

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: February 17, 2009
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Terrace Park policy and facility modifications

REPORTED BY: Penelope Leach, Recreation and Community Services Director

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendations to:

- (1) amend the park reservation policy limiting party size at Terrace Park to 40 people;
- (2) remove the picnic table closest to the fence on the west side of the park;
- (3) remove four BBQs;
- (4) install landscaping along a portion of the west side fence to provide more privacy for residents.

BACKGROUND

Since the completion of the Terrace Park improvements in early fall of 2007, Terrace Park residents have attended a number of Parks and Recreation Commission meetings expressing concerns regarding the increase in the number of picnic tables, the increase in the number of BBQs, the large party size of some of the picnic rentals, and the lack of privacy for the neighbors living closest to the fence on the west side of the park due to the recent improvements. At the September 2007 Commission meeting residents submitted a petition asking the Commission to remove three of the six new picnic tables and four of the six new BBQs. The residents also requested that the one remaining un-tethered picnic table outside of the tot lot be removed. That table has since been removed. It should also be mentioned that in the petition residents asked for more garbage cans and weekend cleanup. Recycle cans have been installed and weekend staff is now scheduled from March through October to clean the parks on Saturdays and Sundays. Please see the attached petition.

DISCUSSION

The Parks and Recreation Commission hesitated to make any changes due to the fact that the improvements for the park went through a lengthy public process resulting in a design that was recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission and approved by the City Council. Given that at the time of the residents' petition in September 2007, the park had

just opened and the peak picnic season was near an end, the Commission asked the residents to wait and see how the improvements impacted the neighborhood in order to get an accurate account of their concerns. The Commission did, however, compromise with the residents and had two BBQs fully installed, but asked staff to hold off on installing the tops of the four remaining BBQs, leaving only the stems. The Commission also recommended that staff remove the table closest to the fence as many park users were standing on the table and looking into neighbors' backyards. Please see the attached pictures.

Residents also asked staff to install signs listing park rules, codes, and good neighbor messages; however, the Commission has no recommended language for signage at this time. The Commission prefers to have signage reflect all approved changes and information. For instance, pending the Council's decision to amend park policy that would limit party size at Terrace Park to a maximum of 40 people as well as the ongoing discussions the Commission is currently having regarding dogs in Albany's parks would impact what rules/codes are listed on potential signs. Additionally, enforcement of the park rules that might appear on signs is also an issue. For example, residents attending the Commission meetings asked that hours of the park be posted; however, Albany's municipal code does not address hours of operation for parks other than Memorial Park and Albany Hill. Having discussed this issue with the Police Chief, enforcing hours of operation at Terrace Park could be problematic without a code to back it up. There are a few items in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space section of the municipal code that could use some updating. Staff will be recommending to the Parks and Recreation Commission that the Commission review the code in an effort to recommend to Council needed changes. Please see the attached municipal code.

A few Terrace Park neighbors attended the September 2008 Commission meeting again requesting that two more tables be removed and the four BBQ stems be removed. One resident also asked that landscaping be added along the west fence line to prevent park users from getting too close to the fence, thus infringing on the resident's privacy. At one time, the resident asked for a higher fence, but the cost would have been approximately \$15,000; therefore, the Commission did not recommend a new higher fence. The resident added a lattice to the top of her fence creating a little more privacy, but maintains that two of the new tables are still too close to the fence and should be removed.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

BBQs are wood/coal burning. Neighbors were concerned about air quality should all six BBQs be used at the same time in such a small area.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact for amending the park policy to limit party size to a maximum of 40 people. There is public works staff time involved in removing the picnic table or the BBQ stands. The cost for landscaping the west side fence area is approximately \$4,000 with possible additional costs for moving irrigation.

Attachments

1. Petition from Terrace Park residents with diagram of requested tables and BBQs to be removed
2. Pictures of Terrace Park
3. Municipal code