



CITY COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: August 12, 2009

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: John Szerlag, City Manager
John M. Lamerato, Assistant City Manager, Finance and Administration
Carol Anderson, Parks and Recreation Director *CA*

SUBJECT: Path Bhaban Request for Waiver of Non-Profit Group Meeting Room Policy at Community Center

Path Bhaban, a Michigan based non-profit Learning Center for Bengali Language and Culture, has submitted an appeal (exhibit 1) for free use of a room at the Community Center on a weekly basis in order to conduct a Bengali language and culture class beginning September 4, 2009.

Background:

- Under the current room usage policy which expires on August 31, 2009, any 501 (C) non-profit tax exempt corporation, community/civic organization, church, fraternal body, educational unit, or government organization that consists of at least 75% Troy residents are allowed free use of Community Center meeting rooms during regular business hours (Monday – Friday, 8 am – 10 pm; Saturday 8 am – 1 pm). In addition, these groups are not required to pay for use of the audio visual equipment and are exempt from the Community Center Food Policy (Exhibit 2). Although groups are limited to one reservation per day, there is no limit to the number of days a group can reserve a room.
- This policy was developed prior to the renovation of the existing Community Center in 2002 when the rooms in the facility were not available for rent to the general public and fewer programs were offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. The intent was for non-profit groups to be able to use the rooms primarily for monthly meetings.
- After the renovation was complete and additional rooms were added to the Community Center, the total number of reservations increased from 2,116 in 2001-02 to 10,782 in 2007-08. Of this total, 27% were reserved for non-profit groups, 54% for parks and recreation sponsored activities/programs and 19% for public groups who pay a rental fee.
- There are approximately 50 non-profit organizations that reserve rooms under the no fee policy (Exhibit 3). A majority of these groups reserve one or more rooms on a weekly basis and run programs that are advertised to be free to their members.
- Approximately 20 non-profit groups (i.e. High School Sport Teams, Scout Groups, Homeowner Associations, Ethnic Organizations) hold special events such as banquets and holiday parties for no charge despite set up, take down and cleaning conducted by staff.

- The number of non-profit group meetings has increased to the point that it has become difficult for new Parks and Recreation programs or other new groups to find space for their activity at peak times.
- The cost to provide services and utilities to these non-profit groups has also increased since 2002 yet the general fund subsidy to accommodate these groups has remained the same.
- In order to increase revenue, City Council adopted revenue enhancements on February 16, 2009 that included the establishment of a room rental fee for non-profit groups who stage meetings and activities at the Community Center (Resolution #2009-02-045).
- On May 18, 2009 Carol Anderson reported to City Council the revised non-profit room rental fee policy that was to become effective September 1, 2009.
- Under this new policy, non-profit groups will be limited to one reservation per month and be charged \$20 per hour (50% of the Troy Business Rate) to reserve space for any additional meetings during the month. This will impact the groups that are listed in Exhibit 3 that meet weekly or bi-weekly. In addition, non-profit groups that hold events in Room 304-305 will be charged a \$30 set up/cleaning fee.
- As a result of this change, it is anticipated that \$27,500 of additional revenue would be earned (Exhibit 4).
- Path Bhaban would incur a \$1,200 charge to use a room on a weekly basis as they have requested for 2009-10 under the new non-profit policy. There would be 12 free monthly meetings and 24 meetings that would require a fee to be paid.

Policy Considerations:

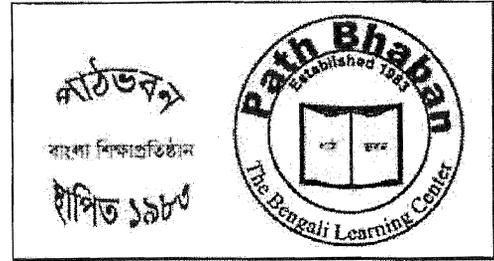
- Approval of additional use by Path Bhaban to use the room for no charge would be inequitable to the other non-profit groups who have the same type of programs and are paying the rental fee. An exception to this group would in effect rescind the directive by City Council to establish a room rental fee for non-profit groups.

August 10, 2009

Honorable Members of Troy City Council,
Civic Center Drive,
Troy MI 48084

Subject: Path Bhaban, the Bengali Learning Center

Respectable Members!



Path Bhaban is a Michigan Based Non-Profit Learning Center for Bengali Language and Culture. Bengali is the National Language of Bangladesh and a Sate Language in India. Bengali is the Sixth Largest Spoken Language in the World.

Path Bhaban has served the residents of Troy and other cities in Michigan for over 26 years. The Teachers, Trainers and Staff are all volunteers and have been devoting their time in exposing Bengali Language, History, Heritage, and Culture to all interested people at virtually No-Cost Basis. Students pay only a nominal part of the books and material, required for study. All other costs provided by community organizations like Troy Community Center and others. We would like to emphasize that Path Bhaban is Open to every individual, interested in learning Bengali Language,

Path Bhaban Management appreciates very much the City of Troy as well as acknowledges the staff at the Community Centre for supporting Path Bhaban Bengali Learning Center activity for the past 26 years. We have been very fortunate and grateful to be able to run our classes for so long and have been able to do so only as a result of your help.

Path Bhaban students of different backgrounds traditionally learn (a) adequate communication skill during Assignments/Visits to India or Bangladesh; (b) language, and culture on Friendship/Relationship/Marriage to a Bengali Family; (c) roots of Bengali history and heritage. Some of the Ex-students reached literary excellence and received Tomkins Award, New Century Writers Award, Ray Bradbury Fellowship, for articles and stories on Bengali Cultures. Examples can be found in Best New American Voices 2001.

Path Bhaban also benefits Troy Community Center. Students, Teachers, Parents and supporters of Path Bhaban traditionally become members of Troy Community Center Athletics, Water World, Tennis and others games and generate Revenue for the City. Path Bhaban and other Bengali organizations have been directly paying for many events in the Community Center through the year.

Harsh economic conditions have hit the entire country, but especially so in Troy and the rest of southeastern Michigan. Communities are suffering from unemployment and other difficulties associated with the economic downturn and the Bengali Community is no different. We really need the help of the Troy Community Center to continue running Path Bhaban at a low cost to students.

Please include Path Bhaban Appeal in the agenda for Troy Council Meeting, August 17, 2009, and allow the Organizers to appeal for free building facility to the Honorable Members of the Troy City Council.

Yours Sincerely,

Sat Basu 8/10/09

(Sat Basu)

For and on behalf of Path Bhaban
P. O. Box # 4928, Troy MI 48099

248-524-0058

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CITY OF TROY

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Troy Community Center Food/Beverage Policy

Groups that would like to serve food or beverages at their events in the Troy Community Center have the following options:

1. Order from the Community Center “preferred” caterer(s). If a qualifying meal is ordered, the group will receive a 35% discount on the room rental charges (excluding labor) provided the following minimum conditions are met:
 - Qualifying food order must be \$5 or more per person
 - Group size of 20
 - Two hour room rental

2. Order from a caterer that is not “preferred”. Groups may hire another caterer to provide food and beverages but are subject to the following charges and conditions:
 - Cleaning Fee - \$30
 - Service Fee (per person) - \$.75 for breakfast, \$1 for lunch, \$2 for dinner (There is no service fee if beverage or snacks are served)
 - Breakfast items include bagels, muffins and pastries. Snack foods include pre-packaged non-perishable items and desserts.
 - Caterer must have valid kitchen license.
 - Caterer or group will not have access to the kitchen area.

3. Carry in food prepared from home, store or restaurant. Groups, with the exception of non-profit groups (see below) may bring in their own food and beverages but are subject to the following charges and conditions:
 - Cleaning Fee - \$30
 - Service Fee (per person) - \$.75 for breakfast, \$1 for lunch, \$2 for dinner (There is no service fee if beverage or snacks are served)
 - Breakfast items include bagels, muffins and pastries. Snack foods include pre-packaged non-perishable items and desserts.
 - Group will not have access to the kitchen area.
 - The food being served is only available to members of the group. It cannot be served to the public.

Other Information

1. Any non-profit tax exempt (501c) corporations, community/civic organizations, churches, fraternal bodies, educational units or government organizations that consist of at least 75% Troy residents in attendance are permitted to carry in food prepared from home without incurring the service fee and will be subject to the cleaning fee if the room does not pass a post event inspection.
2. Individuals visiting the Community Center may consume food brought from home or purchased at a restaurant without incurring a cleaning fee or service fee as long as the food is not being served for a group function. For example, a patron may eat their individual lunch anywhere in the facility.
3. The kitchen is not available for use by any group except by a “preferred” caterer who may use it in the process of staging their meal.

Exhibit 3

The following non-profit groups meet at the Community Center under the no-fee policy.

Groups That Meet Weekly or More (22)

Troy Noontimers (Alcoholics Anonymous) - Monday, Friday
Nothin But the Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) – Wednesday
Al-Anon (Alcoholics Anonymous) - Friday
Church in Troy - Monday, Saturday
Indian Dance Club - Monday, Saturday
Troy Chinese School - Tuesday, Friday
ACACAE/CAGD (Chinese Association of Greater Detroit) – Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday
Chinese Dance Club - Thursday
Michigan Chinese Folk Dance Club - Thursday, Friday
Performing Arts Club - Wednesday
Nadanta - Wednesday
ARC of Oakland County (Weight Watchers for the Disabled) - Thursday
Wattles Robotics Club - Thursday
Charity Cup (Religious Group) - Thursday
Path Bhaban (Bengali Organization) - Friday
Buddha's Light International Association - Friday, Saturday
Girl Scout Troop (Multiple Troops) – Various days
Waray-Waray International Organization (Philippine Dance Group) - Friday
Falun Dafa (Chinese Meditation Group) - Saturday
Oriental Art - Saturday
Hindu Swayamsevak Organization - Saturday
Mizuno Dance Club – Saturday
Troy High School Cheerleaders - Monday to Friday
Troy High School Winterguard – Monday to Friday

Groups That Meet Twice per Month (4)

Cub Scout Troop (Multiple Groups) – Monday, Wednesday
Democratic Club - Wednesday
American Romanian School – Saturday

Groups That Meet Monthly (16)

AAll Fast Track – Monday
AAll Fast Track - Tuesday
Community Chorus - Monday
Troy Soccer League- Monday, Tuesday
Primrose Garden - Tuesday
Troy Women's Association - Tuesday
Girl Scout Troop – Tuesday, Thursday
Troy Garden Club -Wednesday
Leadership Troy - Wednesday
Beachwood Recreation - Wednesday
Troy Youth Soccer League -Thursday

Troy Newcomers - Thursday

Senator Pappageorge - Saturday

Homeowner Associations (Multiple Associations)

Special Events and Banquets in Room 304 - 305

Troy School Sports Teams Annual Banquet (6)

Boy Scout Blue and Gold Banquet (3)

Pine Wood Derby (3)

Indus Science Fair

Troy Elementary School Fun Fairs and Dances (6)

Community Coalition Banquet

Exhibit 4
Revenue Projections

New Policy – One reservation per month for no charge, \$20 per hour room rental for other reservations, cleaning charge

Source of New Revenue	Estimated Revenue Calculation	Amount
Non Profit Groups	10 groups renting space x \$40 per meeting x 3 per month x 12 months	\$14,400
Private Rentals	2 new rentals per week x \$100 per meeting x 50 weeks	\$10,000
Recreation Programs	1 new program per week x \$50 per meeting x 50 weeks	\$2,500
Cleaning Fee	20 banquet events x \$30 cleaning fee	\$600
Total Revenue		\$27,500