

VALPO PARKS

RULES AND REGULATIONS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1. DEFINITIONS

CHAPTER 2: GENERAL USE

CHAPTER 3: GENERAL CONDUCT

CHAPTER 4: RECREATION ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER 5: VEHICLES AND PARKING

CHAPTER 6: PETS AND ANIMALS

CHAPTER 7: FEES AND REFUNDS

CHAPTER 8: INDIVIDUAL PARK AND PROGRAM RULES

CHAPTER 9: PARK AND PARK PROGRAM RULE ENFORCEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The City of Valparaiso established Valpo Parks to enhance community well-being through exceptional recreational opportunities. Valpo Parks is committed to designing meaningful spaces, creating impactful experiences, and promoting healthy lifestyles for all residents and visitors. To achieve this vision, Valpo Parks has adopted these Rules and Regulations to ensure that all Valpo Parks' facilities, trails, parks, and other natural areas remain welcoming and safe for public enjoyment.

Unless otherwise expressly authorized by Valpo Parks, these Rules and Regulations shall govern the conduct of all individuals utilizing Valpo Parks properties. All users shall, in conjunction with these Rules and Regulations, adhere to all applicable City ordinances, as well as all relevant State and Federal laws.

CHAPTER 1. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise expressly stated, the following terms shall hold the meanings set forth below:

- a. "Alcohol" shall mean and include any intoxicating or non-intoxicating malt liquor, including but not limited to beer, wine, hard seltzer, or any other alcoholic beverage as defined by applicable State and Federal law.
- b. "Bicycle Path" shall mean and include any designated path, lane, or trail primarily maintained for the use of persons operating bicycles.
- c. "Board" shall mean the Park Board, a six-member bipartisan board of park and recreation commissioners established by the City of Valparaiso.
- d. "City" shall mean the City of Valparaiso, Indiana.
- e. "Facilities" shall mean and include any structures or improvements located on Park property, including but not limited to recreation centers, maintenance buildings, garages or sheds, bridges, shelters, fences, splash pads, playground equipment, recreation equipment, and any other items constructed, installed, or established for a specific Park or recreation purpose.
- f. "Footpath" or "Foot Trail" shall mean and include any designated path or trail primarily maintained for pedestrian use.
- g. "Natural Resource" shall mean and include any plant or plant product, geologic formation, body of water, or wild animal found within Valpo Parks or in spaces maintained and managed by the City of Valparaiso.
- h. "Owner" shall mean and include any person owning, operating, or having the lawful use and control of a vehicle, animal, object, or other property, whether through lease, ownership, or otherwise.
- i. "Park," unless specifically limited, shall be deemed to include all parks, parkways, playgrounds, athletic fields, pickleball and/or tennis courts, golf courses, splash pads, parking areas, botanical gardens, public squares, open spaces, tree lawn areas, boulevards, internal park roads, waterways and lands under water, and also entrances,

docks and piers, channels and bridges, or any other area owned, improved, maintained, operated, or otherwise controlled by Valpo Parks.

j. "Permit" shall mean and include any written authorization issued by or under the authority of Valpo Parks for a specified park privilege, activity, or event, or permitting the performance of a specified act or acts within any Park or park-street.

k. "Person" shall mean and include any natural person, corporation, society, organization, company, association, joint stock association, firm, or co-partnership.

l. "Playground" or "Playground Area" shall mean and include any area maintained or designated as a playground or playground area, including all territory under the jurisdiction of Valpo Parks.

m. "Vehicle" shall mean and include any device, conveyance, or combination of conveyances, wheeled or without wheels, propelled, towed, or unpropelled, that in, around, or on which a person or thing is or may be carried, or any moving support or container for the conveyance of persons, animals, or bulky objects on land, water, or in the air.

CHAPTER 2: GENERAL USE

Chapter 2 / Section 1: Hours and Access

a. Valpo Parks are open to all individuals without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, political affiliation, or status regarding public assistance.

b. Unless otherwise posted or authorized by prior arrangement, all Valpo Parks shall be considered closed at 10:00 p.m. through 4:00 a.m. Access to parks or facilities may be restricted to daylight hours or other specific times as determined and posted by Valpo Parks.

c. Any Park or section thereof may be closed by Valpo Parks at any time, at its sole discretion, for reasons including, but not limited to, public safety, maintenance, or special events.

Chapter 2 / Section 2: Registrations, Permits, and Agreements for Park Facilities

a. All individuals seeking to utilize Park facilities requiring a permit or registration shall fulfill all obligations as prescribed by Valpo Parks. This includes, but is not limited to, the payment of all required fees, execution of any written contracts or agreements, and compliance with all applicable restrictions established by Valpo Parks.

Chapter 2 / Section 3: Commercial Use

a. No person shall engage in the sale, trade, peddling of merchandise, or vending of any type within a Park or Facility.

b. No person shall engage in commercial filming, photography, or any other type of videography on Park property or within Park facilities. Non-commercial or private recreational photography/videography, and other types are permitted.

c. No person shall distribute flyers, leaflets, pamphlets, or other forms of advertisement directly to park visitors or by placing them on vehicles parked within any Park.

d. No person shall place, post, or otherwise display any sign, billboard, or any other visible form of advertising within a Park or Facility.

e. No person shall distribute or display any flag, banner, aircraft, kite, balloon, or any other aerial device for the purposes of advertising or marketing within a Park or Facility.

Chapter 2 / Section 4: Political Use

a. Organized assemblies, rallies, protests, advertising, campaigning, or any other form of politicking within a Park or Facility without a reservation is prohibited.

Chapter 2 / Section 5: Facility and Park Reservations

a. Individuals may reserve a Park facility. Such reservations require payment in full at the time of booking. All fees for facility reservations are non-refundable, and reservations are valid regardless of weather conditions ("rain or shine"), except in the event of cancellation by Valpo Parks. This does not apply to field reservations.

b. In the event Valpo Parks must cancel a reservation due to unforeseen circumstances, a refund may be issued at the sole discretion of Valpo Parks.

c. All individuals or groups reserving an area are responsible for cleaning the area upon completion of their activity or termination of their reservation. Failure to properly clean the area may result in additional charges.

Chapter 2 / Section 6: Special Events, Classes, and Programs

a. Park staff and volunteers may photograph, or videotape participants enrolled in programs and events or enjoying park facilities. These photos and videos are for Valpo Parks and City of Valparaiso use only and may be utilized in Valpo Parks and City of Valparaiso publications or media promotions. Individuals who prefer not to be photographed may inform the photographer or program supervisor. While every effort will be made to respect such requests, this may not be possible in all situations, particularly during large public events.

Chapter 2 / Section 7: Rules for the Rentals of Shelters or Gazebos

a. No person shall bring or use any artificial petals, leaves, glitter, confetti, rice, fireworks, or tiki torches.

b. Amplified music must be contained within the immediate area of the shelter or gazebo. The sound should not be clearly audible from the nearest park entrance, parking lot, or adjacent park amenity. Regardless of the decibel level, if the music is determined to be disruptive to other park users or neighbors, the renter must lower the volume or turn off the music.

c. No person shall amplify sound using blowhorns, whistles, car horns, or any other type of excessive sound amplifying device.

d. No person is permitted to use or hang any decorations that will cause damage to any shelter, gazebo, or structure located at a shelter or gazebo.

e. No person shall use chalk anywhere within a shelter or gazebo.

CHAPTER 3: GENERAL CONDUCT

Chapter 3 / Section 1: General Rules

a. Valpo Parks reserves the right to expel any person found in violation of these Rules and Regulations from a Park or Facility. Such expulsion may be for an extended period, and reinstatement shall only occur upon the express written consent of Valpo Parks.

- b. The following conduct is prohibited on Park property: fighting; abusive or obscene language, gestures, or behavior; disturbing, harassing, or interfering with any Park employee or the employee's property; disturbing, harassing, or interfering with any guest, resident, or visitor to any of the Parks; causing damage or harm to any Park property or Facility; blatant violation of posted park signage; interfering with, destroying, or causing damage to Park wildlife; and/or disregarding the rights or safety of others.
- c. No person shall interrupt, interfere with, or otherwise disturb the orderly conduct of games, recreational activities, or events within a Park or Facility.
- d. Unreasonably loud, disturbing, or unnecessary noise that interferes with the enjoyment of the park or disturbs the peace of the neighborhood is prohibited.
- e. No person shall perform any construction, repair, or renovation work of any kind within any Park.
- f. No person shall smoke, including the use of e-cigarettes and vaping devices, within the boundaries of all Park locations or Facilities except in the parking lot or designated areas.
- g. Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes and vaping devices, is prohibited within eight (8) feet of a public entrance to any public place or government building.

Chapter 3 / Section 2: Conduct on Park Property

- a. Placing, throwing, or otherwise disposing of any foreign object, whether solid or liquid, into any pond, lake, fountain, water feature, or other body of water found within a Park or Facility is prohibited.
- b. No individual is permitted to bathe, swim, or wade in any pond, lake, fountain, water feature, or other body of water within a Park or Facility, unless the area is specifically designated and authorized for such activities.
- c. The unauthorized removal or destruction of any tree, plant, shrub, flower, or any part thereof is prohibited. Attaching signs to or carving into any tree or plant is also prohibited.
- d. Every person is responsible for the proper disposal and removal of their waste. All garbage and recyclables must be placed in designated trash or recycling receptacles. No person shall bring in, dump, or dispose of any outside waste within a Park or Facility.

Chapter 3 / Section 3: Use of Alcohol and Other Substances

- a. The consumption or possession of any alcoholic beverage is prohibited at all Park locations or Facilities, except within areas specifically designated and permitted for such consumption by Valpo Parks.
- b. No person shall possess an illegal substance as defined by all applicable City, State, County, and Federal law.
- c. No person shall sell, barter, trade, or exchange an alcoholic beverage within a Park or Facility, except for authorized agents and employees of Valpo Parks acting within the scope of a valid permit.
- d. Employees and agents of Valpo Parks, while in the performance of their duties, are authorized and empowered to expel or deny entrance to a Park or Facility to any person whom the employee or agent reasonably believes to be impaired by or under the influence of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances, to the extent that such impairment poses a risk to safety or interferes with the enjoyment of others.

Chapter 3 / Section 4: Use of Fireworks and Weapons

- a. The use of fireworks, rockets, or any other device with an explosive charge is prohibited within any Park or Facility.
- b. Any person possessing a weapon or firearm on Park property must comply with all applicable State, Federal, and local regulations pertaining to the possession, carry, and use of weapons and firearms.

CHAPTER 4: RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Chapter 4 / Section 1: Picnicking

- a. No person may claim exclusive control over a picnic area or facility unless a valid reservation has been made and confirmed by Valpo Parks. All picnic areas are available on a first-come, first-served basis unless otherwise reserved.

Chapter 4 / Section 2: Cooking and Grilling

- a. Outdoor cooking and grilling are permitted exclusively in areas designated and equipped for that purpose.

b. Any person utilizing a designated cooking or grilling area is responsible for the complete extinguishment and proper disposal of all coal, oil, fuel, or any other material used for cooking and/or grilling.

Chapter 4 / Section 3: Recreational Fires

- a. No person may start, light, or maintain a recreational fire outside of a designated area.
- b. Fire dancing, fire twirling, or fire throwing is prohibited in any Park or Facility.
- c. All individuals must comply with all applicable City, County, and State statutes and ordinances regarding the use and management of fires.

Chapter 4 / Section 4: Paths and Trails

- a. Path and trail users shall observe and obey all posted signs, markings, and traffic laws. Where trails and roadways intersect, all users shall yield right-of-way in accordance with applicable City, County, and State statutes.
- b. Bicycle riders shall operate in a safe and controlled manner and shall adhere to a reasonable and safe speed (not to exceed 10 miles per hour) that does not endanger others.
- c. Bicycle riders should maintain a safe passing distance (e.g., minimum three feet) when overtaking pedestrians.
- d. Bicycle riders shall not park their bicycles in locations that may impede or endanger other park patrons. Bicycles shall be parked in designated bicycle racks or other designated bike parking spaces whenever possible.
- e. Class 1 e-bikes are permitted on any path, sidewalk, pathway, trail, bike lane, or other walkway.
- f. Class 2 e-bikes are permitted on any path, sidewalk, pathway, bike lane, or other walkway.
- g. Class 3 and Class 4 e-bikes are prohibited on any path, sidewalk, pathway, trail, bike lane, or other walkway.
- h. Under the same rules and regulations applicable to bicycles, all in-line skates, roller skates, skis, skateboards, scooters, and other similar personal mobility equipment are permitted to use paved pathways.

Chapter 4 / Section 5: Sport Courts, Facilities, and Fields

- a. Valpo Parks reserves the right to close any field, facility, or court for any reason, including but not limited to, inclement weather, dangerous conditions, or maintenance requirements. Rescheduling is subject to field availability.
- b. In the event of rain or unsafe weather, the following policies apply:
 - a. **PRACTICES**

If a scheduled practice is rained out or fields are closed, the practice may be rescheduled, or credit may be issued for future field use.
 - b. **GAMES**

If a game is stopped due to weather with less than one (1) hour played, the game may be rescheduled, or credit may be issued. If one (1) hour or more has been played, the game is considered official and no reschedule or credit will be issued.
 - c. **FULL-DAY TOURNAMENT / EVENT RENTALS**

If weather ends the event before 50% of the bracket has been played, the event may be rescheduled, or credit may be issued. If 50% or more of the bracket has been played, the event is considered official and no reschedule or credit will be issued.
- c. All sport courts, facilities, and fields are available on a first-come, first-served basis unless otherwise reserved through Valpo Parks. Fairgrounds Park fields are available by reservation only.
- d. The use of microphones and loudspeaker systems for announcing players or making public announcements is prohibited at sport courts, facilities, or fields.
- e. Private team or sponsor banners are not permitted on fences, fields, or upon any structure at any court, facility, or field.
- f. No person may remove, destroy, tamper with, or otherwise interfere with any nets, mounds, fences, fields, or any other piece of equipment necessary for recreational play at a court, facility, or field.
- g. Metal cleats are prohibited on portable mounds at baseball and softball fields and at Samardzija Field at Tower Park on the artificial turf.
- h. No person is permitted to penetrate the surface of any field with a sharp object, including but not limited to tent stakes, corner flags, or any other objects that can damage the playing surface.
- i. No person is permitted to use paint or any other drawing device to create lines or any other markings on any facility, field, court, or any other surface.
- j. Golf and disc golf are permitted exclusively at designated courses.

Chapter 4 / Section 6: Winter Sports and Recreation

- a. Sledding and tubing are permitted only at certain designated areas as posted by Valpo Parks.
- b. Ice skating is permitted only at certain designated areas as posted by Valpo Parks.
- c. Snowmobiles and other winter motor vehicles are prohibited in any Park or Facility.

Chapter 4 / Section 7: Fishing and Boating

- a. Fishing is permitted only in designated bodies of water as posted by Valpo Parks.
- b. A valid fishing license is required, and all fishing activities are subject to Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulations.
- c. Boating is permitted on Loomis Lake and is subject to all Standard Indiana boating laws and regulations, including requirements for personal flotation devices (PFDs), age restrictions for operators of motorboats and personal watercraft (PWC), and vessel registration.

Chapter 4 / Section 8: Wildlife and Environmental Protection

- a. Attempts to kill, injure, harass, remove, or disturb any waterfowl, turtles, birds, deer, squirrels, or any other wildlife animal within the Parks or Facilities is prohibited.
- b. The feeding of any wildlife animal within the Parks or Park Facilities is prohibited.
- c. The abuse of any natural resources within the Parks, including intentional digging of holes, excavating, or otherwise damaging or destroying any natural resources, is prohibited.
- d. No person is permitted to remove any natural resource from within the Parks or Facilities.
- e. No person is permitted to introduce any plant or animal species that are invasive or could pose a threat to the existing park environment.
- f. No person is permitted to plant, farm, or cultivate any natural resources within the Park or Facilities.

Chapter 4 / Section 9: Camping

a. No person shall camp, establish, or maintain any lodging place, including a tent, boat, camper, RV, or other shelter, within any Park or Facility, unless the area is specifically designated and supervised for such activities.

Chapter 4 / Section 10: Drones and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (“UAS”)

a. All persons operating a drone or UAS are subject to all applicable State, local, and Federal regulations regarding permits, licenses, and the operation of such devices.

b. No person may operate a drone or UAS to harass or otherwise invade the privacy of another guest at Valpo Parks, including the taking of photos or videos that would constitute harassment or an invasion of privacy.

c. No person may operate a drone or UAS in a manner that would endanger the safety of any other person at Valpo Parks, including the unsafe launching or landing of a drone or UAS.

d. No person may operate a drone or UAS in a way that would substantially interfere with Valpo Parks and its staff and employees’ ability to maintain the use and enjoyment of any building, structure, Park, or Facility.

Chapter 4 / Section 11: Playgrounds

a. All children should be dressed appropriately for playground equipment. Valpo Parks advises against children wearing clothing with drawstrings, necklaces, purses, or anything else with a strap while playing on a playground, as such items can become entangled with equipment.

b. All games should be played in designated or appropriate areas within the playground to ensure safety and prevent interference with other users.

c. Shoving, fighting, pushing, or any other form of horseplay while using any piece of equipment in a playground is prohibited.

d. All equipment must be used in accordance with its intended purpose and design:

1. All persons must slide feet first.

2. Only one person is permitted on a slide platform at one time; group sliding is prohibited.

3. Users must keep hands and arms inside the slide while sliding.
 4. Climbing up the slide ramp or slide platform is prohibited.
 5. Standing or kneeling on swings is prohibited.
 6. Jumping off a swing while in motion is prohibited.
 7. Climbing on swing support poles is prohibited.
 8. Swinging sideways is prohibited.
 9. Standing on top of any climber or jungle gym is prohibited; interfering with anyone using a climber or jungle gym is also prohibited.
 10. Jumping off a seesaw while in use is prohibited.
 11. Climbing on the top of tube slides is prohibited.
- e. Equipment should not be used if the surface is wet or slippery.

CHAPTER 5: VEHICLES AND PARKING

Chapter 5 / Section 1: Operation of Motor Vehicles

- a. Motor vehicles may not be operated in any off-road area or any area not specifically designated for vehicular traffic.
- b. Neither children nor pets may be left unattended in a motor vehicle on Park property.
- c. Except for designated roadways, all persons are restricted from operating motor vehicles on other paved areas, paths, or trails. Valpo Parks employees and staff, as well as emergency vehicles, are permitted to operate motor vehicles on such paths as deemed necessary for official duties.

Chapter 5 / Section 2: Parking

- a. Motor vehicle parking is permitted exclusively in designated parking lots or parking areas, unless otherwise specifically authorized by Valpo Parks.
- b. The practice of using a person, object, or any other thing to reserve a parking space for a vehicle not yet present is prohibited.
- c. Motor vehicles parked illegally on Park property may be tagged and/or towed at the owner's expense.

- d. Parking lots and spaces at any Park or Facility are reserved for Park patrons only.
- e. Overnight parking in any of the Park's parking spaces is prohibited.

Chapter 5 / Section 3: Other Motorized Vehicles

- a. The use of other off-road vehicles such as snowmobiles, four-wheelers or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), dirt bikes, and other similar motorized vehicles is prohibited on Park property.
- b. Golf carts are permitted in designated areas within Valpo Parks and are subject to all local ordinances and Valpo Parks regulations.

CHAPTER 6: PETS AND ANIMALS

Chapter 6 / Section 1: Service Animals

- a. Service animals, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), are permitted in all public areas of the Park system, including those areas where pets are prohibited.

Chapter 6 / Section 2: Dogs

- a. Dogs must be effectively restrained on a leash at all times when in a Park or Park Facility, except when properly utilizing the designated ValPAWrAiso Dog Park.
- b. Owners and handlers of dogs must prevent their animals from pursuing, disturbance, or harassment of any animal wildlife, nests, burrows, or other wildlife habitat on Park property.
- c. Owners and dog handlers are responsible for the immediate cleanup and proper disposal of all animal feces. All owners and handlers must carry a suitable device for such cleanup.
- d. Dogs are not allowed in the skatepark, on sports fields, on playgrounds, or in other areas with posted signs.

Chapter 6 / Section 3: Other Animals

a. No person shall bring any other animal, including but not limited to horses, pigs, chickens, goats, cows, cats, snakes, spiders, lizards, or any other non-service animal, into a Park or Facility.

CHAPTER 7: FEES AND REFUNDS

The Board has adopted a policy of fees for selected facilities and designated programs. Residents of the City of Valparaiso and Center Township may receive a discount on select fees, while non-residents may be required to pay a higher fee. This differential fee structure reflects the contribution of property taxes from Valparaiso City and Center Township residents towards the operations of Valpo Parks.

Chapter 7 / Section 1: Fee Assistance

a. Fee assistance may be available to reduce the basic fee for most Park Youth Programs. Eligibility for this assistance is based on family income and the number of family members. To apply, interested parties must inquire prior to registering for a youth activity and complete an application for fee assistance.

Chapter 7 / Section 2: Fees for Special Events, Programs, or Classes

Special Events, Programs, or Classes may require an enrollment fee. Valpo Parks reserves the right to cancel or alter these special events, programs, or classes due to limited registration or circumstances beyond its control. If a special event, program, or class is cancelled by Valpo Parks, a refund may be issued.

Chapter 7 / Section 3: Refund Processing Fees

A service charge of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) shall be applied to all processed refunds, with the sole exception of cancellations initiated by Valpo Parks.

Chapter 7 / Section 3: Refunds

Youth Sports, Adult Sports, Enrichment Activities, Summer Camp, and/or Discovery Cottage

- a. To be eligible for a refund, cancellation requests must be received a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the published registration deadline.
- b. Cancellations submitted within seven (7) days of the published registration deadline will not be eligible for a refund.
- c. Approved refunds will be distributed to the participant via check by mail. This process typically requires four (4) to six (6) weeks for completion.
- d. Refunds for any camp will be processed exclusively through the camp software.

Facility Reservations

- f. All facility rental fees are non-refundable.
- g. If Valpo Parks must cancel a reservation due to unforeseen circumstances, a full refund will be issued.

Day Trips

- h. If the registrant's spot can be filled by another participant, the registrant will receive a check refund by mail, less a fifteen-dollar (\$15.00) processing fee. Refunds typically take four (4) to six (6) weeks to process. If the registrant's spot can not be filled, the fee is non-refundable.

Special Events

- i. To be eligible for a refund, cancellation requests must be received a minimum of twenty-one (21) days prior to the published registration deadline.
- j. Cancellations submitted within twenty-one (21) days of the published registration deadline will not be eligible for a refund.
- k. If eligible, registrations processed through RunSignUp will be refunded via the RunSignUp software.
- l. Other approved refunds will be distributed to the participant via check by mail. This process typically requires four (4) to six (6) weeks for completion.

Memorial Opera House (MOH)

- n. All tickets are non-refundable.
- o. Exchanges are not guaranteed for non-subscribers and are at the discretion of MOH.
- p. Subscribers and Flex Pass members can exchange their tickets up to 24 hours prior to their scheduled performance date and may only exchange tickets for another performance date of the same show.
- q. Tickets for past shows cannot be transferred.

Other: Community Garden Plots, Passes to Rogers Lakewood, ValPAWraiso Dog Park, Central Park Plaza Ice Rink, Golf, and other season passes are non-refundable.

CHAPTER 8: INDIVIDUAL PARK AND PROGRAM RULES

- a. Specific rules and regulations may apply to individual Parks and/or programs managed by Valpo Parks. Such rules and regulations are hereby incorporated by reference into this document and shall be observed in conjunction with these general Rules and Regulations.
- b. Any rule or regulation set forth may be waived with prior written consent from Valpo Parks.

CHAPTER 9: PARK AND PARK PROGRAM RULE ENFORCEMENT

- a. The Board is authorized to adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of patrons, park program participants, spectators, and volunteers in Valpo Parks, to the extent they do not conflict with this article or other ordinances or statutes.
- b. If the Park Director determines that the safety of patrons and of park employees and volunteers and park property requires the removal of an individual from a park(s) and/or park program(s), he/she may do so by following the procedures set forth in IC 35-43-2-2. The ban imposed by the Park Director shall be for a maximum period of up to one (1) year for a first offense and three (3) years for any subsequent offense.
- c. Any appeal of a ban by the Park Director must be filed in writing with the Board within five (5) days after service of the ban.
- d. The Board shall set rules governing the hearing of the appeal.