

# **RECREATION COMMISSION**

## **REGULAR MEETING**

**November 19, 2015**

**Present:** Mr. Kevin Bodnar (arrived at 7:54)  
Mr. Michael Breslin  
Mrs. Jan McCabe  
Mrs. Maggie Slawinski  
Mr. Jake Cahill (arrived at 7:35 p.m.)  
Mr. Gerard Sittmann, Chairman

Karleen Leahey, Recreation Director  
Sheryl McNichol, Events Coordinator

**Absent:** Mrs. Maureen McEntee

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Sittmann 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. Sittmann opened the meeting to the public to speak on matters other than those on the agenda.

Mr. Jeff Emge, 151 Granniss Avenue, Morris Plains, stated he was at this meeting to represent Morris Plains Soccer. He provided an update of the Fall season which concluded this past Saturday, November 14, 2015. The program had ten teams of divisional players – first through fourth grades – 120 players. There were also 96 clinic players (three years old through kindergarten). For the spring program there were 61 first through fourth players and 92 clinic players. He provided additional information as he was able to do so. Most of the time they play at Simon’s Park, but sometimes play at Frelinghuysen. He provided details on the organization’s work to acquire business sponsorships, and as a result each team has a sponsor. Each sponsorship is \$250. The organization was also able to acquire more sponsors to cover overall and incidental costs of the program. He also made mention of Morris United. The organization is pleased with the success they have had with their sponsorship program. He provided information concerning the sale of snacks at the games from a truck versus the snack bar used in previous years. This relates to the fact that the parents manning the snack bar in the past were unable to watch their children play. He also commented on equipment. He stated that this soccer organization is not a U.S. Soccer organization and therefore not required to follow their rules. He commented that they will be addressing information recently published by the U. S. Soccer organization and referred to some complaints and concerns raised by parents and others. Some of the concerns relate to possible head injuries, “headers”, and falls.

Continuing, Mr. Emge advised that Morris United Travel will follow the information from the U. S. Soccer organization. Morris United Recreation has not yet decided what they will do. Apparently, players ages are taken into consideration with regard to some of these rules and regulations. He mentioned future roles for somewhat smaller fields. He stated he finds some of the information being discussed by U. S. Soccer conflicting and is unsure as to how Morris Plains Soccer will proceed with

this information. He is exploring various ways of making practice games safer by using much softer, old balls. He described how playing is at the various fields as well as the availability of lighting for some games, including games at Central Park. He also provided information on the schedules for games and practices. He referred to lights for the Simon's park turf field. It would be great to be able to add more lighting at other fields. He stated with the sun setting earlier and earlier now, it is harder and harder for some of the coaches to be able to make it to practice. He does not know what such a request would cost, but he is willing to explore what the cost would be. He advised that all coaches have a background check done – they actually go through Little League at no cost.

Mr. Emge thanked the Commission for their time and consideration.

The Commission thanked Mr. Emge for his presentation.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Sittmann asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Commission's October 22, 2015 meeting.

Mrs. Slawinski moved that these minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Breslin. Voice vote. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

### **RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2015**

Mrs. Leahey presented her report.

**Halloween Parade and Party** – This event was a great success. She believes there may have been a record number of trick or treaters this year. She also advised of thank-you notes received and expressed thanks to all who helped with the parade and party. Not unexpectedly, there were some complaints from residents living in the Burch Drive

vicinity. She wondered if these complaints could be eliminated by having this event on a different day than Halloween – for example, the Friday before Halloween.

Cross discussion about this suggestion that included possible new ways to enhance the experience, that this event is actually the Fire Department's activity, trying to move it Community Park, although this was tried in the past, but the Fire Department did not support such a move, and it would completely reduce the trick or treating complaints from nearby residents.

**Bonfire** – The Bonfire was also a great success. She explained some of the challenges experienced relating to the refreshments and the need for sufficient availability. She stated there was an issue about the cost of the standard unit port-a-potty -- \$75 (as in past years) versus \$238. It was ordered from the same vendor as in the past. Ms. McNichols attempted to negotiate this matter, but the vendor insisted the price was \$238. A voucher was sent to the vendor for \$75. When Mrs. Leahey called the vendor, she was told the \$238 price was always the correct price and that in previous years the vendor was giving the Borough a discount, but for this year and going forward they decided to charge the standard rate. Ultimately, a price of \$95 was agreed to. She will investigate other suppliers prior to next year's event.

**Meeting at Borough School** – Mrs. Leahey and Mrs. Fu met with the Superintendent and the Technology Coordinator in connection with planned summer programs. The meeting went very well. The original expectation was that these programs will be held after the traditional summer camp programs and that parents would be picking up their children at summer camp to take them to Borough School. She provided additional details as they were explained to her by the Superintendent and the Technology Coordinator. There was also a visit to the

Community Center, possibly with the thought of the school's programs being held at the Community Center before camp versus the Borough School for ease of the participants and parents by their not having to transport children between the two locations.

Cross discussion about the issues discussed at the meeting with the Superintendent and the Technology Coordinator, including that some of the Community Center space would not be available because it is set up for the length of the program; for example, where arts and crafts are done and what timeframe(s) would be available to accommodate such a proposal.

**Dance Classes** – Mrs. Leahey reported that two dance classes (one day and one evening) for children are offered. However, she is experiencing increasing problems with some mothers who bring their children for the dance class and also have other children with them and stay – but wander around the various rooms in the Community Center. At some point one of the mothers approached a Councilmember who was attending a meeting at the Community Center and complained that since it was a community center, they should have “free reign” and their children should be able to play with toys that are at the Center.

A comment was made that this should be handled the same as what Basketball has been told – their children cannot have free reign of the Center and that there are other classes. Toys were purchased for specific programs. It should be explained to the Council how disruptive this approach (allowing free reign, playing with toys) would be at the Center. The dance instructor for the evening dance class now locks the door to the room where mothers and children most consistently tend to go.

A suggestion was made that going forward the evening staff at the center lock the doors of all rooms at the Center where nothing is taking place.

**Kids Helping Kids** – She updated as to the upcoming plans that this organization has scheduled.

**Fence (Top of)** – The issue here was that there needs to be a decision made as to whether the Borough will install or will the Vo-Tech School. The decision must also be made as to who will buy.

**Volunteer of the Year** – Mrs. Leahey provided information on the nominations for this award.

#### **EVENTS COORDINATOR'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2015**

Ms. McNichols presented her report:

**Bonfire** – This event went great, even though the weather was somewhat warm at the start of it.

**Winter Event(s)** – Mr. Ed Nicholson offered to present a concert. Ms. McNichols stated that right now a concert is schedule to be held on Friday, January 8, 2016. She and Mrs. Leahey would like to have the Morris Plains Band be the opening act. She named student musicians who Mr. Nicholson would be including in this concert. She also provided information on back-up musicians. He is planning to charge about \$500.

Cross discussion regarding the issue of charging to present this concert, including that it would not be a Recreation event and that this concert could be considered as the winter version of the Summer Concert Series.

Mr. Sittmann asked for a vote as to whether this winter concert should be supported. Voice vote. None in favor. The winter concert idea was denied.

Cross discussion concerning a possible musical concert, including that perhaps there could be a concert performed by the Morris Plains Band; that there will be a presentation, possibly at the Commission's next meeting, relating to the Band; that funds remain in the budget left over from the Summer Concert Series; costs associated with having a concert at Borough School at night/on a weekend; checking with Councilwoman Fu and/or the Council on the issues relating to band concerts; the fact that Mr. Nicholson is a music teacher paid by his students who would be performing at the concert; and additional discussion about whether or not there is any possible way that Mr. Nicholson would be able to present his concert at some time in the future and request \$500.

Mrs. Leahey will follow up with Councilwoman Fu about the band concert questions.

**Bingo** – Ms. McNichol mentioned that this was done last year and was a success; she would like to consider offering this activity again.

### **2016 BUDGET**

Mrs. Leahey stated that budget amounts will be needed for the various Recreation Commission events held throughout the year such as the Bonfire. There will be five Sundays in July 2016. She would like to hold the Summer Concert Series concerts on the second, third, fourth, and fifth weekends and ask Mr. Larry Ripley if he would like to present the Morris Plains Band on the Fourth of July weekend.

### **2016 EVENTS/GROUPS AND BUDGETED AMOUNTS**

**EVENT/GROUP****BUDGET AMOUNT**

Bonfire	Same as in 2015 (\$1,500)
Fireworks	Same as 2015 (\$20,800.)
Halloween Parade & Party	Same as 2015 (\$250.)
Theater	\$3,500.
Family Day	\$9500.
Summer Concert Series	Same as 2015 (\$4000.)
Splash Parties (2)	\$1,500.
Block Dance	Same as 2015 (\$1,500.)
Senior Picnic	\$1,250.
Recreation Events	Same as 2015 (\$1,500.)
Breakfast with the Easter Bunny	\$1,700.
Senior Exercise	Same as 2015 (\$1200.)
Volunteer Night	Same as 2015 (\$200.)
Babe Ruth	Same as 2015 (\$500.)
Grapplers	Same as 2015 (\$500.)
Morris Plains Little League	Same as 2015 (\$2,500.)
Soccer	Same as 2015 (\$2500.)
Hockey	Same as 2015 (\$1000.)
Wildcats	Same as 2015 (\$1500.)
Watnong Park	Same as 2015 (\$500.)
Railroad Club	Same as 2015 (\$400.)
Swim Team	Same as 2015 (\$2500.)
Lacrosse	Same as 2015 (\$2500.)

Cross discussion about how fund donations and vouchers to lacrosse are to be handled. Apparently the reason relates to use of fields at Central Park.

Basketball	\$3,000
Sports Fund	Same as 2015 (\$500.)

A decision was made to table the determination of the Events dates for 2016.

### **APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS**

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

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Sittmann asked Mrs. Leahey to make a note relating to the Bonfire. A question has arisen about the need for better lighting along the pathway leading to/from the event. In addition to the darkness, there are also tree branches and limbs posing walking difficulties.

A question was asked as to whether solar lights could be lined up along the pathway to provide lighting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Karleen Leahey  
Commission Secretary

Maureen Sullivan  
Recording Secretary