

# RECREATION COMMISSION RE-ORGANIZATION MEETING

**January 23, 2014**

Present: Mr. Salvatore Cortese, Chairman  
Mrs. Jan McCabe  
Mrs. Maureen McEntee  
Mr. Gerard Sittmann, Vice Chairman  
Mrs. Maggie Slawinski  
Mr. Kevin Bodnar (arrived 8:01PM)

Absent Mr. Michael Breslin

Present: Karleen Leahey, Recreation Director  
Councilwoman Laurie Fu

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Cortese called the meeting to order. He stated that adequate notice of this meeting has been posted and published in accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Law of 1975, "Open Public Meetings Act."

## **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Mr. Cortese opened the meeting to the public to speak on matters other than those on the agenda. Seeing none, he closed this portion of the meeting to the public.

## **REPORT – COUNCILMEMBER FU**

Councilmember Fu reported on the Borough Council Re-Organization Meeting that was held on January 7, 2014. Councilmembers Karr and McCluskey were both sworn in as returning councilmembers and Councilmember Coogan was elected as the President of the Council. The Mayor recognized the Beautification Committee this year as the Community Service Award winners, and they will be the Grand Marshals for the Parade. On a special note, the Morris Plains time capsule that has been buried for 50 years at Community Park will be unveiled with details to follow. Another time capsule will be placed; she asked for suggestions of what could be put in the new one. Honeywell will commence re-locating their headquarters in during this year, renovating buildings as needed. Hopefully, they will be operational by mid 2015. Coty, Inc. has completed its move of its research headquarters to The American Road offices. Harley-Davidson will be open on Route 10 soon. She commented on a new restaurant, Healthy and Delicious. The former Pfizer property is still under litigation. The

Council is still pursuing affordable housing to be constructed on the site across the street from the recycling center. This project involves working with the Madison Housing Authority. *Plains Talk* will be coming out soon.

Continuing, Councilmember Fu advised that the League of Municipalities has informed the Borough that the new minimum wage law will not affect municipalities, but the federal requirements will still exist, but they are not held to the \$8.25 amount.

Mrs. Leahey reported that she had discussed the minimum wage issues with the appropriate contacts, but had received conflicting information initially. In the end she was advised that the Borough did not have to comply.

Mr. Cortese advised there would be further discussion concerning wages. He thanked Councilmember Fu for her report.

#### **RECREATION DIRECTORS' REPORT – January 2014**

Mrs. Leahey presented the Recreation Director's Report for January 2014.

Mrs. Leahey read a letter received from the Morristown Grapplers Club. In addition to the letter, the Club also included a financial report and information about insurance. Mrs. Leahey also read a letter received from the Morris Plains Fire Association thanking the Commission for its assistance with the Halloween Parade and Party.

Mrs. Leahey reported she contacted Rutgers in connection with their safety workshops. Two one-day workshops are scheduled to train individuals to be safety instructors – the first is on March 2, 2014 in Atlantic City and the second will be in the fall in October 2014 at the Rutgers campus. She has all the information and asked if anyone wanted to take the training to let her know.

Cross discussion about whether it would be a good idea for one of the Commission members to take this course. It also included general discussion about procedures and practices related to training, and Mrs. Leahey reporting on how the arrangement with Stephanie Crowley as the official trainer for Morris Plains training works.

Continuing, Mrs. Leahey provided a brief summary of the items she included in the packet distributed to the Commission members.

Mr. Cortese talked about issues relating to the Bonfire, especially the kindness shown by Agway in providing the hay and his request that instead of giving him any money that the funds go to a sports organization.

Mrs. Leahey advised a thank you letter had been written to Agway. She also has her recommendations for Recreation spring programs. A question she has

relates to the programs offered through USSI – tennis courts are reserved (with a sign) when the tennis lessons are in progress and now they want to offer basketball using the new courts. But, can she place a reserved sign on the basketball courts when they need them and is the net (basket) adjustable for different ages?

Mr. Cortese stated they are adjustable nets. He and Mr. Bodnar will further check this out. The court on the left is the one where a reserved sign can be placed.

Mrs. Leahey advised of a resident (Lynn Blenner, Hillview Avenue) who wants to offer two programs. She prepared a short report summarizing the content of the programs and asked for feedback from the Commission members as to their thoughts about the programs' contents and the cost of each (\$185). One program is titled "Wardrobe Secrets" and the other "A Personalized Color Palette".

Cross discussion about whether either of these programs are the kind to include under the Recreation banner, including whether the programs are more promoting a business, which the Commission does not do; the cost of these programs; and that they would need to be fall programs since everything is set for spring and summer.

Mrs. Leahey discussed the resolution – "Notice of Meetings" – that needs to be published next week. The resolution includes the dates of all 2014 meetings and the final meeting in January 2015. She next talked about the Special Events that are highlighted in blue and are the final budget numbers.

Councilmember Fu advised that no budget meetings have been held yet; they will be in February and March.

Mrs. Leahey stated she has the worksheet for upcoming Recreation events that need the dates determined.

**Breakfast with the Easter Bunny and Egg Hunt** - The Breakfast with the Easter Bunny and Egg Hunt event has already been scheduled (for Saturday, April 12) so that it could be publicized in *Plains Talk*. But, there is still an existing conflict with the Opening Day for Little League; she has been talking with Tom Bergeron to identify a way both events could be held on the same Saturday (April 12), but at different times. Mrs. Leahey has told Mr. Bergeron that no Little League activities will be able to start until 12:00 Noon; and there is still the issue of parking activities in connection with Opening Day before everyone has vacated the site from the Breakfast with the Easter Bunny event.

Mr. Cortese said that Mr. Bergeron will have to be flexible with the time if Little League's Opening Day is also held on Saturday, April 12. He will contact Mr. Bergeron about this situation.

Mr. Bodnar arrived at the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

**Basketball Courts** - Mr. Cortese asked Mr. Bodnar whether the new basketball backboards are adjustable.

Mr. Bodnar advised he believes the two on the ends are.

Mrs. Leahey explained to Mr. Bodnar that this question came up during discussion about a new program USSI wants to offer.

Mr. Cortese advised that the Borough did the asphalt and capital improvements there. Morris Plains Basketball installed all the custom hoops. There are four adjustable backboards – at the Pool and the new court.

**Splash Party** – Mrs. Leahey scheduled this for July, around the same time as in 2013.

The Commissioners reviewed the Special Events schedule and asked questions or commented on specific events as necessary. Around Fourth of July, the Borough offices are closed on Friday, July 4, 2014 and on Monday, July 7, 2014; however the summer camp will be shut down only on Friday.

Mrs. Leahey explained she has reserved a date for activities involving Gingerbread Houses. She believes this event when held in 2012 was a very favorable and well-enjoyed event. A change were made to the Family Day rain date to make it for Sunday, June 29, 2014.

The Schedule of Special Events was approved with a voice vote and all being in favor. **Motion carried.**

Cross discussion about a child who lives in Wharton, but who attends school in Morris Plains attends the summer camp at the same rate as everyone else – there is no difference because of being a non-resident because the child attends Borough School.

Cross discussion about this situation – currently there are 10 non-resident students in the school system, but just the one who participates in the camp, including that for this year, it is too late to make any changes since the 2014 Fee Schedule has been approved and that this matter should be discussed again prior to the 2015 camp season.

Mrs. Leahey said she will be charging the same amount. Registration for summer camp will begin on Wednesday, April 16, 2014. There will be a theater

program again this year and that Susan returns as Camp Director she wants to have 10 CITs. Three people have submitted applications so far for a volunteer position.

Mrs. Leahey was advised to hold these applications and they will be reviewed as the summer camp registration process continues.

Mr. Cortese advised that CITs had been eliminated because too many were hired and "something was promised that could not be delivered."

Commission members expressed concern and reasons why hiring too many CITs really can be a problem. Members discussed the pros and cons of having CITs and what the realistic need will be for CITs in the 2014 camp season.

Mr. Cortese advised that the Pool is a separate entity and this must be remembered.

Mrs. Slawinski reported on a meeting she and Mrs. McCabe had with the Treasurer.Chief Financial Officer (Ana).about the payroll. The young people will need to provide all of their payroll information submitted by Thursday, July 3, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. Pay days will not be every two weeks. The staff will start on June 30, 2014, but there is an organizational day on or about June 27, 2014. The first payday for them will be on July 15, 2014, but only for several days, and the second payday will be on July 31, 2014, and the last payday is on August 15, 2014. The Borough payroll cannot be easily changed. The recommendation was that these paydays be included in the letter they receive when they are hired. They will try to make sure that July 3, 2014 is included in the first payday.

A question was asked about only applicants committing to work a minimum of 20 days being considered. Does this include subs?

Mrs. Leahey advised this would not apply to any subs hired. It applies to those who want to work the full-time, five weeks positions. If there is the need to miss work due to a family vacation or some other activity, then the person can be hired as a sub, but not as a regular full-time employee.

Cross discussion about the issue of committing to work a minimum of 20 days, including hiring of subs.

There was also discussion about the theater program, including how much oversight the Commission really needs to provide since a director is hired to coordinate this program. The suggestion was made to hold a talent show or a showcase versus the play format.

**Basketball** – Mr. Bodnar reported on this activity stating that he believes all the early season rough patches have been worked out. The weather has been a problem and many practices were cancelled.

Mr. Cortese advised that a week before the season opened, the vo-tech school called to cancel some classes that the Commission has had with them for many years. “That was just horrific.” Everything was thrown off. A meeting(s) will be scheduled to discuss what went wrong. The Mayor, Councilmember Fu and he will attend this meeting. He reviewed the support provided to the vo-tech school by the Commission/Borough.

Mrs. Leahey reported that a vo-tech school representative contacted her about using the Community Center gymnasium for his girls’ basketball team.

**Little League/Softball** - Cross discussion about this request in light of what happened with the use schedule; also included issues relating to softball and Little League, such as getting the fields ready for the season, maintenance of fields, who is responsible for what, who is going to pay for what, condition of fields after use, meetings that need to be scheduled, and dates when certain work must be completed.

Mr. Cortese stated that the fields must be done by the end of March, weather permitting. Attention must be paid to scheduling of work to be done on fields and related matters. The Park Commission should be contacting the Commission/Borough shortly about use of the Greystone fields. Once the details are fully known, there will have to be a meeting with the various sports organizations.

Mr. Bodnar suggested that perhaps the Borough team should practice at Simon’s Park after school to relieve some of the use of the field behind Borough School, a field that may have to be re-seeded.

Cross discussion about using the turf fields for several activities.

**Hockey** – There was no report by Mrs. McCabe.

**Lacrosse** – Mr. Sittmann and Mr. Cortese met with them and advised them to go the meetings in Morris Township and/or Morristown – Recreation, Council, and organizations’ meetings to have Morris Township and Morristown take a greater role to secure time at Greystone. He has not had any feedback from them. They may be anticipating that Morris Plains is the only municipality that will help them.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Cortese requested that all members review the minutes of the Commission’s November 21, 2013 Regular Meeting.

Mrs. McCabe commented on information under “Winter/Spring Recreation Programs”, she suggested a heading/caption for the text discussing the Little League (page 2).

Mr. Sittmann moved that the minutes of the November 21, 2013 Regular Meeting be accepted as circulated with the change recommended on page 2, seconded by Mr. Bodnar. Voice vote. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Discussion concerning a dumpster at Simon’s Park that is a continuation of a discussion held at a prior meeting. The dumpster was moved; however, there may be problems when the dumpster is emptied in that the dumpster sometimes winds up in a somewhat different area. His discussion included a second discussion about the hoped-for planting of trees to provide additional buffer for the residents.

Mr. Cortese asked if Pine trees can be obtained. He asked for 30 trees for Watnong Park.

Councilwoman Fu replied that Pine trees can be obtained. She advised the current planting plan calls for trees to be planted along the train tracks at Watnong Park. The storm destroyed many trees in this park.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Councilwoman Fu advised she has contact with the person who inquired about requesting reserved tennis courts last year. She asked if the proposal for a trial run to allow this has been authorized by the Commission. She suggested developing a procedure for allowing the reserving of one tennis court, and to let them know when this procedure is in place.

Family Day was the next subject for discussion, specifically about which organizations will be authorized to provide which vendor services. It included when the organizations should be advised of this change; the thinking was that perhaps it should be done sooner rather than later so the groups are aware of the change, especially in light of budget expectations they may have. Certain vendor services can generate higher fund raising opportunities.

Mr. Cortese mentioned that perhaps it would be better to make this change for the 2015 Family Day to ensure plenty of time for the organizations to make any changes they think they have to make in terms of raising funds.

It was also mentioned that perhaps all the money raised by the vendor services could be put into “one pot” and that there be some type of fair and equitable distribution to the organizations that participated as vendors. It would also be taken into account any money an organization spent to buy their food supplies or wares. It was also suggested that the presidents of different organizations be

invited to attend a meeting to review this matter. Another part of this discussion was whether it would be possible to identify a product or a service versus food that organizations could sell/provide to raise funds.

Councilwoman Fu commented that there are other organizations besides the sports organizations, such as the Teen Center, the Alliance and others.

Mr. Cortese reminded that only three Commissioners will be able to attend the meeting with the sports organizations' presidents.

Concern was expressed about the fact that the various organizations range from little to very big in size as organizations. Can the smaller organizations handle the same level of commitment and participation as the larger ones?

### **VOUCHERS**

Mr. Cortese asked the Commission members to check the vouchers.

Mrs. Slawinski moved that the vouchers be approved as presented, seconded by Mrs. McCabe. Voice vote. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

### **NOMINATION FOR CHAIRMAN**

Mr. Sittmann moved to nominate Mr. Cortese to serve as Chairperson of the Recreation Commission for 2014, seconded by Mr. Bodnar. Voice vote. All in favor. (Mr. Cortese abstained from voting.) **Motion carried.**

### **NOMINATION FOR VICE CHAIRMAN**

Mrs. Slawinski moved to nominate Mr. Sittmann to serve as Vice Chairperson of the Recreation Commission, seconded by Mr. Bodnar. Voice vote. All in favor. (Mr. Sittmann abstained from voting.) **Motion carried.**

There being no further business, Mr. Sittmann moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mrs. Slawinski. Voice vote. All in favor. **Motion carried.** The Re-Organization Meeting was closed at 9:13 p.m.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Karleen Leahey  
Commission Secretary

Maureen Sullivan  
Recording Secretary