

## **RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes from July 25, 2023, 7 PM – Borough Hall Courtroom

Meeting called to order at 7:02

Attending: Sarah Corrado, Maureen Dolan, Julie Flores-Castillo, John LeFever, Pat Richter, Nicole Taetsch, Oscar Salinas, Ben Forest, Melissa Moore

Reviewed agenda, discussed roles of Committee officers.

**Item 1:** Oscar provided an overview of current activities of the Parks and Recreation Department including:

- Two camps in session now, at the midpoint of 6 weeks. Little Rascals is for younger children and the daily schedule was extended by one hour to 2 pm this summer. Rascals is for older children. Enrollment is strong, and most campers are Red Bank residents with about a third coming from surrounding towns. Filling staff positions remains difficult even with a \$15 per hour pay rate. Busing is a big challenge. There was some discussion about purchasing a bus, but it does not seem practical. Even the schools are having difficulty with busing.
- Riverside Gardens Park jazz concerts (in partnership with the Jazz Arts Project) and Friday Concerts (in partnership with Habcore) have been successful without any rain challenges so far.
- Fitness programs (in partnership with the YMCA) are also active weekly.
- Movies have been cancelled so far this summer due to rain or threat of storms.

**Item 2:** Oscar provided an overview of upcoming activities and events.

- Afternoon jazz concerts in Johnny Jazz Park for four sessions will start July 30<sup>th</sup> and the August 20<sup>th</sup> concert will honor Count Basie the day before his official birthday.
- There will be a 9/11 Memorial Ceremony, and this is the third year the Parks and Recreation Department has taken the lead on this. Oscar is looking for schools to participate and hoping to identify a first responder or family member directly impacted by the events of that day. Also need to identify someone to sing the national anthem. Attendees suggested the RBR Chorale program or Count Basie programs for young people.
- There will be a September 23<sup>rd</sup> Hispanic Heritage Celebration at Riverside Gardens Park at 2:00 pm and Oscar is going to appoint a Committee to focus on this. The rain date is September 30<sup>th</sup>. He is looking for vendors, sponsors, and a DJ. Maybe food trucks?
- As it is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Red Bank Halloween Parade, this year's celebration will be bigger and better! Some ideas shared included renaming the town something spooky (but not Dead Bank) and finding out the process for that given the new form of government.
- Soccer registration for this Fall is now closed with double the number of participants! Volunteers are needed to coach. There is some degree of frustration with the paucity of parents coming forward to help. The first week will be celebratory, include home games only, with some vendors and food.
- To improve clarity for the community, Oscar suggested that the Parks and Recreation Department be renamed The Parks Department, and hopefully that will decrease the many inappropriate calls his small staff of three have to deal with (e.g. parking complaints). Several in attendance noted that the Town's website was not intuitive and information was hard to find. Sometimes there is no contact information for Town staff in charge of a specific function.

**Item 3:** John reviewed the purpose of the Advisory Committee as he has been leading it for many years.

The purpose of the Committee includes the following:

- Input on events and programs

- Serve as liaison to the Town Council
- Volunteer and provide assistance as needed.
- Sharing observations and suggestions to improve programs and events.
- Members are expected to have good attendance and inform the Chair if they cannot make a meeting. Excessive absences may lead to termination.
- Ben Forest, newly elected Town Council member, is the Council liaison to the Parks and Recreation Committee

Those attending introduced themselves and shared their motivations for joining this Committee.

**Item 4: Selection of Officers**

Jon LeFever was voted unanimously to continue as Chair.

Nicole Taetsch was voted unanimously as Vice Chair

Pat Richter was voted unanimously as Secretary.

**Open Discussion**

Attendees mentioned the possibility of a dog park, upcoming improvements for East Side Park (basketball and pickleball courts), frustration with Marine Park, and turf improvements at Count Basie Park. It was shared that Juanita Lewis has withdrawn from the Committee.

**Next Meeting will be held – Tuesday, August 22, 2023, 7 pm Court Room**

Sarah Corrado \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ Maureen Dolan \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ Julie Flores-Castillo \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

Alberto Garcia \_\_\_\_\_ John LeFever \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

Melissa Moore \_\_\_\_\_ Pat Richter \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ Nicole Taetsch \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

Oscar Salinas (P & R Director) \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ Ben Forest (Council Liaison) \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_