

RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes from November 29, 2023, 7 PM – Borough Hall Courtroom

Meeting called to order at 7:07 with a motion by Nicole Taetsch, seconded by Sarah Corrado.

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

The minutes from the October 24, 2023, meeting were approved unanimously.

Item 1: Update of current Recreation activities and events

Fall sports wrap-up: Overall, a very successful season and all teams had a great time. The travel soccer team won 6 championships. However, there was a shortage of volunteer coaches, and 2 paid coaches were needed to provide adequate support. There was some discussion of factors driving a decrease in parental involvement in their children's sports activities. Practices are at 5:30 or 6:00 so they do not interfere with typical workdays.

Item 2: Upcoming activities and events

Holiday season events: All events discussed at the last meeting are on track. The tree at Johnny Jazz Park will be lit on December 8th and Lunch Break will be providing free hot chocolate. December 12 and 13 from 6 pm to 8:30 pm is the 'phone calls from Santa and Elves' session at 90 Monmouth Street and there is a need for Spanish speaking volunteers. There are about 300 calls made, and last year Oscar had to do 100 of them due to language needs. Outreach to the YMCA will be done at tomorrow's Advisory Committee meeting. Mailboxes for letters to Santa were installed. There will be a house decorating competition, and so far, 10 to 15 homes have entered. The Student Council helps with judging, but the Charter School Ambassador Club might also be interested. There will be 3 prizes of gift baskets.

Winter sports update: Basketball and indoor soccer have already reached maximum capacity and there are waiting lists for both. Uniforms will be available in the first week of January. There is a need for additional referees. There are 40 men participating in adult basketballs and there might be a need to set a maximum enrollment for that sport. The co-ed team did not fly as not enough women committed.

Volunteer recognition: For April's Volunteer Recognition Day Joe Horan will be honored for his many hours of service.

New tennis/pickleball courts: Construction has been completed for the East Side courts and an online system for booking the courts will be created in the near future. There will be specific hours for playing so neighbors are not disturbed early in the morning by the sounds of the sports.

Item 3: New Business

Committee member terms: By means of a drawing, initial staggered terms were determined as follows: Julie Flores-Castillo, Maureen Dolan, and Melissa Moore for a one-year term; Sarah Corrado, Alberto Garcia, and Pat Richter for a two-year term; and John LeFever and Nicole Taetsch for a three-year term. Those with a one-year term will serve from July 4 to December 31, 2023. As there are no term limits, they may request to serve a subsequent full term of three years pending approval by the Committee.

Green Acres restraints: There was considerable discussion about the requirements of recreation areas that are also designated as “Green Acres “properties. Clarification on how construction projects can be completed given the access requirements is needed from the town attorney. Technically those properties must be available to the public from dawn to dusk.

Field usage eligibility: The Committee received updated application forms for field permits and rentals, which are particularly important for non-Red Bank groups. Enforcement is the challenge. The forms make it very clear that a minimum of 80% resident participation is required to receive the resident rates. The revised forms are more specific and all in one package for completion. The Recreation Department does not want a random group to see an empty field and start using it. Gaps in usage are often intentional.

Parks and Recreation workload: The Committee is interested in providing input to ensure the Recreation department is not overloaded beyond its capacity. There are some events that have ‘migrated’ to the Recreation Department and created a burden on a small staff. An annual calendar of events will be shared so that the Committee can explore potential partnerships with Community groups that can take over events that are clearly within their mission and capacity. Nicole, Pat, and Julie are interested in working on this.

Next Meeting will be held – Tuesday, December 19, 2023, 7 pm Court Room

Sarah Corrado____x____ Maureen Dolan____x____ Julie Flores-Castillo_____

Alberto Garcia_____ John LeFever_____x_____

Melissa Moore__x____ Pat Richter__x____ Nicole Taetsch__x____

Oscar Salinas (P & R Director) __x____ Ben Forest (Council Liaison) __x____