

## Council works on youth center, chamber leases

Contributed by Elizabeth Larson  
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CLEARLAKE &ndash; The Clearlake City Council worked on refining two new leases with local nonprofits during its Thursday night meeting.

City Administrator Dale Neiman took to the council updated leases for the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce and the city's youth center &ndash; managed by the Lake County Community Action Agency &ndash; based on a template developed by the city's attorney, Malathy Subramanian.

The leases are for six years, and only charge the groups \$1 a year each.

Council member Judy Thein questioned a clause in the youth center lease that said alcohol could not be sold on the premises without first obtaining the city's consent.

She said alcohol should never be allowed at the center, even during fundraisers, which can be held at other venues if alcohol is to be served.

Thein said a fundraising event was held at the center several months ago, and alcohol was served. &ldquo;I can't begin to tell you the numerous telephone calls, the numerous e-mails I received,&rdquo; said Thein, adding that allowing for alcohol sales there sends a &ldquo;mixed message&rdquo; to the community.

The lease also called for criminal background checks for any center employees or volunteers, which is in keeping with state law.

Thein asked if they also could include a clause requiring that all center staff and volunteers also be properly credentialed. Neiman said that was covered in a lease provision that requires the center operate according to local, state and federal laws.

Council member Joyce Overton, who has advocated extensively for the center and Lake County Community Action Agency, added that the youth center has to follow state laws, which would specify what credentials and licenses an individual would need to work there.

&ldquo;I don't think we want to make it our responsibility to track down what credentials they need,&rdquo; added Neiman.

Thein also questioned the lease's inclusion of a clause that made the city solely responsible for all major repairs that might be required at either the youth center of the chamber building.

&ldquo;We don't have the money for it. We didn't budget for it,&rdquo; said Thein.

Because the groups are only charged \$1 a year, Thein said they should make provision for repairs.

Overton said the youth center hasn't asked the city to do anything so far, and said they're aware that the city is in tough financial straits. &ldquo;It will be our job to raise the money,&rdquo; she said, adding that she wanted to see the repair clause remain as proposed.

She didn't, however, have a problem with removing the clause about alcohol sales.

Councilman Roy Simons said there has to be a contingency plan to take care of the youth center building. If something goes wrong, will it need to be fixed or closed down, he asked.

Vice Mayor Chuck Leonard agreed with Thein that the city couldn't be held responsible. He said the city also had a \$1-a-year lease with the Boys and Girls Club at one time, and it had cost \$10,000 to relocate the group. &ldquo;Common sense doesn't always really get used in these matters.&rdquo;

Citing the Boys and Girls Club situation, Mayor Curt Giambruno said he wanted a relocation clause added to the lease so the city didn't have to pay any associated expenses. Overton said that the city had used grant funding to pay for that relocation.

Neiman suggested that if they left in the section about responsibility for repairs, a strict interpretation could require the city to do the work.

Georgina Lehne, executive director of Lake County Community Action Agency, said she appreciated the city's \$1-a-year lease, and agreed with Thein that alcohol shouldn't be sold on the premises.

During the year and a half that the agency has operated the center, the community's service organizations have offered &ldquo;tremendous support,&rdquo; she said.

&ldquo;We've practically redone that whole building,&rdquo; she said.

But the building still has problems, which became clear during a recent rain, when water started pouring through the roof. Lehne said the city's Public Works Department fixed the roof that time.

Lehne said they agency takes great pride in the building, but when they budget their funds the money goes for programs, not building repair.

In September, the state cited the center for operating its after school program without a day care license, as Lake County News has reported. The center was not allowing young children to come and go according to drop-in center requirements.

Lehne said the center has since amended its hours and the age group of the children it serves, going from ages 7 to 17 to 10 through 16. They also referred 33 younger children to programs through the Konocti Unified School District.

On Oct. 31, the center received a letter from the state saying that the center is exempt from licensing, which will have the added value of saving it from a \$200-per-day fine for October.

&ldquo;We've really got a good center here going,&rdquo; said Lehne, adding that they need to figure out how to deal with emergencies.

Overton asked the council to delay taking action until she could see a revised lease and discuss the situation with the

Lake County Community Action Board. However, Leonard suggested the city could act on the lease and make changes later if necessary.

They offered that, if an emergency came up for the building, the city could draw on the council's small contingency budget to help.

Leonard moved to execute the leases with the changes, including striking the alcohol sales section from the youth center lease and removing the clauses requiring the city to take full responsibility for all major repairs.

They seconded and the council approved the leases 5-0.

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