



City of Dyersville
City Administrator's Office

June 22, 2026

Mayor Jeff Jacque and City Council Members
City of Dyersville
Memorial Building
340 1st Avenue East
Dyersville, IA 52040

RE: Youth T-Ball Field Use — Findings and Plan for 2027

Dear Honorable Mayor Jacque and Council Members:

You recently received a petition about youth access to our athletic fields. I investigated the concerns it raises, met with the family who brought it forward, and reviewed our field scheduling and the events of June 12. This letter provides the Council with a full account of what happened and the steps the City is taking. I want to begin by thanking the family and the parents who brought these concerns forward. The City's 2026 season is now complete, so our focus is on how to resolve this for the future. To explain how the situation arose and how the City intends to do that, it helps to start with how our ballfields are scheduled.

The City's ballfields are governed by our Baseball/Softball Facilities Use and Rental Policy, adopted by Resolution No. 31-19 on April 15, 2019. That policy reserves the fields for City recreation activities Monday through Thursday and makes them available for rental Friday through Sunday. It also establishes a priority order when more than one group seeks the same field: City recreation activities, including our T-ball program, have a higher priority than paid rentals such as tournaments. The key point, however, is that this priority protects an activity only when it has an actual, scheduled reservation.

This balance is deliberate. The policy keeps our fields available for City youth and recreation programs during the week, while weekend rentals bring visitors to Dyersville, support our downtown businesses, and strengthen the community. The City and the Field of Dreams Movie Site are partners in that effort, working toward the same goal, and the 2027 adjustment is intended to serve that shared purpose by improving the program for everyone who uses these fields.

For many years, T-ball has been played on Friday evenings. This practice began around 2014 when T-ball was moved from Saturday to Friday. The City has no record that this was formally

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adopted by the Park and Recreation Committee or the City Council. For most of that time, it caused no difficulty because the games finished early and the fields were cleared before tournament play began. However, leaving Friday T-ball as an informal practice contributed to this conflict.

Two developments have made that informal arrangement harder to sustain. Our T-ball program has grown, and for the safety of the children, we divided it by age group beginning in 2024. More players and more games on Friday evenings, overlapping with rented tournament time, have left little room for error when weather or schedules shift. Park and Recreation Manager Adam Huehnergath recognized this challenge. Earlier in the season, Huehnergath reviewed the calendar, identified the Fridays most likely to cause conflicts, adjusted where possible, and communicated those adjustments to the Park and Recreation Committee. Friday scheduling pressure was also discussed at the March Park and Recreation Committee meeting, where the consensus was to keep Friday T-ball games and adjust as needed.

On the morning of Friday, June 12, 2026, a rain event delayed that day's tournament games and triggered a series of schedule changes. By midday, families were notified that T-ball games would move from the Westside Park ballfields to the Candy Cane Park ballfield. Later that afternoon, as the delay pushed the tournament's timeline further, games were reassigned to fields expected to open by early evening, leaving no ballfield available for T-ball at game time. At about 5:45 p.m., families were notified that the T-ball games would instead be played on the grass at Westside Park. Staff worked on a solution, including bringing tees and balls to the grass, but because the final change came so late, there was not enough time to set everything up properly before the games began. Equipment and bases were not yet in place when play started, and coaches stepped in to help their teams get organized. Unsurprisingly, the evening was confusing for some coaches and the families present. The youngest children were unsettled, and the games ran late, past many of the players' bedtimes. In the end, six of the seven scheduled games were played that night. The City apologizes to all families and participants for the disruption and confusion that evening.

On June 19, I met with the petition-signing family — Jordan and Carly Thein, joined by Angie White — along with Mayor Jacque and Park and Recreation Manager Huehnergath. The petition lists six requests, but our conversation focused on two key points: that Friday remain T-ball night and that our youngest players have a consistent, protected time to play that is not lost to a last-minute change. These are fair and reasonable requests, and I believe the City can meet them.

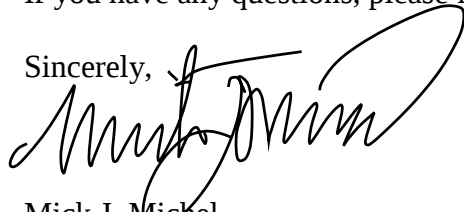
Beginning with the 2027 season, Staff will move Friday T-ball to Commercial Club Park and reserve those fields on Friday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for T-ball across the six Fridays of the season, May 7 through June 11. Commercial Club Park is a strong fit for several reasons. It is safer for small children because the fields are not immediately adjacent to a city street. It also keeps our visiting guests close to downtown, supports local businesses, and keeps tournament operations connected rather than spread across town. By formally reserving this T-ball time slot under our existing policy, T-ball will have a protected place on the Friday evening

schedule rather than relying on informal accommodations. This action is accomplished under the current policy and requires no changes. The City will include this protected Friday evening T-ball window in the Field of Dreams Movie Site rental agreement, thereby setting the arrangement by contract. As a result, even if a tournament's schedule is affected by weather or other factors, the reserved T-ball window will remain in place and will not be preempted by last-minute changes. We will keep the program divided by age group, as the location can accommodate the additional games.

As we plan for future seasons, our focus turns to applying what the evening of June 12 made clear. Staff will bring these lessons to the Park and Recreation Committee for its review, including how best to notify families when weather forces a schedule change and how to ensure equipment for our youngest players is pre-positioned at any alternate location where a game might be moved. I anticipate the Committee will work through these procedures well before the 2027 season, and if any further adjustments or formal actions become necessary to safeguard local recreation time, staff will bring them to the Council's attention. Staff will also communicate the protected T-ball schedule and contingency plans to our Field of Dreams tournament partners well in advance of next season.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mick J. Michel", with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Mick J. Michel
City Administrator
