

## **RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes from December 17, 2024 - Borough Hall Courtroom

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm

Attending: John LeFever, Oscar Salinas, Pat Richter, Nicole Taetsch, Maureen Dolan, Melissa Moore, Katie O'Brien.

The minutes from the November meeting were approved with a motion by Maureen seconded by Nicole.

Several Committee members were in attendance for a webinar hosted by Mr. Jim Gant, Town Manager, this afternoon about the planned features for Marine Park. Both the Town engineer and the playground subcontractor were on the call, and they had maps and mockups for an overview and specific designs and equipment for the playground. Demolition of the former parking lot will not occur until the winter is over, and several layers of permits from the state (DEP) and the Army Corp of Engineers must be successfully obtained. There are two major grants that will help a great deal with the overall costs if they are both secured.

### **Item 1**

#### **Update of current Parks and Recreation activities and events**

##### **Holiday events**

The Westside Tree Lighting was well attended (even in the cold) and a great success except for a sound system glitch when the School of Rock began to play and overwhelmed the electric supply system. For the future, it will need to be upgraded. The choirs were great, Lunch Break provided free hot chocolate, St. James was giving out winter clothes, and Santa arrived on a fire truck.

Santa phone calls were made by thirty boys from the High School and one Rotary member as well as four parents to manage Spanish language calls.

Ten houses entered the decorating competition, and the winners will be selected soon. The Student Council of the Middle School and eighth graders from the Charter School took their judging very seriously. More houses need to be in the contest.

New mailboxes attracted many letters to Santa and the Rotary helped respond to them as well as Committee members. Unfortunately, some letters did not include an address.

##### **Winter Sports**

Basketball had fifty-five participants with approximately 60% from Red Bank.

Indoor soccer had 176 participants with 90% from Red Bank. Eighth graders have their own 2-hour soccer session on Saturdays with the High School freshmen.

Volunteer coaches are still needed.

### **Item 2**

#### **Upcoming activities and events**

There will be a new Hip Hop 6-week dance class series in Red Bank for participants from ages 6 to 12 at the Senior Center, with a late January start date. The teacher is from Long Branch and has a great reputation.

The last of three meetings at Red Bank Regional is in early January, with a goal of integrating the Red Bank students more effectively into sports and in general. Dr. Moore wants the Red Bank students to feel welcome and part of the school community. Solving this problem will take work at all levels – the school administration, guidance counselors, the school sports directors, parents, and the Parks and Recreation department can play a role as well.

### **Mayor's Wellness Campaign**

This is a grant funded program from the League of Municipalities and has best practices available to all programs in the form of a Handbook. Any Government Committee on the local level can run the program. There have been several activities so far with one well attended (included a vaccine drive) and two others not so well attended. The Committee would like to know more about the goals for the town and see what role Parks and Recs can play in helping meet defined goals.

### **PARC member terms**

Melissa and Maureen will be re-appointed by the Town Council for a full term on the Parks and Recreation Committee and there are two more vacancies that need to be filled.

### **Artificial turf**

There are some videos available (e.g., Green Building Alliance) that review the pros and cons (mostly cons) of artificial turf. While turf increases the risk of injuries (especially knee injuries) and contains many non-degradable plastic byproducts, it is less expensive to maintain and requires less water. For now, there are no plans to evaluate the options.

### **Marine Park Update**

Marine Park was discussed at the beginning of the meeting. There are hopes that several annual events could be revenue producers for the Town. There will be shade and green space! Problems with loitering, vandalism, drug use, and overnight sleeping will hopefully be addressed through security cameras and police patrolling. Currently the park has temporary power supplied by JCP&L.

### **Open Discussion**

Year in review – The secretary will prepare a summary of 2024 in January highlighting accomplishments and continuing issues, which will be helpful to new Committee members.

Committee members helped respond to letters to Santa.

Katie moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Nicole seconded the motion.

Next Meeting will be **January 28, 2025**, at 7 pm in the Court Room.