



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Item 3
October 7, 2021
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Mercer Island Community and Event Center Facility Allocation and Use policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Discuss the proposed policy and, if desired, move to endorse.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

STAFF:	Ryan Daly/Emily Moon (Consultant)
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Jake Jacobson
EXHIBITS:	1. MICEC Facility Allocation and Use Policy

SUMMARY

The City’s Strategy for the *Mercer Island Community and Event Center and Recreation Programs and Services* (also known as the Reset Strategy) calls for updating existing or developing new policies to ensure that the Recreation Division’s actions are consistent with the Reset Strategy.

The City does not have a comprehensive policy guiding the allocation of MICEC space for various purposes and by various users. This staff report provides the Commission with a proposed policy for its consideration. Staff believes that this policy provides some needed boundaries and parameters for facility use but continues to permit sufficient flexibility for Staff to respond to facility, community and user needs.

Background

In 2003, the Mercer Island City Council endorsed the following “MICEC Purpose and Intent Statement:”

Mercer Island’s future Community Center will be a public gathering place for citizens of all ages. Seniors, young children, teens and adults will have available to them the activities and programs offered at the center. It will first and foremost provide the services for the citizens of Mercer Island. The center will be the community’s primary civic meeting center addressing recreational, educational, and cultural interests for all Mercer Islanders. It will also be a meeting place for organizations individuals and for public events.

Since that time, the MICEC has delivered on those initial intentions and strengthened the role of the facility as a meeting and event venue. In 2011, for example, the City Council voted to change the name of the facility to emphasize and support the important role the “Event Center” plays in providing necessary financial support to the activities of the Community Center. This action and many others have demonstrated that the MICEC will serve both residents and non-residents for a wide variety of uses.

The availability and allocation of the facility's space differ from day to day, season to season, and year to year. The facility space is a finite resource, the MICEC is a unique amenity on Mercer Island, and some uses can co-exist more easily than others; therefore, thoughtful management is needed to for the MICEC to meet near-term demand and ongoing goals.

This draft policy uses the following principles to guide MICEC facility allocation and use. Allocation and use of the MICEC will:

- Be benefits-focused.
- Support diverse uses.
- Be equitable and fair.

The policy describes how various groups will be prioritized for scheduling purposes. It also differentiates between parts of the facility that are widely sought as private rental amenities and other parts of the facility that are used to host the bulk of the community and public programs.

Key policy questions

As the Parks and Recreation Commission reviews this policy, Staff encourages the Commission to focus on major policy questions and implications such as:

- Should the MICEC be used for commercial purposes or to conduct fundraising?
- If the MICEC is used by other organizations to generate profit, should the MICEC receive a share (above and beyond the rental fee)?
- Who should get priority access to rent the facility?
- Should the current policy/practice of providing a fee reduction or waiver to Level 1 organizations be continued?
- Should the ongoing use by any one renter or for any one activity explicitly be limited?

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Discuss policy and key questions.
- 2) Take action on the policy (either moving to endorse or suggesting amendments).