

RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

September 25, 2014

Present: Mr. Kevin Bodnar
Mr. Michael Breslin
Mr. Salvatore Cortese, Chairman
Mrs. Jan McCabe
Mrs. Maureen McEntee
Mr. Gerard Sittmann, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Maggie Slawinski

Absent: None

Present: Karleen Leahey, Recreation Director
Sheryl McNichol, Events Coordinator
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.

Mr. Tom Bergeron, Druetzler Drive, Morris Plains, commented that the tennis coach is "fabulous." He provided information on how he works with his students who have never played tennis before.

Mr. Cortese thanked him for his comments since it is always nice to receive compliments on the programs offered.

Mr. Kevin Burns, advised he is representing the Morris Plains Little League and would like to discuss intentions and plans that Little League has and hopefully get the Commission's support of them. There are about 220 participants – 140 boys and 80 girls. He thanked the Commission members for their support in acquiring their new scoreboard and also for the work done by the Department of Public Works (DPW) staff with the bases.

There are two ideas the Board has: (1) Field #1 needs netting installed behind the backstop. Without this netting, players will still need to try to recover balls that become lost in the woods and the high grass that is not mowed any longer; 5 to 10 balls are lost per game. And, the players who are trying to find the lost balls are encountering poison ivy and other problems in the woods. Installing this netting will save the cost of the lost balls. He thinks five to six poles will need to be put up behind the backstop to hold the netting. If the DPW staff can install the poles, that will be a significant savings for Little League. The netting is taken down generally in October each year. Little League has the necessary funding; they are requesting help from the DPW to install the netting.

Mr. Burns was advised that the grass is no longer being mowed at Little League's requests over the years since the high grass keeps the parents off the hill.

Cross discussion about the netting being requested, how it would be installed and used, how long the netting will be up, parking/car issues, and exactly where it would be installed.

Mr. Cortese advised he wants to present this plan to the Borough Engineer to ensure there are no problems. He asked Mr. Burns to provide him with a sketch that gives details on size(s) and equipment required to accomplish this goal.

Mr. Burns commented on acquiring more clay for Fields #3 and #4. He also remarked on Little League/baseball/softball conflict issues that sometimes occur.

Mr. Cortese and Mr. Sittmann offered suggestions to Mr. Burns on how best to present what it is they are requesting, particularly in relation to other sports organizations and what they are requesting, when, how and why.

Cross discussion about prior discussions with sports organizations and their various requests over the years, including not conversing in a "us and them" manner.

Mr. Burns stated he "as the President and we as the Board" have allocated money to baseball and softball for all their requests as received from each organization. The organizations continue and they essentially have the same needs as previously.

Idea (2) is about converting Field #2 into a 50/70 field. This would have no impact on the current Little League field and it would continue to be used for Little League. He described how this field conversion would be done. Again, they are requesting DPW's help in cutting an arc behind the infield.

Cross discussion on several other possible issues relating to the fields; for example, appropriateness of existing field fencing (too close?), use of the 50/70 field(s), number of home runs in an average game, baseball/softball scheduling, the mound, that the VFW field does not work, neither does Borough, soccer needs and use,

bleachers, playing on dirt, apparent cutting of a field(s) without notifying the Commission, issues relating to Field #4, that Fields #3 and #5 are softball fields, baseball/softball issues, field drainage issues, and lack of water sources.

Mr. Cortese asked Mr. Burns and the Board to present additional data to convince him and the Commission members that this or that is not working properly and why it needs the Commission's assistance to "make things work right" before the Commission promises anything specific to him. Specific recommendations or suggestions on what any solutions might be should be included, too.

Cross discussion concerning the matter of whether it was parents in the Borough or Board members who had a problem(s) surrounding Field #4 and how it is used and maintained and other matters relating to this field.

Mr. Cortese commented on matters being discussed in the various cross discussion portions and provided his thoughts about these issues. One or more Commission members also provided commentary as to their thoughts.

Mr. Burns thanked the Commission for its time, considerations, and suggestions.

Cross discussion among the Commission members about the issues raised during the prior discussions about Little League, baseball, and softball and field matters, including that Mr. Cortese advised he had to obtain permission from the Borough for the bases to be installed by the DPW staff and are they getting a mixed message – "is it give us what you think is best" or something else?"

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

Mr. Sittmann moved that the minutes of the July 24, 2014 meeting be approved, seconded by Mr. Bodnar. Voice vote. All in favor (except Mrs. McCabe and Mrs. McEntee who abstained). **Motion carried.**

RECREATION DIRECTORS' REPORT – August and September 2014

Mrs. Leahey presented the Recreation Director's Report.

Summer Camp – Mrs. Leahey reviewed certain camp statistics. Late registration produced extra revenue of \$2,340 (39 people who registered late and had to pay an additional \$60). The revenue collected prior to May 15, 2014 totaled \$47,600. Total salary expenses were \$46,968.88. The Enhancements did very well. Camp revenue was down a somewhat, a combination of having 50-60 less participants this year and the salaries increased. Overall, we were down \$151.83 for Camp. Factoring in all the Enhancements and take out that Camp total, we were up \$7,487.42. She believes the Camp was very good this season.

Continuing, Mrs. Leahey reported on the trips that were scheduled. Unfortunately, not enough Camp participants signed up for some of the trips. For Dorney Park, it was down almost \$800 and Mountain Creek was down \$896. She was able to cancel a third trip and have the bus rental cost refunded. She and Susan discussed this situation, and believe the resolution has to be to not offer these kinds of trips in the future. This seems to go against past trends for these trips when there was not enough room on buses for everyone who wanted to go. Trips will still be offered, just not these “high-end” kinds of trips.

Mrs. McNichol advised that this year there were 72 seventh graders and about 80 eighth graders.

Correspondence Received - Mrs. Leahey advised of a note of appreciation from Frances Spillane about pool exercises and the senior exercises. She requested they be extended to summer 2015. She stated the Knitting Club has disbanded so there will be some flexibility in connection to these funds.

Sports Organizations – Mrs. Leahey advised of the sports organizations that did not return the vouchers for their stipends. She has sent reminders. The checks cannot be released until the vouchers are signed and approved. The organizations that did not return their vouchers are: (1) Grapplers, (2) Colonial Hockey, (3) Swim Team, (4) Lacrosse, and (5) Basketball. If any member hears from any of these organizations asking where their check is, please remind them they have to sign their voucher and return it.

Cross discussion about this situation.

Fall Programs – Mrs. Leahey reported these are doing well, although she did have to cancel a program titled “Bake Up Some Fun”. She does not really know why it did not do very well, except that she thought it might have related to its cost. There was a four-person minimum. She also had to cancel a sports program.

She advised that the Rutgers Safety Training planned program had to be cancelled due to a lack of enough participants. Randolph held a class on August 19th and those who needed to attend were able to go to that training. Six Morris Plains participants attended.

Community Park Pool - Mrs. Leahey stated she included information in the members' folders concerning a possible biometric ID system for the Pool. This relates to the ongoing problems she has had with the computer and printer she has been using to create the Pool IDs. At this point the printer is broken and the computer and the software program have problems. When purchased, the camera, the printer and the program cost \$6,000. Additionally, ID cards must be purchased as well as the needed ribbon, both of which are costly.

She has talked with personnel involved with the Chester Pool and the biometric system they are using. (a finger scan ID system). They reported that initially it was a nightmare getting everyone scanned, but over time it has become an amazing system. The start-up cost for everything was about \$3,000. She has not yet made any contact with the biometric system equipment company, but has the information that Chester provided to her. She agrees it would be an enormous task to get everyone scanned, but ultimately it will make things so much easier.

Cross discussion about the possibility of acquiring this biometric system for future use, including what the initial and recurring expenses would be, what equipment would be needed at the Pool to accomplish the finger scanning, that Mrs. Leahey will further investigate this possibility, that perhaps Councilmember Karr can be of assistance with this investigation, security issues involving having people's fingerprints, how Pool ID badges currently are made, and related issues.

Report of Sheryl McNichol - Events

Garage Sales Weekend - Mrs. McNichol reported on the efforts that are underway in connection with the Garage Sales Weekend. She and Mrs. Leahey believe about 50 participants have signed up so far. Monday, September 29, 2014, 4:00 p.m., is the last day to submit to ensure inclusion in the Garage Sales information booklet. She provided details regarding making the copies of the booklet and advertising for this event and its cost; the ad will cost \$68.04 and will run for one day (Friday, October 3). She also provided additional information concerning issues relating to the cost of advertising. The ad will run in *Patch* for the entire week and on one or more internet websites covering Morris County garage sales.

Cross discussion about garage sales weekend matters, including that these sales have been held for the past 18 years on the first weekend in October and the arrangements for distribution of the booklets and flyers to the public.

Mrs. McNichol advised she will keep a count as to how many flyers/booklets are left at the various business sites so at the end of the day she can determine how many people took these items as well as pick up whatever remain.

Bonfire – Mrs. McNichol provided information on the supplies that she had ordered so far, including 100 pumpkins and the key dates/timeframes when other actions must be taken and what these actions are. This year there will be a scavenger hunt from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and will involve the entire Community Park area. No prizes will be given; it's just a fun activity. A Girl Scout troop will serve hot chocolate. Mr. Swanson will be providing hamburgers and hot dogs. Supplies have been ordered from Oriental Trading; Mrs. McEntee advised what she ordered for the 2013 bonfire. She has also secured the necessary fire/bonfire permit that lists herself and Chris Shay on it.

Cross discussion about matters related to the bonfire, including issues connected to fire safety (embers from the fire), what the DPW responsibilities will be and the equipment they will need to provide, need for electricity and extension cords, location of various equipment/supplies items that may already be at Community Park, and other related concerns, needs, entertainment, and activities.

Halloween Parade and Party – Mrs. McNichol provided an update on the plans for this event. The Fire Department is the primary coordinator of this event, but the Commission members assist with various responsibilities and activities.

VOUCHERS

Mrs. Leahey advised that only the vouchers highlighted in yellow are to be approved. She also stated that the Lacrosse voucher is not included and that she believes the Wildcats voucher is included.

Mr. Breslin moved that the vouchers highlighted in yellow be approved as presented, seconded by Mr. Bodnar. Voice vote. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilwoman Fu advised there will be a prescription take-back event on Saturday, September 27, 2014, sponsored by the Morris Plains Police Department. It will be held at Stop & Shop from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. There will be a Rotary breakfast on Sunday, November 28, 2014. The Board of Health will sponsor a Wellness Day on Saturday, October 25, 2014. The new boiler was installed at the Community Center. On October 1, 2014, Mr. Cortese, the Mayor and she will attend a meeting with the County Park Commission to discuss the turf.

Cross discussion about several issues that can be raised on behalf of the Commission at the meeting with the County Park Commission, mostly about use of the fields and various issues/problems that occur around this matter. There was also a brief discussion about general matters relating to the Greystone property.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

There was discussion about the posting of rules and regulations at various parks in the Borough. It was mentioned that at Central Park there is a banner type sign used. Mrs. Leahey could investigate this and possibly one or more as needed can be ordered for use in the Borough.

Mr. Bodnar updated on matters in connection with working with the County and the vo-tech school. He said that at this time everything is going well.

Mr. Cortese commented about the availability of clay. He suggested that vo-tech be contacted as to any projects they may be looking to do, perhaps not now, but maybe in the spring. Mention was made of painting, fencing installation, and bleachers.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Maureen Sullivan
Recording Secretary

Karleen Leahey
Commission Secretary

