

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Council Communication</b> Office of the City Manager</p>	<b>Date:</b> September 11, 2017
	<b>Agenda Item No.</b> 54 <b>Roll Call No.</b> <u>17-1598</u> <b>Communication No.</b> <u>17-642</u> <b>Submitted by:</b> Benjamin R. Page, Park and Recreation Director

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Approve proposed amendments of Municipal Code Chapter 74 Article IV. FACILITIES and Article VI. fees regarding various changes to recreation fees and park facility hours.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Approve staff’s recommended changes to Municipal Code Chapters 74, including:

- Article VI. FEES, Sec.74-184. Brenton Skating Plaza fees for the fiscal year ending (FYE)18-FYE20 skating seasons beginning November 2017.

**FISCAL IMPACT: NONE**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Staff has reviewed sections of Chapters 74 of the Municipal Code pertaining to facility hours and recreation fees. Recommended fee changes reflect current business practices and the need for the periodic updating of fees based on demand and comparable rates of like facilities. Proposed changes are the following:

Section 74-184. Brenton Skating Plaza Fees

Brenton Skating Plaza opened in November of 2006 and was the first of its kind in the State of Iowa.

Nearly 350,000 people have enjoyed winter skating at Brenton Skating Plaza over the past decade. In recent years, summer rentals and events have become more prominent as part of the yearly schedule.

Brenton Skating Plaza has lost an average of \$81,000 over its 10 years of operation. Operation Downtown is estimating a reduction to approximately a loss of just \$57,000 for FYE17. Down from each of the last three (3) years since the addition of the canopy for use during summer rentals and programming. Any deficit is covered by the combined contribution of three (3) entities; the Riverfront Development Authority, the City, and Operation Downtown.

Operation Downtown has the management contract for Brenton Skating Plaza; however, if in any year the facility operates at a deficit, the City is responsible to share in coverage of the loss by contributing up to \$25,000. The goal is to put Brenton Skating Plaza into a position where it is self-sustaining. Part of doing this will require a periodic increase in rates. Goals of any rate increase will be to increase skating revenue and to bring fees into better alignment with the market rate comparable to other

outdoor skating facilities locally and nationally. Due to the Grand Avenue Bridge construction project, City Hall repair project, new parking garage construction and limited parking, rates were not increased for the FYE17 season.

The following fee increases are proposed for FYE18 with an additional increase in fees happening each of the following two (2) years (FYE19-FYE20). This is upon successful activation of the eligible extensions in the agreement with Operation Downtown for the operation of Brenton Skating Plaza. Operations are currently committed to through October 15, 2018 with the opportunity to continue operations through October 15, 2020.

Skating Rates	FYE17	FYE18	FYE19	FYE20
Adult (Mon-Thurs)	\$6.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Adult (Fri-Sun)	\$7.50	N/A	N/A	N/A
Adult	\$7.50	\$8.00	\$8.50	\$9.00
Child/Senior (Mon-Thurs)	\$3.75	N/A	N/A	N/A
Child 6-12/Senior 62+	\$5.25	\$5.00	\$5.25	\$5.50
Children under 5	Free	Free	Free	Free
Skate Rental	\$4.25	\$4.50	\$4.75	\$5.00

\*A holiday pricing increase of \$1.00 on admission would be effective:

- Thanksgiving Day through Sunday
- Winter break (aligned with the Des Moines Public Schools calendar)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day

The change of greatest impact is with the unification of weekday and weekend adult rates into one (1) fee for every hour of operation. This is consistent with other destination attractions in the area such as the Science Center of Iowa and Blank Park Zoo who have a single adult access fee for all hours of operation. The other recommended change is to combine the senior, ages 62 and above, and child, ages 6-12, rate into the same fee category. Children age five (5) and under will continue to be allowed to skate for free. Approximately 70-75% of admissions occur Friday through Sunday.

Brenton Skating Plaza will continue to offer promotions throughout the week for additional savings. Some examples of past promotions and future opportunities include;

- Sponsors of Brenton Skating Plaza contribution allows Buy One Get One (BOGO) for the public and free admission for their employees.
- BOGO - admission available on Groupon, Chocolate Storybook, the Entertainment Book, Catch Des Moines, and local realtors.
- Greater Des Moines Recreational Activity Scholarship Program (GRASP) - one (1) free child admission with a paid adult for those that meet the financial criteria.
- 2018 Prairie Meadows Grant - will provide vouchers to 500 underprivileged children. The voucher will be good for free admission and skate rental for two (2) people.
- Student nights - \$6.00 for both admission and skate rental.
- Family nights - \$20.00 per family (up to five {5} members) for admission and skate rental.
- Punch pass - \$80.00 for 10 admissions and skate rentals.
- Online discounts - opportunities to sell discounted admission tickets online.

Other Attractions Admission Pricing:

- Brenton Skating Plaza remains lower or comparable to the admission pricing of other Central Iowa attractions such as:
  - Botanical Center - \$8/adults, \$6/children, free/3 and under
  - Blank Park Zoo - \$14/adults, \$8/children, free/2 and under
  - Science Center of Iowa - \$12/adults, \$8/children, free/2 and under
- Brenton Skating Plaza is the only Central Iowa attraction providing free admission for children five (5) and under. Most attractions charge admission rates for all children. Some attractions provide free admission for children three (3) years or younger.
- Brenton Skating Plaza offers free admission for non-skating chaperons or non-skating guests. Most attractions charge admission for entrance.

These rate changes, unique holiday pricing, set pricing structure, and hour modifications are from a series of formal recommendations by Rink Management Services combined with lessons learned and trends locally. Rink Management Services are the foremost leader of outdoor skating rink provision and a strong partner of the efforts by Operation Downtown. Demand for use of the rink is high during holidays and it is a common practice for outdoor rinks across the nation, in attempt to better manage crowds at peak times, to raise fees as well as produce a potential increase in revenues. Other local destination attractions have a set pricing structure, which is additional justification for alignment with these principles.

Staff is also recommending a change to the hours of operation by opening at 3:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday. In previous years, the rink has been open to the public starting at noon. To help offset daytime parking concerns and construction of the Grand Avenue Bridge, City Hall repair project, and new parking garage, hours were modified for FYE17 to open at 5:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday. Low attendance during that period Monday-Thursday also helped with the reduction of staffing expenses. Opening at 3:00 p.m., Monday-Thursday will accommodate after school patrons while still reducing a portion of staffing expenses. As was the case last season, staff will still promote and accommodate rental groups prior to 3:00 p.m. as requested.

Hours	FYE16	FYE17	FYE18
Monday–Thursday	Noon–9:00 p.m.	5:00–9:00 p.m.	3:00–9:00 p.m.
Friday–Saturday	Noon–11:00 p.m.	Noon–11:00 p.m.	Noon–11:00 p.m.
Sunday	Noon–6:00 p.m.	Noon–6:00 p.m.	Noon–6:00 p.m.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: November 18, 2013

Roll Call Number: [13-1815](#)

Action: [Agreement](#) between Des Moines Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District – Operation Downtown and Rink Management Services Corporation for operation of Brenton Skating Plaza through April 30, 2014 with automatic renewals unless notice of not to renew for every year for up to two years. ([Council Communication No. 13-561](#)) Moved by Coleman to adopt. Motion Carried 6-0.

**BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):**

Board: Park and Recreation Board

Date: August 22, 2017

Resolution Number: 17-056

Action: Motion by Woodard to approve fees as presented. Second by Feltner. Motion carried.

Board: Park and Recreation Board

Date: October 25, 2016

Resolution Number: 16-079

Action: Approval of recommendations of Chapter 74 changes.

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE**

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