

RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes from December 19, 2023, 7 PM – Borough Hall Courtroom

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 with a motion by Maureen Dolan and seconded by Julie Flores-Castillo.

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

The minutes from the November 29, 2023, meeting were approved unanimously.

Item 1: Update of current Recreation activities and events

Holiday Programs:

Tree lighting: The West Side tree lighting was well attended, festive and very successful on December 8th, and the tree looked great. There were multiple youth choral groups from local schools and an adult group, each of which performed several songs, and then Santa arrived on a firetruck. Councilman Forest's social media posts of the event have been viewed many times. Hot chocolate was provided by Lunch Break.

Santa calls: Santa calls have just been completed, 211 in all, mostly done by 50 High School students. There were only two volunteers from Rotary. Next year the hope is to recruit more adults that can sound like Santa as well as some bilingual Santas.

Decorating contest: The holiday house decorating contest has been completed with three winners out of eighteen entries. One house was a previous winner, and the two others were first time winners. Gift baskets will be provided to all three winners.

Item 2: Upcoming activities and events

Winter sports update: Basketball has seventy registrations and sufficient volunteers for referees. Indoor soccer has two hundred registrations, with some parents coaching. Oscar is beginning efforts to boost baseball interest and enrollment. The Two River Little League will do some instruction at the Middle School to encourage interest. Softball will be available only for the older grades and there will be a free clinic in January.

Item 3: New Business

Recent proposal sent to Green Acres: The town submitted a proposal through this state opportunity for the second time, hoping to secure funds to rehabilitate the bleachers at Count Basie Park. The proposal does not include the snack bar or restrooms. The storage underneath the bleachers is very important for the Recreation department as it has very limited storage space. The ownership of Count Basie Field is complicated as some is owned by the Board of Education (the stadium and Field One), and the rest is owned by the town. Green Acres funding requires that park space be open to the public, but putting restrictions and procedures in place is allowed. A group of athletes cannot just 'show up' at the field for a game.

Open Space grant: State funds were requested to repair three baseball fields.

Monmouth County Improvement Authority Funds for 2023: The town requested funding through a proposal to replace soccer goals, benches for \$70,000.

There was discussion on the options for security cameras as vandalism is a serious problem in the parks, including the Riverside Gardens Christmas tree.

Parks and Recs office workload and potential partners: The Committee received a spreadsheet with all of the sports programs, events, and celebrations that the Parks Department supports. Some have been longstanding and others relatively new. The Committee will review this summary and compose a memo to Oscar with some recommendations to attempt to balance the workload with the department's capacity. Also, a process for adding a new event will be developed.

Other items: Three Committee members have completed their one-year term, They need to be re-appointed by the Mayor/Town Council. Councilman Forest said the Town Council was working on many appointments for various committees and that the three members will probably be re-appointed before the next meeting. There are also additional Committee members being considered.

NEXT MEETING IS JANUARY 23, 7:00 PM AT 90 MONMOUTH STREET

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____