

★ Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

41

Date..... September 28, 2015

WHEREAS, the Park and Recreation Board at its meeting held on September 22, 2015, by unanimous vote approved the attached letter regarding GRASP (Greater Des Moines Recreational Activity Scholarship) offering reduced fees for many programs and facilities.

MOVED by _____ to receive and file the attached letter from Park and Recreation Board Chair Susan Noland.

Approved as to Form:

Ann DiDonato

Ann DiDonato
Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
GATTO				
GRAY				
HENSLEY				
MAHAFFEY				
MOORE				
TOTAL				

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVED

Mayor

CERTIFICATE

I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

City Clerk



September 22, 2015

Honorable Mayor
And
Members of the City Council

Re: Financial assistance program

Dear Mayor and City Council Members:

Des Moines Parks and Recreation has a variety of programs and facilities that have a tremendous impact on the quality of life in Des Moines. Every Des Moines citizen deserves the opportunity to participate in these programs and facilities regardless of their ability to pay.

On May 4, 2009, by Roll Call No. 09-799, the Des Moines City Council approved the temporary expansion in eligibility for the Park and Recreation Scholarship Program, which subsidized recreational program fees, and was then administered by the City's Community Development Department through the Community Services site locations (which became the Des Moines Community Action Agency of the City's Housing Services Department). The expanded, "Fun Pass" scholarship program, which was originally to last for the remainder of calendar year 2009, waived income parameters and other qualifying factors for residents of the City of Des Moines and was recommended by Parks and Recreation staff due to the wide-ranging adverse financial repercussions and number of people impacted by factors such as loss of employment, reduction of work hours, or reduction of wages then affecting the nation's economy.

The program was offered again in 2010 as the City and nation struggled to recover from the financial downturn. The relaxed-qualification scholarship program offerings, amounts of subsidization and qualifications evolved as it continued year after year into 2013. The lenient application process, that did not require verification through presentation of personal information documentation, continued with the subsidy cards, now known as GRASP (Greater Des Moines Recreational Activity Scholarship Program) being issued primarily through the Park and Recreation administrative office, but also at Pioneer Columbus and Four Mile Community Centers, and the Community Action Site Office.

Although the City's economic climate is in a much different place today than when this scholarship program temporarily expanded its eligibility back in 2009, the number of people registering for the program has stayed relevant in the number of people accessing this service over the last few years. Since 2013 when the number of cards issued reached its peak (during the last year of the exception to qualification was in place), the number of uses demonstrates that while the need for this program has declined there are still those who benefit from this service. The number of uses involving those issued cards is shown below.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of uses	971	1661	1323	809	627

On May 18, 2015, by Roll Call No. 15-0871, the Des Moines City Council approved an agreement with Red Rock Area Community Action Program, Inc. for conveyance of Des Moines Community Action Agency programs and service area. Des Moines Community Action Agency previously administered the Park and Recreation Scholarship Program, called GRASP but has been eliminated as part of the City structure; therefore, Parks and Recreation staff is recommending that the approval process for the Park and Recreation Scholarship Program qualification be reinstated by Red Rock Area Community Action Program.

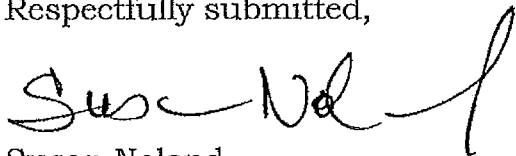
Effective October 1, 2015 Red Rock Area Community Action Program will be changing their name to Impact Community Action Partnership.

To remain in place as a part of the agreement, Parks and Recreation will pay \$3,000 to now Impact Community Action Partnership for administrative support of verifying income and issuing GRASP cards as a component of their assistance programs. Marketing for the reduced-fee program will be through the Impact Community Action office and the Parks and Recreation Department.

This letter is to notify Council that the Park and Recreation Board has approved the continuation of this service and the extension of the qualification criteria.

The Park and Recreation Board is proud to work with a department committed to meeting the needs of all citizens in Des Moines and appreciates City Council's support of the financial assistance program over the years.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Noland
Park and Recreation Board Chair

Cc: Scott Sanders, City Manager
Benjamin R. Page, Parks and Recreation Director