Written by Mark Jaeger
Wednesday, 16 December 2009 17:58

Village adopts schedule for groups looking to use community green space

The Village of Saukville has made a concerted effort to improve the amenities available at its parks in recent years.

However, little attention had been paid to the fees charged to groups wanting to ensure they have access to those amenities for private functions.

That shortcoming was remedied this month, when the Village Board adopted a standardized fee schedule and set of rules.

Under the policy, facilities can be rented at Grady, Schowalter, Veterans and Quade parks.

A sliding fee scale was adopted with residents paying less than nonresidents.

Residents will pay $75 for use of the pavilion at Grady Park and another $75 for use of the concession stand, with nonresidents paying $175 each to use those same facilities.

Residents will pay $50 each to use the pavilion and concession stand at Schowalter Park. Nonresidents will pay $150, each.

It will cost residents $50 to reserve the Quade Park pavilion or Veterans Park, and $150 for nonresidents.

A refundable $100 deposit will be required to reserve any park, with the money to be returned if there is no damage or significant cleaning required.

The policy was backed by the Parks Committee, after reassurances from the staff that the fees are in line with what other communities charge for use of their parks.

“We are slotted right in the middle. The costs were determined based on what is available in each park,” said Public Works Supt. Ray de Bruijn.

“The bottom line is we want to encourage people to use our parks and needed to come up with a way to cover our costs. A lot of people don’t know that our parks

are available for rent," said Public Works Director Roy Wilhelm.

The costs were calculated based on the time required to process the reservation paperwork and the cost of providing electrical and water service, if applicable.

The straightforward resolution met nominal resistance when the Village Board took up the matter.

Trustee Dan Sauer was the only board member to vote against the fee schedule, contending the public parks should remain available to everyone.

"They are public parks," Sauer said after voting against the proposal.

"I don't see an issue with assessing a fee to nonresidents, but residents who already pay property taxes should not be obligated to pay an additional fee for something that is funded via the general tax levy. In other words, I would prefer not to see any fee."

A supporting reservation form created along with the fee schedule requires those looking to reserve a park to specify how the park will be used.

The village must be advised if beer or wine will be served.

Authorization from the police department will be required of groups planning to serve alcohol, and proper licensing must be secured if alcohol is to be sold.

Hard liquor cannot be provided by groups renting facilities.

Because all village parks are in residential areas, the regulations say that groups looking to provide amplified or live music must "take all reasonably necessary precautions to ensure that the volume will not carry beyond the park boundaries.

To protect the village against claims, any group reserving a park must provide proof of liability coverage of at least $1 million.