

RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes from May 28, 2024 - Borough Hall Courtroom

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm with a motion by Maureen Dolan and seconded by John LeFevre

Attending: John LeFevre, Maureen Dolan, Pat Richter, Nicole Taetsch, Oscar Salinas, Ben Forest, Katie O'Brien, guest Laura Jannone.

The minutes from the April meeting were approved unanimously with a correction to the header indicating that they are minutes and not the agenda.

Guest attendee: Ms. Pat Pinto, Red Bank resident, had communicated her intention to attend the meeting to discuss the pickleball court utilization at East Side Park. She would like to see extended open play sessions during the summer. While she was not able to attend, via electronic communication she made her preference clear. There was considerable discussion about how court utilization was going since the improvements to the courts and the online registration system. Kim Smith, our local Pickleball ambassador and volunteer, is present for open free clinics for residents. Open play is very busy, and it appears that serious players are rotating back and forth between Red Bank and Fair Haven, depending on where courts are available. It's challenging to schedule a court for tennis. The Committee was agreeable to an additional open play session from 5:30 to 7:30 on Thursday through the summer; however, the following recommendations were made:

- If a player books five times and does not show up for their session they cannot book again for a month
- Consider developing a behavior code or code of conduct for open play.
- Limit how many sessions someone can book at once using the online system.
- Ensure that courts are booked consecutively from court 1 to court four. Once there are four players for Court 1, then the next 'bookers' are assigned to court two until there are four players assigned to court two, etcetera.

Item 1: Update of current P & R activities & events

Spring Sports

2 River Little League and T-Ball ended, with no teams continuing to the playoffs. Interest in baseball is still lower than hoped for and less than in surrounding towns.

Track and Field will continue until the second week in June, and those runners are invited to participate in the upcoming 5K Red Bank race for free – 30 to 40 kids are expected to attend.

Summer Camp Staffing is complete, with fifteen counselors, two supervisors, one coordinator, and one intern. The ratio of campers to staff is 1 to 4. Monmouth County Workforce Development subsidizes the costs and Red Bank won recognition by the County for its embrace of the program and contribution to supporting work skills in young people. Camp will start July 8 and continue to the third week in August, from 8 am to 3:30 pm.

Projects

A new playground at Count Basie Fields has been completed, paid for by the town. The Committee was concerned about a promotional flyer promoting a ribbon cutting this Friday evening that was not clear how the playground was paid for, giving the impression that FC Monmouth and Whirl Construction (a subcontractor hired by Gametime Construction) were sponsors of the project. Oscar will check with the Town Manager and

several Township Council members to correct the misleading information. The flyer also mentioned that there would be free tickets to the adult soccer game after the ribbon cutting sponsored by FC Monmouth.

Adult programs – At the senior center members can sign up for Zumba and Tai Chi for a small fee, and the programs have been full with a waiting list. While the Recreation Department secures the instructors and pays them, the fees paid by students make it a no cost program for the town. The tai chi instructor has a PHD in Chinese Medicine.

Sponsorship update – sponsorship for summer programs at Riverside Park is at approximately \$7,500, more than last year, with some prospects still outstanding. Oscar shared a spreadsheet of all prospects and secured sponsorships. Several Committee members are helping with follow-up and locating new sponsors.

Item 2: Upcoming activities & events

Summer activities – There will be two sports camps in August, one organized by Brazilian United Soccer and the other by US ABL. These are partnership programs where the Township receives a cut of profits and is relieved of the administrative burden of registration and staffing. The soccer camp is for kids 5 to 14 and the baseball camp is for all ages, and it will be for 2 weekends.

Pride – Oscar can use help with set up at 11 o'clock. There will be a pet costume competition with Fins and Feathers donating the prizes. River center is also a partner.

Juneteenth – This event will start at Pilgrim Baptist church with a march to Jonnie Jazz Park. The Committee was in full support of Juneteenth Committee members exploring creating a nonprofit specifically for this event to make it easier to raise money, receive grants, and pursue sponsors.

Item 3: New Business

The town has a new position – Community Engagement Coordinator, who reports to Jim Gant. It's not clear yet whether this person can help with certain community events spearheaded by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Summer sponsorship thank yous – the Committee agreed that members will write thank you notes to each of the sponsors of the Riverside Park summer events.

Fall soccer – registration started in early May and will close June 25th. This early registration is important for planning purposes and to purchase uniforms, hire coaches, etc. There will be a group for 3rd and 4th grade, one for 5th and 6th grade, and 7th and 8th grade (two for boys and one for girls).

Flag Football proposal - There is some community interest in Flag Football, but AYF does not have it for kids older than eight. Also, there is concern that it might 'take away' from regular football. Space is a problem, especially in the warm weather, but this is something that Oscar will explore. John felt that time and space could be found on the schedule for it; at the very least maybe the town could have a one-time clinic.

Shelter at Riverside Park – Lee Sanderson needs a response following his visit to the Committee and concerns about musicians in the sun when performing. The big white tents that the Township has used for events are rented, not owned by the town. A Committee member mentioned the sail cloth shades at The Grove that are hooked onto strong stakes in the ground. They can be removed. The Committee will continue to explore options and get back to Mr. Sanderson.

Open Discussion

There is a for-profit camp business that focuses on providing programs during 'gap' times when school is closed, and other programs are not operating. The company is Inspire Life, and they are active in Asbury Park and interested in expanding to more communities. It was started by two parents in 2016 and strives for a diverse

mix of kids, with some paying \$100 a week and others subsidized. Their programs include STEM activities and try to minimize the slide in academic skills that often happens during vacations. They can operate as a partner with the Township. Nicole will investigate this more and share details with Oscar and John.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm with a move by John and seconded by Kate.

Next Meeting will be held – Tuesday, June 25, 2024, 7pm Court Room