

Recreation Commission Minutes - FINAL
Sep 3, 2014

Note: This meeting was rescheduled from August 20.

Chairman Lembeck called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

Attendance:

Chairman John Lembeck; Commissioners: Dan Bavuso, Mike Cecil, Kerry Chandler, Jim Dengler, Sharon Greener, and Robert McGinty were present. Councilman Ben Day and Recreation Director Sarah Orsay were also present.

Public comment portion:

There were no members of the public present.

Chairman's Announcements

None

Approval of the Minutes

There were no Minutes to approve.

Director's Report

Parks

Ms. Orsay reported that there are over 3600 residents vying for time on Rumson Borough fields each week in September and October, including Recreation Soccer, R-FH Rec Flag Football, Travel baseball, Forrestdale boys and girls soccer, RFHRHS boys and girls soccer, Holy Cross soccer and American Youth Football. The space issue is exacerbated by the closure of Meadow Ridge Center for maintenance. Teams are tripled up and more on fields, additional portable soccer goals were purchased to encourage cross field use and to allow for grass sidelines to be used. In addition, Rumson Soccer Club purchased field time at Oceanport's Maria Gatta fields to accommodate each team's ability to have two practices a week.

Programs

Summer Programs – Ms. Orsay reported the final numbers on camp registrations – almost 1500 participants across 20+ Rumson Rec Approved programs as well as Rumson Borough sponsored Summer Playground and Summer Rowing programs, ranging in age from pre-school through Adult. The non-youth sports camps were hugely popular and most were oversubscribed. New this summer, camps were offered from June through mid-August, as opposed to only the month of July in years past. This change was well received by parents who were delighted with the breadth of local offerings.

RFH Flag Football–Ms. Orsay reported fall registration numbers of 350 participants. The program is maxed out and some very late registrants were turned away due to lack of space. Ms. Orsay mentioned that some coaches were requesting two practices a week citing the difficulty of learning the plays in just one practice. Also, given the severe field constraints, next year we should look into getting space from Fair Haven. Finally, Ms. Orsay announced that Rick Brandt, an experienced Two River Little League umpire, Board member and volunteer Rec coach from Little Silver, would be the Assistant Flag Football Coordinator, assisting Mr. Bavuso in setting up fields on game days as well as overseeing games and addressing any issues that might arise.

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Soccer – Ms. Orsay reported fall registration numbers for Rec Soccer approached 700 in the K-8 program, and almost 200 in the Travel Soccer program. Rec teams were very full across divisions due to the high number of very late registrations and, unfortunately, some children had to be turned away.

Rumson Resident Robert Butters had approached Ms. Orsay in the late spring volunteering to revamp the K Clinic and the Grade 1&2 Soccer program. Ms. Orsay reported that Mr. Butters brings energy, enthusiasm and a high degree of organization to the role. Two innovations of note: all the Grade 1&2 teams practice on the same evening, clinic style, which is a huge benefit to coaches and players alike; second, Grade 1&2 has a World Cup theme – each of the teams is a country and will have their own age appropriate World Cup tournament toward the end of the season. Ms. Orsay has received positive feedback from parents and coaches on the revised format.

Crew – Mr. Lembeck gave an update on crew, seeking the Recreation Commission’s recommendation or approval on three items: 1) that Mr. Bavuso be appointed to the Parent Booster Board in the Borough’s recently vacated seat; 2) that a Quad be rented from Navesink River Rowing for the fall crew program (approximately \$1500); and 3) that the RC recommend to purchase a new Quad for approximately \$23,000 using designated crew funds. Mr. Lembeck explained why the crew coaches had recommended this particular purchase.

Ms. Chandler raised several questions about the boat purchase, namely where is the money coming from. She wanted assurances that no general Rec funds or taxpayer money would be used. Mr. Lembeck explained that the money would come from the amount received from the High School for the spring crew season (approximately \$17,500), plus funds from the summer crew program and possibly Endowment funds earmarked explicitly for crew. There was a lengthy discussion and then Mr. Bavuso raised the motion that the purchase be approved. Mr. McGinty seconded the motion, but all agreed that the purchase only be made after the money had been received from the High School. All members present voted in favor of the purchase after the HS funds were received, except Ms. Chandler, who voted against the motion citing she felt that the Parent Booster group should also be contributing, not just the Borough, particularly since the Boosters presumably still have significant funds that had been raised in the spring expressly for this purpose. By majority, the motion was approved.

With respect to Mr. Bavuso joining the parent Booster Board and the Quad rental, the RC concluded that these were not items that required explicit RC approval.

Committee reports

Travel Basketball–Mr. Cecil updated the Commission on the fall program start dates, the Boys 8U tryouts and also the 7U group headed by resident and volunteer coach Justin Cupps. He reported that the Rumson Mid-Monmouth travel basketball registration fees increased to \$175 from \$140 as our facility fees at Congregation B’Nai Israel (“CBI”) and Rumson Country Day (“RCDS”) had increased considerably. In the case of CBI, the increase was due primarily to cover the cost of hiring door security per CBI’s new security policy.

Projects

PRTP – Ms. Orsay provided an update on the status of the Monmouth County Open Space grant application for the Piping Rock Turf Project (“PRTP”) and reminded the Commissioners that there would be a public hearing on this topic on Tuesday, September 9, 7.30pm in the Charles S. Callman Court room. Ms. Orsay reported that the Borough expected to receive letters of support for the project from the High School, Forrestdale, Fair Haven Recreation, Fair Haven Soccer, American Youth Football, RFH Youth Lacrosse, and residents. Mr. Cecil confirmed that he had reached out to members of the Keith D. McHeffey Foundation (“KDM”) and that they were open to the project, understanding that things change, and looked forward to hearing more details. Their major concern was to maintain the integrity and beauty of the KDM memorial at the park.

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The RC also discussed what level of support would be appropriate and possible from the general Recreation funds. Ms. Chandler raised the motion to recommend to the Borough Council that \$50,000 from the general Recreation funds be used in support of the project if it moves forward. Mr. Bavuso seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Administrative

Volunteer Background Checks – Ms. Orsay reported that she had investigated a professional background check service provider she met at the NJPRA Conference in March. Rumson Borough ordinance requires volunteer coaches undergo a criminal fingerprint background every 3 years. In 2013 the Recreation Commission reaffirmed their commitment to this time frame for reapplication. However, Ms. Orsay expressed the difficulty of compliance and that many volunteers choose simply to stop volunteering rather than go through the inconvenience of an additional fingerprint check. The professional background check provider suggested that the Borough consider requiring a fingerprint background check initially, and then doing a Drivers' License check on renewal, which is less cumbersome on the volunteer but provides an identical criminal background check. Ms. Orsay shared this information with the Commission and with their approval will pursue the efficacy of this approach with Chief Paterson.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Orsay reviewed the Treasurer's Report. Rumson Recreation received a \$1500 donation from the proceeds of the 5th Annual Kelleher Kids Triathlon, for which the Commission expressed appreciation of the Kelleher's ongoing generous support.

Ms. Orsay highlighted the significant positive balance in the Travel Soccer line item, noting that the program's proceeds had been accruing since the program's inception, yet during this time the program had not paid any portion of field maintenance or big ticket items such as replacing metal goal posts – costs which would typically be borne from the general recreation funds that accumulate as residual balances from programs are swept into the general fund. In a prior meeting the Commission agreed that all programs surpluses, if any, except for Crew, should be swept to the general funds. Accordingly, if there are program deficits in a given year due to unforeseen expenses, funds can be transferred from the general fund to offsets these. Crew is not included because general funds will not be allocated to offset deficits in that program, so accordingly it does not contribute any surpluses. Crew surpluses, if any, are used for crew equipment purchases, replacement and maintenance.

Mr. Lembeck asked the Travel Committee to review and make a recommendation on the Travel Soccer surplus at the next meeting.

Old business

RC Committee Formation – Referencing the discussion from the July 2014 meeting, Mr. Lembeck distributed a list of possible Committees and asked the Commissioners to designate which they would like to serve on: Parks (Mr. Dengler, Ms. Chandler, Mr. Lembeck); Travel Sports (Mr. McGinty, Mr. Cecil, Ms. Chandler); Crew (Mr. Bavuso, Mr. McGinty); Special Events (Ms. Greener, Ms. Chandler). It was agreed that Finance and Personnel would be appointed on an as needed basis.

VP Refurbishment – Most of the Commissioners had visited Victory Park to assess the wear and tear on the playground equipment, per Mr. Rogers request at the July meeting. Mr. Rogers believes that Victory Park playground equipment needs to be refurbished or replaced in the coming years and that this is a significant and costly project so planning should start now. Mr. Day provided detailed photos on his i-pad for the Commissioners to review.

Mr. Lembeck asked the RC Park Committee to review and bring recommendations to the RC.

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New business

Tennis Courts – Victory Park tennis courts are exhibiting wear and one of the net holders is damaged. Ms. Orsay asked a professional to assess the courts and provide recommendations. The initial cost estimate from the provider was approximately \$15K. However, it was unclear if all of the work needs to be done. Ms. Orsay will follow up with DPW on the amount of work needed and then to procure additional bids.

Late Registrations – During the program report Ms. Orsay highlighted the excessive amount of late registrations for Fall sports (over 30% after the initial deadline and almost 20% of registrations after August 1). Late registrations of this magnitude lead to an enormous amount of additional administrative work, unbalanced and overcrowded teams, and rush orders for additional equipment and uniforms. Mr. McGinty asked how other towns have addressed the issue. Ms. Orsay indicated that Fall registration is particularly difficult because participants need to register in late Spring for the Fall, so put it off as they are focused on Summer, thus the issue is not uncommon. Some towns have raised their Late Fees in response, ranging from \$50-\$100 per registration. Other towns have initiated an absolute end date after which no one may register for any reason.

Rumson Recreation's current Late Fee is \$25, raised from \$10 in May 2013. The Commissioners concluded that apparently even the \$25 fee is not an effective motivator to register on time if hundreds of people registered late, despite the extensive marketing during Open Registration. The Commissioners agreed that they did not want to punish children by having an absolute end date and prohibiting their participation because parents neglected to register on time, but that there needs to be a significant deterrent to registering late/motivation to registering on-time. Mr. Dengler motioned to raise the Late Registration Fee to \$50 per individual registration, Ms. Greener seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Sep 17 at 7 PM at the Charles S Callman courtroom.

The meeting adjourned at 9.55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Orsay