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Comments on proposal to limit access to RG Boat Ramp

1 message

Christy and Hub Adams <chadams123@comcast.net>
To: manager@cityofrivergrove.com

Mon, Aug 13, 2018 at 10:20 AM

Good morning:

I do not support any changes to the existing operations of the River Grove Boat Ramp. This includes limited use to daytime hours and any provisions to limit "loitering." My reasons are detailed below:

There is no conclusive evidence that there is a major problem with the boat ramp.

We have lived in River Grove for 7 years. We use the boat ramp to launch our kayaks during the summer perhaps 3 times a month, but visit the boat ramp year round at least weekly during evening walks in the neighborhood. We walk down, check the river, enjoy the scenery and then depart. During all of this time (at least 350 visits), we have rarely encountered more than one other person using the ramp, and everyone we have encountered has been quiet and respectful.

OUR experiences at the boat ramp, as well as the observation and experience of all residents, should be taken into account if Council is considering a change. Council should do a survey and collect data from ALL citizens to make this decision, and not just react to the 'squeaky wheels' who live adjacent to the ramp.

To make any changes to the operations based on the wishes of a small group of residents is inherently unfair and unethical

The Mayor and City Manager have each described the group of residents who have initiated all of this uproar as a "small" group of people. I would ask why the city has taken this knee-jerk reaction based on a small group of residents and apparently disregarded the many residents who have been happily and peacefully using the ramp for years. Governing based on the wishes or complaints of only a few residents creates the appearance of cronyism, favoritism and catering to the privileged few.

River access is a treasured part of our life in River Grove

The boat ramp is the only public access point to the river in River Grove. To close or limit access to the river to daytime hours would be to deny the majority of residents who do not live along the river itself access to this natural waterway and peaceful treasure. It begs the question of why the City would move to privatizing river access—an irony since we are RIVER Grove. Cities today realize the inherent public value of waterways and work to create access for citizens. One can look at Lake Oswego and Tualatin as examples. While River Grove is not the same size as these cities, they certainly can adopt this view and mindset--of encouraging wider access when possible—and not remain mired in attitudes of the past, those of exclusivity and access only for a privileged few.

We need to distinguish between an inconvenience or annoyance and an "emergency"

In discussing this I think it is important to make clear that modern life in a populated area involves being around other people and their children, their vehicles, their dogs, etc. This can result in things happening that are annoying or unpleasant, or that may make us uncomfortable. For example, we live near Childs Road and often have cars turning around in our driveway, our street filled with cars when neighbors have a party, teenagers playing loud music, barking dogs, etc. We understand that we made the choice to live where we do and we simply deal with these things as they arise. In this instance residents near the boat ramp have chosen to live where they do, and they should adapt to the realities of their location, not revert to asking the City to change policy so that they can be spared annoyances. Things like trash left on the ramp, people speaking loudly, or even shouting, or witnessing children playing on the ramp or in the river are simply part of living in a populated area. Closing or limiting a public facility so that this small group of residents can be spared discomfort is absurd.

That said I do believe that there may be some common sense measures that can be taken to help make sure the ramp is accessible and usable for all. Perhaps some signs or curb striping of parking/no parking areas would be helpful. Perhaps another trash collection point would be helpful. Council should look at these type of changes—those that would be beneficial for all users, and would solve some of the problem points brought up by neighbors--WITHOUT excluding anyone from using the river.

In short, I would support the city taking a fair approach to any changes, including collecting data from ALL citizens of River Grove, and involving ALL citizens in a solution, and not simply doing what is easiest and closing or limiting use of the ramp based on the requests of a very small minority of residents.

Thank you,

Christy Adams

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