

RANCHO SIMI RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 4, 2007

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: General Manager

SUBJECT: Report on Use of Rancho Simi Community Park for Simi Valley
Days Music Festival

SUMMARY

The Simi Valley Days Music Festival took place at Rancho Simi Community Park on September 14, 15 and 16, 2007. Park District Rangers and staff were present during all three days (and nights) of the event. A summary of observations from the District's Recreation Administrator is attached for your information. A few identified issues are worth emphasizing here.

The music played was not family-oriented, and much of it would in fact be considered as either noise, obscenity, or both, by a large percentage of the population. It is unknown why this type of music has been a part of the annual Simi Valley Days community event. Profanity was screamed by several of the bands, and the sound echoed loudly through the adjacent neighborhoods and beyond. The music seemed geared towards a very small segment of the community.

Although not many complaints were received by the District, the ones that were received expressed very serious concerns about the intrusion this event had on the individual rights of the surrounding neighbors. The Simi Valley Police Department also indicated that complaint calls were received.

The Park District's conditions required the Simi Valley Days Committee to obtain a Special Event Permit from the City. Although one was in fact issued, the Simi Valley Days Committee did not timely transmit a copy or explain the conditions of that Special Event Permit to the Music Festival organizer(s). Park District staff provided a copy of the City's Special Event Permit to the Music Festival organizer during an event coordination meeting held on the Monday prior to the event at the Sycamore Drive Community Center. Simi Valley Police, Park District staff and Simi Valley Days Committee members were in attendance at this meeting, and the terms of the permits were thoroughly reviewed at that time.

The music played later than the City's Special Event Permit allowed (although not later than the Park District's permit of 11:30 pm), and police instructed organizers to shut the music down. The parking support of Explorer Scouts was to be divided between the carnival and music festival sites. In fact, no Explorer Scouts were apparently used at the music festival site, and the grass parking lot

attendants did not meet District requirements. The sprinklers in the area had to be turned off during the Music Festival setup, event and tear down. This meant the grass fields had to be watered just before setup occurred, which left the soil damp and vulnerable to damage by the heavy equipment driven onto the grass for the tents, stage, fencing, concessions, toilets, etc. The Simi Valley Days Committee's uniformed security arrived very late the first day of the festival. Festival attendance was low, with bands playing to as a few as 10 people at times. The music was loud, long, unbecoming of the Park District, and obviously annoyed many more than the number of people that enjoyed it.

Under these circumstances, it is staff's recommendation that this event not be allowed to return to Rancho Simi Community Park. This site is inadequate for music festival style events. Parking is limited, neighbors live close to the park boundaries, sound travels easily from this location, and family oriented uses are already regularly programmed at this park site. Three days of music extending from early afternoon to nearly midnight is just too large of an impact upon the community for either a small or large audience, particularly given the physical limitations of the facility. Staff recommends this matter be referred to the Policy Committee so that an analysis of District Policy regarding music festivals can be undertaken.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED

Review and refer the matter to the District's Policy Committee.



Larry Peterson
General Manager

ATTACHMENT

RANCHO SIMI RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: September 21, 2007
To: Larry Peterson, General Manager
From: Administrator, Recreation & Leisure Services
Subject: Simi Valley Days Music Festival, September 14, 15 & 16, 2007 Recap

I. SUMMARY

- A. Attendance was low, which helped make the event run without problems.
1. Estimated was 300 people paid on Friday, 600 on Saturday and 100 on Sunday, which is about 1/3 the number they had anticipated. I also heard the paid entry numbers were lower than these.
 2. Police said the crowd was mellow—no fights or aggressive behavior, although there was a broken leg by one spectator on Sunday.
- B. We received complaints from “neighbors” following the 3-day event that were typically EXTREMELY upset! Complaints were about the loudness of the music, the lateness of the music, the annoying type of music and the multiple hours of the music. Others stated that our events in our parks should be family oriented activities, and this was not.
1. The decibel level on neighboring streets was approx. 60-65. Although this is a “conversational” level, the fact that it could be heard “at all”, was very irritating to those that complained.
 2. The City Police Dept received approx. 7 calls on Friday and at least 10 on Saturday. Police informed callers that it was a permitted event and there was nothing they could do about it.
 3. The Conditions given the SVD MF from the Park District included that no amplified music after 11:30pm and volume limit of 85 decibels at the park boundaries. They did not break the Park District conditions but The City placed Conditions on them that limited their amplified music to end by 11:00pm on Friday and Saturday. They did not follow this condition. I also noticed that their schedule of music was to end at 11:45pm, and appeared to me they never intended to follow the ending time they were given.
- C. Problem/concern areas:
1. Softball Field 3 (Cemetery Field) had quite a few people just hanging out, which was a difficult area to supervise.
 - a. There were also non-paying people that viewed the stage from the “other side” of the outfield fence without paying. This concerned SVD MF leaders.

2. There were a number of people leaving at the end of the night who walked eastward through the park toward the Tennis court parking lot. The walkway lights turn off at 10:00pm (when the park normally is closed) and so this walk and walkway was in the dark.
3. We have "ruts" in the grass ballfields from the big trucks used for the Stage, Fencing, Tents and port-a-potty deliveries. It is a challenge to keep the grass green and still stop watering early enough to handle larger trucks.
4. The Avalon "Tent truck" exited through the entrance gate at approx. 6:15pm on Friday night, as they were running late. Crowd was small so it wasn't that much of an issue but could have been if crowd was larger.
5. Grass parking lot should have had parking lot attendants controlling the lot, a minimum of 3 at all times as per RSRPD Conditions of Use and the City of Simi Valley Special Event Conditions. There was usually only 1 person at the entrance who guided people onto the grass and/or checked names for entrance to the VIP lot. It "worked out" this year without parking attendants because it had such low attendance, but could have been a problem with a higher attendance.
 - a. SVDMF Committee said the Explorer Scouts were supposed to attend to the parking lot, but they couldn't make it because they were at the carnival site.
 - b. We had heard from the police at our "pre-event coordination meeting" that they thought there were not going to be enough explorer scouts to handle two venue sites, but SVDMF people did not heed their concern.
6. Seems like "in and out" privileges shouldn't have been allowed as attendees could, and did, exit to the parking lot to go "hang out" in their cars.
7. I hear that some bands used a lot of profanity. SVDMF promoter was observed instructing a Sat night band of the "language rules" that he was given from the police, so I do not know if profanity continued following the "instruction from the police" for Sunday's bands.
8. Police voiced concern over the number of their Special Event Permit Conditions they had given the SVDMF that were not followed.
9. Staff and Police were told they would be given keys to the gates, but I don't believe they were (the locks weren't bought or put on the gates until Saturday.)

D. On a "more positive note":

1. Last bands of Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights had horn sections and/or style of music that was much more "mainstream" music.
2. Knights of Columbus (trash pickup) were always there picking up trash in both the event site and grass parking lot.
3. SVDMF utilized the ballfield lights effectively, turning them on and off timely and appropriately.
4. Two light towers in the grass lot were very helpful to have in addition to the ballfield lights.
5. There were always paramedics on site during the event hours as well as the vendors. Vendors included a climbing wall, a "human gyroscope" ride, a food vendor, a Kettlecorn vendor and the Kiwanis Beer Wagon.

II. Event recap on a day to day basis

A. Friday

1. Rangers arrived and had to tell SVDMMF personnel that parking attendants were needed, as there was no one in the lot or grass area at all.
2. Music stopped 11:10 - 11:15 p.m. (Would have played one more encore but police said "no".) No incidents.
3. Uniformed security didn't arrive until late (after 8:00 p.m.) as they all went to Carnival site. Five of eight were told to come over. "World Security" did not have anyone pre-arranged to stay overnight to watch over event site and equipment, but ended up getting one to stay last minute.
4. 11:30pm, couldn't find rangers to "patrol" the grass parking lot. It appeared they left at the same time as the police which was about 15 minutes after the music stopped and when the police had determined there was no issue with the crowd.
 - a. I discussed this "post-concert" supervision responsibility with Sgt. Brill on the first night. RSRPD would be responsible for supervising the backstage and "clean-up" after the last band if it seemed quiet and most the concert patrons gone.
 - b. Also discussed with Sgt. Brill the "stop time" for the music. The park board had approved until 11:30pm, but the city municipal code and City Conditions for the special event stated no amplified music after 11:00pm. Park Rangers would not be enforcing the 11:00pm stop time, but that would be up to the City Police to "enforce".
 - c. I did not observe our Rangers walking or "out of their Ranger vehicle" any of the 3 days, but I was not in attendance the entire time. I believe they need more direct instructions of what they are to do for this kind of event.
5. Rangers counted 120 cars at its largest point on Friday night.

B. Saturday

1. 4pm there was about one side of one row of cars in the grass parking lot (50-70 cars.) The band was performing to less than 5 people, as it appeared the rest of the cars must have been from event staff.
2. At 7pm there were cars scattered throughout the grass lot instead of parked "close together". There did not appear to be many people inside.
3. Between 10 and 11pm there were around 100 people in the audience for the last band.
4. I heard that the Rangers had earlier approached the people "hanging out" in Field 3. This is good, but there were still quite a few there at 10pm.
5. Music stopped at 11:20pm. I hear the last band, "Fishbone", got a late start because some of the band members went to the carnival site where they had played the previous year.
 - a. SVDC did not communicate the City of Simi Valley's Special Event Conditions to the SVDMMF organizers. Music was planned to go until 11:30pm, as per RSRPD Conditions, but did not plan to end by 11:00pm as per City of Simi Valley Conditions. Actually, the schedule showed music ending on Saturday at 11:45pm, so they were never planning to abide by RSRPD Conditions.

C. Sunday

1. Didn't observe much this day as when I drove by there were very few cars (19) in the grass parking lot and I didn't go in until the end of the night.
2. Music was around 9:30pm.

III. Overall comments about the SVDMF and recommendations for the future

- A. In my opinion, the event consisted of too many hours of loud, annoying to the general public, amplified music that was allowed to be played until too late at night. The park is too close to residential areas and isn't suited for this extended, loud event.
- B. Should we receive a request to hold this event again in the future at Rancho Simi Community Park, I suggest recommending the following to the Park Board:
1. Deny the use of this park
 2. Should a concert(s) be allowed, then
 - a. establish a limit of music per day, I suggest a max of 2 hours
 - b. limit the number of days. I suggest to 1 or 2.
 - (1) but after this year, the neighbors may get concerned of the length of time the music will be played if they here any at all.
 - c. limit amplified sound to end by 9:30pm. I would suggest even earlier.
 - d. Park District Ordinance No. 2, Rule 9, *No person will use abusive, profane or indecent language, or exhibit any conduct that may annoy others.* be strictly conditioned and enforced.
 - e. charge a substantial financial "bond", or deposit, to be collected and kept should Conditions For Use not be kept.
 - f. Require the event coordinator or designated person/people to meet with park district staff prior to the event and that this person/people be required to be in attendance the entire hours of the event. The SVDMF two primary organizers were Jason and Bruce. Although Bruce was not in attendance during part of Sunday's event, I am not sure if Jason was or not at the time Bruce was gone.
 - g. Require the permittee notify neighbors of the park of the upcoming event.
- C. Should the park board want to consider this event in the future then I would suggest the board question the SVD Committee on the purpose or goal of this event and how they believe it follows the mission of Simi Valley Days. Simi Valley Days' primary mission is to provide a fundraising vehicle under the auspices of a community-wide event to the service clubs, charitable organizations and nonprofit groups of the community. As I am unaware of a service club who sponsors the "music festival", I do not believe it fits their mission.



Doug Gale, Administrator
Recreation & Leisure Services