

RECREATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

September 27, 2012

Present: Mr. Kevin Bodnar
Mr. Michael Breslin (arrived at 8:59 p.m.)
Mr. Salvatore Cortese, Chairman
Mr. Gerard Sittmann, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Jan McCabe
Mrs. Maureen McEntee

Mrs. Karleen Leahey, Recreation Director
Mrs. Katie Bezold, Events Coordinator
Councilwoman Laurie Fu

Absent: Mrs. Maggie Slawinski

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. Kevin Byrnes stated he is the vice president of baseball for the Little League.

Mr. Tom Bergeron stated he is the president of Little League.

Mr. Byrnes presented a report on what he termed "the status of baseball." Overall, it is going well, especially at the younger ages. Field conditions, maintenance, and work done on the fields in the past and in the more recent past were discussed. He specifically mentioned wet ground problems with Field #1 when there was rain and the effort on their part that is needed to ready the field for play.

Mr. Cortese expressed surprise and concern with the field wetness problem since the Borough installed a 24" piping for the fields.

Mr. Byrnes replied that he does not believe the piping that was installed is able to help

maintain Field #1; he thinks it is more in the area of Field #2.

Cross discussion about this problem, the two fields, the piping, rocks, and the need to discuss this with the Borough Engineer and the possibility of extending the piping from Field #2 into Field #1. It also included references to grading of the ground in certain areas, future installation of clay, and the need for a topography study of the field.

Mr. Cortese cautioned Messrs. Byrnes and Bergeron about continuing some of the efforts they are doing and worried about issues being created with hydrology by cutting and filling versus developing one coordinated plan to address this problem. He does appreciate their volunteer efforts in attempting to address this situation.

Mr. Byrnes advised that Fields #2, #3, #4, and #5 need maintenance work. The softball fields are not in good condition. Field #2 has a problem with a drain/grate near a dugout area. A portion of one of the fields had grass seed put down, but the grass never grew in. Most of the fields appear to have some level of problem with wetness/rain water.

Mr. Cortese recommended that he and they meet at the fields to visually see what the problems are and then develop a plan to resolve the issues. The problems should be corrected one time, not doing "band-aid" resolutions each time it is needed. He needs to know how the services provided by the Borough Engineer relate to work needed at Borough parks. He provided information regarding the need to do Phase II of the original plan. He also commented on the work done by the Department of Public Works (DPW) when the piping was installed, stating that it is 48" below grade. There should be more than a sufficient amount of pitch to correct these problems. With a topographic report and the grades being set, the work can be done once to resolve the water issues. He recommended a meeting with Councilwoman Fu that he and possibly one or two Commission members would attend. However, he does not anticipate a quick resolution to these problems.

Mr. Byrnes added that during the hosting of a summer tournament, they had to relocate games onto Parsippany fields because they did not want players on Field #2 specifically.

Mr. Cortese was quite upset to learn of the need to move games to another municipality due to field problems. He also commented on issues relating to how funding might be allocated through the Borough budget. He wants to accomplish all the necessary work once and be done with these problems.

Mr. Bergeron added that there was a 10-year-old tournament two years ago and that there is a need for this type of tournament, and they would like to re-start this tournament, but Field #2 is not really considered safely playable by players over 8

years old.

Mr. Cortese stated he believes there will be good support for performing this work, but he does not want this work to be on a small scale. Each field needs to have a topography report done, and there must be a proper drainage system – just as this is done in other municipalities. There is more need for this kind of maintenance and field work because the Borough is flat.

Mr. Sittmann commented that while this work is being done, it may be necessary for fields to be closed and this will require scheduling changes.

Mr. Cortese stated he will investigate precisely what level of help the Borough Engineer might be able to provide. He also wondered if there might be anyone in the Little League organization that might be able to provide topographic work/surveying/engineering. He will also discuss funding possibilities with Councilwoman Fu. He suggested that the Little League organization start putting funds aside that the Borough may be able to match for future projects.

Mr. Byrnes also spoke about the Little League's "wish list." He also commented on ways that the organization might be able to fund a "wish list" account as well as raise funds for joint Little League-Borough projects.

Cross discussion about electrical outlet sources at the fields and the use of extension cords for certain activities.

Mr. Cortese requested that Messrs. Byrnes and Bergeron work on an estimate of what the cost would be for the installation of electrical outlets and submit this information to the Commission. This should also include proposed locations for these outlets and the number of outlets required.

Mr. Byrnes next spoke on the topic of the batting cages and what he believes needs to be done. He wondered if DPW staff might be able to do the work needed (edging out, stone installation) .

Mr. Cortese replied that Councilwoman Fu can contact Councilman Coogan who is the DPW liaison if over the winter the DPW staff can provide this work. He asked Councilwoman Fu to follow-up with Councilman Coogan to see if over the winter DPW staff could give time to dig out two batting cages 4" below and provide whatever finishing work would be needed.

Mr. Byrnes stated he thought they would be able to provide written information by the November meeting.

The November Commission meeting will be the week before Thanksgiving on

Thursday, November 15, 2012.

Mr. Bergeron asked how these kinds of projects were accomplished in the past.

Mr. Cortese replied that a long time ago many parents would be providing a high level of support for such projects, including helping to raise funds.

The consensus thought was that the same groups of supportive parents are trying to help at all the various sports fields at different times and that it is not particularly easy to identify many volunteers.

Mr. Bergeron asked about the relationship with the vocational school. His wish-list item was for a press box on top of a dugout. He does not know what it would entail to make this not what it would cost, but they would really like to have one.

Cross discussion about the possibility of installing a press box, including the structural integrity of the dugout to allow a press box to be installed above it, that the roof is reinforced concrete, although it would have to be leveled out a bit and stairs added, that the vocational school can most likely be able to assist with such a construction, plans would be needed, and it would be good if Little League developed a three-year plan for future work they would like to see done.

Mr. Cortese remarked that the vocational school has been very helpful over the years with both hands-on work and providing supplies such as clay. He also commented that if budget funding or Little League funds are not immediately or soon available, Little League will need to continue "band-aid" approaches until funds are available.

Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Bergeron thanked the Commission for their continuing support and Mr. Cortese thanked them for their continued time and effort.

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT –September 2012

Mrs. Leahey presented her report.

Summer Camp

Mrs. Leahey advised there were 370 campers this year; 120 campers at the Teen Center. She stated a request was made to the Borough Council to raise the late fee to \$210; there were only seven late registrants this year.

Mr. Cortese commented on the completeness of their report and he and the Commission members expressed their appreciation for their work in connection with it.

Mrs. Bezold spoke about the survey that was distributed via Survey Monkey on the last

day of camp. There were a total of 74 respondents, more than have ever replied to the paper versions of the survey. She reviewed the survey results, stating that the comments are interesting and worth reading.

Mr. Cortese suggested the possibility of holding an "after camp review meeting" to assess the results of the survey and the report submitted by Mrs. Leahey and Mrs. Bezold.

Garage Sale Days

Mrs. Leahey advised that the last item in their folders is the sample of the garage sale license and the garage sale registration form. Last year they made \$900 clear after ads were paid for (the only expense). In past years some of the money raised was given to the Parade Committee because they assisted with the garage sales; however, last year Mr. Banks, the former Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer stated all the money is exclusive to Recreation. She asked where this money is, what it goes to, and whether it can be used for a specific use.

Mr. Cortese responded that to the best of his knowledge, all the money that goes into one account legally cannot be moved into another account.

Cross discussion about how the garage sale days licensing might be handled in the future such as charging a lower fee (the \$10 fee charged by the Borough for regular yard sales/garage sales). The current fee is \$15 since the advertising is paid for. Also included discussion of what account does the money actually go into, is it earmarked for Recreation, and how is it divided up.

Mrs. Bezold advised of the advertising done for the upcoming garage sale days, including the cost of same.

Mrs. Leahey provided a current status report of the work related to the garage sale days -- number of people signed up, booklet printing and other work. She also provided information as to locations where garage sale day booklets can be found. It is also on the website.

Mrs. Bezold provided information concerning the distribution of the maps, something the Mayor considers important as part of a greeting to the Borough.

Summer Adult Fitness Programs

Mrs. Leahey provided information concerning the summer fitness program, the boot camp and the yoga program. All these programs very well received and \$1,440 was made after the instructors were paid. These programs will most likely be conducted again next summer. She also stated some vouchers had to be prepared for refunds.

Some were done because one of the programs had to be cancelled, but others were due to people signing up for many programs and then backing out. Generally, it is the same people time after time, in fact their behavior is almost abusive of the policy.

Cross discussion as to how best to deal with these program cancellations in the future, including changing nothing.

Use of the Community Center/Scheduling of Activities and Events

Mrs. Bezold spoke about the need to better schedule the use of the Community Center for the summer camp activities and the other activities taking place in the Center. This included reference to the need for cleaning up and straightening up rooms. Sometimes when rooms were left as is after summer camp activities, others complained when participating in the same room(s) in other programs such as yoga.

Cross discussion as to how the scheduling challenges might best be resolved, including a letter that should be written (by Mrs. Leahey) to the Center's facilities coordinator regarding advising of the multiple uses of rooms in connection with summer camp and the variety of adult programs and the Family Day event.

Mr. Cortese stated the Council was advised that the Commission had requested that nothing be scheduled at the Community Center during the summer camp timeframe; that they did not want anyone there during camp.

Mrs. Leahey advised she provides a list of all the events to the Community Center facilities coordinator with a note that during these events and all Teen Center events there cannot be any other activity other than the Commission's event; "these are the givens." It is a safety concern for the children attending these events to ensure there is not contact with strangers in the building.

Summer Camp Trips/Teen Center Trips

Mrs. Bezold reported that in connection with these trips, it would appear to be a good idea to consider charging \$5 more on the fee to be able to provide a shirt for all participants so that all trip participants will be much more easily identifiable during the trip to the camp counselors. This is also a safety concern. The color of the shirt is still undecided.

Mr. Cortese suggested a meeting be held to discuss summer camp matters. Mr. Sittmann and Mrs. McCabe together with one other Commission members offered to help. He also commented on money that will be available as "start" money to start the early work to be done in connection with summer camp.

Background Checks for All Over 18 Years of Age

Mrs. Bezold advised that in the past every counselor over 18 signed paperwork for a background check. For the first time she received a telephone call from the police chief telling her that what was being requested is not valid, that the only check they can do based on the information provided is to determine if a person has done anything in the Borough. The background check will need to be revised. When the form is revised a check will be able to be done beyond Morris Plains.

Cross discussion about the various issues involved with background checks, including that Mr. Sittmann will meet with the police chief about this.

Advertising of Recreation Commission Events/Activities

Cross discussion about ideas for signs/signage that could be used exclusively by the Recreation Commission to advertise events, including that newspaper advertising is very limited due to cost, best ways to advertise, best places to advertise, and directly asking people who say they did not know about an event where they would usually/typically look to learn of events.

Fall Recreation Programs

Mrs. Leahey reported on fall programs.

Mommy and Me – The response was overwhelming. There are 16 moms and 16 children.

2 Dance Classes – These classes have been great.

T-Ball – Great response to this program.

Adult Tennis – This program was cancelled. Several moms wondered if this program could be offered in the morning. She has spoken with USSI about this.

Spring Tennis – There are two classes.

Children's Theater Workshop– This program had to be cancelled. Twelve participants were needed and there were only five interested. There was no flexibility since two salaries needed to be paid.

Boot Camp - Overwhelming response to this program.

Yoga – Overwhelming response to this program.

Kick Boxing – Overwhelming response to this program.

Kids Helping Kids – This program may be in some trouble since volunteers are needed and they are not available any more to help with the programs. Attempts continue to save this program.

Cross discussion about the Kids Helping Kids program, including its educational component, fun elements, that perhaps the program needs a dedicated person to serve as the coordinator and oversee it, ideas on how to identify additional volunteers to help and support this program, monetary support if needed, per-pupil/per-class costs, suggestions of how to establish a better Board and how that Board should best function, a better formal structure, a proposed resolution(s) to this program's problem should be available at the October Commission meeting, possibly hiring a special education teacher or two (\$15 an hour salaries paid from a prior fundraiser), hiring mentor-trained high school students and paying \$10 an hour, the Montville Kids Helping Kids program, and history of the program starting with the Alliance.

Mrs. Leahey advised that 296 children participated in this program last year.

Mr. Cortese asked Mrs. Leahey to contact Ann and/or Melissa to request assistance as to what should be included in a description of what the position requires.

Correspondence

Mrs. Leahey advised of correspondence, including a letter from a Dana Smith. She read the letter that advised of her inability to use the Community Pool for the much of the season due to a skin rash. The August 21, 2012 letter requests either a partial or a full refund due to her limited use of the Pool. A doctor's note is enclosed.

A decision was made to address this matter later.

A letter was also received from Governor Christie regarding the purchase of parks and playground equipment.

Mr. Cortese explained the procedure of how these purchases were determined and done in the past and offered to assist her when and if any equipment purchases need to be done.

Mrs. Leahey asked if she should visit the parks and playgrounds to assess if there is any need for new purchases.

Mr. Cortese advised that he does this and the DPW does, too. There is nothing in writing, but when issues are noted and DPW can address them, they take care of whatever the situation is. He believes this is a responsibility that can be handled jointly

by Recreation and DPW.

Cross discussion on the various ways that monitoring at the parks and playgrounds can be accomplished, including that Mr. Cortese offered to periodically go with DPW staff to check for situations needing repair or work of some kind. He did not think Mrs. Leahey needed to add this to her list of work responsibilities.

Mr. Cortese provided information concerning the most recent renovations and upgrades done in the Borough's parks and playgrounds. Mr. Cortese offered to do a monthly walk through with DPW of the parks and playgrounds. He said he will do this for the remainder of this year and next year.

Councilwoman Fu commented on the buildings and grounds-recreation connection and how this connection might possibly be put to use in the monitoring of the parks, playgrounds and equipment.

Bonfire

Mrs. Bezold presented the plans for the Bonfire event. She will order the porta-potty; it came out of the Recreation budget last year even though it should not have. She is seeking a musical act. This event is the last Saturday in October, October 27.

Mr. Cortese mentioned he knows of a Borough resident who is supposed to be very good with the guitar. He will e-mail his contact information to Mrs. Bezold.

Mrs. Bezold continued advising she will contact the Boy Scouts on how they will participate in this event. She is uncertain of whether the bleachers are needed. Two extra bales of hay will be needed for the scarecrows.

Mr. Cortese advised the hay for the hayride and the scarecrows will be arranged for and picked up. Agway donates the bales of hay because it is returned to them after the bonfire.

Cross discussion about certain needs for the event (electrical outlets, certificates of liability, vouchers, etc.).

Halloween Parade and Party

Mrs. Bezold advised this event will proceed as always. She will contact the coordinator of this event. Commission members will help as volunteers to pass out food; the Commission will also pass out glow sticks.

Holiday-Themed Event(s)

Mrs. Bezold asked if anyone might have any additional such as the house decorating contest. Members appeared to like the idea of the house decorating. Residents like to see their names as winners and have the sign in front stating they are winners. Each member will take a district. She will ensure an article is published in *Plains Talk*. There was discussion about finding a way to have new winners year to year so the same residents are winning all the time.

Checks for Events

Mr. Cortese advised that each time there is an event, Borough Council approval will be needed – the Treasurer cannot write a check without Council approval. He cautioned that all necessary information will need to be submitted in a timely manner for Borough Council approval.

Dinner Dance/Comedy Night – 2013

Mrs. Bezold stated she thought it had been decided last year to do this event every other year, alternating with a volunteer appreciation event. It can be put in the budget for 2013. Further consideration will be given to this event. This event typically is held in either February or March.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Bodnar moved that the minutes of the June 28, 2012 Regular meeting be approved as distributed, seconded by Mr. Breslin.

Roll Call

Yeas: Mr. Bodnar, Mr. Breslin, Mr. Cortese, Mr. Sittmann,

Nays: None

Abstain: Mrs. McCabe, Mrs. McEntee

Absent: Mrs. Slawinski

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

Mrs. Leahey advised that only the yellow vouchers are to be approved at this meeting. The remaining ones have already been approved.

Mr. Sittmann moved that the vouchers as described above be approved, seconded by

Mrs. McCabe. Voice vote. All in favor. Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilwoman Fu updated the Commission on certain work projects being planned in the Borough and other recent actions in the Borough, including the proposed changes at the former Pfizer property for residential and commercial construction as well as the status of the Johnson & Johnson commercial buildings across the street from the former Pfizer property.

Continuing, Councilwoman Fu commented on a meeting with the Borough Treasurer.

Mr. Cortese asked Councilwoman Fu to determine several dates from the Treasurer to meet to discuss procedures for the Commission. He also commented on receipt of a grant (\$130,000) for turf installation at Simon's Park. He also asked Councilwoman Fu if it would be possible to install signage at Simon's Park to inform the public that the work is 100 percent funded through a grant from the Morris United Soccer Club.

It appeared that such signage for the turf installation project would be approved.

Continuing, Mr. Cortese next spoke about issues relating to the Greystone property. The fields and other areas are frequently very busy.

Mr. Bodnar provided information about Basketball's opening day on December 8, 2012. He also gave an update on joint work projects to be done with the vocational school.

Mr. Breslin asked about any updated information about certain State property at Greystone and roadway changes.

Brief cross discussion followed.

OLD BUSINESS

Cross discussion about work done and still needed to be planned for and done at Community Park, including continued discussion about the issues discussed by Messrs. Byrnes and Bergeron in connection with Little League.

There being no further business, Mrs. McCabe moved this public meeting be adjourned so that the Commission can go into closed session, seconded by Mr. Sittmann. Voice vote. All in favor. Motion carried.

Karleen Leahey

Commission Secretary

Maureen Sullivan

Recording Secretary

