterprise funds account for the City's recreational enterprise facilities. These are, according to the 2008 CAFR:

- Aquatic Center fund
- Golf Course fund
- Arena fund
- Art Center fund
- Edinborough/Centennial Lakes fund

Additional financial support may be provided by debt or an existing trust.

Enterprise facilities, as well as many scheduled non-enterprise recreational facilities, are supported by user fees. City Manager Hughes explained in a March 3, 2009 interview: "The City has a user fee philosophy. Generally for the most part, facilities have, as a matter of fact, a fee associated with them."³⁷ Director Keprios added, "Former mayor Fred Richards' philosophy was 'wherever it is effective and efficient we should charge a fee.' If we can have someone pay, we will. Edina is the most fee-oriented community of any."

The rationale for charging fees was explained in an October 7, 2009 memo from Director Keprios to the Park Board:

³⁵ 2010 General Fund Budget page 12.

³⁶ 2010 General Fund Budget page 21.

³⁷ See Appendix G.

The philosophy that has long been followed in the City of Edina is that fees and charges are set at a level that accomplishes the following:

- Users pay their fair share of the costs associated with the programs and facilities they use today and should not place that burden on future taxpayers (user fee philosophy).
- Keep programs and activities affordable to the maximum number of residents.
- Cover the costs associated with the activity or facility whenever possible.
- Find a way to allow all residents to participate in basic recreation programs regardless of their ability to pay (i.e., Edina Community Foundation Grant-In-Aid Fund).

In other words, we could probably charge higher fees in some cases without seeing a significant drop in participation, whereas higher fees in other programs would see a significant drop in participation and/or rentals.

I believe that it is important to keep in mind our mission when establishing fees and charges. There is a reason why the private sector does not offer a myriad of Art Centers. Art Centers are not a profitable business, but are a highly valued service for our communities. Some of our enterprise facilities make a profit and some do not. We do our best to run an efficient business-like enterprise, while remaining competitively priced in the marketplace. In setting fees and charts, I ask that you please be mindful that our mission is not to maximize profits.

Admission, rental and use fees for both enterprise and non-enterprise recreational facilities are set each year by the City Council after review by the Park Board.

The CAFR does not provide a detailed accounting of how much the City collects in user or rental fees for its non-enterprise recreational facilities. It is therefore difficult to see if the user fee philosophy stated above is applied. The budget does provide some insight into how much is collected from youth sports associations and some of the costs associated with these associations' use of outdoor fields. Information on that will follow.

The CAFR, updated and published annually, shows operating revenue and expenses for the City's recreational enterprise facilities. The committee looked at the reports for 2006, 2007, and 2008. The 2008 Business Plans provide financial statements for 2005, 2006, and 2007.

The Edina Art Center has operated at a loss for the years reviewed. Transfers from the Liquor, Construction and Park Developers funds have subsidized operations.

The same information shows Centennial Lakes and Edinborough Parks have also operated at a loss. The loss, in recent years, has been covered by the Centennial Lakes/Edinborough Park trust. Braemar Arena has operated at a loss and been subsidized by the Liquor and Capital Improvement funds. Overall, golf facilities have operated at a profit, but non-operating expenses have caused these operations to go into the red some years. The Aquatic Center has been profitable.

Types of Park and Recreation Facilities

Park and Recreation facilities, whether enterprise or non-enterprise, can be divided into two main categories: free and fee-based.

Free Facilities

Free facilities fall into two categories:

- Free/open use
- Free/scheduled use

Free facilities are supported entirely by taxpayers. These “facilities are 100% subsidized,” per Director Keprios. “Residents are not charged at all for their use.”³⁸

Free/Open Use Facilities

A free/open use facility requires no point of contact with the City for use. Examples of this type of facility are park playgrounds, tennis courts, general outdoor skating areas, and walking paths or trails.

Scheduled outdoor facilities—athletic fields, basketball courts, batting cages, and hockey rinks—are free/open use when they are not scheduled. Some neighborhood parks and all community playfields have one or more scheduled facility. These facilities may be indicated with a sign, such as:



³⁸ See Appendix H.

Director Keprios explained scheduled and game only fields in an August 3, 2009 memo:³⁹

A “scheduled field” is an athletic field that is scheduled for games and/or practices by the Edina Park and Recreation Department. The “game only field” policy was created by management and staff for the purpose of avoiding over-scheduling and deterioration of premier athletic fields. Game only fields include Courtney Fields, Van Valkenburg Park, Braemar Arena Athletic Field and all three fields at Lewis Park. The public and athletic associations become aware of this policy when they contact the Park and Recreation Department to reserve an athletic field.

Unscheduled (free/open) use of game only fields is discouraged. For example, the playing fields at Van Valkenburg Park are locked behind a fence.

Free/Scheduled Use Facility

City Hall meeting rooms are an example of a free/scheduled use facility.⁴⁰ Use of meeting rooms is governed by the “Use of City Hall Policy and Guidelines.” These guidelines prioritize use of the Council Chambers, West Foyer, Community Room, and Mayor’s Conference Room. “Generally speaking, community groups may use the City Hall facilities on weekends and evenings,” according to the policy. “Groups or individuals wishing to use any of the four areas for meetings must make arrangements through the Department of Administration.” The policy is not available online; a reference to scheduling City Hall meeting rooms can be found by clicking on “City Hall” on the Parks and Facilities page.

Fee-Based Facilities

The City has a range of fee-based facilities. These include the enterprise facilities, scheduled outdoor athletic facilities, warming houses, picnic shelters, City gyms, and meeting/events spaces at the Senior Center and Arneson Acres.⁴¹

The fees for these facilities are set by City Council resolution each year. The committee was unable to find a complete listing of Park and Recreation fees on the website. Fees for 2010 are included in Appendix L.

Fee-based use can be divided into two categories:

- Fee-based/open use
- Fee-based/scheduled use

Fee-Based/Open Use

This type of use requires a point of contact with the City—usually to pay an admission fee. Use is open during public hours of operation.

³⁹ See Appendix I.

⁴⁰ City Hall meetings rooms, although mentioned in this study, are handled by the Department of Administration. LWVE has made use of City Hall meeting rooms without charge, in accordance with City policy.

⁴¹ LWVE has used Arneson Acres facilities for a fee.

Examples include:

- Edinborough Park pool, track and fitness center
- Adventure Peak
- Aquatic Center
- Paddle boats, putt-putt golf, and lawn games at Centennial Lakes

These facilities may be scheduled, but scheduled use is either non-exclusive or at times other than when the facility is open to the general public. Examples of the former include birthday parties at Adventure Peak. Examples of the latter include swimming lessons and swim team practices at the Edinborough pool or Aquatic Center.

Ice-skating at Braemar Arena during general skating hours is also an example of a fee-based/open use.

Fee-Based/Scheduled Use

This type of use requires a point of contact with the City to schedule the use, pay a fee, obtain a permit or contract for use, and obtain (when applicable) a key to the facility.

Examples of scheduled use for which a fee and permit or contract for use are required include:

- Exclusive use of an outdoor picnic shelter or park gazebo;
- Exclusive use of a park warming house;
- Meeting and event spaces at Braemar, Centennial Lakes, Senior Center and Edinborough;
- Exclusive use of the City gyms; and
- Exclusive use of outdoor athletic facilities

Golfing at any of the City's golf facilities requires paying a fee and scheduling a tee time; however a contract or permit is not required.

Use of enterprise facilities is scheduled by contacting the facilities directly; use of the City gyms is scheduled by contacting the school district; scheduled use of other fee-based facilities is arranged by contacting the Park and Recreation Department.

The City has a "user-fee" philosophy and fees may be adjusted to influence how much a facility is used, or by whom. For example, the new higher non-resident fee for scheduled use of the Arneson Acres meeting room and outdoor Gazebo is intended to discourage non-resident use.⁴²

Residents Avoiding Paying Fee for Fee-Based/Scheduled Facilities

Residents tend to view outdoor park facilities as free and open for use on a first-come, first-served basis.

For example, a resident may plan a family reunion gathering for the picnic shelter at Rosland Park. Rather than schedule the shelter and pay the \$150 fee, the resident may take a chance that the

⁴² October 7, 2009 memo from Director Keprios to the Park Board.

shelter has not been scheduled by anyone else on that day and that it will be available for use on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Park and Recreation Department is aware people use outdoor scheduled facilities without scheduling or paying a fee. As Director Keprios explained in a March 3, 2009 interview:⁴³

Groups with knowledge use the parks without permits, such as at Weber and [Edina nonprofit Cool Planet] that had a big event and paid no fees. It was two fold: access is a good thing, but there is an issue of some who circumvent the park permit process and take advantage of the system.

At the August 5, 2009 interview,⁴⁴

John Keprios noted that he gets many requests for reserved use of park space and, when he tells the individual/group the fee, they hang up. Later he finds that the group has gone ahead and used the space without a permit. If this kind of use is discovered while it is going on, the police may tell the individual/group to leave. As a rule, John Keprios does not want to cite residents for use of park spaces without a permit.

Warming Houses and Indoor Meeting/Event Facilities

Access to scheduled indoor park facilities is more easily controlled.

A key is required to access the warming houses at Todd, Walnut Ridge, Weber and Cornelia School Parks when these buildings are not open for skating during the winter. To get a key, residents contact the Park and Recreation Department, pay the fee and get a permit.

Indoor meeting and event spaces—Braemar Clubhouse, Centennial Lakes Centrum, and Senior Center Fireside room, classrooms, and Grandview room—may be scheduled by contacting those facilities directly.

The Great Hall and Amphitheater at Edinborough Park are no longer available for private rentals, due to the popularity of the birthday party packages offered by the facility.

City Gyms

Access to City gyms, located at the Edina Community Center, is controlled per the City's agreement with Edina Public Schools. Guidelines and fees for using these facilities can be found on the district's website. Fees for using the City gyms are established and collected by the district. Recognized youth sports associations pay a \$9 per user fee to the City. The City contacts the district to schedule use of the City gyms for City programs and activities and for recognized youth sports associations. Other individuals or organizations contact the school district directly. The City's Priority Use of the Edina School District's Gymnasium Policy defines how the City prioritizes its access to the City gyms.

⁴³ See Appendix G.

⁴⁴ See Appendix H.

Braemar Arena

Scheduled ice time is offered at Edina's indoor ice facility, Braemar Arena. The fee is \$185 per hour. This compares to \$220 for peak time and \$130 for off-peak time at Minnesota Made, a private ice arena in Edina. The 2008 Business Plans note Braemar does not "have off-peak pricing currently but may have to consider doing so."

Braemar Arena's principal customers are "Braemar City of Lakes Figure Skating Club, Edina Hockey Association, Minnesota Showcase Hockey and Edina High School," according to the 2008 Business Plans. Customers can use Rinkfinder.com, a web-based service, to find available ice time and contact the facility directly to schedule.

Braemar Golf Dome

The Braemar Golf Dome "is open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily from November through mid-April," according to the City's website. The Dome "is the largest and longest-hitting in the Twin Cities area with 46 tee areas on two levels. As of January 1, 2009, prices are \$7.50 for buckets and \$10.50 half-hour of timed golf." During other times, the Dome field may be rented for \$130 per hour.

Golf Courses

A fee and tee-time are required to golf at any of Edina's three golf courses. This makes golf a fee-based, scheduled use. Courses are also scheduled by golf leagues and booked for group events. Arrangements are made through the facility. Patron cards, now offered to non-residents as well as residents, entitle holders to schedule tee times seven days in advance, receive a discount on green fees, and receive discounts in the Pro Shop. Fees for Braemar golf facilities are approved by the City Council; complete fees are not available on the City's website.

Outdoor Athletic Facilities

Outdoor athletic facilities may be scheduled only by residents. Fees, whether for general park areas or developed athletic fields, are \$48 per hour (\$75 per hour with lights) or \$137 per day. Residents contact the Park and Recreation Department directly to schedule.

Recognized youth sports associations pay a *per participant* fee rather than a per hour or per day fee for using scheduled outdoor athletic facilities. The per hour or per day fee is paid by *unrecognized* youth sports associations or other Edina-based athletic groups. It is also paid by the general public seeking reserved, exclusive use of these facilities (for a birthday party or neighborhood party, for example).

This policy of having unrecognized athletic associations pay more is meant to discourage the formation of additional youth sports associations, as explained in the City's Priority Use of Edina's Scheduled Outdoor Athletic Facilities Policy:

It is the City of Edina's view that the public is best served when there is only one independently incorporated youth athletic association per sport. ... To that end, the City of Edina will charge differing facility use fees with intent to discourage formation of new youth athletic associations that compete with existing youth athletic associations and create a duplication of services, which the City of Edina views as not in the public's best interest.

A fuller discussion of outdoor athletic field fees will follow.

Types of Use of Park and Recreation Facilities

There are two primary types of use: open and scheduled.

Open Uses

Open uses require no point of contact with City staff—no permit, permission, application, contract for use, or fee. Use is defined by:

- The types of facilities that are offered (i.e., a playground defines its use as a playground);
- City Code; and
- Posted regulations.

Section 1230 of Edina’s City Code refers to “Conduct in Parks and Public Spaces.” This section gives the Park Director discretion to grant permission for certain activities in parks that are otherwise prohibited.⁴⁵

The section also gives the Park Director authority to:

... adopt additional rules and regulations not contrary to the provisions of this Code governing the use and enjoyment of parks, programmed parks, playgrounds, lakes, ponds, streams and other publicly owned properties which shall be prominently posted or publicly announced in the places where they are intended to apply.

This discretion has been used infrequently, according to Director Keprios in his August 3, 2009 memo:⁴⁶

It is extremely rare that I use ordinance 1230.06 which gives the Park Director authority to change park rules and regulations. The last three times that I can even remember having used this ordinance were for:

- At their Tuesday, August 17, 2004, meeting, the City Council voted unanimously to direct the Park Director to establish an additional Regulation, under the authority granted in Code 1230.06, to make all Edina parks tobacco-free. This new regulation prohibits the use of all forms of tobacco in all Edina parks both indoor and outdoor.
- Creation of an off-leash dog park at Van Valkenburg Park.
- Creation of rule to require scheduled athletic fields to be used by permit only; however, permits are not required for neighborhood use.

As a rule, park regulations are posted on signs near the park entrance or parking lot.

⁴⁵ Examples of these kinds of activities are:

- Be in or remain in the park before or after posted hours of operation
- Be in or remain in any area of the park closed to public use
- Pick or cut any wild or cultivated flower, or cut, break, or in any way injure or deface any tree, shrub, plant
- Place or keep any goods, wares, merchandise or other articles
- Participate in or conduct any band procession, parade, or military formation
- Promote or participate in an entertainment or exhibition
- Give any public speech or hold or participate in any rally, convention, assembly or meeting

⁴⁶ See Appendix I.

Scheduled Uses

Scheduled uses require contact with City staff. Common scheduled uses were discussed in the previous section. The following looks at less common scheduled uses. These are:

- Special uses
- Quasi-public uses
- Privatizations

Special Park Uses

Special uses are defined as uses that result from a special request by a private individual or organization to use a facility in a way or for a purpose for which it is not commonly used and/or in a way or for a purpose that conflicts with policy.

Special uses may be allowed by ordinance. For example, a resident could schedule a warming house for a New Year's Eve party and be given permission to be in the warming house after posted hours of operation. This would not be a common use, but it would be allowed.

Special uses may fall into a gray area. A facility that is not typically offered for private rental may be made available under special circumstances.

For example, the Edina Aquatic Center was made available to the Abbey's Hope Foundation⁴⁷ for a pool party/pool safety event on June 5, 2009.

Director Keprios and Manager Hughes discussed the event in our March 3, 2009 interview.⁴⁸ They noted the most difficult requests they receive are the "I'm special" requests." Director Keprios noted:

The ongoing biggest challenge is getting requests from those who request special preferential treatment, such as reduced or reduction in fees, because of whom or what they are.

That said, Director Keprios said, "We try to do everything we can to say yes." This was echoed in a July 29, 2009 email from Manager Hughes:⁴⁹

In my opinion, making those judgment calls is part of my job as City Manager and my criteria are based on reasonableness of the request and benefit to the community. ... I attempt to say "yes" whenever possible and "no" when I believe the request is at odds with public purposes or perception. Sometimes I say "maybe" and bring such issues forward to our policy makers.

⁴⁷ Abbey's Hope Charitable Foundation is an Edina-based organization named for Abigail Taylor, who tragically died as a result of a swimming pool accident. Information on the foundation can be found at www.abbeyshope.org.

⁴⁸ See Appendix G.

⁴⁹ See Appendix F.

While the Abbey's Hope event did not go to policy makers for discussion, other special requests have. One example is a request from the Morningside Neighborhood Association (MNA) to waive the fee for use of the Weber Park warming house in September 2006.⁵⁰

The MNA steering committee approached the Park Board with a request that the Board waive the fee for warming house rentals by formally organized neighborhood associations for annual meetings and up to two social events per year.

Fees for warming houses are set by resolution by the City Council. "Generally speaking, staff does not waive or reduce fees set by ordinance or resolution," wrote Manager Hughes in a July 29, 2009 email.⁵¹ Director Keprios shared a similar statement in his August 3, 2009 memo: "Technically no staff has the authority to waive or reduce fees and therefore there is no policy that governs waived or reduced fees."⁵²

A review of Park Board meeting minutes shows that fees are waived under certain circumstances and that a policy regarding fee waivers for formally organized neighborhood associations' use of warming houses was created in 2006.

Quasi-Public Uses

Quasi-public uses are uses by organizations that are quasi-public in nature.⁵³

Uses by recognized youth sports associations are considered to be quasi-public uses because these associations:

- Are privately operated non-profit corporations;
- Have policy-mandated responsibilities;
- Receive City support; and
- Are subject to a greater degree of City control than are other, non-recognized sports associations

Youth Sports Associations are described in Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan 2008 Update:

Edina Athletic Associations and Clubs currently offer athletic opportunities to over 9,000 youth of all abilities through fourteen clubs and associations. The independently incorporated youth athletic associations and clubs are run by volunteers with the help of a professional recreation staff liaison.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ For complete discussion, see Appendix K.

⁵¹ See Appendix F.

⁵² See Appendix I.

⁵³ According to commonly accepted definitions, quasi-public corporations have the following characteristics:

- They are privately held companies;
- They have legislatively-mandated responsibilities;
- They receive government support; and
- They are subject to a greater degree of governmental control than are other corporations.

⁵⁴ City of Edina 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update, Chapter 9, page 40.

In 2006 the City formed a Youth Sports Task Force to address issues related to youth sports. One outcome of this task force was an updated “relationship agreement” between youth sports associations, Park and Recreation Department staff, and the Park Board.

The updated relationship agreement—*Youth Athletic Associations’ Relationship With the Edina Park Board and the Park and Recreation Staff (Relationship Document)*—defines the terms by which the City will provide support to youth sports associations and the guidelines the associations will follow in exchange.

Recognition Criteria for Youth Sports Associations

As stated in the Relationship Document, “It is the City of Edina’s view that the public is best served when there is only one independently incorporated youth athletic association per sport;” however, “the traveling component of a particular sport [may be] administered by its own youth athletic association.”

To be recognized as an official Edina youth athletic association, youth sports associations must meet eight criteria, defined in Appendix 1.2 of the Relationship Document.⁵⁵ These criteria relate to the composition of teams (90% Edina residents), sportsmanship, non-discrimination, and operational transparency. Associations must also adopt the Relationship Document and Core Values and Community Strategy. These documents can be found on the City’s website.⁵⁶

The following teams, according to the Relationship Document, are recognized:

- Edina Baseball Association
- Edina Basketball Association
- Edina Girls Athletic Association
- Edina Girls Basketball Association
- Edina Hockey Association
- Edina Soccer Association
- Edina Soccer Club
- Edina Football Association
- Edina Youth Softball Association
- Edina Girls Fastpitch Softball Association
- Edina Lacrosse Association
- Edina Swim Club

⁵⁵ Currently found at http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/park_recreation/park_board/youth_sports/index.htm

⁵⁶ *Id.*

Responsibilities for Recognized Youth Sports Associations

Recognized youth sports associations must continue to meet the criteria for recognition, as well as fulfill additional responsibilities detailed in the Relationship Document.⁵⁷

City Responsibilities for Youth Sports Associations

In exchange for meeting these responsibilities, recognized youth sports associations receive the following support from the City, as defined in the Relationship Document; in providing this support the City exercises some degree of control.

- Edina Park and Recreation Department will provide facilities and fields for boys and girls at each age group within the association.
- The Edina Park and Recreation Department in cooperation with the Park Board will help each association plan, and provide safe and well maintained public athletic facilities to meet [the needs of] youth sports programs, and give professional staff liaison services regarding the operation of their association, and offer appropriate clerical and administrative support services.
- The Edina Park and Recreation Department shall act as a liaison between the associations and the Edina Park Board to assist associations in providing a well rounded and equitable program for all participants.
- Edina Park and Recreation shall attend at least semi-annually association board meetings. Department personnel shall be available and provide resource help to associations in training of coaches operations, and other functions with which the association needs assistance.
- To ensure that the public has an open, fair and just process to handle grievances that are not resolved at the association board or staff level, the City of Edina will facilitate a grievance process. This grievance process is not intended to deal with team assignment, coach assignment or tryout process grievances.

Youth sports associations are charged \$9 per participant per season for use of the City's outdoor athletic fields and the above services.

Revenue and Expenses Related to Youth Sports Associations
Use of Scheduled Outdoor Facilities

Revenue to the City from several youth sports associations is presented in section 1642 of the City's 2010 General Fund Budget. This section also describes how outdoor athletic fields are maintained for scheduled games:⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Responsibilities include:

- All boys and girls have a fun, positive, safe, age-appropriate, educational experience that is open to all residents of all abilities, and receive equal opportunity to participate at whatever ability level they may play.
- Associations shall have a common code of conduct for players, coaches and parents.
- Qualified citizen volunteers should serve in positions as Board of Directors. Board of Directors must have knowledge of the program/sport. Associations are encouraged to have open member elections to elect Board of Directors.
- The Edina Park and Recreation Department shall establish minimum insurance requirements of each and every association that uses Edina's public athletic facilities.

⁵⁸ Page 112, City's 2010 General Fund Budget.

All sports fields are specially prepared for scheduled games. These fields are dragged and field lined with a chalk material. A special mixture (agricultural lime) is used each spring for filling holes and regrading is done as needed during the playing season. All of the field areas are fertilized each year and the grass is treated with herbicides. The grassy playing surfaces in all of these parks are aerated, seeded and/or sodded when necessary to maintain safe ground cover.

Actual costs for maintenance of scheduled fields are shown.⁵⁹

The committee asked Director Keprios how many hours youth sports associations scheduled fields, rinks and gyms in 2006, 2007 and 2008. He provided the following answer in his August 3, 2009 memo:⁶⁰

<u>Association</u>	<u>Hours/year</u>
• Edina Baseball Association	2,718
• Edina Basketball Association	1,644
• Edina Soccer Association	1,020
• Edina Soccer Club	2,212
• Edina Football Association	600
• Edina Lacrosse Association	500
• Edina Boys Flag Football	14
• Edina Hockey Association	2,200
• EGAA Flag Football	84
• EGAA Basketball	126
• EGAA Volleyball	216
• EYSA	152
• Girls Fastpitch Association	130

The committee asked Director Keprios if the above numbers were from a single year or were an average of the three years requested. Director Keprios responded in a September 11, 2009 email:

I am told that the number of scheduled hours are an average and do not vary much from year to year. The hours are mostly representative of 2008. To research an exact count would be extremely time consuming and problematic for both staff and the volunteers who also do scheduling; plus, in the end some of the data may not even be available.

As stated earlier, recognized youth sports associations are charged \$9 per participant for scheduled use of Edina’s outdoor athletic fields. Unrecognized sports associations or organized teams are charged by the hour.⁶¹

In our August 5, 2009 interview, Director Keprios “noted the City Council has been increasing the field use fees over the past several years for use of scheduled facilities. He noted there has been push-back from youth sports associations regarding fee increases.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Page 113, City’s 2010 General Fund Budget.

⁶⁰ See Appendix I.

⁶¹ The school district is not charged for scheduled use of the City’s outdoor athletic facilities.

⁶² See Appendix H.

One “push-back” was relayed in an October 7, 2009 memo from Director Keprios to the Park Board: “EHA [Edina Hockey Association] confirmed they are not interested in a fee increase or paying to keep that rink [Strachauer] open this coming skating season.”

A month earlier, at the September 8, 2009 Park Board meeting, a member had suggested the EHA be charged increased fees. As the minutes read:

Mr. Sorem suggested that possibly they could raise the user fee for the EHA participants from \$9.00 to \$25.00. Mr. Keprios replied that he has been told for the 2009-2010 outdoor skating season the EHA is not planning on using any outdoor ice for any games, just practices. Mr. Sorem commented that most of the young teams have a standing weekly scheduled practice for the entire season and noted that \$9.00 is pretty cheap, it’s a great deal.

Mr. Keprios noted in his August 5, 2009 interview that “The decision was made to charge all sports the same fee, rather than different fees tied to the cost of maintaining the field for each sport.” He explained, “Soccer, because of the number of participants, pays the most, even though soccer fields are easier to maintain. Baseball pays less in total because they have fewer participants, however, baseball fields are more expensive to maintain.”⁶³

The question, however, had been raised: *Were youth sports associations paying a fee that could be considered reasonable under the City’s user fee philosophy?*

The committee did several calculations using numbers provided by the City to attempt an answer.⁶⁴

The calculations showed that it costs \$32.43 per hour of use to maintain the City’s outdoor athletic fields for use by youth sports associations.⁶⁵ As calculated, the median rate paid in 2008 was \$10.80.

As noted, recognized youth sports associations paid \$9 per participant for scheduled use of the City’s outdoor athletic fields. The calculations showed the per participant cost of maintaining fields for this use was \$31.83.

The City may have access to more detailed numbers than were provided for this study. A review of the numbers, as well as assumptions, would be necessary for a more complete discussion on the rate paid by youth sports associations for use of the City’s outdoor scheduled facilities.

Further review might find that actual costs may be more or less, but the above numbers suggest that Park Board member Sorem may have been correct when he said, “\$9 is pretty cheap, it’s a great deal.”⁶⁶

⁶³ See Appendix H.

⁶⁴ Please see Appendix L for detailed discussion.

⁶⁵ Other teams and the general public, pay \$48/hour, \$75/hour with lights, or \$137 per day.

⁶⁶ September 8, 2009 Park Board meeting minutes.

Privatization

Privatizations occur when ownership or control of City land or a City facility is transferred to a private entity.

Scheduled use of a facility may be seen as a privatization in that scheduled use allows a private entity exclusive use of a facility for a period of time. Such scheduled use, however, differs from privatization in several ways:

- *Duration of use.* In scheduled use, the duration of use is measured in hours or days. In privatization, the duration of use is months or years.
- *Ownership.* In scheduled use, ownership of both the land and the facility is public. In privatization, the land and/or facility may be privately owned.
- *Change of use.* In scheduled use, the purpose or function of a facility does not change. A field remains a field; a warming house remains a warming house. In privatization, the purpose or function of a facility may change. A field may become a private vegetable garden; a warming house may also become a coffee shop.
- *Determination of access.* In scheduled use, the City determines who may access a facility and the terms of this access. This is sometimes spelled out in a policy, such as the *Priority Scheduling* policies, or *Use of City Hall* policy. In privatization, the privatizing entity determines who may access the facility and under what terms (however, this may be determined in cooperation with the City and defined in a contract).

Privatized facilities cannot be differentiated from public facilities on the basis of purpose alone, since privatized facilities are often presented as serving a public purpose. Public access to facilities also does not necessarily differentiate privatized facilities from public ones. Some privatizations may limit access to the facility by the general public (Chowen Park/YEA vegetable garden, for example), while others may depend on the public accessing the facility for their revenue stream (Lewis Park coffee shop, for example).

Chapter 9 of the City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update discusses the sale of public parkland or open spaces in the context of overall goals and policies.⁶⁷ As goals, the City will "continue to devote a minimum of 15 percent of Edina's land area to parkland and open space" and "retain, maintain, and protect and preserve all park and open space property currently owned by the City." As policy, the City will "not sell any park land and/or open space property currently owned by the City of Edina. An exception to this policy might include a property exchange for land of equal or greater value that is determined to be in the best interest of the community."

Of the four privatization issues discussed in the opening section of the report, none involved the sale of public land.

The Edina Golf Dome was originally a private facility on *leased* public land. The Edina Field House would have been the same. The Lewis Park warming house and coffee shop would have been a

⁶⁷ Pages 17-19 of Chapter 9, City of Edina 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update.

privately funded public building on public land; access to and use of the building, however, would have been under private control for ten years. The Chowen Park vegetable garden would have been a private vegetable garden on public land, seasonal exclusive use of which would have been granted by the City for free.

Edina Golf Dome⁶⁸

The Edina Golf Dome was constructed in 1982. Today, the Dome is cited as an example of privatization of public land.⁶⁹

The Dome operated for three seasons before the need to make improvements to the facility prompted the developers to propose a new arrangement with the City. This arrangement called for an elimination of rent payments in exchange for the City having access to the facility during the off-season. The facility operated under the 1986 lease terms until 1988 when the developers proposed to sell the facility to the City for \$575,000. City staff recommended the purchase, stating profits from the Dome could help offset losses at the Braemar Ice Arena.⁷⁰

The City Council approved the purchase of the Golf Dome in 1988 for \$575,000.⁷¹ With the purchase, the Golf Dome became a publicly owned and operated facility.

Edina Field House⁷²

In 2004, the City Council authorized a feasibility study to look into the possibility of developing a new indoor multi-sport facility over the existing Braemar athletic field.⁷³ Later, staff presented data gathered from youth sports associations regarding each association's likely use of the new facility and a cost estimate for the feasibility study to the Park Board. Members questioned the cost of the feasibility study and stated concern that likely use of the facility would not adequately offset operating costs.⁷⁴ The City Council echoed those views and voted to not pursue the feasibility study or an indoor multi-sport facility at Braemar.⁷⁵

The idea of a new indoor multi-sport facility at Braemar was resurrected in 2005 by private developers who proposed replacing the Edina Golf Dome with a new indoor multi-sport facility, to be called the Edina Field House.

⁶⁸ See Appendix M for detailed discussion.

⁶⁹ See Appendix H.

⁷⁰ June 21, 1982 City Council meeting minutes.

⁷¹ September 19, 1988 City Council meeting minutes.

⁷² See Appendix N for detailed discussion.

⁷³ September 7, 2004 City Council meeting minutes.

⁷⁴ October 12, 2004 Park Board meeting minutes.

⁷⁵ October 19, 2004 City Council meeting minutes.

This “100% privately owned and funded facility” was proposed to be built “on a land parcel sized approximately 5.5 acres to be located at the current location of the Edina Golf Dome.” The developers requested a “50 year ground lease” at a cost of \$75,000 per year.⁷⁶

At a joint meeting between the City Council and Park Board, both agreed to not pursue the proposed Field House.⁷⁷

*Lewis Park Warming House and Coffee Shop*⁷⁸

In October 2007 Edina resident Carolyn Kohrs approached the Park Board with a proposal to replace the existing Lewis Park warming house with a new two-story facility that would be used as a community gathering space and coffee shop. Ms. Kohrs stated that she would provide funds to build the facility; in exchange she would be allowed to operate the coffee shop as a private venture. Revenue from the coffee shop would be used to recoup investment and operating costs. Once investment costs were recouped, the coffee shop and control over the facility would be given to the City.⁷⁹

The Park Board tabled the discussion to the next meeting. At this meeting:

Ms. Kohrs explained that the original proposal in regards to public/private ventures on parkland proposal has been modified. It now states that as soon as the building is constructed it will immediately be donated to the city.⁸⁰

The Park Board heard the topic again at their January 8, 2006 meeting. Several Park Board members raised concerns about privatization of public land, whether it would set a precedent and would be good public policy.⁸¹

These concerns were echoed in the press.⁸²

The proposal was advanced to the City Council and their March 3, 2008 meeting. After a presentation by Ms. Kohrs, public testimony and discussion, the City Council voted to accept Ms. Kohrs donation—three in favor, two opposed. The motion failed, however, for lack of a four-fifths supermajority vote, as is required by state statute for the City Council to accept donations.

⁷⁶ Undated response from Field House development and management team to a February 1, 2006 email from Director Keprios.

⁷⁷ March 21, 2006 City Council meeting minutes.

⁷⁸ See Appendix O for detailed discussion.

⁷⁹ October 9, 2007 Park Board meeting minutes.

⁸⁰ November 13, 2007 Park Board meeting minutes.

⁸¹ January 8, 2008 Park Board meeting minutes.

⁸² January 24, 2008 letter to the editor, *Lewis Park Proposal Has Strings Attached*, published in the *Edina Sun Current*

YEA Corps/Chowen Park Garden⁸³

In April 2009 Edina resident Mary Helen Franze approached the Park Board on behalf of her nonprofit organization, YEA Corps, with a request to turn a 12' x 16' section of Chowen Park into a garden that would be used exclusively by YEA Corps to grow vegetables to be sold at a farmer's market. The purpose of the proposed project was to provide young people with entrepreneurial experience and raise funds for their private group. The proposed use would have permanently altered Chowen Park for the duration of the growing season.

Director Keprios discussed the proposal at the April 14, 2009 Park Board meeting:

Mr. Keprios gave a power point presentation to show the brief history on where they are to date with the YEA Corp proposal for Chowen Park. He pointed out that this really is a request to privatize parkland; it is not the same concept as a community garden, it is completely different. He pointed out that currently there is no policy or ordinance that prohibits this type of use for a park. He explained that they have privatized parkland in the past because the golf dome wasn't always owned by the City of Edina; however, the city always owned the property. Therefore a precedent has been set in past practice. He indicated that because there is no written policy on how to deal with these they are dealt with on a case by case basis.

The Park Board voted to forward the proposal to the City Council.

The City Council heard the YEA Corps/Chowen Park garden proposal at their July 21, 2009 meeting. "Member Housh made a motion, seconded by Member Brindle, to approve the establishment of a 12-foot by 16-foot organic garden at Chowen Park" subject to the conditions stated in staff's recommendation. Following the motion, the "Council discussed the need to establish a policy to avoid case-by-case consideration of such issues."⁸⁴ The motion failed four to one.

The discussion of the YEA Corps/Chowen Park garden, however, raised a wider discussion on community gardens. The City Council asked staff to recommend a community gardens policy that could be used to address future requests such as the one made by YEA Corp.

In response, Director Keprios proposed the Park Board consider a "no vegetable gardens of any kind in any Edina public park" policy.⁸⁵ Members of the Park Board expressed reservations about a "no vegetable gardens" policy and Director Keprios offered to do further research.⁸⁶ He returned to the Park Board with a revised recommendation: To allow community gardens for use by Edina residents only, on a first-come, first-served basis, at three Edina Parks.⁸⁷

⁸³ See Appendix P for detailed discussion.

⁸⁴ July 21, 2009 City Council meeting minutes.

⁸⁵ August 4, 2009 memo from Director Keprios to the Park Board.

⁸⁶ August 11, 2009 Park Board meeting minutes.

⁸⁷ September 1, 2009 memo from Director Keprios to the Park Board.

After some discussion at the September 8, 2009 Park Board meeting, the Park Board voted to go with Director Keprios' "initial recommendation not to move forward with community gardens at this time."

Challenges Related To Access and Use of Park and Recreation Facilities

Content Recipients

Simply put, content recipients are *park users*. The content of parks are the various facilities: playgrounds, athletic fields, swimming pools, trails, and so on. Park users receive the content of these parks and recreation areas experientially—climbing on the play equipment, playing soccer on a field, splashing in the swimming pool, and so on.

Access, as defined in the opening section of this report, is the opportunity to experience or make use of a facility. Opportunity, as it relates to access, is conditioned upon the user being *aware* the facility is available for a particular use, the use fitting within the guidelines of policy or practice, and the ability of the user to pay a fee for that use if required.

Awareness as a Requirement for Access

The first steps to accessing and using a park or recreational facility is becoming aware a facility is available to access and use. At the most basic, this means becoming aware the facility exists and being motivated by need. A parent needing a place for her three-year-old to burn off energy in the middle of the winter may be motivated to seek information that leads to an awareness of Adventure Peak. The City can foster awareness of its parks and recreational facilities by making information readily available. This includes locations, hours of operation, scheduling information, and fees. How this information is communicated is largely the role of the Communications and Marketing Department.

Schedules for general park areas, athletic fields, basketball courts, and batting cages are not posted. Schedules for outdoor hockey rinks are posted in warming houses.

Edina Public Schools communicates detailed information about its schedulable facilities on their website. This information includes building use guidelines and fees (Policy 1330) and building use permits. It also includes an online scheduling calendar for each schedulable facility, including City gyms. This calendar shows when a facility is available, when it has already been scheduled, and by whom.

Use Fitting Within Policy Guidelines as a Requirement for Access

The opportunity to use a facility is conditioned upon the use fitting within policy guidelines. In this way, policies influence how park users receive the "content" of parks. An earlier section of this report looked at policies relating to access to and use of parks and recreational facilities. Some policies are expressed in policy documents. The *Priority Use of Edina's Scheduled Outdoor Athletic Facilities Policy* and the *Relationship Document* are examples. Some policies are expressed in meeting minutes only. The policy on *waiving the fee for neighborhood associations to use warming houses for their board meetings* and the policy on *not moving forward with community gardens at this time* are examples. Finally, some "policies" may only be expressed internally or to select recipients, as the example below suggests.

On February 12, 2009, Edina resident Laura Plaetzer emailed City Hall with a concern:

I am confused about exactly what the purpose of Edinborough Park is to the residents of Edina. It has always been my understanding that this is a taxpayer supported city of Edina park. If that is true and our taxes go to support this park and it is a city park then why are we not allowed to go there and take pictures for special events like Edina High School dances?

In a November 9, 2009⁸⁸ email response, Director Keprios informed Ms. Plaetzer of the City's plan for handling large group school dance photographs at Edinborough:

It is our intent to make Edinborough Park's Grotto Area open to Edina students at no charge for photos on the evening of Edina School District's Sweethearts Dance. Students will be asked to show a student ID.

This plan, however, would not be publicized, according to a follow-up email from Director Keprios on the same day:

I am reluctant to advertise this option to the entire student body simply because the facility cannot accommodate that great of number.

Public access to and understanding of the policies and guidelines related to facility use reduces confusion about how a facility may be used. The Park and Recreation Department does not have a policy manual, although one has been contemplated, according to Director Keprios:

[Recreation Supervisor] Donna Tilsner is in charge of creating a Parks & Recreation policy manual as we can get to it. "It is more for the staff than public, where we want consistency."⁸⁹

Ability to Pay Park Fees as a Requirement for Access

Finally, the opportunity to access and use a fee-based facility is dependent upon the user's ability to pay the fee. In this way, fees influence how park users receive the "content" of our parks.

As we have seen, there are two types of fees: those charged at enterprise facilities and those charged by the Park and Recreation Department directly. Both types of fees are approved by the City Council and can be viewed in the fee schedule at the back of this report. Fees charged by enterprise facilities go back into supporting the business operations of these facilities. Fees charged by the Park and Recreation Department directly go back to supporting operations that are also supported by taxpayers through the General Fund.

⁸⁸ Noting no response to her February 2009 email, Ms. Plaetzer sent a follow-up email on November 8, 2009.

⁸⁹ See Appendix G.

The 2006 Parks Needs Assessment Survey looked at the community's attitudes toward current parks and recreational facilities. The survey asked residents what improvements to or expansions of parks and recreational facilities would they be willing to fund with tax dollars. (The top choice, with 66% of respondents in favor of supporting with tax dollars, was walking and biking trails). The survey did not ask residents whether they would be willing to support new facilities with user fees or seek information about community attitudes toward user fees in general. Focus groups and stakeholder interviews gave a subset of residents the opportunity to comment on funding sources for new facilities; in these contexts user fees were discussed.

The comments suggest a willingness to embrace user fees as a source of funding. There may be an impression that all user fees go to the City of Edina and thereby offset tax responsibilities. This impression could stem from a lack of awareness about how the City has set up enterprise facilities and the difference between the fees that are collected for these and the fees that support operations that are also supported through the General Fund. Ms. Plaetzer's comments in her February 12, 2009 email about Edinborough Park may be representative of resident confusion:

I am confused about exactly what the purpose of Edinborough Park is to the residents of Edina.... It has always been my understanding that this is a taxpayer supported city of Edina park.

The question can be raised: How "public" are City facilities that are not supported with taxpayer funds? The responsibility for these facilities is ultimately the taxpayers'. But in terms of day-to-day operations, Edina taxpayers are customers like any others. For the most part, residents and non-residents pay the same fees and have access to facilities at the same level of priority.

As a rule, Edina's enterprise facilities rely on non-resident revenue. "Edina residents represent 20 percent of daily admissions" to Edinborough Park, according to the 2008 Business Plans. "Fifty-nine percent of our Adventure Peak season pass holders are residents" and "Twenty-three percent of patrons who purchase punch cards for Adventure Peak are residents of Edina." In other words, non-residents account for 80% of daily admissions to Adventure Peak, 41% of season passes, and 77% of patrons who purchase 10-punch passes. Residents and non-residents pay the same fee for daily admission and 10-punch passes. This was changed for 2008. Prior, residents paid a reduced rate. Residents still receive a break on season passes, paying about 10% less for season passes than non-residents.

Daily admission fees to the Aquatic Center are also the same for residents as for non-residents. "The Aquatic Center is among a few facilities which we rely on non-residents to pay the bills," said Director Keprios in our March 3, 2009 interview.⁹⁰ The 2008 Business Plans states large groups "travel from as far away as Andover, Big Lake, Burnsville, Dayton and Spring Lake Park." Revenue figures from non-resident daily admissions are not provided. Non-residents account for 35% of season pass revenue, according to the 2008 Business Plans. Residents pay about 12% less than non-residents for season passes (based on a family of four).

Both residents and non-residents may now purchase patron cards for the City's golf courses. Patron cards give residents and non-residents the same access to reduced green fees and advance tee time scheduling. Prior to 2008, these benefits were extended only to Edina residents. Non-residents pay about 36% more for patron cards than residents. Standard green fees for residents and non-residents are the same.

⁹⁰ See Appendix G.

Similarly, residents and non-residents pay the same for scheduled ice time at Braemar Arena. Ice time is marketed on Rinkfinder.com. “Braemar is at an advantage with respect to competing for out-of-town ice customers,” according to the 2008 Business Plans. The Arena’s “central and convenient location” is cited as a reason Braemar appeals to non-residents. With Rinkfinder.com, “Braemar wins rather than loses customers seeking ice time. In other words, fewer Edina-based ice buyers buy ice at Braemar.”

Looking at the City’s enterprise facilities from a business perspective, it makes sense to set resident and non-resident fees the same. This not only streamlines operations (no need to ask for I.D. at the ticket window) but also increases revenues by eliminating the resident discounted rate. For example, when the City stopped offering a resident rate for daily admission to Adventure Peak for 2008, the cost to residents for daily admission went up 22%.

Content Providers

Content providers *supply* and/or are the *subject of* content in Communications and Marketing facilities. In this section, the Parks and Recreation corollary is discussed.

In short, content providers are the private individuals or organizations that shape in some way the content (i.e., facilities) of our parks.

Privatization is one way content is shaped. This has been detailed above. Three additional ways content is shaped are presented below: advertising, donations, and influence.

Shaping Park Content Through Advertising

In 1997, the Park Board recommended that the City sell advertising on scoreboards to help finance the replacement of the scoreboards at Courtney Fields. At the time, the City had a policy against the sale of advertising on “fixed stock” (advertising was allowed on “rolling stock” such as a Zamboni or T-shirts).⁹¹

The City Council considered the issue at their October 6, 1997 meeting:

Director Keprios explained the staff has reviewed the existing Donations/Sponsorship policy as directed by Council at their September 15, 1997 meeting and recommends Council abolish the existing policy. This would allow staff greater flexibility in seeking alternate funding through donations, sponsorships and advertising while keeping with the City’s traditions, philosophy and ordinances.

Further, staff recommended that the City Council allow the City manager to determine “the appropriateness of each donation, sponsorship or advertising request.” The City Council voted in favor of the recommendation.

A more recent discussion of advertising content in park facilities took place in May 2006. Edinborough Park needed a new inflatable jumper. The facility had “been contracting with a company that rents jumpers for special events” and had been approached by this company “with

⁹¹ September 2, 1997 City Council meeting minutes.

the idea of giving [Edinborough] a jumper free of charge in lieu of advertising on the jumper. There would be a small sign on the jumper that would say sponsored by Magic Bounce with their phone number and business cards.”⁹²

“Mr. Keprios explained that it is City policy that they are to deal with all of these advertising requests on a case by case basis.”

Shaping Park Content Through Donations

The second way private individuals or organizations shape the content of park facilities is through donations. The City has a Donations/Memorials Policy. This policy defines how monetary donations will be recognized. This policy does not address non-monetary donations or monetary donations provided only for specific purposes (such as the Lewis Park warming house).

It is assumed that, like advertising, these donations are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

One non-monetary donation came before the Park Board on September 8, 2009. Edina resident Mark Burman proposed installing three permanent metal plaques in Edina parks; these plaques would be part of a community science education project called the “Nanoscale Solar System.” The project would be a to-scale representation of our solar system. The Sun would be located at Concord Elementary; Earth at Pamela Park; Mars at Rosland Park; and Jupiter at Centennial Lakes Park. Outer planets would be located in other communities.

He added that each plaque will also list facts about the planets.... He pointed out that he is also requesting to include the sponsor’s names on these places. He indicated that he has talked to Mr. Keprios about this and as long as the sponsor is a non-profit 501C3 organization it should work. He added that this will not be the Park Department’s responsibility for upkeep. Mr. Burman stated that there will be a website for this with contact information for people who have questions.

The Park Board approved the request.

Shaping Park Content Through Influence

A third way private individuals or organizations shape the content of park facilities is through influence. Residents can influence the plans or proposals for parks and recreational facilities by letting their views be known.

A review of Park Board meeting minutes, however, showed that youth sports associations can have significant influence over the plans and proposals for parks and recreational facilities.

*Pamela Park Renovations*⁹³

In early 2009, the City developed an updated master plan for Pamela Park. This plan, developed by a task force that included representatives from athletic associations, included \$875,000 in improvements to meet the needs of organized sports. The Park Board approved staff’s

⁹² May 9, 2006 Park Board meeting minutes.

⁹³ See Appendix Q for detailed discussion.

recommendation to include these improvements in the City's five-year capital improvement plan (CIP).⁹⁴

The 2006 Park Needs Assessment Survey asked residents how supportive they would be of the City developing outdoor athletic facilities for sports. Twenty-three percent responded they were very supportive. When asked what facilities residents would be most willing to fund with additional tax dollars, 17.1% of respondents selected outdoor athletic fields as their first choice.

Donations and influence can work together to shape the content of our parks. In May 2009, the Park Board discussed a proposal from the Edina Girls Fast Pitch Softball Association to donate funds for three electronic scoreboards at Pamela Park. As the minutes explain:

Mr. Keprios gave a power point presentation on Pamela Park. He informed the Park Board the Edina Girls Fast Pitch Association (EGFA) has requested an additional batting cage and pitching tunnel basically for the safety and protection of anyone using the park. Mr. Keprios pointed out that EGFA recently came forward and have offered to donate money to put up three electronic wireless scoreboards. ... Mr. Keprios indicated that he sent out letters and a map to all of the neighbors who live within 500 feet of the softball fields which ended up being approximately 75 households. He noted that to date he has received three emails and one letter to which none were favorable toward the project.

Mr. Keprios explained that the way parks are getting developed now is there are competing interest groups that want more and want better, they want to be like their neighboring communities. However, it's not always as well received and accepted by the neighborhoods and he notes that he understands both sides.

After discussion, including comment from the EGFA president, the Park Board voted to go "forward with the batting cages and pitching tunnels and do what Mr. Keprios suggested for the scoreboards."

Lewis Park Hockey Rink

Another example of the influence of youth sports associations can be seen in a December 12, 2006 Park Board discussion:

Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the Edina Hockey Association (EHA) and staff met with the consultant [the EHA] hired to do a feasibility study on whether or not they should consider building an outdoor artificially refrigerated rink at Lewis Park. He noted that we learned that it would cost approximately \$800,000 to build.

The 2006 Parks Needs Assessment Survey asked residents how supportive they would be of the City developing a new outdoor artificial hockey rink. Sixteen percent responded they would be very supportive. The survey asked what facilities residents would be willing to fund with additional tax dollars; approximately 11% selected it as their first choice. The weak support for such a facility was noted in a November 14, 2006 Park Board meeting: Director Keprios "indicated that the Needs Assessment Survey did ask some questions about an outdoor refrigerated rink to which it did not receive very much support. He commented that really isn't a surprise since only 30% of the Edina homes have kids."

⁹⁴ See August 11, 2009 Park Board meeting minutes.

Artificial or refrigerated ice at Lewis Park is currently not in the CIP.

Strachauer and Countryside Parks Rinks

A final example of the ways youth sports associations can influence the content of our parks can be found in a September 1, 2009 memo from Director Keprios to the Park Board. Being discussed were ways the Park and Recreation Department could reduce its 2010 budget. Director Keprios suggested \$7,500 could be saved by closing the skating rinks at Strachauer and Countryside parks:

Staff proposes to close Strachauer Park because it is clearly the least desired hockey rink by the Edina Hockey Association and specifically those who schedule outdoor hockey rink games and practices. ...

As you will notice, the attendance numbers at Strachauer for the past two years are slightly higher than a few other outdoor skating areas. I am told this is primarily due to adult and non-resident unscheduled use of the hockey rink because skaters have learned that Strachauer Park is rarely scheduled by the EHA for practices or games.

Todd Park was considered as another close candidate for closing because it would save manpower by not having to construct and remove the hockey rink boards and netting each year; however, the hockey rink is scheduled more frequently by the Edina Hockey Association and it has a newer and more user friendly warming house.

After voting at their September meeting to continue discussions to October, the Park Board voted at their October 13, 2009 meeting to recommend to the City Council that Strachauer Park skating remain open for the 2009-2010 season.

As stated earlier, the Relationship Document defines the terms by which the City will provide support to youth sports associations and the guidelines the associations will follow in exchange. One promise of support is to “provide safe and well-maintained public athletic facilities to meet [the needs of] youth sports programs.” This promise could be one reason youth sports associations can disproportionately influence the content of our parks.

CITY STAFF AND CITY COUNCIL VIEWS ON POLICY

As a rule, policies can serve two purposes:

- They can clearly define what is or is not allowed; and/or
- They can provide guidelines for decision making when the policy leaves room for discretion.

The committee found the City has relatively few written policies governing access to and use of City facilities.

This could be due, in part, to a perception that policies can be ineffective if the City Council can change policies or override policy-based decisions at any time. As Director Keprios explained at the August 11, 2009 Park Board meeting, “a policy is not an ordinance and a policy can change at any given City Council meeting.”

Director Keprios noted, in the August 5, 2009 interview that “He does not think more policies will help. If requesters are told no, they go to the Mayor or the City Council and the Council decides.”⁹⁵

As Manager Hughes stated in the March 3, 2009 interview in a discussion on how policies are developed and issues resolved: “folks seem to know how to contact the City Council in this city.”⁹⁶

Current City Council members hold varying views on the value of and need for policies. These views were expressed in emails from each Council member to the study committee in response to the following questions:

- Are there areas of policy you believe the City Council could or should develop to help address requests from private individuals or groups for access to or use of public facilities in Edina? If yes, please explain.
- In absence of written policy, what role does precedent play in guiding a decision whether to grant a private individual or organization access to or use of a public facility?
- In what ways, if any, does the absence of written policy (for requests such as Lewis Park coffee shop or Chowen Park garden) affect the Council’s decision-making process?

Responses from all Council members can be found in the Appendix R. Below two responses are offered to show the range of perspectives.

From Mayor Jim Hovland:

Regarding private use of public facilities in Edina, I hear little, if anything, from our residents on this issue. While it is true we will have issues from time to time like Chowen Park garden or Lewis Park coffee shop to deal with, I prefer having the Council deal with those matters on a case by case basis as

⁹⁵ See Appendix H.

⁹⁶ See Appendix G.

an original matter rather than trying to rely on a pre-set policy that may or may not be helpful. In short, I have generally been comfortable with the way we have handled private usage of public facilities in the past, both with respect to defining facilities that are available for use, to what types of groups they are available and at what cost, if any. I therefore don't believe I would favor implementation of a specific broad policy containing mandates but I might be willing to consider some guidelines that would still allow for staff judgment on a case-by-case basis. I say this because I think this is an area where there could be a great deal of difficulty in trying to draft policies that would be universally applied without exception in every situation and still be responsive to the varied needs of our residents. I am also sensitive to staff being able to exercise managerial judgment in some circumstances as defined by the city manager. If staff were to express that there are certain areas in which they needed guidance, I think the Council would be responsive to such requests and I would generally prefer dealing with those requests as they come up rather than to creating policies that potentially contain more challenges than exist under our current practices. I suppose I could be accused, in this circumstance, of having a "if it ain't broke don't fix it" mentality but I am not aware that we have had any consistent problems in this area that require Council attention or the need for specific policies.

From Council member Joni Bennett:

Thank you for all of your work on this important topic. Here are my answers to your questions. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss these further, if desired.

1. Yes, I believe the City would benefit from the development of additional policies regarding private access to and use of public facilities. Specifically, I think we lack policy regarding, but not limited to, the following: community gardens, commercial activity (including sale of concessions, and private athletic facilities), solicitation and use of charitable donations, and city communications.
2. Even if a decision does not create a legal precedent or is accompanied by a cautionary statement that it is not intended to create precedent, people expect subsequent decisions to acknowledge and be consistent with those made previously. In the absence of written policy, precedent can create accidental or unintentional policy. Conversely, failure to follow precedent can make a decision to permit or deny access appear arbitrary or open to claims of favoritism.
3. Both the requests you mention were given extensive consideration by City staff, the Park Board and the City Council. In the absence of written policy, individual perceptions and preferences advanced the proposals from level to level. Support for the proposals by staff, residents and some of the members of the Park Board and City Council focused on the need for a new warming house in Lewis Park and the desirability of youth engaged in organic gardening rather than the principles at stake. There also was significant discussion of the backgrounds and good intentions of the people proposing the private uses in public parks. In each case, a decision to permit the use would have been subject to perception as arbitrary and subject to claims of favoritism.

SUMMARY

In summary, this study focused on City of Edina Communications and Marketing Department and Park and Recreation Department facilities. The study identified which facilities are available to be accessed and used, by whom they are accessed and used, what they cost, what the terms of access and use are, and how the City has made decisions in specific cases related to access to and use of these facilities. As seen from the above comments related to policy, no consensus exists among community decision makers. As a consequence, the following questions are raised:

1. Should the City have documented facility access and use policies and practices that are easily accessible by and understandable to the general public?
2. Should the City review policies and practices on a regular basis?
3. Should the City survey residents on a regular basis to help City decision makers in their decision-making?
4. Are discretionary practices preferable to defined policies? If yes, why? If no, why not?
5. In what ways, if any, does the absence of written policy affect decision-making?
6. What role should precedent play in guiding a decision on whether to grant a private individual or organization access to or use of a public facility?
7. Should the City create an advisory board for Communications and Marketing similar to other commissions currently advising the City Council?
8. Should the City define a process by which proposals to privatize City land or facilities will be heard, accepted and/or denied?
9. Should the City define a process by which requests for special uses of Park and Recreation facilities will be heard, accepted and/or denied?

LIST OF APPENDICES

- A: August 4, 2009 Memo from Director Bennerotte
- B: September 25, 2009 Interview Notes (Jamie Zwilling)
- C: December 10, 2009 Memo from Director Bennerotte
- D: August 10, 2009 Interview Notes (Director Bennerotte)
- E: *Submitted Photo and Original Artwork Use Policy*
- F: July 29, 2009 Email from City Manager Gordon Hughes
- G: March 3, 2009 Interview Notes (City Manager Hughes and Director Keprios)
- H: August 5, 2009 Interview Notes (Director Keprios)
- I: August 3, 2009 Memo from Director Keprios
- J: 2010 Park and Recreation Fees/Charges
- K: Morningside Neighborhood Association (MNA) Fee Waiver Discussion
- L: Youth Sports Associations Fee Discussion
- M: Golf Dome Discussion
- N: Edina Field House Discussion
- O: Lewis Park Warming House/Coffee Shop Discussion
- P: Chowen Park/YEA Corps Vegetable Garden Discussion
- Q: Pamela Park Discussion
- R: City Council Emails

RESOURCES

Website content as cited throughout this report and in these resources is current as of December 2009 and may have since been updated or changed.

The City of Edina website is <http://www.cityofedina.com>.

The City of Edina general phone number is 952-927-8861.

The following information, referenced in the study, is available on the City's website:

- City Council meeting minutes, 1997-present. See http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/CityCouncil/L3-27_CouncilMeetingMinutes.htm.
- Park Board meeting minutes. See <http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/citycouncil/ParkBoardMeetingMinutes.htm>.
- City Code. See http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/CityCode/L4-07_CityCodeSelect.htm.
- Video programs. See <http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/departments/WatchaMeeting.htm>.
- *About Town*, *Council Connection*, City Extra. See http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/L3_Communications.htm
- Video Production Policies. See <http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/VideoProductionPolicies.htm>.
- Website Links Policy and Application. See <http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/aboutthissite.htm>.
- Park and Recreation Activities Directory. See http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/pressreleases/L4-31_ParksDirectorySelect.htm.
- Youth Sports "Relationship Document" and Related Policies. See http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/park_recreation/park_board/youth_sports/index.htm.
- 2010 General Fund Budget. See http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/L3-11_Finance.htm.
- 2010-2014 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). See http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/L3-11_Finance.htm.
- 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). See http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/L3-11_Finance.htm.
- City of Edina 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update. See <http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/Departments/CompPlan.htm>.

The following information, referenced in the study, may be requested by contacting the Marketing and Communications Department:

- City of Edina 2008 Business Plans
- Website Activity Reports
- October 2009 Survey on *Park and Recreation Insider Preferences*
- Outdoor Sign Request Form

The following information, referenced in the study, may be requested by contacting the Park and Recreation Department:

- Memos from Director Keprios to the Edina Park Board
- 2006 Needs Assessment Survey
- *Donations/Memorials Policy*
- *Priority Use of the Edina School District's Gymnasium Policy*
- *Priority Use of Edina's Scheduled Outdoor Athletic Facilities Policy*

The following information, referenced in the study, may be requested by contacting the Finance Department:

- 2006 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report
- 2007 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

The following information, referenced in the study, may be requested by contacting the Administration Department:

- *Use of City Hall Policy and Guidelines*
- City Council meeting minutes, prior to 1997
- 1999 Decision Resources Survey

Other Resources:

- Edina Public Schools. See <http://www.edina.k12.mn.us>.
- Edina Sun Current newspaper. See <http://www.mnsun.com>.

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