



Memorandum

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMISSION

FROM: Albert Balagso

SUBJECT: PRNS DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER
POLICY

DATE: April 27, 2009

Approved

Date

COUNCIL DISTRICT: City-Wide
SNI AREA: N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Accept and support the proposed Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department Volunteer Policy.

OUTCOME

The Parks and Recreation Commission will receive a presentation about the proposed Volunteer Policy. The Commission will have an opportunity to comment and/or support the Volunteer Policy, which will be presented to the Neighborhood Services and Education Council Committee.

BACKGROUND

In Fiscal Year 2008 - 2009 the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) Department created a Volunteer Management Unit. The mission of the PRNS Volunteer Management Unit is to encourage and facilitate opportunities for community participation, in partnership with PRNS staff, that support the successful completion of projects and programs that enhance the maintenance of public parks and the delivery of services for the benefit of the public.

Various opportunities for volunteer activity within PRNS currently exist such as Anti-Graffiti, Friends of the Rose Garden and San Jose Family Camp, Adopt-a-Park and the Sports Leagues to name a few.

One of the first tasks for the Volunteer Management Unit was to update a PRNS volunteer policy first adopted in May 1970 (Attachment A) and develop a complementary Implementation Manual. These documents provide a framework and process for the recruitment, management and recognition of volunteers.

In addition, since August 2008, the Volunteer Management Unit has met with staff from various PRNS and other City volunteer programs, talked with representatives from Friends organizations, and received input from community leaders and Neighborhood Action Committees from the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative. In these sessions, staff gathered input about the existing needs for volunteer support and related policy and procedural concerns. The Volunteer Management Unit also identified best practices from established policies and procedures from other jurisdictions.

ANALYSIS

As a result, the Volunteer Management Unit has identified principles and goals that will guide the PRNS Volunteer Policy and Implementation Manual. The summary and analysis of those principles follow:

Purpose – Mutually Beneficial Partnership

Fostering the community's stake and participation in neighborhood parks and community programs adds value to the mission of PRNS. At the same time, volunteer projects or services should be guided by the following complementing goals: 1) activities should enhance staff's ability to complete projects or services that currently are above and beyond their capacity; and 2) staff should make an effort to design and provide meaningful service opportunities for volunteers. Both staff and volunteers should agree on the projects or services to be provided.

Volunteer Qualifications

Definition - A volunteer is an individual, or group of individuals, who is non-elected or non-appointed and provides a one-time or continued service on behalf of PRNS for the benefit of the public without receiving financial or material compensation.

Activity - Volunteer activity includes the work of volunteers at all community, youth, and senior centers, parklands, as well as any other location where an event, sponsored by PRNS or supervised by its staff, is taking place.

Age - Persons under the age of 18 must obtain written consent from parent or legal guardian to volunteer. The minimum age of a PRNS volunteer shall be 13. Volunteers between the age of 13 and 15 must have a parent, legal guardian, or other parent-authorized program or school representative present during their service. A volunteer over the age of 15 may provide service without the presence of parent, legal guardian, or program supervisor.

Volunteer Fingerprinting and TB Test Requirements

State law requires that any City employee or volunteer in a supervising or disciplinary role over a person under 18 years of age shall submit to fingerprinting by the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department and the Federal Department of Justice. Similarly, the proposed policy requires that any volunteer in contact with minors and/or participating in food processing or distribution must provide proof of a negative TB test taken within the 2 year period immediately preceding start of the volunteer service.

Volunteer Registration and Assignment

Length of Service

Volunteers who provide a one-time service or project must complete and sign the *Volunteer Service Agreement*. Those volunteers who wish to participate in a multiple-day service must fill out, date, and sign a *Volunteer Application*, which captures more information about the interested volunteer. The *Volunteer Application* also serves as the *Volunteer Service Agreement* for the volunteer participating in a multiple-day project or service.

Volunteers who show an ongoing commitment and/or mastery of their initial assignments may become a *Master Volunteer* by seeking the support and sponsorship of their immediate staff lead. PRNS is currently working with the City Attorney's Office to develop volunteer agreements applicable to each level of volunteer activity.

No Law Enforcement Tasks for Volunteers – volunteers shall not perform law enforcement services for PRNS.

Approval of Volunteer Project – In approving the scope of a volunteer project, several factors shall be considered, including but not limited to 1) staff's ability to provide qualify safety orientation, training, and supervision; 2) volunteers' physical and technical capacity; and 3) contributions to the operational needs of PRNS.

Volunteer Use of Tools, Equipment, and City Vehicles

PRNS staff has identified tools and equipment that may be used by volunteers to carry out their assignment with proper training. A certificate of tool or equipment use proficiency will be issued to the volunteer upon successful completion of the training session. A centralized list of certified volunteers shall be maintained by the Volunteer Management Unit. Minors shall not be allowed to operate any power tool. This list follows guidelines established by the City's Risk Management Office and has been reviewed by the City's Attorney Office.

Workers Compensation Program

All official PRNS volunteers are covered under the City of San José Workers' Compensation Program for injuries that occur while the volunteer is providing the service. The City's standard Workers' Compensation Incident report is to be used for the immediate recording of an injury. The use of volunteer's private car is not covered by the Program.

Volunteer Expectations

While performing their service, volunteers represent PRNS and the City of San José. Accordingly, volunteers must follow the City's Code of Ethics and PRNS' Code of Conduct for volunteers. Both of these documents shall be developed by PRNS and the City Attorney's Office.

Volunteer Recognition

PRNS will develop a system of volunteer recognition based on volunteer service hour thresholds. For example, each program or unit is to carry out recognition at each and every opportunity available to maintain positive partnerships with volunteers.

COORDINATION

This memo has been coordinated with Risk Management and City Attorney's Office.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

These recommendations align to the City's priority of full funding for Parks and Recreation Programs.

CEQA

Exempt

Attachments

Attachment A – Policy Number 3-1 (Adopted May 1970)

Attachment B – Proposed PRNS Volunteer Policy

ALBERT BALAGSO
Director of Parks, Recreation
and Neighborhood Services

For questions please contact NEIL RUFINO, RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT, at 535-3583