

Background

At the January 16, 2017 Community Services Committee meeting, a report entitled Field House Booking Policies was presented. The report noted that a review of booking practices at Neighbourhood Association field houses conducted in 2016 pointed to a number of practices not consistent with City of Greater Sudbury (City) policies. The report recommended several new processes for field house bookings. The report was deferred for consultation with neighbourhood associations.

A subsequent report on Field House Booking Policies was presented at the April 3, 2017 Community Services Committee meeting. The report provided a summary of the feedback and concerns expressed by volunteer neighbourhood associations about the new proposed booking processes. The following resolution was passed by the Community Services Committee:

WHEREAS the report to Council presented on Monday, January 16, 2017, titled Field House Booking Policies was deferred for the purpose of consulting with neighbourhood associations to review proposed changes to booking practices;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Greater Sudbury implement the recommendations identified in the report dated March 15, 2017 from the General Manager of Community Development;

AND THAT a clear communication plan be put in place to ensure volunteers are fully trained on new policies and procedures relating to field house bookings.

At the Council meeting of April 25, 2017 the Field House Booking Policies report was pulled for discussion. Concerns were expressed about the impact of the new proposed booking processes on neighbourhood associations and user groups, the potential loss of volunteers and lack of information/training provided. The Field House Booking Policies report was deferred for further information and consultation on these matters.

Analysis

Upon the deferral of the report, the intent and purpose of new booking processes was reviewed with Finance. It was determined that the objectives of any new field house booking processes should ensure that:

- activities taking place at City owned facilities are safe;
- that proper insurance coverage is in place for activities;
- that there is no bonusing of facilities or services;
- that proper cash handling practices are followed and,
- user fees are charged in accordance with the City's Miscellaneous User Fee By-Law

Through consultation with Neighbourhood Associations, further information was collected about field house bookings and current practices. The role of the Neighbourhood Association and their volunteers are integral to bookings including fielding inquiries, showing venues, opening and securing facilities and cleaning the field house. Neighbourhood Associations typically ask for a small contribution for bookings

which is in turn used for programs, activities, special events or facility improvements organized by the association.

Neighbourhood Associations advised that the majority of field house bookings are for community meetings, birthday parties, minor sports association use, etc. There is minimal risk involved with these types of activities.

It was also recognized that certain types of bookings require additional considerations and review. Activities may have special insurance requirements, requirements for permits or other regulatory implications. There is the potential for bonusing for any commercial booking. There is also a need to ensure that the Alcohol Risk Management By-Law is adhered to for any event involving alcohol.

On October 3, 2017, association representatives gathered for the annual Neighborhood Association President's Dinner. This was used as an opportunity to introduce new processes for field house bookings which would be reflective of the stated objectives and the different categories of bookings. The following was presented as part of the meeting for discussion and input:

Category One - Low Risk Neighbourhood Bookings

- Typical functions include birthday parties, community meetings, showers, etc.
- Neighbourhood Associations may request a contribution in lieu of use of the facility.
- Neighbourhood Associations will continue to book as per normal practices.
- Neighbourhood Associations to issue a receipt for any contributions received.

Category Two - Bookings with Potential Risk

- Activities may have special insurance implications or other considerations (permits, regulatory requirements, etc.)
- Examples may include special events by third parties, sporting leagues, bookings over an extended period.
- Neighbourhood Associations are to contact the respective Recreation Coordinator for guidance and next steps.
- City will work with the Neighbourhood Association to determine the appropriate booking process and any other requirements.

Category Three - Commercial Bookings, Bookings with Special Requirements and Events with Alcohol

- All commercial bookings must be processed by the City to prevent any issues with bonusing.
- Any event with alcohol related activities to be processed by the City to ensure requirements of the Alcohol Risk Management By-Law are followed.
- Facility Agreement will be generated and funds collected by City. The City will in turn pay Neighbourhood Associations an amount equivalent to the rental rate charged.
- Applicable rates as per the Miscellaneous User Fee By-Law will apply.

In addition to the categories of field house bookings developed and corresponding processes, the City will work with Neighbourhood Associations on the following:

- Develop year end reporting mechanisms for reporting on revenue generated from field house bookings.
- Provide guidelines for field house bookings that can be shared with groups booking facilities.

Should a Neighbourhood Association determine that it is preferred that the City processes all field house bookings through its facility booking software, the City will process and the applicable rates as per the User Fee By-Law will apply.

In the event there is not an active Neighbourhood Association for a field house, and there is a request from a third party to book the facility, the City will process the booking and the applicable rates as per the Miscellaneous User Fee By-Law will apply.

The revised processes outlined were well received by Neighbourhood Associations. It was determined that the processes outlined for the most part formalize practices that have been occurring with field house bookings. Neighbourhood Association representatives were asked to forward any concerns or suggestions to their respective Recreation Coordinator during the upcoming outdoor rink season.

Summary

Neighbourhood Associations are volunteer organizations that work in cooperation with the City to improve the quality of life in their community. Each Neighbourhood Association organizes and promotes local leisure opportunities to meet the needs of area residents. Associations also manage community meeting places for residents and other community organizations.

The recommended processes outlined in this report allow Neighbourhood Associations to continue to facilitate and respond to community booking requests while mitigating potential risk, bonusing and cash handling issues that other types of bookings may present.

Next Steps

Reporting mechanisms for reporting on revenue generated and guidelines for field house bookings will be developed and shared with Neighbourhood Associations.

References

Field House Booking Policies, Community Services Committee (January 16, 2017)
<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=10&id=1150>

Field House Booking Policies, Community Services Committee (April 3, 2017)
<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=4&id=1151>