TO: Mayor Jefferson and Members of City Council
FROM: Dorothy Hargrove, Director
        Parks, Recreation and Library Department
THROUGH: Eric Keck, City Manager
DATE: February 3, 2016
SUBJECT: Discontinuation of Englewood Recreation Center Preschool Program
        Council Request #16-036

The difficult decision to discontinue the preschool program at the Englewood Recreation Center
reflects the changing demand for this service in our community as well as the challenges of
complying with new regulatory requirements.

The current enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year is 16 children. Enrollment has been
steadily declining for the past several years. Although we raised the price slightly this year, we
estimate a loss of approximately $18,000. Even at full capacity of 24 children we would still not
break even on expenses.

Our goal, of course, is not necessarily to make money on the preschool but to use resources
wisely to meet the needs of families and children in the community. Because the majority of
families today have two working parents, there are simply fewer people able to take advantage
of a preschool that meets for just 3 hours on weekday mornings. As part of the decision
process, staff gathered information on other community and recreation center preschools. We
discovered that while our tuition is at the low end of the market range we couldn’t expect to raise
prices sufficiently to cover our costs. We also discovered that smaller recreation departments
have or are considering discontinuing the service due to low demand and increasing State
regulations. Only the larger recreation districts, such as South Suburban or Foothills, plan to
continue their preschools, although they report declining enrollment as well.

Changes in regulation have also driven the necessity to consider changing our service model.
About 5 years ago, we were informed that the preschool program would need to meet
requirements for educational preschools throughout the State of Colorado. Before that time, the
ERC program was not officially regulated as a preschool program but was simply an extension
of family and child recreation activities.

Several of the regulations were fairly easy and inexpensive to incorporate into our existing
program. Let me be quick to state that the health and safety of our children have never been in
question. The difficulty has come with the need to hire more highly qualified staff and meet
changing curriculum guidelines. We have experienced significant staff turnover. It is difficult to
recruit and retain qualified teachers who are willing to work the limited number of hours at an affordable salary. We are actually paying tuition and costs for a current teacher to take early childhood education courses she needs to stay in compliance with State requirements. Our continued discussions with the regulators have made it clear that even more stringent requirements are being considered to improve the educational rigor of preschools. The traditional activity-based preschool program that is consistent with the goals and the resources of the recreation center is no longer an option.

We gave the attached letter to families last week in order to give them ample time to find alternate preschools before we discontinued the program for the summer. The families have been aware that staff has been struggling to keep the program alive and we sincerely regret disappointing them, and our dedicated teachers, with the necessity of this change.

The Englewood Recreation Center is still committed to serving families and young children but the type of program that we can most effectively deliver is changing. We have just hired a dynamic new Youth Program Administrator to help us develop new services that better reflect the changed realities of our environment and community. We are exploring, for instance, the possibility of providing evening and weekend drop-in day care to better serve the needs of working parents. Our summer camp programs are popular and successful. We will continue to work with the community to find programs that are sustainable and successful.

We would be happy to provide more information or to answer any questions.

Attachment (1)
January 28, 2016

Dear Friends and Parents,

I am writing you today with some difficult news. With regret, Englewood Parks and Recreation has decided that the All Aboard Preschool program will close in May of 2016. Discontinuing this program was not an easy decision. Staff spent the past two years reviewing state licensing demands, enrollment trends and ultimately assessing the community's needs and came to the conclusion that we can no longer operate a licensed preschool program. This program will continue through the remainder of the school year with a strong dedication to education, culminating in a graduation in May.

Whether this is the first school year with us or your family has been a part of our preschool program for many years, we are grateful that you have chosen to enroll your child(ren) in our program. I also want to extend my gratitude to Mrs. Hanks and Mrs. Valdez for their hard work and perseverance.

While we can no longer provide a separate preschool program we will continue to offer special classes and events for young children. We look forward to serving you and your children again in the future.

Included is a collection of licensed preschool programs in the area to assist you and your family in the transition for next school year. Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your support and understanding.

Jones  
Program and Facility Supervisor  
Englewood Recreation Center  
303 762.2692 jjones@englewoodgov.org
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<td>Amadeo Wheeler</td>
<td>M-F: Full Day</td>
<td>303 498.2127</td>
<td>Footills Sanders Creek Day Care 6:45a - 6p</td>
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<td>Cindy Stodgill</td>
<td>M-W-F: 8:15-3:30</td>
<td>303 763.7075</td>
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TO: Eric Keck, City Manager

FROM: Dorothy Hargrove, Director of Parks, Recreation and Library
       Joe Sack, Recreation Manager

DATE: February 16, 2016

SUBJECT: Preschool Costs and Fees

State of Colorado Preschool licensing requirements include the following staffing positions: Director, Teacher, Aide and Sub-Director. We do not have a qualified Director or Sub-Director on staff at this time and would need to hire at least one additional staff member to be in compliance with State regulations. Qualifications for a Director include an appropriate baccalaureate degree, Early Childhood Education credits and a minimum 5460 hours of experience working with children under 6. These staffing requirements create difficulty in hiring qualified part time staff.

Current 2016 Budget

- Labor $23,626 Part Time Preschool Teacher & Assistant
- Recreational Supplies $1,300 General operating supplies
- Food $200 Food and refreshments
- Books/Magazines $75 Books
- Other Pro Services $700 Nursing fee, background checks, inspection fee, excursions
- Travel & Conf $2250 Trainings required by State

Sub-Total $28,151

Additional Staffing required (Currently not funded)
Director - 20 hours week with benefits $16.00/hr. = $22,630 year

Current Program Supervision (Currently indirect cost not included in 2016 fee structure)
Program administrator 25% of time; $49,000 plus benefits = $16,660 year

Total Operational Cost $67,441

In order to recover these costs, fees for program participants would need to increase substantially. These estimates are based upon the preschool operating 33 weeks per year.

Programs Fees
3-4 years old T/TH 9am -12N $511 non-resident /$409 resident per month
4-5 years old MW/F 9 am -12N $766 non-resident /$613 resident per month

2016 Current Fees
3-4 years old T/TH 9am -12N $176 non-resident /$138 resident per month
4-5 years old MW/F 9 am -12N $220 non-resident /$176 resident per month