

TO: Mayor and City Council

FOR MEETING: March 5, 2007

THROUGH: Robert G. Wells, City Manager

4.3 (d)

AGENDA ITEM: _____

FROM: Barbara A. Roberts, CPRP, Interim Director
Department of Community Services

SUBJECT: **SOFTBALL UPDATE**

ISSUE

Inform City Council as to the activities that have been, or are currently being undertaken to provide recreational adult softball leagues and youth and adult tournaments at the Wallace Marine Park Softball "Complex" this upcoming season.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only.

BACKGROUND

1. On October 23, 2006, City Council, as an interim measure for the 2007 softball season (November 2006 - October 2007), authorized the Department of Community Services to proceed with the steps required to maintain the softball leagues and tournaments at Wallace Marine Park Softball Complex.
2. Also in October, City Council formed a Softball Task Force to advise the City on a future strategy for softball. The Softball Task Force has been meeting since December and is coming forward in early March with their report and recommendations.

FACTS AND FINDINGS

1. The purpose of this report is to give City Council a brief overview of the activities over the past three months to bring the 2007 softball program and the fields at Wallace Marine Park to bring the Softball Complex on line. While this list is not all inclusive, it does provide a sense of the efforts needed to coordinate and manage a citywide adult softball program that will serve as many as 190 adult mens, womens, and coed teams in league play and if all goes well (weather cooperates, teams sign up for the tournaments being promoted and operated by Oregon ASA and Oregon USSSA, etc.) over 750 tournament teams.
2. Complex Maintenance
 - a. Parks Operations Division and players identified facility maintenance needs that have resulted in the following:
 - ★ Ordered, and in March of this year, will install new playground equipment which had been identified in the funded 2006-07 Capital Improvements Program.
 - ★ Ordered, and in April of this year, will install one new scoreboard which will complete the recent replacement of all five scoreboards funded from the Softball Reserve Fund.
 - ★ Ongoing effort to address the issues related to the restrooms including assessment by the Public Works Department and potentially modifying the system to better serve the patrons.
 - b. The City working with the Oregon State Penitentiary to schedule inmate crews to do the daily weekday maintenance functions at the Complex.

c. A "Volunteer Work Party" was held on Saturday, February 3, 2007. A total of 48 people (mostly players and coaches) participated and worked on the following tasks:

- 1) Cleaned and painted the interior of both the men's and women's restrooms.
- 2) Cleaned and painted the office and umpire rooms.
- 3) Cleaned the concessions stand.
- 4) Scraped old paint from dugouts.
- 5) Cleaned and prepared all exterior walls for painting.
- 6) Trimmed and cleaned out all landscaped areas.
- 7) Cleaned out exterior drains.

A number of items were donated including paint, new vapor light fixtures, wood products, and new heaters (for restrooms). Food and beverages for the work party participants was donated by Roth's Family Markets (West Salem) and the West Salem Starbuck's.

3. Tournament Promotions and National Bidding

a. Attended both the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) and Amateur Softball Association (ASA) National Conferences resulting in Salem being awarded three national championship tournaments:

- ★ 2008 ASA Girls 14-U Class B Fast Pitch Western Nationals
- ★ 2008 ASA Women's 23-Under Fast Pitch National Championships
- ★ 2007 USSSA Women's (35 and over) and Men's (45 & over) World Tournament

These three tournaments are in addition to the two national tournaments already scheduled for 2007:

- ★ ASA Girls 16B Western Nationals
- ★ ASA Women's C Western Nationals

4. Engaged the Softball Players

a. Convened a monthly "Players Forum" which was open to all softball players, coaches, sponsors, USSSA, and ASA representatives. This open forum serves as focal point for the dissemination of information as well as dialogue regarding program rules and regulations. Three meetings have been held to date, with the fourth scheduled for March 7th and have included the following items:

- 1) Categorized issues brought forth by the group into: **Facility, League, Tournament, Marketing, and Miscellaneous.**
- 2) Formed three working groups; **USSSA Tournament Promotions Group, ASA Tournament Advisory Committee, and League Advisory Group.** One of the first priorities was convening the League Advisory Group which assists staff in developing league rules and regulations, teams classifications, and a process to address players and coaches complaints about the fields, umpires, or other matters.

5. Set a Tournament Calendar for 2007

a. Aside from the national tournaments listed above the 2007 weekend tournament calendar currently consists of, but is not limited to, the following:

- ★ Ten (10) ASA sponsored and operated tournaments including; the annual Panther's/Easton Girls Fast Pitch Tournament, the 14B State Tournament, the 16B Western Nationals, and the Women's C Western National Championships.

★ Twenty-three (23) USSSA sponsored and operated events including; two early-bird tournaments, a USSSA State Tournament, a St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, and Father's Day Tournaments, and several National Invitational Tournaments.

★ Three (3) signature softball tournaments: *Play For The Cure Tournament* (breast cancer awareness), *Guns & Hoses Law Enforcement/Fire Department Tournament* and the *World Softball Association (WSA) Northwest Tournament*.

b. The 2007 softball complex calendar also includes ASA Girls Fastpitch Fall Ball (September through October on Sunday afternoons). The Complex will also serve as a home and practice field for a number of local high school and college teams (i.e., Western Mennonite School, Chemeketa Community College, Corban College, and others).

6. Sponsorship/Advertising/Concession Activities

a. Staff is currently meeting with past and potential new event/facility/program sponsors with the goal of generating a combination of direct revenue and in-kind labor and/or materials to augment the activities required to maintain the Complex and offer the softball programs and services.

b. Currently staff is recruiting for a food and beverage concessionaire. Results of that recruitment will be included in the next update to Council.

7. Public Information Plan

a. The plan includes a system of providing regular new releases to local print and television media, nightly game reports and league standings for distribution to players, coaches, and media, and the development of a Facility/Program Guide.

b. With the Salem Convention and Visitors Bureau as a partner and the host, established www.softballcityusa.com as the website for the Wallace Marine Park Softball Complex, softball programs, tournaments, related services, and linking it with national organizations, and local lodging and business establishments. This website can also be accessed through a link on www.cityofsalem.net.


8. Adult Softball League Play

a. Hired Nancy Aiken, Recreation Coordinator, to manage the day-to-day operations of the softball operations and the Complex.

b. Made personal contact with over 124 of the teams who participated in the 2006 league program. The purpose of the contact was to 1) seek their input as the program was being developed, 2) provide them with 2007 league classifications, schedules, tournament opportunities, fees, etc. and 3) invite them to the monthly players forum.

c. City staff has completed the adult softball league calendar and has been accepting team registrations since Monday, February 5. Practices are currently being scheduled with practice games set to begin the week of April 9 through 20. League play for all divisions begins Monday, April 23. Additional softball program information may be viewed at www.softballcityusa.com.

d. Currently in discussions/negotiations with the Salem Softball Umpires Association (SSUA) regarding their service contract for 2007 league play.

Prepared by: 
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