

Community Services Advisory Committee
Sponsorship Policy Recommendations
Report to Board of Selectmen by Paula Panchuck, Committee Chair

Board of Selectmen's charge to the Community Services Advisory Committee

- Among several objectives in establishing the role of the Community Services Advisory Committee in September 2016, the Board of Selectmen charged the group to “establish and evaluate facility access policies, including matters of sponsorship”.
(<http://www.natickma.gov/1349/Community-Services-Advisory-Committee> - Section 1. Establishment and Role of the Community Services Advisory Committee).
- Sponsorship is a designation given to eligible Natick-based organizations for which they receive a substantial reduction in room rental fees at the Community Center.
- Sponsorship is consistent with the stated mission of Community Services, specifically “To elicit the priority needs and interests of residents and respond to those priorities through well-conceived program development, efficient service delivery and thoughtful trusteeship of our array of public facilities and resources” and by “building partnerships with community leaders, groups and organizations....developing the kinds of programs, services and initiatives our residents feel are important.” (<http://www.natickma.gov/167/Community-Services>)
- This is an ideal time for the Community Services Department to review its more than four years of rental history and sponsorship activity in order to clarify the definition of sponsorship and develop guidelines for qualification, application and awarding of this designation for local organizations.

Community Services Advisory Committee Policy Recommendations

In its review of current sponsorship practices, the Community Services Advisory Committee focused upon the following in its recommendations:

1. Sponsorship designation: No specific guidelines existed.
2. Eligibility and awarding of sponsorship: Need for specific policies and process.
3. Application for sponsorship: No inclusion of information about sponsorship in the current Application for Rental of Natick Community Center Facility
4. Awarding of sponsorship: Need for clear process.
5. Marketing of sponsorship opportunity: The only mention of sponsorship opportunity in any Community Services publication or rental information is the notation “CSC Sponsored Groups: \$10. Flat Charge” in the published chart of rental rates.

Sponsorship designation: Sponsored organizations will be entitled to the use of one designated room per week for a flat rate of \$10.

Eligibility for sponsorship: The organization that is applying for sponsorship:

- Is a registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit with a home address of Natick or it is a Natick-based volunteer service organization whose applicant for sponsorship is a Natick resident or it is a Natick-based organization addressing a community need whose applicant for sponsorship is a Natick resident
- Can demonstrate financial hardship in meeting full rental charges;
- Does not deny resident participation based on inability to pay membership fees, if any are charged.

Ineligible organizations include groups of a political nature, activities or events that are commercial in nature, discriminatory activities /organizations or those that would seek to incite hatred toward others.

Application for sponsorship: An organization that wishes to apply for sponsorship must complete a Sponsorship Application, developed by the Committee. The application will provide information about sponsorship designation, eligibility and the process of awarding scholarship to the applicant. It will request the following information from the applicant organization:

- Organization's name and contact person's information
- Purpose/mission of the organization, number of members and % of membership that reside in Natick
- Date of establishment and organization's history of service to Natick
- Why organization is requesting sponsorship,
- Why paying full rental fee would pose hardship
- If organization charges members a fee; offers waivers for those who cannot afford fee
- If fundraising is conducted to fulfill group's mission, way in which funds are utilized
- Space request

Awarding of sponsorship: The Community Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) will make decisions regarding the awarding of sponsorship according to eligibility guidelines, availability of space, and the number of sponsored groups. The awarding process will include the following:

- Community Services Department staff will review submitted materials for completeness and schedule a review at the next scheduled CSAC meeting.
- CSAC will take up the matter and make a decision based on material submitted or may request additional information or for the applicant to appear before them
- Department staff will notify applicants by both telephone and posted mail of the decision of the CSAC.
- Sponsorships will continue until conditions change for the applicant group or if questions arise regarding eligibility.
- Department staff and/or the CSAC reserve the right to re-evaluate applicants from time to time.

Marketing of sponsorship opportunity: Consistent with its mission of "Enhancing communication through the development of community-wide informational materials", the Community Services Department will increase the marketing of sponsorship opportunity through inclusion in

- room rental information
- room rental applications
- all relevant departmental informational materials (i.e. website, Natick Common Guide).