

Test Your Knowledge About...

Rye Town Park

Who owns Rye Town Park?

- A. Rye Town
- B. Rye City and Rye Town Jointly
- C. Seaside Johnnies

Answer: B The establishing legislation said the park should “be known as Rye Park.”

What are Rye’s financial obligations to RTP?

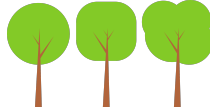
- A. It’s a 50-50 split with Rye City and Rye Town
- B. It’s a 60-40 split with Rye City and Rye Town

Answer: The answer is A and B. Under the agreement between Rye Town and City, Rye City is responsible for 46.654% of the operating costs, 39.278% of capital expenditures and is also responsible for policing the park. [Source: 2014 Audited Financial Statements available on Rye Town website.]

Can Rye Town Park operate revenue generating business activities to defray the costs of operating and maintaining the park?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. It depends

Answer: C It Depends. Under the New York law “public trust” doctrine, this may be permissible if the purpose is to enhance the experience of the public when using the park as a public park. So charging for beach access, offering restaurant facilities and providing reasonable parking is generally permissible to enhance public use of a park as a public park. However, if the real purpose is not to enhance the park experience but primarily to raise revenue to defray costs, that is not a sufficient justification.



How many cars parked in RTP in 2012 and 2013 respectively?

- A. 8,000 and 10,000
- B. 12,000 and 13,000
- C. 56,724 and 53,622

Answer: C

Of the million-dollar RTP annual running costs, where does most of the money come from and where does it go?

- A. From taxpayers, to park maintenance
- B. From park users, to employees

Answer: B For its financial year 2014, Rye Town Park revenues were \$892,000 of which cash receipts from parking and beach were approximately \$618,000 (or about 70% of total revenue). Of total operating expenses of \$892,934, approximately \$522,000 (59%) was spent on staff salaries and benefits. [Source: 2014 Audited Financial Statements available on Rye Town website.] The figures for receipts do not include approximately \$116,000 for permit sales (presumably charged online or by credit card) and \$95,000 from concessions (e.g., Seaside Johnnies).

Who runs the Park?

- A. The Rye Town Park Commission, made up of officials from Rye City, Rye Town, Port Chester and Rye Brook. Rye's representatives are Mayor Joe Sack and Councilmember Julie Killian.
- B. RTP Staff
- C. Seaside Johnnies

Answer: A

Does RTP financially “break even” ever year?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Answer: A park should not be expected to break even as it is a public good. But in fact, even with a largely cash-based revenue system, the park was even in 2013, lost about \$50,000 in 2014 and was up about \$75,000 in 2015 (unofficial). The park posted a deficit of \$500,000 the year before reforms were implemented and differential pricing was put into place.