

Borough of Washington, Warren County, New Jersey
Recreation Committee Minutes
March 25, 2009

Call to Order

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Washington Borough Recreation Committee was called to order on Wednesday, March 25th, by Chairman Rick Feldman at 7:35 p.m. Also in attendance were committee members Candy DeFillippis and Erica Kilkinney. Paula Aron, Rebecca Copenhaver, Beth Uporsky, Adam Zimmer and council liaison Patrick Boyle were absent.

Audience Participation

Bill Smith was in attendance. He stated that youth basketball has finished and they had a good season. The 7th/8th grade girls' team was in the championships and one of the 5th/6th grade boys' team won the championship. He feels we will need to replenish some of the basketballs each year. Bill also stated that baseball started this week. The dirt was delivered and Little League volunteers will start work on the field this weekend. They currently have two rookie teams, two minor teams, one major team and four T-ball teams. Many older kids started playing lacrosse instead of baseball. Rick asked if there was an increase in costs. Bill replied there was as every coach had to attend CPR training and all head coaches also had to attend a first aid class. Insurance costs and league assessments went up as well. Rick asked if they have ever looked into fundraisers. Bill replied it was considered, but it is hard to get people to volunteer. They are looking at different options. Dave Hackney is looking to do a small parade to announce the teams and play all games on Memorial and Steinhardt and would like T-ball to play on Vara Field that day. They don't use the Boro Park field anymore because they have always gotten bumped in the past. Rick stated that Little League's capital field improvement request was forwarded to the committee for review. The committee will discuss, but Rick noted that financial issues will affect the outcome as well. Bill stated one of the biggest issues would be the cutting of the grass. Rick stated the DPW would be handling this. Rick asked if a grass infield is needed. Dave replied it's not required, but preferred. Bill stated the main safety concern is the bleachers, as the league requires they have a back and sides installed or else removed completely. Bill will provide the committee with the statement from Little League. Dave asked if a youth association was ever considered. Rick replied that there was no need for one when the commission was in place. Since the committee is new, it hasn't been discussed yet. Rick feels a youth association would help baseball. Rick thanked Bill and Dave for their time and information.

Don Eller was in attendance to get some clarification on street hockey. He was informed there would be no trophies or party as was the practice in the past and wondered where the money was going instead. Rick replied that when the commission was in place, all fees received for sports were spread throughout all activities as needed. Now that the group is a committee, the Park Director and Borough Manager oversee the budget. It was council's decision not to spend the money for the trophies and party. The committee had recommended council not allow this based on prior practice and Rick is not sure if council is looking to revisit this. Don asked where the money is going instead. Rick replied it is probably going to non-revenue events like the egg hunt or movies in the park, but hasn't seen any information to be able to say for sure. Don feels by not doing this for the children, it is a big disservice to them, especially since it was done with less than four games remaining. Don stated it was always done in the past and has the support of the NJ Devils. Don feels hockey is one of the only sports where all kids play regardless of their skill level. Players have come back after 8th grade to be assistant coaches. Don noted hockey is different as it is sponsored by the NJ Devils. They supply equipment and they offer the participants free or discounted tickets to their games. Devils' management, mascot and players come and speak to the kids at the end of season party. The party helps support the Devils' program that in turn supports the Boro teams. Don stated this program is a money maker for other recreation programs. Rick stated this is not the way it always was. The commission never supported parties for any sport. Last year there was

confusion as to who was to pay and the Boro funded the party, but the two parties before were paid for by the parents. All sports have requirements for all participants to play equally. The commission, and now the committee, has been giving medals and certificates to all participants in every sport over the past few years. Candy stated that when the hockey program started it was not very big. Some of the money from other sports was used to help build the hockey program. The money is there for all sports. Bill Smith stated he coaches baseball and basketball and it was up to the coaches if a party was wanted. Soccer had a party at the end of their season, but they have a parent's association that they created themselves. It is up to each organization if they want to get one started. Don stated he feels hockey starts and ends too late and could perhaps start in mid-November and be finished in early March. This would give the kids a 2-3 week break before the next sport starts.

Don also feels there are not enough chairs at the pool and has heard complaints about the fence around the baby pool. Rick stated the fence was a state requirement. Don suggested letting the children have swimmies or floating devices in the pool as other towns do. Rick thanked Don for his time.

Tammy Taescher was in the audience in regards to the Swim Team. She heard the concession stand will be closing down and asked how that will affect the Swim Team. Rick stated the Swim Team had come to council and were told not to sell anything. Council will put in the vending machines but didn't discuss the impact it will have on the Swim Team. The committee had recommended no vending machines to council. Rick will find out if the Swim Team should be talking to the committee or to council regarding this.

Review of Past Minutes

A motion was made by Candy DeFillippis, seconded by Erica Kilkinney, to approve the minutes from the March 11, 2009 regular meeting with changes. Motion carried.

Park Director Report

There was no park director report at this meeting as there was no park director hired. Rick stated he has no information regarding finances. Candy noted grass seed had been planted on the hill by the pool. DPW built a mound on the baseball field.

New Business

Borough's Budget Issues

Rick stated the Boro is in deep money trouble. Capital improvements may not happen and we may be asked to cut back more.

Railroad Avenue

Rick stated the commission had submitted an application to request a \$500,000 Green Acres loan to fund the Railroad Avenue project. This request has just been approved; however, the municipality may not accept, as it is a loan, not a grant. Candy stated some people think the property should be sold, but that would be taking the park away from the children.

Little League Wish List – Steinhardt Field

Rick stated that in violation of statute, this request was given to the boro manager. It will be tabled until the next meeting when more committee members are present. Rick noted it will be hard to make recommendations without seeing the budget.

Unfinished Business

Street Hockey

Rick stated the request previously presented to the committee to start an adult and high school league will be discussed at the next council meeting.

Field Usage Fee

The committee is still in need of information from other towns. No decision has come from council as of yet.

Park Director Comments

There were no park director comments at this meeting since there is no park director hired.

Committee Comments

Candy stated she is preparing for the Easter Egg Hunt. Prizes will be at the designated areas. It is important to keep this a free event. Candy had the idea of offering one free session of swim lessons to each age group.

Rick stated the letters he sent to council, including the reinstatement of the Recreation Commission, will be discussed at the next council meeting. Street Hockey parents will be at the meeting to discuss the trophy issues. Rick will call Patrick Boyle and get his recommendation regarding the raffle of a session of swim lessons.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:56 p.m. by Candy DeFillippis, seconded by Erica Kilkinney.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Kilduff