



Administrative Report

J.1., File # RP24-1164

Meeting Date: 7/10/2024

To: RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION

From: KELLY ORTA, DEPUTY COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE VOLUNTEER AND EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

In March 2023, the Recreation and Parks Commission (Commission) approved the proposed Volunteer and Employee Acknowledgement Program that was developed and presented by the Volunteer Acknowledgement Program Subcommittee (Subcommittee). This program was developed to identify and celebrate those whose volunteer service has positively impacted the City's parks and greenspaces. Included as an attachment is the Program's guidelines and information document, which outlines the various award categories, requirements for eligibility, the review and selection process, and recognition opportunities.

The acknowledgement program has been in effect for over a year. In that time, staff and the Subcommittee have identified a number of updates that, if approved, will make the program guidelines clearer that the volunteer service must positively impact the City's parks, greenspaces, and recreation programs; further assists the Commission in its review of applications and the Subcommittee's recommendations; and removes employees from the program following a number of questions regarding eligibility verification.

Parks, Greenspaces and Recreational Activities

The original intent behind the development of this program was to acknowledge volunteer service throughout the City in ways that positively impact the City's parks, greenspaces and recreational activities. These key areas fall within the purview of the Commission and provide focused parameters for reviewing an individual or organization's volunteer service for eligibility. While the original program guidelines currently note this requirement, it is not explicit and has led to confusion. The redlined changes emphasize this requirement and eligibility guideline in multiple places.

Subcommittee Review Form

Per the program guidelines, the Subcommittee reviews applications and makes a recommendation to the Commission if it feels the nominated individual or organization qualifies for acknowledgement by the Commission. Recommended applications are then provided to the Commission for a formal review. In order to formalize the process and ensure the Subcommittee is able to directly share their comments regarding each applicant in an efficient manner, staff developed the attached Subcommittee Review Form that would be completed by the Subcommittee and included with the

application at the time of the Commission's review. This form outlines program requirements to ensure the nominated individual or organization meets all qualifications, and provides an additional section for the Subcommittee to include any comments or justifications for their decision. This form will be especially critical when Subcommittee members are unable to attend regular Commission meetings where consideration of an applicant is on the agenda. A copy of this form is attached for the Commission's review.

City Employees

Currently, the acknowledgement program includes an opportunity for City employees to be recognized for any volunteer service above and beyond their assigned duties. While there are many employees that are more than deserving of this recognition, there has been questions raised regarding the difficulty in verifying this volunteer service and whether it can be distinctively bifurcated with regular work responsibilities. This uncertainty has led to hesitancy in considering these types of applications. Therefore, it is recommended to remove recognition of City employees from the Commission's volunteer acknowledgement program until there is a clearer, concise way to delineate the volunteer service beyond the employee's regular work responsibilities.

Included as an attachment is a redlined version of the program's guidelines as well as a clean version reflecting the proposed changes. Staff recommends the Commission review and approve these proposed changes to the acknowledgement program, which would go into effect immediately.

ATTACHMENTS

- Volunteer & Employee Acknowledgement Program Guidelines & Information - Current
- Volunteer & Employee Acknowledgement Program Guidelines & Information - redlined with proposed changes
- Volunteer & Employee Acknowledgement Program Guidelines & Information - clean version with proposed changes
- Subcommittee Review Form