

Recently a few emails and media coverage contained inaccurate information about the Recreation District. We wanted to clarify the situation with the Seafood festival.

Recreation District #1/Pelican Park Board of Commissioners set fees for rental groups who desire exclusive use of the parking lots in Pelican Park at their meeting on Wednesday night June 10, 2009. After audience input and discussion among the board members about possible options, the board voted to adopt parking lot rental fees equal to \$1.00 per parking space.

The Board of Commissioners explained to the public, that according to public law, rates had to be set equal to fair market value. The District's lawyer confirmed that legally, the Recreation District is barred from giving away anything of worth regardless if the group is a non-profit or not.

Many of the 20 people in attendance were concerned about how the rate would affect the Mandeville Seafood Festival and the charities to which the Festival contributes. The Board stated they feel the festival and charities were great groups but had to establish rates for any and all groups who might rent the parking lots.

The meeting clarified the rumors about last year event and this year's fees. Last year, Pelican Park had no fees established for parking lots and were asked to be "overflow" parking for the Seafood festival, using only 1-3 parking lots. Estimated cost for the staffing only was \$500.00.

The festival was a great success and parking at Pelican Park became primary with 1,800 cars on Friday and 1,500 cars parked on Saturday at the Park. The festival cars filled 8 of the 9 parking lots on these two days. The Park experienced major problems with crowd control, trash and inability to use the facilities due to the crowds from the festival. The staff billed the Seafood festival \$1,965.00 for the direct cost of emergency staffing that had to be called in.

In August, two of the Park's parking lots were rented by Washington-St. Tammany Electric to shuttle people to their festival at the State

Park. This group paid rental rates equal to the cost of the field rental associated with each lot plus staffing costs.

In January, the Board finalized parking fees for each lot equal to the cost of the field/facility rental associated with each lot. The cost given to the Seafood festival in February 2009 for lot rental was \$16,900. Added to that cost was the expense for sheriff, staffing, signs etc for a total proposed cost of \$23,725.00

The reduction in parking lot fees made at the special board meeting last Wednesday, would result in the following cost to the Seafood Festival. Utilizing partial lots on Thursday and Sunday and all of the parking lots on Friday and Saturday the cost would be \$5,136.00 for parking plus the cost of staffing and equipment. (\$8,471.00) In addition, the festival would be responsible for port a potties and security.

It is unclear at this time if the Seafood festival will utilize Pelican Park for parking as they stated they could not pay over \$2,600.00. Hopefully, the Seafood festival will be a great success, regardless of where they chose to park cars and from where they shuttle people.