

RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes from January 28, 2025 - Borough Hall Courtroom

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm

Attending: John LeFever, Oscar Salinas, Nicole Taetsch, Pat Richter, Maureen Dolan, Katie O'Brien, Richard Blache, Joe Simon, and Ben Forest.

The minutes from the December and January meetings will be reviewed and approved at the February 25th, 2025, meeting.

The new Parks and Recreation Committee member, Joe Simon, introduced himself and shared his background. He has three children and the family loves both the Borough's parks and the County parks. Each Committee member introduced themselves and their role on the Committee.

Item 1

Update of current Parks and Recreation activities and events

Current activities

Youth Hip Hop Dance classes began last week with seventeen kids attending, despite the first of five sessions being canceled. Sessions are held at the Senior Center, which is often empty after 4:00 pm, providing more opportunities for events. The instructor has received positive feedback.

Adult Evening Basketball will continue through February and maybe March in the Middle School Gyn with twenty-five players. It is from 7 pm to 9 pm on Mondays and Tuesdays.

The Fusion Program is going well, and participants are happy.

Winter Sports

Basketball is in its fourth week and soccer is in its third week. Volunteers are needed for things like distributing jerseys/uniforms and managing the scoreboard. Perhaps the high school Team Leadership Committee can be approached for volunteers. Katie shared that Manalapan has a volunteer group of young people sponsored by the town High School. There is an APP called See My Legacy where online campaigns can be posted for volunteers and sponsorship.

Indoor soccer now includes eighth graders playing with the high schoolers on Saturdays, while fifth through seventh graders have separate teams and play on Sundays. Twenty-five high school kids are participating.

Item 2

Spring Sports

Baseball will have the same number of teams as last year. Red Bank lacks enough players to form a team, so they may join neighboring towns like Little Silver and Middletown. There has been a change in the rules for Little League so that kids do not need to live in the town where the league is. It has been frustrating building enthusiasm for baseball, perhaps because local kids are not starting young in the sport.

Little Silver has a softball program for second graders. The Charter School and Middle School don't have teams because they are not starting kids at younger ages in the sport. In contrast, indoor soccer is overwhelmed – that is where the interest and enthusiasm is.

The Red Bank Raiders will host a clinic at the end of March for kids seven to fourteen for 3 Saturdays for boys. Seventeen boys will be helping and there are dads involved.

An Eagle Scout project will benefit East Side Park – the corner sign with the name of the park will be replaced and some plantings done to spruce up the area.

Spring Activities

The Easter Egg hunt will be on March 30 from 9 am to 12 noon (Sunday) and children will be grouped by age and have separate 20-minute time slots to run and collect eggs. There will be someone dressed up as the Easter Bunny.

PRIDE will be June 7th and Adriana, our new Community Engagement Manager, will be the lead for the event, but Oscar will help out with logistics.

Juneteenth does not have a date yet and Oscar will collaborate with the Committee planning the event.

The Couch to 5K program, in partnership with the YMCA, will be prior to the big 5K race in the middle of June and will encourage more participants.

Item 3: New Business

New Grant application

The Borough is applying for a 2025 Local Recreation Improvement Grant to pay \$100,000 of the \$167,000 full cost of new fencing at Count Basie Field, near fields 3, 4, and 5. Last year's successful grant funded improvements in the dock area of Marine Park.

Non-sports activities

There were lots of ideas shared for fun recreational activities that are not sports-centered, such as Master Gardener Walks, Tai Chi (again), Stem classes, chair yoga, and more. Committee members were encouraged to connect Oscar with potential volunteers or instructors for interesting activities/classes. Right now, people can create Valentines' Day cards for seniors and patients at Riverview and drop them off at 90 Monmouth Street.

Sponsorship Packet for 2025

There will be opportunities to sponsor the Summer Programs at Riverside Gardens Park, township events, and sports. Oscar shared some flyers to spark interest. Options include baseball, softball, track, basketball, fall soccer, winter soccer, summer camp, Juneteenth, Pride, Halloween parade, Westside concerts, and Hispanic heritage. Promotional materials for the Riverside Gardens summer program are still in development.

Summer Camp

Applications for summer camp will begin March 1. Applications for counselors are currently being accepted with fifteen slots at \$450 per week (for 25 to 29 hours per week) open March 1. There are also a few intern slots. Counselors must be under age 24 and live in Monmouth County.

2024 In Review

Committee members reviewed some of the accomplishments and pending issues from 2024. It is hoped that a contract will be developed between the Township and FC Monmouth Semi Pro team for use of Count Basie Fields. Nicole contacted the Mayor's Wellness Initiative to learn more about how we might work together but has not gotten a response yet.

Officer Elections

Current officers were re-elected for another one-year term: Jonh LeFever for President, Nicole Taetsch for Vice President, and Pat Richter for Secretary with six votes in support and one abstention (due to being a new member).

Next Meeting will be **February 25th, 2025**, at 7 pm in the Court Room.