

RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes from October 29, 2024 - Borough Hall Courtroom

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm

Attending: John LeFever, Oscar Salinas, Ben Forest (Council Liaison), Pat Richter, Kathryn O'Brian, Richard Blache, Nicole Taetsch

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved with a motion by Nicole, seconded by Katie.

There were two groups of guests at this meeting. The first group were strong advocates of Pickleball, particularly at Eastside Park. They presented numerous benefits of Pickleball for Seniors and requested that Open Play be reinstated Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 9 to 11 during the winter. The Saturday time slot would benefit people who worked during the week. Kim Smith, a semi-professional player, and Ambassador for Pickleball in a wide geographic area shared personal testimonials about how playing improved quality of life for many Seniors. Bob, the Team Captain, thanked the town for improving the courts and noted that there were almost five hundred names on his Red Bank Pickleball group, and he can easily communicate with them about any changes in court availability.

The second group was comprised of Harrison Avenue residents concerned about the new 'temporary' bicycle lanes. Unfortunately, the Parks and Recreation Committee has no knowledge or authority over that project, and they were advised to approach the Town Manager or Town Council.

After the two groups departed the Committee focused on the planned agenda.

Item 1

Update of current Parks and Recreation activities and events

Fall Sports

As of Saturday October 26th, the soccer season is over. There was some discussion of the challenges for 'recreation' soccer players when playing 'travel teams. Red Bank has more 'recreation' players than surrounding towns and the 'travel team' players can be quite aggressive resulting in injuries.

The pre-K 3- to 4-year-olds had a great soccer season.

Red Bank Catholic has a big football game coming up against a Toms River Team and there will be a helicopter landing with a Rutgers player on board.

Halloween events wrap up

Movie night, the town parade, and the party in the White Street parking lot were all highly successful with a great turnout. Many prizes were given out for costumes and floats. In the future, floats from businesses and nonprofits might be preferable to floats from families for insurance reasons.

RiverCenter, A Time to Kiln, The School of Rock, and the Key Club were all great partners.

The Jack O Lantern competition did not have many entries, and they started to decompose quickly. Maybe next year we can consider scarecrows instead.

Item 2

Upcoming activities and events

Project Update:

Marina Upgrades

There will be improvements to the slips at the Marina and two kayak launches will be created as well as a Fire Department Boat Lift. These upgrades will absorb \$40,000 of the grant budget.

Winter Sport registration

Registration will be open November 15th for basketball and indoor soccer for adults, and open to men and women.

Holiday Events

Westside Tree Lighting is 6 pm on December 6th. There are concerns that the tree in the park is not doing well, and perhaps the Shade Tree Committee can take a look at it. Lunch Break will provide hot chocolate.

Calls from Santa will be December 11 and 12 at Borough Hall and bilingual volunteers are needed, especially males who can pretend to be Santa. Committee members will reach out to recruit volunteers.

The Town erects two wooden mailboxes for letters to Santa after Thanksgiving, but these boxes are very old and in need of refreshing. Committee members reached out for volunteers to help. Letters are answered by the Rotary Club.

Holiday House Decoration Contest will occur as usual, judged by students from the Middle School and the Charter School.

Item 3: New Business

FC Monmouth (Camps, Women's team)

FC Monmouth Semi-Pro Soccer Club continues to present challenges to ongoing access and sports activities for Red Bank students and Red Bank Catholic usage. This organization pays an hourly fee for field and other building access which may not adequately reimburse Red Bank and has been late paying their fees. There is no contract with the Borough, something that was recommended at the last meeting of this Committee.

Expiring PARC terms

Two current Committee members have one-year terms that will expire at the end of the calendar year. Oscar will check with them and see if they would like to have their term renewed. He was not sure if they would be starting a three-year term at that point. There are two vacancies in addition to these expiring terms and potential candidates should be forwarded to Oscar and John and then the Town Council which appoints all members.

Westside Outreach

Council member Nancy Facey Blackwood suggested that the Recreation Department provide some attractive options for young people on the West side of town. Some options include 'Stepping' and 'Double Dutch' jump roping. Having a representative on the Committee from the West side would be helpful in being responsive to community needs. The primary school might be an excellent location for these activities.

Follow up on RBR meeting (getting more involvement from RB in sports and after school)

Some of the challenges for Red Bank students in participating in sports include transportation and cost. The Recreation Department does have scholarships for eligible students. The summer sports camps often do not work for Red Bank families. Maybe Red Bank could provide some short sports camps during gap times, providing scholarships and transportation. There will be an open discussion on Jan 10 at RBR on this and other topics.

Open Discussion

Oscar shared that security cameras are being installed in many sensitive areas around town next week, including the parks.

Circling back to the Pickleball guests, the Committee recommended that open play be available on Tuesdays from 9 to 11. There have been previous discussions about adding a small fee for the upkeep of the courts and perhaps this could start on January 1.

Kate O'Brien moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Nicole Taetsch seconded the motion.

Next Meeting is **Tuesday, November 19, 2024**, at 7pm in the Court Room.