

Item 25-0492: Approve Irish Fest of the Fox Cities to hold a ticketed private Special Event

Item 25-0491: Approve change to park rules to prohibit alcohol beverages within 20' of any pavilion or playground

Parks and Recreation Committee

Mon, May 12, 2025 6:00PM

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 02:48

All right, moving on 25-0492, approve Irish Fest of the Fox Cities to hold a ticketed private special event. Is there a motion?

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 02:59

Motion to approve.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 03:01

Second.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 03:05

I'm sorry. I skipped one. Can I come back?

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 03:12

I moved.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 03:13

Seconded.

[Attorney Behrens says something off microphone.]

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 03:14

Apologies, Attorney Behrens. Okay, any discussion around the Irish Fest?

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 03:23

I do—I mean, we skipped the one I think we'll talk about the—chair, can I—I'm sorry.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 03:29

No, no, you're fine.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 03:30

Okay. We skipped the rule change about alcohol, but I assume Irish Fest—I do remember a lot of Guinness at that event. So, but if it's—the point is, if it's a private, ticketed event, then that is by their rules, as opposed to the possible park, general park rules. Is that—that's how that is?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 03:55

Yes, if you rent a pavilion, then it doesn't apply to—the rule would not apply to you or a special event or a ticketed event.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 04:03

Okay.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 04:07

Any other questions or comments? All right, we'll move into voting. All those in favor? Aye. All those opposed? Passes five to zero.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 04:17

And apologies. We'll go back to 25-0491, approve change to park rules prohibit alcoholic beverages within 20 feet of any pavilion or playground. Do we have a motion?

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 04:30

Motion to approve.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 04:31

Second.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 04:32

And discussion. Director Gazza, you look like you had something to start with.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 04:37

Yes. Thank you, chair. This was initiated by Chief Olson and her staff. One of the challenges that the police department has had is policing behavior around the pavilion. There's a significant amount of people that gather right at the pavilion and then other park users are trying to get access to the pavilion, or utilize the pavilion, or go into the restrooms, and, generally, just because of that behavior around the pavilion it causes issues. They also thought, you know, as we discussed it, the playgrounds too just as it were, you know, updating the rule, similar to smoking, try to keep the negative behaviors away from the playground and in the pavilion that the kids are using for restrooms and things like that. So, we had meetings, couple meetings regarding that, and we came to this and thought this would be a good way of moving forward.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 05:43

Yes, Alder van Zeeland?

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 05:45

Thank you, Chair. Just to clarify Alder Smith's previous question, so if someone were to rent a pavilion at Lions Park for a graduation party and they want to have alcoholic beverages for their guests, the pavilion issue would not apply to them. They would not be prevented from—but they still would be prevented from being on the playground.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 06:12

Yes.

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 06:13

Okay, perfect. Thank you.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 06:15

Alder Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 06:17

District 13, please, Chair. Thank you. I understand where this is going, and appreciate that, but the way that this memo is written, that—the rule the way that is written would not include, does not include that verbiage, excluding pavilion rentals. So, I'm concerned that the way that the rule is written in here, that you would accept, if you guys vote to approve this, would potentially be in conflict. So, I am wondering if we need to entertain amending the rule as it is written in the memo to include the exclusion of pavilion rentals allowing for beverages within the 20 feet.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 07:03

Yes, Alder van Zeeland?

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 07:04

I could just ask Attorney Behrens does—is the—would there be any required action to iron this out in the rules as Alder Hartzheim has stated?

Attorney Christopher Behrens 07:15

Sorry, I was trying to do some administrative work here. So, I've not been following the discussion.

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 07:21

So, the memo that we have doesn't state the rule change does not include the pavilion rental. Is that something that we would need to make an amendment for to ensure that people who rent the pavilion are not prevented from drinking alcohol in—within the 20 feet of the pavilion.

Attorney Christopher Behrens 07:44

I guess I'm going to defer to Director Gazza and what the understanding is of the rule that's being proposed by staff.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 07:50

Yeah, I think that's a good addition. I think it makes it clear that, you know, approve—change to park rules to prohibit alcohol beverages within 20 feet of any pavilion or playground within a park, park pavilion rentals—this excludes pavilion rentals. In pavilion rentals, when people do reserve a park for a special event, the pavilion is already included in that rental. So, I don't know if we have to say special events also, but we—if somebody chooses to, we could also include special events and/or pavilion rentals.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 08:28

Alder Van Zeeland.

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 08:29

Thank you, Chair, so I'll move to make an amendment to add that this excludes pavilion rentals and special events.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 08:38

Second.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 08:41

And any discussion on the amendment? Yes, Alder Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 08:49

Thank you, Chair. I'm glad that that's clarified, because when I read this memo, I was like, I have lots of questions. And I think people who would rent pavilions would be like, "Wait a minute. It says within 20 feet, I can't do this?" So, including that exclusion directly in the verbiage, I think is quite helpful, and I appreciate the amendment. Thank you, Alder van Zeeland.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 09:09

I'll add, I think that's good, good observation, because when the pavilion rental form will say that, but this will give us an opportunity to clean it up when we put it in chapter 13, in the ordinance to combine them two to make sure it's crystal clear.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 09:24

Alder Smith.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 09:25

Thank you. So, Director Gazza, the the—what this would ban is, in effect, just people hanging out in the pavilion. They haven't rented the pavilion. There's no special event going on. They're just in the pavilion or near the pavilion with a beer in their hand. That's just blanket—

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 09:43

Correct.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 09:44

That will give the Chief Olson and the police department room to kind of to make sure that's not happening.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 09:52

Yeah, it's the most common area of the park where everybody uses it whether they're going to wash their hands or use the restroom, and it just becomes very difficult for patrons. So, they do get complaints where you have the entire rest of the park to utilize sitting at, you know, picnic tables or wherever, outside in benches and things like that.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 10:12

So that was actually—and that was a follow up of mine, too, is if you're sitting on a picnic bench that's more than 20 feet away from playgrounds or have a, you know, a blanket on the grass or whatever, you're—people are welcome to have a beer in that kind of a setting.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 10:24

Absolutely. I was thinking we're probably close to about 20 feet away right now.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 10:29

Right.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 10:29

So, it's not a great distance, but it's enough to make sure we don't have that blocking doorways and things like that.

Alderson Martyn Smith (District 4) 10:37

Okay, that sounds good. Thank you.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 10:39

Any further discussion on the amendment? All right, we'll vote on the amendment to—for the exclusions that Alder van Zeeland made. All those in favor? Aye. All those opposed? That passes five zero, which takes us back to the original resolution on the amended resolution with the exclusion changes in there. Any further discussion? Alder Schultz.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 11:05

Thank you, Chair. I guess I'd like to ask a question to Director Gazza. In practice—in practice then organizers of events will be aware of the policy, but the general public will not necessarily be aware of this rule change. Is there—how do we intend to communicate this to the general public? A thousand people show up, and no one is aware that there is this new 20-foot exclusion rule.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 11:28

Yeah, I'll talk to Chief Olson. We usually—all of the park rules are on a poster. We'll have to update those.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 11:34

Okay, so there'll be something publicly available when people show up that dictates this.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 11:38

But even with the park rules sometimes being on a poster, a lot of people don't walk up to that and look at it. So, I think, you know, the police department will make sure there's that transition or grace period.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 11:49

Okay, I appreciate that.

Alderson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 11:53

All right, seeing no further discussion, we'll move forward with voting. All those in favor of the amended resolution? Aye. All those opposed? Passes five to zero.