

RECREATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

November 21, 2013

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

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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Cortese requested that all members review the minutes of the Commission's October 24, 2013 Regular Meeting.

Mrs. Leahey advised that attached to the minutes there is a listing containing a number of revisions/clarifications to the minutes to avoid any misinterpretations. Councilmember Fu provided commentary regarding the recommended revisions.

Mrs. Slawinski moved that the minutes of the October 24, 2013 Regular Meeting be accepted as circulated with the amendments as recommended, seconded by Mr. Bodnar. Voice vote. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

RECREATION DIRECTORS' REPORT – November 2013

Mrs. Leahey presented the Recreation Director's Report for November 2013.

Kids Helping Kids – Mrs. Leahey commented on the organization’s Mentor Recognition ceremony. She advised that between July 2012 through June 2013 there were 981 hours accumulated, 99 mentors earned hours, and she provided breakdown information on mentors earning various categories of hours. She provided information on some of the upcoming programs for this group.

Winter-Spring Recreation Programs

Yoga – This program will continue to be offered.

Acrylic Painting – This program will be offered during this timeframe.

Mommy & Me – This program will be offered during this timeframe.

Pre Ballet and Tumbling - This program will be offered during this timeframe.

Tuesday and Thursday Night Boot Camp – The current instructor is no longer able to conduct this class on Wednesday nights. An additional instructor may need to be hired going forward, but for now she will take a wait and see position; perhaps the instructor’s time availability will change.

Morristown Babe Ruth - Mrs. Leahey provided updated information on her attempts to get a Babe Ruth voucher signed. She has left voice mail messages and sent e-mails, but no response has yet been received. She requested assistance from Commission members if anyone can help.

Mr. Cortese advised he will contact Ray Masso

Opening Day – Basketball – Mrs. Leahey advised the Commission has been invited to attend this event on Saturday, December 7, 2013, 8: 30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at the Morris Plains Borough School.

Request to Use Simon’s Park – She has included a copy of an e-mail received from Jeff Emge. She requested that Commission members review this item prior to making a decision on how to move forward.

Girls’ Lacrosse – Mrs. Leahey commented on correspondence from Bob O’Brien about funding for this activity.

Bonfire – The Boy Scouts have not yet provided their receipts and as a result she is unable to provide the final dollar amounts until the next meeting.

Soccer Activities at Simon’s Park – This relates to a telephone call Mrs. Leahey received. She advised the resident (Jennings, 29 West Hanover Avenue) to attend the Commission’s meeting and provide information about his

issues relating to soccer. He requested that she present his concerns to the Commission on his behalf.

Continuing, Mrs. Leahey stated his first issue is the amount of trash that ends up on his lawn after soccer games. He advised that several of his neighbors also have this same problem and provided the names of these neighbors. His second issue is the number of individuals (male, female, and children) who use a portion of his property as a bathroom. He has confronted several people doing this asking them what they are doing. He said they respond that the bathrooms are locked and they have no other alternative. On one occasion while planting flowers, he actually called the police about this behavior. His third issue relates to the dumpster that is now located directly behind his house. This dumpster has no enclosure around it as many others in the Borough do. He wants to know why the dumpster is behind his house and why it is not enclosed.

Mrs. Leahey stated that Mr. Jennings understood that a grouping of Pine trees was to be planted by the Beautification Committee at some point to provide some privacy/buffering to his property from the activities at Simon's Park. He wanted to know if there were plans to do so on anyone's agenda. She stated she told him that either she or someone else would be back in touch with him about these issues.

Mr. Jennings at one point asked one or more coaches (who he identified as Morris United coaches) why the bathrooms were not open. He said the coaches advised they did not get a key.

Mr. Cortese advised the systems have been closed. His recommendation is that continued use of this park will require that a Porta-Potty be available.

Cross discussion of the problems relating to distributing numerous bathroom keys. Apparently giving too many people keys in the past has resulted in certain damages to the bathroom facilities. There was discussion of various ways of allowing these bathrooms to be open when games are occurring while still maintaining a safe approach to protect the equipment.

Mr. Cortese believed there was no need for the dumpster to be there now, several garbage cans with bags should be sufficient.

Councilmember Fu advised there is a plan to plant the Pine trees. She stated it would be fine to tell Mr. Jennings this.

Cross discussion about the dumpster, including whether it really needs to be there during the winter months, the possible cost to have it removed, and could it just be moved from behind his property to a different location.

Mr. Cortese advised that as far as the issue of the bathrooms being opened, he believes this was already worked out. DPW staff would open them and then lock

them again at night. He did not want to give anyone a key; there is too much possibility of vandalism. He explained some other ideas he has to protect this property such as the installation of a deadbolt/master lock that only DPW would have a key to. He said that keys could be given to the coaches IF the deadbolt/master lock was installed at the top. This would cost about \$100. He commented on a temporary solution.

Continuing, Mr. Cortese advised the Commission can discuss Mr. O'Brien's request for girls' lacrosse funding when they work on the budget and as to Jeff Emge's request, they are working on it. He commented on lighting matters. He asked Councilmember Fu to contact Mr. Emge after she discusses his request with the Council.

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 (Mrs. McEntee abstained). **Motion carried.**

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Bonfire – This activity went very well and everyone had lots of fun, including the crafts table that was very busy. There was discussion about lighting.

Halloween Parade and Party – This event went very well, too

COMMUNICATIONS/PRESENTATION OF COUNCILMEMBER FU

Councilmember Fu advised that a First Reading was done on the Fee Schedule.

Cross discussion about wages to be paid in the future since minimum wage payments must be increased to \$8.25 per hour; in the past some of the young people working in the summer programs were often receiving \$7.75 per hour. This discussion also included the fact that more children are being enrolled each year thus requiring more counselors, a meeting that was held to discuss salary issues, creating job descriptions and linking them to the salaries to avoid future problems over who is being paid what, last year's problem, and levels of work positions; for example, a Senior Counselor (\$11) or a Regular Counselor (\$10.50).

Councilmember Fu asked if the Commission is contemplating increasing the Camp fee in light of the minimum wage increase.

Several members replied they will have to make increases.

Cross discussion about new policies to be added for the 2014 season such as having the applicants sign that they will not miss more than five days, otherwise they can not be hired, that perhaps Appalachia could be an Excused Absence, that applicants must commit to the work schedule, and that some employees in the 2013 season worked only two weeks out of the five weeks.

Mr. Cortese asked if there were more than about 20 young people who were paid at minimum wage level during the 2013 season. The difference between \$7.75 and \$8.25 is 50 cents, but with the Commission's wish to make the amount \$8.50 that would make it 75 cents.

Cross discussion about the fact that a number of key adult workers have not had a raise in several years, that the raises could only be 2%, and that these positions are part time.

Councilmember Fu explained that if there were to be revisions to the Fee Schedule, this will need to take place quickly in order to be resolved by the end of this year and two votes and two readings will be necessary. She requested the exact changes being requested.

Mrs. Slawinski suggested that the Camp fee change from \$165 to \$175.

Councilmember Fu will present this request to the Council and will do everything she can to make this revision happen. She explained other issues/changes (such as tennis keys and field usage) relating to the Fee Schedule made by the Council. She will advise as to how the Council decides to approach this request.

Mr. Cortese mentioned that the matter of there being a \$10 cancellation fee per child per program must be well publicized via a large sign when people are signing up as well as on the registration form.

Councilmember Fu continued her presentation by thanking everyone who helped with the Bonfire and the Halloween Parade and Party. She advised that E-Ticket will be present in the Borough soon. She provided information on E-Ticket (electronic ticket writing). The Finance Committee will be meeting with the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer and a company representative to discuss P Card, a credit/procurement card. She will report back on this meeting to the Commission. Certain people will be allowed to use this card.

Continuing, Councilmember Fu asked about the AED equipment and keeping them outside. Will they be kept outside permanently? If so, this will have to be presented to the Council. There are issues of who can safely use the equipment, possible liability issues, possible legislation changes, and whether training is required to safely use it. She will check these matters.

Several Commission members responded that it is their understanding that they would be kept outside permanently.

Councilmember Fu next commented on basketball concussion training and the link on their website. She reminded that the Borough Clerk will need to know those people who are being certified.

Cross discussion about the need to inform the Borough Clerk about those people being certified, including precisely what information she needs to receive.

Councilmember Fu raised Rutgers Training which prompted questions.

Mr. Bodnar asked about what the decision was for those groups needing Rutgers-certified coaches in the off season.

Mr. Sittmann stated he believes the decision was that a call would be made to Mrs. Leahey who would then contact the appropriate person and that the training would take place in Denville.

Mrs. Leahey confirmed this was correct.

Mr. Cortese stated it is very important for all coaches to be Rutgers trained.

Cross discussion about payment/cost of the Rutgers Training and the ability to host such training sessions, perhaps in February or March.

Councilmember Fu reminded the Commission that the Borough Clerk should also know about activities that are taking place off premises for insurance purposes. This would include such activities as those at Vo-Tech. The Menorah lighting will take place on November 30, 2013 with the Annual Tree Lighting taking place on December 8, 2013.

Mr. Cortese asked Mr. Bodnar to give a report on Vo-Tech.

Mr. Bodnar provided information on the arrangement with Vo-Tech, including that they cannot give the Borough Saturdays in February for basketball. This has presented problems for the Borough's basketball program. The gymnasium would be available on Sundays for two hours, but then it would need to be paid for. It will cost basketball about \$1,200 to rent this gym space. Borough School extended their Saturdays one extra hour. But, at least there is a solution for this year. He also provided other related information (past costs, past ability to use various gyms, etc.). The news of this change with Vo-Tech was only learned in mid to late October. He encouraged continued efforts for shared services with Vo-Tech. The basketball program will need to rent 27 hours at Vo-Tech. He mentioned that tile flooring became an issue at another possible site (church).

Mr. Cortese commented on the uses the Borough provides to the Vo-Tech such as the softball field every day from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and the VFW field in the spring and in the fall, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This almost always is just for Monday through Friday; he does not think Vo-Tech has ever used these fields on weekends.

2014 BUDGET

Bonfire – Mr. Cortese said he believes this was a little over the budget amount or that it was very close to the allocated amount.

Fireworks – No longer applicable because the Council handles this event.

Halloween Parade and Party – Mr. Cortese recommended continuing to provide \$250 to the Fire Department.

Movie Night/Summer Theatre – The amount for this activity will remain the same.

Concerts - \$4,000 is the current allocation and includes the four concerts in the park, one at the Splash Party and one at Family Day.

Family Day – Mr. Bodnar stated that several hundred more dollars to this allocation would be great. An amount of \$250 was mentioned and the amount is now \$8750.00.

Splash Party – Mrs. Leahey stated that \$500 is needed for the start-up funds for Mrs. Slawinski. The understanding is that food for this event is donated by one or more of the local supermarkets.

Senior Picnic – The current amount is good -- \$1,250.00.

Recreation Events – Breakfast with the Easter Bunny and Easter Egg Hunt. There was cross discussion about certain logistics of this event such as shopping for items and continental breakfast vs. previous format.

Comedy Night – Councilmember Fu advised that HSA will host a Comedy Night in 2014. Perhaps this funding can be used elsewhere. The decision was to leave this allocation in place since there is still a desire to sponsor some kind of an event geared toward middle aged adults. Rotary will hold a dance. A suggestion was made to investigate possible bus trips, maybe to New York City. The \$1,000 will remain here.

Mr. Cortese commented that Mr. Sittmann has raised the point that Girls' Lacrosse is at zero funding and the \$1,000 is being left with Comedy Night. What about dropping the Comedy Night line to \$200 and give \$800 to the Girls' Lacrosse as they are requesting.

Cross discussion about girls participation in the sports organizations.

Suggestions were made to change the donations to both Babe Ruth (not picking up the money waiting for them) and the Grapplers (with only five Morris Plains participants). Also discussed was the matter of constantly adjusting the amount offered based on the number of Morris Plains participants versus general support for the overall program.

Cross discussion about Little League and the Swim Team always being at the Family Day event for fund raising, including that perhaps it is time to begin to consider some rebalancing of how this is done, alternating fund raising groups year to year, that Little League still receives a lot of donated services, funding, and support even though that program is somewhat shrinking, that the overall opportunity to do fund raising maybe should be divided up differently than it is now, and volunteers roster.

The Grapplers – Their amount will stay at \$500.

Little League – Mr. Cortese suggested a decrease to \$2,500. A suggestion was made to consider the other items they are getting such as field support and maintenance and some costs for the new sign for the field; perhaps they should no longer be receiving \$3,000. The decision was to make it \$2,500 in 2014. There were also comments about how much focus is being put on Field 1 by the Little League representative. The Commission members listed the various other ways Little League is helped besides the monetary contribution.

Mr. Bodnar stated that attention must be paid to the fact that the needs have shifted among the various sports organizations.

Morris Plains Soccer – The amount currently being given will be the same in 2014. Mr. Cortese mentioned the amount of work that must be done to the fields to prepare them for soccer games. Morris United also supports this organization and DPW helps out with field support, too. The allocation for 2014 will remain the same. There are 215 Morris Plains residents participating in this sport. This contribution will be \$2,500.

Hockey - This activity is up a bit; about 50% of the participants are from Morris Plains. This is a very expensive sport due to the high expense of renting the rinks. The 2014 amount will be \$1,000.

Babe Ruth – The numbers have been done for this activity, although they rose a bit in 2013. There was discussion about the problem with the voucher that Mrs. Leahey has been attempting to get them to pick up/sign. They were left at \$500 for 2014.

Football – The issue with this activity is field use. The Wildcats and Colonials merged and the numbers are up due to this merger. They had a great year. It was decided they would receive \$1,500 in 2014. Cross discussion about past relationship with this sport. The suggestion was made to leave the amount the same for 2014. A letter will be sent to them as to why they did not attend the October Commission meeting.

Watnong Park – This was left the same amount. Mr. Cortese provided some information about this line allocation. The 2014 amount is \$500.

Railroad Club – This group is currently being given \$400. It is an expensive undertaking. This amount will remain the same.

Swim Team – The amount for 2014 amount will be \$2,500. The Swim Team season lasts for five to seven weeks, depending on the exact activities included.

Lacrosse – Mr. Cortese recommended that this group be given \$2,500. Discussion of this line item also included discussion of how many Morris Plains residents are participants and using a percentage to determine the amount of the contribution. It also covered issues relating to Girls' Lacrosse. Mr. Cortese provided additional rationale for his recommendations for the contributions to the boys' and girls' activities. There was also discussion about use of fields – field(s) in Morris Plains versus Greystone fields. It was stated there are 100 girls and 150 boys participating in lacrosse programs. The \$2,500 contribution would be the same as for Little League and soccer. Mr. Cortese believes that the lacrosse programs will have a greater need to use the Greystone fields than will the soccer program. It was also pointed out that with two contributions of \$2,000 (vs. the proposed \$2,500) and \$800, the total lacrosse program would actually receive \$2,800, \$300 more than soccer and Little League; a \$2,500 contribution plus the \$800 contribution would result in a total payment of \$3,300. There was also discussion that much of the thinking relates to lacrosse needing to use Greystone fields and that extra funding will help with that. However, if other sources of field funding are identified or there is less use of the Greystone fields than anticipated, then it would be appropriate for lacrosse to return a portion of the funds to the Borough/Commission. Mr. Cortese also spoke about reserves. Also discussed was the difference between boys' lacrosse and girls' lacrosse, especially when it comes to equipment – boys' lacrosse requires more than girls. The suggestion was made to designate the \$800 to girls' lacrosse as a one-time contribution for start-up expenses. In future years, the contribution would be to the one lacrosse organization, covering both girls' and boys' lacrosse. The final decision was to contribute \$2,500 to lacrosse.

Mr. Cortese stated he believes that out of the \$2,500 contribution to boys' lacrosse, some of this funding will eventually have to go to the girls' lacrosse, particularly for possible costs relating to field use.

Continued cross discussion concerning the lacrosse programs.

Girls' Lacrosse – This contribution amount will be \$800.

Basketball – Due to what has happened with the decreased ability to use the Vo-Tech gymnasium, this program will likely need a greater amount of financial support. The extra cost due this is \$1,200. There was also discussion about the various basketball programs conducted throughout the year. Mr. Cortese commented on the giving of \$3,000 to Swim Team and the proposed contribution to basketball of \$3,000. It was decided to contribute \$2,500 for this year and on a line titled "Basketball Court Rental" enter an amount of \$500.

Cross discussion about funds that could still be distributed.

Mr. Cortese asked Councilmember Fu to advise the Council that some of the funding will likely come back because it was not needed by the organization, specifically soccer and lacrosse. He prefers the funds to be allocated and then have a portion returned than not have the funds allocated.

Councilmember Fu reminded that the amounts discussed at this meeting are not yet approved, and the amounts could be changed.

Mr. Cortese stated the Commission understands this, but he believes the amounts established were calculated carefully with specific reasoning as to how they were determined. He offered to attend the Council meeting where these contributions would be discussed to provide any additional information that may be needed for the Commission to justify the amounts determined at this meeting.

The Commission reviewed the contribution amounts allocated. The allocations total \$18,200.

Cross discussion about possible future movement of funds that are no longer needed for the reasons they were initially included in the budget. The calculation of how this would likely occur results in the 2014 budget for these items being just \$200 more than last year. There was continued discussion about this matter resulting in slightly different amounts from member to member.

Mrs. Slawinski asked if the Commission intends to identify a person to act as an Events Coordinator.

Mr. Cortese responded the Commission will discuss this at another time.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

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

Karleen Leahey
Commission Secretary

Maureen Sullivan
Recording Secretary