



MIAMI BEACH

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NO. LTC # **047-2010**

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matt Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager *Jorge M. Gonzalez for*

DATE: February 8, 2010

SUBJECT: Parks and Recreation Volleyball League

This LTC is in response to the emails you may have received regarding our Parks and Recreation Department's volleyball program. The concerns expressed were regarding the availability to continue using a sand area for weekday and weekend volleyball league and instructional play and, more specifically, the challenges encountered for nighttime use during the months of November to March (daylight savings time).

Approximately four years ago, the Parks and Recreation Department created a beach volleyball court out of the old ice rink at the Scott Rakow Youth Center for their after school program participants. Shortly thereafter, the department initiated an adult league and instructional volleyball play on site. Before we initiated the Rakow beach volleyball court, our volleyball program was practically non-existent, with only a small following. The department worked very hard to build up the adult and youth volleyball program, and contracted Extreme Volleyball Professionals (EVP) to get it off the ground. The Beach Volleyball program had as many as 45 participants in the Spring 2009 session, 17 in the Fall 2009 session, and averaged 26 players over the past full year. The revenue generated by this program is minimal and most of it goes to compensate the program provider, EVP, for their services.

This contractor still works with us under a professional services agreement, with a profit-sharing split. The use of the Rakow beach volleyball facility started very slow, but eventually grew to a respectable following. Prior to the beginning of the construction at the Rakow, the participants of the night league were informed that the beach volleyball court was being demolished and a new multi-purpose activity area was being built. The league was relocated to the 73rd Street beach when the old ice rink was closed for demolition. This location serves as a great location for the adults, and was not an issue until Day Light Savings time when it becomes darker much earlier. This same situation holds true for all our volleyball courts on every beach throughout the city.

In order to try to accommodate EVP and the volleyball league participants during this time, the department offered North Shore Park basketball gym, an indoor facility, for their volleyball play. The participants declined our offer to play indoors as they prefer to play on sand. The North Shore Youth Center is no longer available as of January 19, 2010 due to the commencement of our youth basketball leagues. In November 2009, we researched lighting options and provided this information to EVP. The department explained to EVP that it would be in EVP's interest, as a for-profit contractor, to consider purchasing a generator/lighting system in order to continue to provide their services during the winter months.

The emails to you offered some recommendations in order to try to accommodate the program. These included:

- Demolishing two tennis courts somewhere in the city and replacing them with sand volleyball courts; and/or
- Installing permanent lighting on the beach volleyball courts at the band shell.

Both of these recommendations present certain challenges. The current tennis patron climate suggests an interest in retaining, let alone increasing, the number of tennis courts in the City. In terms of beach lighting, regulatory restrictions on lighting on the beach imposed by the State may make permanent lighting an issue. While we can certainly inquire of the State, we do know that the State was heavily involved in the review of the lighting for the senior center, and that facility's lighting would be of much less intensity than those required for nighttime volleyball at that location. The Parks and Recreation Department has preliminarily looked at other sites in the city that may accommodate the sport without extensive capital outlay, such as finding locations with existing sports lighting. We have concluded that no existing space could accommodate this use without affecting a neighborhood park's green space.

It is our recommendation that we continue to accommodate our beach volleyball community as we have until now at our bandshell or other beachfront areas, with accommodations continued to be made by the private contractor during those periods of the year when additional lighting is required. Please let me know should you have additional questions or require additional information.

c: Hilda M. Fernandez, Assistant City Manager
Kevin Smith, Parks & Recreation Director
Julio Magrisso, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

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