

RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes from February 27, 2024, 7 PM – Borough Hall Courtroom

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 with a motion by Nicole Taetsch and seconded by Maureen Dolan. Attending: John LeFevre, Maureen Dolan, Sarah Corrado, Pat Richter, Nicole Taetsch, Oscar Salinas, Ben Forest, Richard Blache, and guest Jeff Davis, a community member.

The minutes from the January 30, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously.

Item 1: Update of current Parks and Recreation activities and events

Winter basketball and indoor soccer both are going well and will end soon. There were some extensions of the sessions due to cancellations and a leak in the gym. The programs were well supported by volunteers from the high school and FC Monmouth Soccer Club. Adult basketball was very popular and will be extended to the end of March when it has to end to make way for volleyball, which will run to the end of the school year.

The Department has grant funding for two recreation outings for a person with special needs and a buddy who does not have special needs. Sixteen people can sign up for a trip to Allaire Community Farm on April 2 and Monster Mini Golf. Committee members will help with the wording of the announcement.

There is a need for more summer camp counselors! The pay is \$3,600 for the season, and counselors must live in Monmouth and be between 16 and 24 years old. Oscar has publicized the opportunity widely and done in-person visits to stimulate interest.

Item 2: Upcoming activities and events

Spring season events and need for volunteers/sponsors.

T-ball and softball registration will begin at the end of March.

The Red Bank 5K will be June 15th and volunteers are needed. The Red Bank YMCA is a partner in this event and assigns volunteers. Recreation volunteers often give out water and medals. Committee members expressed the hope that businesses will take advantage of this huge event and be open for food and other purchases.

Pride will be June 8 with a rain date of June 9 from 12 to 3 in Riverview Park. Sponsors are needed.

Juneteenth will be on Father's Day June 16th and there is a Committee working on this event. Food vendors are needed, and the fee is \$25 for Red Bank vendors and \$50 if not Red Bank based. Nonprofits are free. Sponsors are needed.

The Egg Hunt will be March 17th (with a rain date the following Sunday) and a sufficient number of volunteers from the Key Club at Red Bank Regional will attend. A volunteer to wear the new bunny suit is needed. Set up is at 10 am and the event winds down by 12 noon. Four thousand eggs are spread over the football and softball fields with 12 golden eggs that will result in a prize. Additional volunteers are needed to keep the kids from starting too early. The Charter School might be interested in providing some music.

Summer movie series will start July 9 and end August 16 and Oscar reviewed the costs associated with that series of showings. Sponsors are needed for this as well.

Jazz Arts series and YMCA Fitness in the Park will continue as in previous years.

Oscar shared the possibility of restaurants who are event sponsors having the ‘privilege’ of delivering food through Door Dash to event attendees via a scan code.

Projects and Grants Update

The Recreation Improvement Grant that was planned to be submitted focusing on Count Basie Park will instead be focusing on Marine Park. This is due to the requirements of the funding agency for ownership of the property to be improved. The Town does not own the entire Count Basie Park area; there are three entities that own it.

The Green Acres Proposal was submitted, and this is completely focused on County Basie Fields.

There was considerable discussion about plans for Marine Park, a priority for the Town Council. The former clay tennis courts will probably be designated for parking as the area tends to flood. Final design has not been selected although a schematic was done in 2017 and there is a consultant engaged. There are parking concerns by some nearby businesses who may lose parking near their establishments. The goal is to have a beautiful public space right on the river with upgraded features and easy accessibility.

The new Eastside pickleball courts still have some issues that the contractor needs to fix. Access will be structured and an online system to sign up will be available soon. There was considerable discussion about dogs – being off leash, playing in the court area, and owners not cleaning up dog waste and signage. There is a 450 fine for not picking up after your dog and for having your dog off leash. Oscar shared the poster with court hours and a scan code that will allow for reservations.

There is no good location for a dog park in town. Enforcement of dog rules is nonexistent, especially since the loss of an animal control officer.

Oscar shared with the group photos of the basketball court surface at Count Basie Park, which needs immediate repair. It’s a safety hazard and outdoor basketball season will start soon. An added complication is that the area was built on top of a landfill and so demolition of the current area can only go so far down without disturbing contaminants underneath. Fields 1 and 2 will be re-turfed.

The town now has funding to install security cameras in various locations for safety and security.

Open Discussion

It was clarified that parents can sign their children up for summer camp week by week and it’s not required to sign up for the entire session.

There was a suggestion to organize a Pickleball Tournament as a fundraiser for the Parks and Recs Department.

The three area towns have Recreation Directors that get together to review program offerings and who is going where for sports and programs.

It was suggested that an annual calendar of events is developed in December for the following year and includes a volunteer sign up option, all online.

A suggestion was made to make the soccer quarters for younger players shorter as they are getting too exhausted by longer quarters. This suggestion can be easily adopted.

The World Cup may provide Red Bank with some additional Recreation program opportunities.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm with a motion by Sarah Corrado seconded by Nicole Taetsch.

NEXT MEETING IS March 26, 2024, 7:00 PM AT 90 MONMOUTH STREET