

RECREATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

May 22, 2014

Present: Mr. Kevin Bodnar (Arrived at 8:15pm)
Mr. Michael Breslin
Mr. Salvatore Cortese, Chairman
Mrs. Jan McCabe
Mr. Gerard Sittmann, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Maggie Slawinski

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.

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP PRESENTATION BY ANASTASIA BERGERON

Ms. Bergeron presented an outline of a self created Leadership Workshop Program for girls grades 5-8. Ms. Bergeron would like to present this workshop in conjunction with Morris Plains Recreation Summer Enhancement Program.

Since registration is well underway for Summer Enhancements, it would not be feasible to consider the addition of any new programs. It was therefore suggested Ms. Bergeron consider a timeframe independent of Summer Recreation Programs.

Before moving forward with formulating the Leadership Workshop, it was suggested that Ms. Bergeron create a flyer to display at the Borough School to determine an interest level.

Ms. Bergeron agreed to prepare a flyer and distribute at the Borough School before moving forward. The Recreation Commissioners thanked Ms. Bergeron for her outstanding presentation.

BASEBALL AND REC FIELDS

Mr. Bergeron stated that one thing that could be considered for the baseball fields going forward is a 50/70 baseball field. This is in between the Little League size and the big league size. Little League is 60' to the bases and 46' to the mound. He also mentioned 60/90 like Yankee Stadium. The in-between size is actually very good size for children, and more and more people are using such a field. Morris Plains had a 50/70 team last year (2013) and more and more tournaments for 11, 12, and 13 year-old players are using this distance – they are too big for Little League, but too small for the larger diamond.

Continuing, Mr. Bergeron advised that the All-Star team will compete in a separate tournament that will be a 50/70 tournament. Last year they used Field 4 (the back right one) and dug out the infield a bit. It was used for four or five games, but was not a true 50/70 field. He asked does Morris Plains need to create a 50/70 field? Morristown and Hanover have both created such fields. Could Field 2 be developed into a 50/70 field? However, he reminded, Field 2 has a number of drainage issues. He would very much encourage the creation of a 50/70 field in Morris Plains. He provided additional information relating to this desire. He believes the total cost would be in the approximate amount of \$2,500.

Mr. Cortese asked about Mr. Bergeron's vision of the changes that would be needed to make Field 4 a more multi-purpose field. Does it involve only removing some grass and putting more clay in?

Mr. Bergeron responded it would require the removal of 8' to 10' of grass all around the perimeter. A second base box may need to be added. He gave his reasons why he thinks Field 2 would not be a good choice, particularly the significant drainage issues. He advised that the VFW field is a 60/90 field – a base at 70' and a base at 90'; a mound at 60' and a mound at 50' (camel mound). There would be a need to cut back the infield, about 6' around.

Cross discussion about issues related to the possibility of creating a 50/70 field in Morris Plains, including whatever would be done would not ruin a field for future use by softball; determining whether the Borough can provide some funding for this proposal; while there may be opportunity to use other municipalities' 50/70 fields, there is no guarantee of them being available; they do not expect this field to be ready for use this season; and related additional issues.

Mr. Cortese requested that a letter be provided that confirms that Little League is in agreement with the proposal. He said he does not see any negative impact with regard to this proposal. He advised he will try to identify a way to be supportive of this proposal. He asked that Mr. Bergeron provide the percentage of children who would be playing the 50/70 baseball.

Mr. Bergeron advised that this summer they will not have a team in the district All-Star tournament. Fifteen of their 23 major players will be playing in an alternate 50/70 tournament – about two thirds. He stated he understands there is no way a field can be converted in the next three weeks when the tournament starts. A 50/70 this fall would be good, if possible. Most of the 50/70 is the travel teams in the spring, the summer teams and the fall teams.

Cross discussion, including that having a 50/70 field could be an asset in encouraging greater interest in baseball in light of the competition from other sports such as lacrosse; the length of the baseball season; which fields are used and how often for each; and other issues relating to creating a 50/70 field.

Mr. Cortese offered to meet with Mr. Bergeron together with one of the Commissioners to take some measurements and to check how much clay is available. He will be away, but will contact him during the upcoming week.

Mr. Bergeron thought this would be a good plan and thanked the Commission for its time and consideration.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Cortese requested that all members review the minutes of the Commission's April 24, 2014 Regular Meeting.

Mr. Sittmann moved that the minutes of the April 24, 2014 meeting be approved, second by Mrs. Slawinski. Voice vote. All in favor (except Mr. Breslin who abstained). **Motion carried.**

RECREATION DIRECTORS' REPORT – May 2014

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

Summer Camp Registration – Non- Resident Children

Mrs. Leahey advised about a telephone call and correspondence from Kelly Harrington concerning her request that her child be allowed to register for summer camp even though they do not live in Morris Plains. This child is on the Swim Team. Ms. Harrington asked if there was someone she could appeal to. Mrs. Leahey suggested she attend this Recreation Commission meeting, but she could not. She made her request in written form in a letter to the Commission.

Cross discussion about Ms. Harrington's request, including exceptions have been made for several children who do not live in the Borough, but who are in the Borough school system and have been permitted to register for summer camp programs; the current rule is that a child must live in the Borough; there can be future discussion about this as members desire; and what number would constitute "full registration."

Mrs. Leahey was requested to contact Ms. Harrington to advise that there could be no registration this year, that the Commission will revisit this matter for next year, and thank her for bringing this to their attention.

Morris Plains Soccer Association

Mrs. Leahey next advised of correspondence from Larry Hoey. This concerned the availability of Rutgers Safety Training. She advised him to review the Rutgers Safety Training website for information on where and when classes are being offered. After doing so and finding no satisfactory offerings, he contacted Rutgers who agreed to provide an instructor to do the needed training. The cost will be \$200 and \$30 for each attendee. The Commission has paid the \$30 attendee fee in the past, but the fee paid to the previous Borough instructor was only \$90, not \$200. The training would be for Fall soccer.

Cross discussion about this issue, including that Mr. Hoey would like this training session to be held at the Community Center and be scheduled in August; will the Commission pay the \$200 instructor fee (Mr. Cortese recommended paying \$90 if anything; others thought that in return for paying the \$30 per attendee, the association should pay the \$200); the course is one night; questions about the student materials; and the impact of certain attendance issues.

Mrs. Leahey will continue to work with Mr. Hoey regarding this matter.

Summer Camp and Enhancements – Mrs. Leahey reported the Enhancements are looking very good with some opening second classes when possible. She does not anticipate any problems with any of them. Early registration closed last Thursday and the number of campers right now is 270, down somewhat from last year. She provided additional information on the Teen Camp/Center, too. Last year's registration(s) were unusually high.

Various Commission members wondered how hiring will be impacted in the end if there is a significant drop off from last year in registrations.

Mrs. Leahey thinks that about 10 more children will be registered for camp. A total of 280 campers is a good number, and she will be happy about with this total. She advised that Susan thinks that perhaps too few people are being hired to work in the camp program.

Cross discussion about possible changes that could be made in connection with next season's Recreation programs, including dates of when certain things will or must be done by; fees and when they apply (such as early and late registration); impact of decisions in connection with Fee Schedule and hiring issues; and that this season may just prove to be an "off year".

Mrs. Leahey reminded that a child has to be a part of the Teen Center/Teen

Camp to go on any of the summer recreation trips. They are not open to everyone. There will only be one bus for the trips.

Cross discussion about the possibility of attracting more participants for the Teen Center/Teen Camp program by reminding residents that only children registered for the Teen Camp program will be able to go on the various trips. This also included the fact that the cost to register will now be higher since the early registration timeframe is over. Another suggestion was to send e-mail messages to the sports groups about this, too.

Mrs. Leahey advised that last year the trips created a nightmare when they were part of the enhancements program. This year trip participants will pay cash to participate in the trips/off-site activities.

Mr. Cortese stated he is very pleased with the current total registration number(s). He also commented on several details of the summer camp activities, including the number of registrants and the number of people hired to work at the summer camp. He complimented and thanked everyone who worked on the summer camp program plans and preparation.

Summer Concerts Series – Mrs. Leahey advised everything is all set. She provided the names of the musical acts that will perform.

Senior Picnic – The entertainment at this event this year will be “A Touch of Sinatra” – the life and music of Frank Sinatra. There will be a narrator and a singer. The picnic will be held on Thursday, July 17, 2014, beginning at 12:00 Noon. The entertainers will entertain for about one hour.

Splash Party at the Pool – This event will be held on Saturday night, July 19, 2014.

Mr. Cortese confirmed that there will be a brand new charcoal grill for use at this event.

Cross discussion about who will assist at the various social events, about purchasing the needed food and supplies and arranging for any necessary equipment.

Mrs. Leahey advised that the new Acme manager recently visited the Community Center. He offered to provide plants for her office free of charge. She briefly spoke with him about being able to obtain a line of credit with Acme and will be visiting him at Acme to talk more about this. He was at the Community Center to talk with a seniors group.

Mr. Cortese commented that Acme is a local supermarket.

Mrs. Leahey further advised that in the past Stop & Shop stated they cannot open a line of credit for use by Recreation.

Cross discussion about the length of time it takes for an invoice to be received, a voucher prepared, signed, and returned, and final payment made to the vendor (such as Shop Rite).

Mrs. Leahey stated they may have to re-think going to Restaurant Depot versus Shop Rite since it is less expensive for the camp needs. She also advised she has been very pleased with how things are working in connection with purchasing at Shop Rite.

Councilmember Fu reported on the procurement cards that will be available shortly for a variety of purchases. There is training involved. She also provided information on how the cards will actually be used.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Bodnar provided a status report on this event. There will be two more entertainers (clowns) this year and the rides have been increased and upgraded. He believes everything is in place for Family Day, including issues relating to insurance. Family Day is on Saturday, June 28, 2014, with a rain date on Sunday, June 29, 2014.

Cross discussion about organizations that will help at Family Day, about supplies and equipment that will be needed, the issue of rotating the concessions among the various organizations raising funds on a year-to-year basis, soliciting for corporate sponsors, and other ideas for this event in future years.

Report of Councilmember Fu

Greystone Fields – Councilmember Fu provided updates on information that she had available. There was discussion about the lights (being turned off too early) and a house-like structure) that is now at the fields – the thinking was that it has changing rooms and that there is water hooked up, too.

Mr. Cortese commented on how in his opinion everything is proceeding at the Greystone fields. He believes everything is working relatively well as of now such as traffic and parking issues and entering and existing the field areas.

Councilmember Fu reminded the Commission members of the Memorial Day Parade coming up this weekend. She advised that a new roof is going to be installed at the Pavilion very shortly and hopefully fully completed by the end of May or in early June. A cement floor will also be installed. She also reported that this year's Fishing Contest had the biggest catch in history – 66 Trout versus a normal catch of 20 to 30 Trout.

Cross discussion about several issues at the playground/fields: (1) spikes in the railroad ties are coming out and (2) a bleacher step by Field #2 that is loose.

Councilmember Fu discussed the time capsule activity that will take place on Family Day at 4:00 p.m. In addition, there will be a dedication of a plaque; the two events should take approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Cross discussion about what Family Day activities might be occurring around 4:00 p.m. such as Chris Gardner setting up, including that Councilmember Fu will check on the need for the P.A. system for the time capsule removal.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

VOUCHERS

Mr. Cortese asked the Commission members to check the voucher(s) submitted for approval.

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

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Cortese read the necessary Resolution allowing the Commission to enter into Executive Session.

Voice vote. All in favor to enter Executive Session. Motion carried.

There being no further business, Mrs. Slawinski moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mrs. McCabe Voice vote. All in favor. Motion carried.

Karleen Leahey
Commission Secretary

Maureen Sullivan
Recording Secretary

