



Sports Park Deal Will Mean Less Cost to Taxpayers, More Services !

A letter by Mayor Jim Janney about a proposed plan to hand management of the Sports Park and Recreation Center complex to the South Bay Family YMCA. A community workshop will be held at the Marina Vista Community Center Thursday at 6 p.m.

To the editor:

Our hope and vision for **Sports Park** is to greatly expand its recreational opportunities to serve people of all ages who have many different recreational needs and wants. I believe we can achieve this by contracting with an agency such as the YMCA or the Boys & Girls Club with all their depth of experience and specialized skills beyond our city's to manage **Sports Park**—its ball fields, the main building, the skate park and other park facilities.

The organization would assume operational costs, staff the facility, manage the fields and other outdoor facilities plus offer new programs and specialized services such as:

- Organized teen programming
- Skate clinics
- Music lessons
- Youth and adult basketball
- Flag football
- Volleyball
- Rugby
- "Hot Shots" Pee Wee programs
- Fitness classes including, but not limited to, Zumba, Boot Camp and Interval Training
- Youth and teen day camps during school breaks
- Tumbling/beginning gymnastics
- Parent/child interaction classes
- Tutoring
- Provisions of recreation for people with special needs

When I mention serving people of all ages, the diversity of our population comes to mind. 29 percent of us (7,654 people) are 19 years old or younger; 18.5 percent are 55 and older. I can assure you that City Council is seeking to bring the best recreation to the largest number of Imperial Beach residents and retain the Little League and Girls Softball. And I think this can be accomplished at less cost to the general taxpayers of our city.

Right now our hope and vision of expanded services is just that—a hope and vision. We do not have a contract with the YMCA. One of our goals for the [April 11 workshop](#) is to receive the public's comments about this vision and see how to best combine current baseball and softball leagues with new programs.





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Let me address a few questions related to the expanded opportunities we hope to achieve keeping in mind that City Council has yet to make decisions on this topic:

1. Will the Little League and Girls Softball be able to use the fields ?

Yes. - Retaining the use of the fields for Softball and Little League has always been the city's goal as I [stated in my Dec. 12, 2012](#) letter to both leagues and sent to the media.

Little league and Girls Softball will be able to schedule their games just as they do today. They will simply need to give their schedules to the YMCA instead of the city. The YMCA would use the fields only when they're not scheduled for league use.

2. How much will it cost the leagues to use the fields? What will the charge be? In discussions with the leagues and the YMCA over several months there have been numerous proposals. The city hoped the leagues would defray some of the costs for electricity and water for the fields they use.

Keeping in mind that in 2012, field lighting cost more than \$15,000 and water cost between \$3,000 and \$5,000 for the fields and facilities serving the fields (water costs are estimated based on the total water bill to Sports Park), it's fair for the leagues to defray some of these costs. \$8,000 would defray about 40 percent of the lighting and watering costs.

For example, if Little League had 285 players and softball had 150 players, Little League would pay about 65 percent or \$5,200 of the \$8,000, and Girls Softball would pay 35 percent, or \$2,800.

The payments from each league when spread over the number of players in each league would probably come to less than \$20 per player.

3. Will the leagues need to pay any of their concession income to the City or the YMCA ?

Staff did not recommend this but as I mentioned before, the final decision is City Council's.

4. Who will maintain the fields ?

The organization that contracts with the city to manage Sports Park should be the one to maintain the fields.





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5. Will the city or YMCA force the leagues off the fields in the long run ?

Absolutely not. Keep in mind that a contract for management of Sports Park will state that the city retains ownership and would allow either party to terminate the contract if either is not satisfied with it.

6. Who will manage the fields ?

The YMCA will manage the fields and all other facilities at Sports Park if the city and the YMCA come to an agreement.

7. Will there be a fee to use the skate park ?

Neither staff nor City Council has addressed this question. Council will probably try to balance the desire to keep the facility affordable to all skaters compared to the costs required to manage the skate park in a way that improves safety for skaters and enhances everybody's experience at the Sports Park. There's probably a low fee that could be affordable to almost everybody and help defray the costs of supervision. Such a fee appears to be fairer than a 100 percent subsidy by all taxpayers.

In summary, we have a chance to greatly improve recreational programs to many more people while retaining the long history of IBLL and Imperial Beach Girls Softball at Sports Park. My council colleagues and I want to hear people's ideas and move toward better recreation for the entire community.

Jim Janney
Mayor, City of Imperial Beach

Thanks Again,
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