

Town of Mint Hill Fee Waiver Policy for Parks, Athletic Fields, & Indoor Facilities

General

These guidelines establish parameters for reducing or waiving outdoor park or indoor facility use fees for community-wide events and activities that benefit the public.

Purpose

The Town of Mint Hill (Town) is regularly approached to reduce or waive park/facility use fees for events and activities. These guidelines are designed to provide a process for event organizers to apply for fee reductions or waivers and to establish mutually beneficial partnerships between the Town and the community.

Responsibility

The granting of waivers is dependent upon budget and operating impacts. To the extent a reduction or waiver can be granted without negatively impacting the Town's budget or operations, these guidelines will guide the Town Manager's discretion. No employee other than the Town Manager or his/her designee has the authority to waive, reduce, or change an established fee set by the Mint Hill Board of Commissioners (MHBOC). Waiver requests must be submitted to the Town Manager before finalizing reservation agreements.

Background

The Town strives to be an exceptional steward of the public's parks and facilities, as well as an exceptional steward of the Town budget supported by residents' taxes. To that end, the Town charges fees for park and facility usage to offset the Town's tax burden. Charging user fees is a standard practice when individuals, private groups, or non-profit groups wish to reserve and exclusively utilize public facilities (examples include but are not limited to shelters, fields, tennis, meeting rooms, etc.). The fees associated with reserving public facilities for private use are reviewed annually by Town staff and ultimately approved by the MHBOC.

All fees and deposits in the RecDesk Facility Reservation System associated with any facility, program, or service must be charged to an individual or group unless a waiver is obtained from the Town Manager.

Town employees are not authorized to provide or give exclusive use of facilities to groups or individuals at no charge, regardless of the group's status. If a group or individual wishes to request a fee waiver, those requests must go to the Town Manager.

Policy General Principles

Fee waivers/reductions are available for a variety of large events, including sporting, tourism, cultural, general, and community events and activities.

Fee waivers/reductions only apply to permit or reservation fees. Deposits, direct costs, including but not limited to traffic control, staff time, or other Town fees, are not eligible for a fee waiver or reduction under this policy.

Events/Activities Not Eligible for Waivers or Reductions

- Events and facility reservations by private individuals.
- Activities primarily of a fundraising or charitable nature unless the funds directly benefit Town-owned facilities.
- Events that are political or by individuals seeking political office or elected officials for an election campaign.
- Religious organizations seeking space or facilities for religious services.

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- Organizations based outside of town limits (unless the demonstrated benefits are primarily to the residents of Mint Hill).
- Groups or organizations that have failed to fulfill their obligations during previous events or activities for which Town facility permit fees were waived or reduced.

Fee Reduction Criteria

The following criteria apply to the consideration of fee reduction requests for special events, athletic facilities, and indoor facilities.

Use of Parks for Special Events

On rare occasions, fees and charges may be reduced or waived completely when the Town Manager determines such action to be in the best interest of the Town, residents, and the applicant.

To be eligible for a 100% fee waiver, the reserved facilities must be used for a unique or special Community-Wide Event. For an event to fit this description, it should meet all the following criteria:

- Be open to the entire public at no charge.
- Be family-friendly.
- Be appropriate to the park setting.
- Offer activities or events associated with the Town's core program areas.
- Be offered by a non-profit or not-for-profit established organization.

Community-Wide Event fee waivers are given for the park rental or facility rental fees. Any deposits, direct costs, or fees incurred for staffing are still applied to the group requesting the facility.

Use of Athletic Fields

Youth sports organizations may be eligible for a rental fee reduction if they meet or exceed the following criteria:

- Must be a youth sports organization documented by legal status and insured with General Liability protection per the Town's standards.
- Must show proof of following best practices in the field of youth sports, inclusive of performing background screenings of coaches and administrators.
- Must show proof of providing opportunities to Mint Hill youth from families that do not have the financial means to participate.
- Must provide the service at a participant cost substantially lower than the current market rate (as determined by the Town).
- Must provide sports-based youth development programs that complement Town programming efforts and are not in direct competition.
- Must be in good financial standing with the Town.

Use of Mint Hill Community Center Facilities

Facility rental fees charged for the use of indoor facilities at the Mint Hill Community Center (MHCC) may be waived by the Town Manager or his designee in certain limited cases. Any applicant requesting such a waiver must submit the appropriate documents demonstrating that the applicant or intended use meets the following categories:

- Intergovernmental cooperation, including
 - Local, State, and Federal government, and

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- Public School Districts.
- Town-sponsored programs.
- Non-profit groups.
- Mint Hill Partnership Organizations and Programs.

Recognized Youth Sports Organizations. Any applicant requesting consideration of their waiver must do the following:

1. Submit a letter or [online form](#) to the Town Manager requesting the specific location, date, and time for each facility fee waiver. An authorized representative must sign the request.
2. Submit a copy of the applicant's 501c (3) or (c) (6) non-profit organization documents or any other documents, if applicable.
3. Submit a copy of the organization's mission statement, if applicable.
4. Submit a copy of the organization's certificate of liability insurance naming the Town of Mint Hill as additional insured.

Governmental Waivers

Fees may be waived for special events or temporary uses by outside government agencies when the use is related to performing their normal functions and benefits Mint Hill residents.

Other Obligations

Any reduction or waiver of Town facility fees above will not affect the applicant's obligation to comply with the remaining qualifications, restrictions, and criteria of this policy, to pay other Town costs, or to provide a security deposit or insurance as required by this policy or by ordinance.

Applicants who fail to abide by the guidelines and requirements outlined in this policy will be ineligible to receive future fee waivers or fee reductions for at least one (1) year.