

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 21st, 2024

TO: Mayor Lankford & City Council

VIA: Mercy Rushing, City Manager

FROM: Cindy Karch, City Secretary 

SUBJECT: Policy for Events at the Mineola Nature Preserve
Council Meeting Agenda Item for June 24, 2024

Background

Recently, we received a request from a non-profit organization wishing to hold an educational camp at the Mineola Nature Preserve. The organization plans to charge admission fees to recoup their costs. This situation has highlighted a gap in our current policies:

1. **Current Policy for Non-Profits:**
 - a. Our existing policy exempts all non-profit organizations from rental fees. This policy did not account for non-profit organizations charging admission fees to cover their expenses.
2. **Lack of Policy for Camps:**
 - a. We currently do not have a specific policy governing summer camps, day camps, or similar events at the Preserve. While we regularly accommodate private events such as weddings and family reunions, which pay a rental fee, we have not previously faced a situation where a non-profit organization expects to use the facilities for free while charging participants.

Need for a New Policy

To address these issues and ensure a fair and consistent approach, we have developed a comprehensive policy for all events at the Mineola Nature Preserve. This policy includes provisions for:

1. **Approval Process:**
 - a. Events charging admission fees or accepting donations must be approved by the City Manager or City Council.
 - b. Organizations, including churches in the 75773 zip code and Mineola Independent School District events, are subject to the same regulations as 501(c)(3) organizations in good standing. This policy still allows us to waive the fees and other requirements for these organizations.

2. Rental Fees:

- a. A clear fee structure for daily and weekly rentals, with potential adjustments by the City Council for qualified non-profit organizations.

3. Permit and Insurance Requirements:

- a. Mandatory event insurance naming the City of Mineola as an additional insured party, with a review process for non-profits not charging fees.
- b. Requirements for a Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) license and security arrangements for events serving alcohol.

Conclusion

The proposed policy ensures that all events, including educational camps, are conducted in an orderly manner and comply with city regulations. It balances the need to support non-profit organizations while ensuring that the use of the Preserve is fair and sustainable.

We recommend the City Council adopt the attached resolution, policy, and application form to formalize these guidelines and address the identified gaps.

RESOLUTION 2024-06-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MINEOLA, TEXAS,
ADOPTING A POLICY AND APPLICATION PROCESS FOR EVENTS AT THE
MINEOLA NATURE PRESERVE

WHEREAS, the City of Mineola seeks to insure the orderly conduct of events at the Mineola Nature Preserve, providing clear guidelines for approval, operation, and rental fees; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to establish a comprehensive policy that includes provisions for event insurance, collaboration with city officials, adherence to city regulations, and special requirements for events accepting donations or serving alcohol; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes the importance of supporting non-profit organizations, churches in the 75773 zip code, and the Mineola Independent School District events, and providing a review process for insurance requirements for non-profit events that do not charge admission fees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MINEOLA TEXAS:

SECTION 1: Adoption of Policy

The City Council hereby adopts the policy for Events at the Mineola Nature Preserve, attached hereto as Exhibit A.

SECTION 2: Adoption of Application Form

The City Council hereby adopts the application form for Events at the Mineola Nature Preserve, attached hereto as Exhibit B.

SECTION 3: Implementation

The City Manager and appropriate city staff are hereby authorized to take all necessary steps to implement the policy and application process as outlined in Exhibits A and B.

SECTION 4: Effective Date

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Mineola, Texas on this 24th day of June, 2024.

Jayne Lankford, Mayor

Attest:

Cindy Karch, City Secretary

EXHIBIT A

Policy for Events at the Mineola Nature Preserve

Section 1: Purpose

This policy governs the approval, operation, and rental fees for organizations wishing to hold events at the Mineola Nature Preserve, particularly those charging admission fees, accepting donations, or serving alcohol. The policy ensures that such events are conducted in an orderly manner and comply with city regulations.

Section 2: Definitions

- **Event:** Any single-day or multi-day event, camp, day camp, educational or recreational camp held at the Mineola Nature Preserve.
- **501(c)(3) Organization:** A nonprofit organization recognized by the IRS as tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- **Churches:** Religious organizations located in the 75773 zip code.
- **Mineola Independent School District Event:** Any event organized by Mineola ISD.

Section 3: Approval Process

1. **City Manager or City Council Approval:**
 - Any organization wishing to hold an event that charges an admission fee or accepts donations must obtain approval from the City Manager or City Council.
2. **501(c)(3) Status and Church Inclusion:**
 - Organizations must provide proof of their ongoing and good standing 501(c)(3) status to qualify for rental fee exemptions or reductions.
 - Churches that meet the requirements of an IRS Section 501(c)(3) are automatically considered exempt organizations, and therefore are not required to provide proof of good standing.
3. **Mineola Independent School District Events:**
 - Events organized by Mineola ISD are subject to the same regulations as 501(c)(3) organizations in good standing.

Section 4: Rental Fees

1. **Fee Structure:**
 - A rental fee must be paid by the organizing party unless waived by the City Manager. The fees are as follows:
 - **Daily Rental Fee:** \$[Amount] per day.
 - **Weekly Rental Fee:** \$[Amount] per week.
2. **Fee Waivers:**
 - The City Manager may reduce rental fees for qualified 501(c)(3) organizations, churches within the 75773 zip code, and Mineola ISD events upon request.

Section 5: Permit Requirements

1. Permit Application:

- The organizer must obtain a permit from the city before the event. The application must include details about the event, including dates, times, activities, and expected attendance. There shall be no advertising or promoting the event prior to the approval of the permit.

2. Collaboration with City Officials:

- The organizer must work with the City Manager, Director of Public Works or the Parks Director to ensure compliance with all city regulations and policies.

3. Event Insurance:

- All applicants must obtain event insurance, naming the City of Mineola as an additional insured party. This insurance must cover liability for the duration of the event.
- For non-profit organizations, churches, and Mineola ISD events that do not charge an admission fee, the requirement for event insurance may be subject to review and determination by the City Manager or the City Secretary.

4. Alcohol Service:

- If alcohol will be served at the event, the organizer must provide a Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) license.
- The organizer must hire at least one off-duty City of Mineola Police Officer for security, with additional officers required based on the number of attendees. If no City of Mineola Police Officer is available, it is acceptable to hire a Wood County Sheriff deputy.

Section 6: Compliance and Enforcement

1. Noncompliance:

- Failure to comply with this policy may result in the revocation of the permit and/or other penalties as deemed appropriate by the city.

2. Ongoing Review:

- The city reserves the right to review and amend this policy as necessary to address emerging issues or concerns.

Section 7: Effective Date

This policy shall take effect on [Insert Date].

EXHIBIT B

Application for Event Permit at the Mineola Nature Preserve

Section 1: Applicant Information

1. **Organization Name:**
2. **Contact Person:**
3. **Address:**
4. **Cell Phone Number:**
5. **Email Address:**

Section 2: Event Details

1. **Event Name:**
2. **Event Description:**
3. **Event Dates:**
4. **Event Hours:**
 - Start Time: _____
 - End Time: _____

Section 3: Fees and Proof of 501(c)(3) Status

1. **Daily Rental Fee:**
2. **Weekly Rental Fee:**
3. **Proof of 501(c)(3) Status (if applicable):**
 - Attached

Section 4: Additional Requirements

1. **Details of Activities:**
2. **Expected Attendance:**
3. **Will donations be accepted in lieu of admission fees? (check one)**
 - Yes
 - No

Section 5: Event Insurance

1. **Insurance Provider:**
2. **Policy Number:**
3. **Coverage Amount:**
4. **Certificate of Insurance Naming City of Mineola as Additional Insured:**
 - Attached
5. **Non-profit organizations, churches, and Mineola ISD events not charging admission may be subject to insurance review by the City Manager or the City Secretary.**

Section 6: Alcohol Service

- 1. **Will alcohol be served at the event?** (check one)
 - o Yes
 - o No
- 2. **If yes, provide TABC License Number:**
- 3. **Security Arrangements:**
 - o Number of attendees: _____
 - o Security Provider:
 - Off-duty City of Mineola Police Officer
 - Wood County Sheriff Deputy

Section 7: Compliance Agreement

I, the undersigned, certify that the information provided in this application is true and correct. I agree to comply with all city regulations and policies regarding the use of the Mineola Nature Preserve. I understand that failure to comply may result in the denial or revocation of the permit.

Applicant Signature:

Date:

Submission Instructions:

Please submit this application, along with all required attachments and payments, to the City Secretary's office at least **[insert number]** days prior to the camp/event start date. For questions or assistance, contact the City Secretary at 903-569-6183.

Staff Only:

Application Received by:

Date Received:

Application Reviewed by:

Permit Issued: Yes

No:
