



January 17, 2024

City of Mission
8645 Stave Lake Street
Mission, BC
V2V 4L9

ATTENTION: Mayor & Council

Re: Sports Field User Fees

To All Concerned

It was brought to the attention of the Mission sports associations last week that not only is the City of Mission increasing User Fees on the Sports Fields, but have also introduced new fees, never before seen in Mission without any discussion with the groups these fees will affect.

To make matters worse, sports such as Baseball, Soccer and Lacrosse, had already commenced registration for their upcoming seasons, making the cost recovery, for these non-profit associations, impossible. In baseball, the new field usage fees will consume over 17% of the current overall registration fees, and soccer is nearing 12%, which is simply not sustainable.

In the current economic climate with people straining to make ends meet these costs will certainly drive registration participation numbers down. The stunning part of this is that youth engagement is paramount in the minds of municipalities and this decision has managed to ensure that those that need sport the most will be the first ones left out. Combine the increased cost with the reality that 80% of parents who require financial assistance to have their children participate in sports will not ask for help. This results in youth with nothing to do but create their own pastimes which can and do include, involvement in gangs, mischief, vandalism, fights and other less desirable activities.

It is important for City Council and Staff to recognize that the Mission Sports Council and its members work hard to raise money to sponsor kids to get involved in organized sports. At a time when more kids are being costed out of sports and the need for more money is rising. The dollar amount the generous supporters of our fundraising efforts contributed was down nearly 20% in 2023. Add to this these additional fees will increase the need while the ability to meet the need is diminishing. In 2023 KidSport Mission, Mission Sports Council and JumpStart funded more youth before the September registration period than were funded in all of 2022. 147 total KidSport applications were received in 2023 which turned into total funding of nearly \$30,000.00. The forecast going forward was for more applications, without the fee increase, due to the economic realities families are experiencing.

It is our understanding that in part, this decision was supported with the knowledge that some sports had "money in the bank." This did not consider capital costs, preseason start-up costs,

uniform replacement costs (soccer \$73,000 in 2023), equipment costs, and any other financial requirements that exist before registration begins, that the associations have to plan for. Additionally, there may be up-and-coming capital expenditures the association is planning for such as when baseball built the batting cage at their own expense to the tune of \$60,000 not to mention scoreboards, portable pitching mounds, overhead spectator protection, safety gates for first responders to access diamonds among many other things, to the tune of additional \$90,000 invested in the park by baseball alone. The City's contribution to these expenses for baseball was \$550 for the permit to build the cage.

In closing, we respectfully ask that the City Council vote to suspend these fees for all of 2024 and direct staff to enter into discussions with all those impacted by this or any other fees or significant changes, that the City is or may in the future, be considering. We understand the City needs either more revenue or lower costs however, we strongly feel that doing so on the backs of Missions' youth, is counterproductive.

Thank you for considering our request and should further discussion be required, some of us will be in chambers, to answer your queries. We are also available for consultation meetings with staff or council members, if and when required.

Yours truly,
Mission Sports Council



per:
Dan Williams
President
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