

RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes from January 30, 2024, 7 PM – Borough Hall Courtroom

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

Attending: Maureen Dolan, Sarah Corrado, Pat Richter, Nicole Taetsch, Oscar Salinas, Ben Forest, Julie Flores-Castillo, Richard Blache, Melissa Moore, Nancy Facey-Blackwood, and guests Brian Donahue and Jeff Davis.

The minutes from the December 19, 2023, meeting were approved unanimously.

New Committee member Richard Blache introduced himself and shared his interest in joining the Committee and supporting the Town. He has lived in Red Bank for three years and loves it.

Item 1: Spring Sports

Baseball and softball enrollment numbers have been low, especially for older children, in spite of two extensions of the sign-up deadline. It's also challenging to get sufficient volunteer coaches for the older (above 8) players. T-ball continues to have robust sign up, with 45 interested children. There are enough baseball/softball participants for two teams, but other interested players may have to join teams from nearby towns. It's not clear why interest is waning – soccer is a bigger draw. There has been lots of outreach through the schools and social media platforms. It was suggested that both the days and the times of practice be clear in the promotional information.

Track and field registration will begin in April and is expected to be popular. It was suggested that the Track and Field younger participants be automatically eligible to run in the June YMCA/RiverCenter 5K Kiddie races for a reduced or no fee.

Sports camp is expected to be offered again, late summer, and was very popular last year.

Item 2: Summer Employment

The Recreation Department will benefit from a paid summer intern, a new position. Unfortunately funding from NJ Workforce Development has not been announced yet, so the Town is waiting to see if it will benefit from as much as \$24,000 towards summer staff salaries. Hiring for summer sports and camps has begun with some staff from last year returning.

Item 3: Shaded Structure at Riverside Gardens Park

A town resident expressed concern for performers at Riverside Park exposed to sun and heat during summer musical events. The Committee agreed that any shelter would have to be temporary in nature, and easy to put up, take down, and store. It was suggested that performers be responsible for their own temporary shelter. Another idea was to ask for a donated rental from Party Corner. There were not that many performances in the heat of the day, but there is set up time and a late sunset during the summer to take into consideration.

Item 4: Green Acres Project Proposal

There was considerable discussion about the Green Acres Proposal due early February for which the Committee received the environmental assessment and cost estimates. Comments from 36 Red Bank residents were distributed and 89% were in support of the project. Regardless of success with this proposal, the physical structures at Count Basie Fields are deteriorated to the point that they present a hazard and must be repaired to meet safety codes. As the Red Bank Borough Schools, Red Bank Catholic, American Youth Football and FC

Monmouth use the fields heavily, and share in maintenance costs, a review of the contracts for use may be needed to increase revenue and insure sustainability once repairs are made. The Town has applied twice before and been rejected for this funding opportunity.

Open Discussion

The memo to the Town Manager was reviewed and an edit suggested. This memo advocates for additional support for the Recreation Department and more emphasis on community partnerships to insure a balance between number of events/program and Department capacity. Oscar has been with the Town Manager once and they will establish a regular check-in schedule.

Pickleball scheduling has been going well and players will be registering using an online system once we get through the winter season. The courts have had some puddling, and the contractor will address the problem.

NEXT MEETING IS FEBRARY 27, 2024 7:00 PM AT 90 MONMOUTH STREET