

March 16, 2023

TO: Northfield Park and Recreation Advisory Board
Northfield Parks Department, Attn: Dave Bennett

FR: Blake Kane, NSA President
Eric Runestad, NSA Treasurer

RE: Spring Creek Park

We are writing to request a review of the agreement that the Northfield Soccer Association (NSA) has with the City of Northfield with regard to the maintenance of the soccer fields at Spring Creek Park. More directly, we are hoping that subsequent to this review, the City will agree to cover the costs for field maintenance in way that is consistent with other city parks and athletic fields.

By way of background, I have attached an agreement from 2004 that details the arrangement that NSA worked out with the City with regard to the maintenance of the soccer fields. Though a few parts of this arrangement have changed over time, much of it remains in place. The City currently supports the buildings and structures, water, and irrigation at Spring Creek Park. NSA covers the cost of mowing, fertilizer, field striping and controls scheduling. The cost to NSA families for these services is roughly \$18,000, representing roughly 11% of NSA's annual budget.

Northfield Soccer Association serves approximately 500 youth in Northfield and surrounding communities across all our programming and helps to introduce and provide recreational and competitive soccer experiences to all children who are interested, including those who require financial assistance. Soccer is one of the most affordable and accessible sports and its reach is worldwide. It provides a foundation for youth of all backgrounds to be physically active, learn together and build community.

While we are appreciative of the creative approach to bring these fields online in 2004, we also recognize that almost 20 years have passed and circumstances have changed. The arrangement with Spring Creek and NSA is unlike any other park and any other sport, where the cost of lawncare, fertilizer and striping is carried by the City and spread among all taxpayers.

Because NSA is responsible for these additional costs at Spring Creek Park, and given that we are almost exclusively funded by participant fees, this translates into additional charges that we must pass along to participating families. And, given that soccer is Northfield's most diverse youth sport, this means passing along additional costs to our most diverse families, leading to an inequity that we believe should be addressed. Baseball, softball and lacrosse participants aren't assessed additional fees for lawncare, fertilizer and striping, and we don't believe NSA soccer players and their families should be either.

We would be pleased to speak to the Parks department about NSA, our programs, and our appeal for the City to reconsider this legacy agreement.