



TO THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:

DATE: July 22 2014

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST TO PROVIDE A SENIOR CITIZEN DISCOUNT TO LAP SWIMMING FEES

Report in Brief

At the July 8, 2014 City Council meeting, Councilmember Birsan requested that Council reconsider its action from the June 24, 2014 meeting which did not include adoption of any additional discounts for senior citizens for lap swimming fees. A majority of Councilmembers present on July 8, 2014 voted to reconsider the item at the July 22, 2014 City Council meeting.

Staff recommends that the City Council recognize the existing discounts available to all lap swimmers, including senior lap swimmers, through purchasing swim sessions in bulk and not pursue additional discounts for seniors. However, should Council desire to pursue such a discount staff recommends Council provide such direction for implementation, and set a Public Hearing for September 9, 2014 to amend the Master Fees and Charges schedule for Fiscal year 2014-15.

Background

Concord Community Pool (CCP) was renovated in 2004. Prior to the reopening of the facility, staff conducted a fee comparison survey with similar facilities in the East Bay to establish appropriate use fees. At the time, none of the surrounding cities were offering senior citizen discounts for pool use fees.

In July 2008, a group of CCP lap swimmers organized and signed a petition to request consideration of a senior citizen discount for lap swim fees. As part of this request, staff updated the fee comparison survey and found that some of the agencies were now implementing a senior discount. Staff's recommendation to the City Council at that time was to implement a discount rate of 40 percent for seniors age 50 and above. The recommendation was approved by Council as part of the fiscal year 2008-09 budget process.

In 2009 the City faced significant fiscal challenges as a result of the Great Recession. As one of many budget reduction measures, staff recommended a closure of either three or six months of CCP. In response to this proposal, the senior citizen lap swimmers proposed to give up the reduced rate in an effort to keep the pool open. More than 95% of the seniors agreed and signed their names to the proposal. The City Council accepted the elimination of senior citizen discount fees for lap swimming.

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Subsequently, in FY 2013-14, based on staff's recommendation, the Council approved multi-swim pass discount levels—which are available to all swimmers, including senior citizens. These levels were designed for frequent users of the pool where participants could effectively select the level of discount they wanted to receive through a “volume discount purchase.” Most of the lap swimmers at CCP are frequent users.

Discussion

As of September 1, 2013 the Master Fees and Charges schedule has included multi-swim pass discounts for lap swimmers. The current lap swim fees are as follows:

- Daily Swim: \$5.25(R) / \$6.25(NR)
- 15 Swim Pass: \$66.00(R) (equates to \$4.40/per swim, or 16% discount) / \$76(NR)
- 30 Swim Pass: \$123.00(R) (equates to \$4.10/per swim, or 22% discount) / \$133(NR)
- 45 Swim Pass: \$171.00(R) (equates to \$3.80/per swim, or 27.5% discount) / \$181(NR)

All three of these swim passes are comparable to discounts provided by other City aquatic facilities that offer a senior citizen discount rate (as they offer a 12.5% – 25% discount).

Should Council desire to implement a senior citizen discount rate for lap swimming beyond that being offered through the multi-swim passes, staff would recommend that the discount be implemented for the Daily Swim fee only as the multi-swim passes are already providing a significant discount.

In making his recommendation, Councilmember Birsan recommended that senior citizens be defined as people age 65 and over, who self-identify as low income, and that the discount be 25 % on any daily or multi-swim pass purchase.

Fiscal Impact

A senior citizen discount rate to the daily lap swim fee would not significantly impact the aquatics program budget revenue target. However, the discount was given up voluntarily by the senior lap swimmers as part of a citywide effort to balance the budget and to keep the pool open year round.

Public Contact

Posting of the City Council Agenda. A copy of the report and agenda has been posted at Concord Community Pool and the Concord Senior Center.

Recommendation for Action

Staff recommends that the City Council take no further action on this proposal.

Alternatively, should Council desire to create an additional discount for low income senior citizens, staff recommends that Council provide clear direction and set a Public Hearing for September 9, 2014 to amend the Master Fees and Charges Schedule so that the program can be folded into the adopted Master Fees and Charges for Fiscal Year 2014-15.

Prepared by: Christopher Roke
Recreation Program Manager
Christopher.Roke@cityofconcord.org

Reviewed by: Joan Carrico
Director of Parks & Recreation
Joan.Carrico@cityofconcord.org



Valerie J. Barone
City Manager
Valerie.Barone@cityofconcord.org

Reviewed by: Scott Johnson
Assistant City Manager
Scott.Johnson@cityofconcord.org