

RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes from March 25, 2025 - Borough Hall Courtroom

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm

Attending: John LeFever, Nicole Taetsch, Pat Richter, Maureen Dolan, Katie O'Brien, Dana Ian Farley, and Ben Forest. Guests were two Councilpersons: Ms. Jannone and Ms. Facey Blackwood.

Julie Flores-Castillo has resigned from the Committee. Dana has joined the Committee as a new member, and he introduced himself and why he was interested in being an advocate for recreation. His family has had roots in Red Bank since his grandparents settled here, and his grandfather was born here.

Because the February meeting was cancelled due to lack of power at 90 Monmouth Street, there were no minutes to review.

Item 1

Update of current Parks and Recreation activities and events

Current activities

Evening programs such as Buddy ball and hip-hop dance were popular, with many people registering and participating. There was great feedback from parents related to the Hip Hop classes, and we will plan to repeat the program. For the Father/Daughter dance, there were sixteen couples, and they danced all night.

Winter Sports Wrap-Up

The Basketball season ended on Friday March 7th. We had another excellent season, and Fusion did an excellent job with leading the games and practice. The only negative aspect of this was losing access to the gym unexpectedly due to a school function. Indoor Soccer also concluded on March 16th. Both programs ran without any issues and parents volunteered when needed.

Item 2

Upcoming activities and events

Spring Sports – Baseball and Softball teams are all ready to kick off this season. T-ball will begin on Saturday March 29th. There are seventy participants, fifteen more than last year. Track and Field will begin late April. We're still working out some dates with the Red Bank Regional track coach and availability at Count Basie Track.

Spring Break Sports Camp – We've partnered with Just Sports to run the spring break camp this year. It will run from April 21 to 25 from 9am-12pm and the fee is \$175 for the week (\$225 for non-residents).

Spring Activities – The Annual Spring Egg hunt will be this Sunday March 30th between 9-11AM. Committee members are welcome and encouraged to join in and help, but the turnout of High School and Middle School volunteers has been very good. An adequate number of volunteers is anticipated. No one is allowed to bring a whistle this time! There are plans in process for a gardening workshop with Jason Goldman from the Monmouth Parks System who has his own business called Flower Through the People, the Sports Camp, and maybe a spring break field trip, pending grant confirmation. As part of the Gardening Workshop participants will receive some plants and a pot to take home. There is also the possibility of a few evening programs at the Senior Center, including Chair Yoga, Zumba, or Tai Chi. We would like to have a garden contest – Best Garden – to encourage town residents to grow their own vegetable.

ng Workshop. Committee members should share with Oscar ideas as to prizes and how to implement the contest.

The Environmental Commission, on April 10, is having a composting and rain barrel workshop from 5 to 7 at the Middle school.

Item 3

New Business

Summer Camps – camps are scheduled to start on July 7th. Little Rascals Camp, for four- to six-year-olds, is already full. The Rascals Camp for seven- to thirteen-year-olds, still has space. We are having a hard time finding a rain location for the older kid's camp. Schools aren't usually available due to repairs or having equipment in the gyms and cafeterias.

Summer Staff – we've received a good number of camp counselor applications. About eleven of the seventeen spots have been filled. Supervisors and recreation intern spots are also filled.

Security Cameras (number and access) – Parks and Recreation has been granted access to the cameras at the different parks. Cameras have not been installed at Belhaven, Johnny Jazz Park, or Marine Park.

Community Garden (on Marion St) – Remediation will be completed over the summer or early Fall. Two feet of soil was dug up and removed and clean fill will be provided. The DEP will have this done so a garden can happen again. The contamination was due to slag from Perth Amboy being dumped there.

Lighting for Count Basie Playground – waiting on approval from Administration to go ahead and add solar lights to the playground.

Club World Cup viewing party /World Cup viewing party – There is a desire to have free, open air viewing opportunities for the big soccer matches coming up. Perhaps in the White Street parking lot a big screen could be set up, and drinks would be available from Dublin House. This is a common activity in other countries. RiverCenter might be the sponsor, and if there is a charge, FIFA permission will be required. The games would be over a six-week period.

Non sport recreation options – We are still working on more options for families interested in the arts, dance, movement, etc. Anyone who knows teachers with interesting skills, contact Oscar. There is a STEM program called Built By Me, using Legos to build robots controlled by an I Pad. This is a possibility. Also, there is a very good art teacher at the Charter school that might be interested in some additional classes for the town.

There is a broken slide at Eastside Park that should not be used. DPW is working on it. Maybe some cannabis tax money can be used for expenses like this?

There will be a food drive for dogs and cats at the Newark Humane Society sponsored by the Animal Welfare Committee of Red Bank.

Dog Days will occur at the end of August, with a Yappy Hour and dogs to adopt.

The Shade Tree Commission will have a Green Fair with seedlings to donate. The Environmental Commission will have a table.

A motion to adjourn was made by Nicole Taetsch and seconded by Katie O'Brien.

Next Meeting will be **April 22, 2025**, at 7 pm in the Court Room.