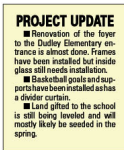


Church denied long-term use of school

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 14 October 2010 22:07 -



Dist. 20 board turns down request because how policy written.

A local church group will not be able to meet Sunday morning in the school's performing arts center.

At their meeting Monday, District 20 school board members turned down a request by the Crossing Fellowship to use the center for church services on a long-term basis.

Eric Most, the spokesperson for the group, and three other church members attended the meeting.

Leasing the school facility was discussed at the board's September meeting after superintendent Mike Teahon denied the church's application.

During last night's meeting, Most said he wasn't sure whether it was a short- or long-term lease.

The policy states that board approval is needed for long-term lease of the facility.

Most pointed out that leasing the PAC means revenue for the school and that custodians church members have talked to would be open to being on call Sunday mornings.

The congregation has met at the Senior Center for 2 1/2 years, he said, and never have had a plugged toilet.

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“We take out the trash, mop the floor and leave it better than we found it,” he said, noting the congregation tries to reach out to people—some who don’t generally step foot in a church. “But they will at the Senior Center and the school.”

According to the policy as interpreted by the administration, Teahon said the facility is not intended to house permanent tenants.

“The fact that this request is from a church is purely coincidental and should not be considered,” he said. “We run the risk of becoming proprietors with multiple tenants once the precedence allowing long-term use of the facility has been set.”

He added that the lease fee schedule is designed for community service events and that assigning custodians on Sundays could easily require more staff.

Other concerns Teahon noted are snow removal as weekend snow is not removed until Sunday afternoon, wear and tear on the facility because of permanent use and use of energy since heating and air conditioning are adjusted on weekends if there are no school events.

The policy also states that school facilities are generally not available to the public when staff is not available to monitor use such as on Sunday mornings prior to noon.

Board member Amber Burge asked the length of time the church needed the facility.

Most said the congregation wants to build their own facility since they’ve outgrown the Senior Center but that could take three to four years.

Nate Wyatt, a board member, said long-term use in the policy is meant to protect the facility and its staff and resources.

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Board members Pat Hecox and Bruce Clark voted to change the policy concerning community use of facilities while Scott France, Lisa Geiken, Wyatt and Burge voted against it.

Earlier, the board voted against changing a different policy dealing with advertising and promotion.

At their September meeting, board members learned that a local business volunteered to provide equipment for the activities program if the company's name and logo appeared on the equipment.

School policy restricts use of advertising in that manner except if it has educational merit.

On Monday night, Teahon said he had discussed the matter with staff and several business owners and recommended that the policy remain unchanged.

During his superintendent's report, Teahon said the district is eligible for \$128,000 in

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