



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Guy McLain, Assistant Director of Operations

Via: Brad Reid, Parks and Recreation Director

Date: September 22, 2020

Reference: Discussion pertaining to a request by the Coppell Baseball Association to conduct limited practices on game fields.

2030: Community Wellness and Enrichment: Excellent and Well-Maintained City Infrastructure and Facilities.

Introduction:

The Coppell Baseball Association (CBA) approached the Coppell Sports Council (CSC) in the summer of 2019 with a suggestion to explore the possibility of allowing some practices on baseball game fields. The CSC members weighed in on the issue with a unanimous vote to move the proposal through the process. The Coppell Girls Softball Association (CGSA) also expressed an interest in this field usage change request. Several CBA members presented the proposal to the September 9, 2019 meeting of the Park Board. The Parks and Recreation staff met with the CBA members and decided on a plan to make improvements to the existing practice fields and evaluate details of the practice on game field proposal further before presenting it to the Park Board for a recommendation. The events and challenges starting in early 2020 with the budget and COVID-19 caused a delay in moving forward with this request.

Analysis:

The disruption in maintenance schedules during the summer of 2020 resulted in lower standards for various landscapes including practice sports fields resulting in a few coaches and parents expressing their frustration with the department's inattentiveness to the baseball practice areas. The request was presented to the September 14, 2020 Park

Board for consideration and for a recommendation to the City Council. The Park Board recommended leaving the Game Field Ordinance and the License and Use Agreement with the CBA as written with no changes and asked the department to pursue the improvements to the practice fields. These improvements have begun and include upgrading the batting box/home plate areas, upgrading the pitching mounds, eliminating the weeds in the turf and adding temporary outfield fencing at MacArthur (2 fields) and Moore Road Park (2 fields). Also, the 8 practice fields (multipurpose) at Wagon Wheel would get some new portable backstops and weed abatement.

Staff met with the outgoing and incoming presidents of CBA on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 to update them on the Park Board decision and get their input on moving forward. They listed 3 points to take into consideration as follows:

1. Negative feedback from citizens that notice when the game fields are not used at a higher level of capacity.
2. The practice fields are in poor condition.
3. Other cities allow practice on game fields and several Coppell teams are paying to practice on game fields in Carrollton. (Flower Mound and Colleyville allow practice on game fields).

The CBA representatives agree with not allowing overuse of the game fields and causing excessive wear or damage. They suggest a limited usage approach whereby the CBA would propose a practice on game field schedule to be approved each season based on available department resources even if it were on a trial basis. They see significant value in giving the players a game quality experience during practice to compete better with associations that have this option. One scenario that they submitted early in the process was a spring season (fall is lighter) with 29 teams (recreational and select) each practicing once a week on a game field for a 13-week season.

Legal Review:

None required at this time.

Fiscal Impact:

No direct fiscal impact at this time.

Recommendation:

This item is for information and discussion.

