

Maintain the Legacy

'What would Charlie want' was the recurring theme during City Council's May 4, 2010 discussion of proposed operational changes for the 2010 Charlie Saikley 6-Man Volleyball Tournament.

The Tournament, which began in 1961 with minimal players and spectators, evolved during ensuing years to 2009's exponential growth to 60,000 people. Of those participants, only 4,000 were players.

The City's high regard for the late Charlie Saikely, who started and nurtured a truly 6-man volleyball event, was cause for council and many residents' stated concerns with what has emerged from the original concept.

To this end, staff and others worked hard to present significant operational changes to this year's even, now scheduled for July 31st and August 1st. Police Chief Rod Uyeda outlined his concerns with the overflow of crowds (an estimate of approximately 60-80,000 was suggested); he spoke about the amount of alcohol brought in and the resulting negative impacts; he referred to issues of health and safety and those who came to what is now perceived as a "Party". Alcohol, it was unequivocally stated, will not be permitted. Increased Police and Fire personnel and enforcement and ticketing for alcohol violations will be maintained. Additionally, large coolers brought in by spectators, were prohibited.

These issues were also discussed and approved by Council who said it was critical to give notice on the Web and elsewhere that NO alcohol was allowed.

A reduction in participating teams and increased entry fees, as well as water and shade for players in order to provide hydration, were other recommendations.

The issue of a no-costume policy was addressed but costumes finally were not prohibited. Residents and some council members saw the costumes as unique to the City and reflected the spirit of the event. Also, music and the bull horn were limited to Sunday.

An earlier recommendation to establish a minimum age of 18 years or older was also voted down.

Residents spoke of the magic of having young people playing with professionals; that this was a family event. There was stated emphasis on keeping the tournament going, open and accessible, and keeping the focus on volleyball and fitness. It was important to keep the legacy going.

Perhaps this was the reply to What Would Charlie Want?