

Borough of Washington, Warren County, New Jersey
Recreation Committee Minutes
April 8, 2009

Call to Order

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Washington Borough Recreation Committee was called to order on Wednesday, April 8th, by Recreation Director Gary Masenior at 7:30 p.m. Also in attendance were committee members Paula Aron, Candy DeFillippis, Rick Feldman, Adam Zimmer and council liaison Patrick Boyle. Beth Uporsky arrived at 8:26. Erica Kilkinney was absent.

As this was Gary's first meeting, he gave a short bio to introduce himself to everyone.

Audience Participation

Tom Dufner, 11 Grand Avenue, was in attendance to discuss little league. He stated he spoke to both Gary and Rich Phelan earlier today regarding the possibility of forming a youth association to help baseball and football. Tom coaches both baseball and basketball and his frustration with baseball is working with the town. Other towns have a youth association to help alleviate the stress of the little league volunteers. He doesn't feel it is the duty of a volunteer baseball coach to prepare the fields. He would also prefer the town handle the baseball sign-ups. Tom stated little league would like to use Boro Park with the dugouts and lights. T-ball cannot currently use Taylor Street Field. Being a part of a youth association would free up the coaches to do fundraising and run a concession stand. Tom stated he represents a percentage of little league. Rick stated that if little league is not all on board, there is little the committee can do for them. Gary stated the committee cannot tell a group to be part of the program. The little league board of directors will need to discuss this with the committee.

Dave Hackney, 11 N. Prospect Street, was also in attendance regarding little league and stated he assists Bill Smith in running the program. He stated he had asked the last Boro Manager for help with the cost of insurance. He was told that since there is no youth association he cannot help them.

Bill Smith, 119 N. Prospect Street, feels little league needs to research this before jumping into something. They also need to find out if the recreation committee can accept the rules and regulations that are set by little league. Bill feels it is too late for this season and they need to sit as a group and see if this is feasible for next year.

Gary tabled this discussion. He asked little league to go back and discuss this with their group and then it can be taken to the next level.

Tom Dufner stated he would rather focus more time on the players instead of working on the fields.

Dave Hackney stated there is a transformation going on within the little league association. He is not going to wait for that to happen; rather he will be out there getting the fields ready for the kids. Gary stated this will be discussed later in the meeting.

Tony Luongo, 89 Flower Avenue, stated he has become more involved in little league over the past few years. He feels we need to pool our resources and would like to see little league playing under the lights at Boro Park. He agrees little league needs to speak first and come back to the committee. He doesn't see it as problem with the town conforming to little league requirements.

Rick asked about the bleachers. Bill Smith provided the committee with an informational sheet which refers people to the local codes to see if hand and back guard rails are required. Rick asked Bill if the sponsors have

paid for the signs at Steinhardt Field. Bill replied that they have. If they are a team sponsor they pay \$250.00. If not, they pay \$125.00. The signs have been purchased from a local vendor. Rick asked Bill about the placement of the shed at Steinhardt Field. Bill replied the shed was placed where it is based on the past Boro Manager and past Park Director's instructions. Rick feels it is too close to the wall and kids could jump on the roof.

Tom Dufner stated he would also like to see a travel basketball team sponsored by the Boro.

Review of Past Minutes

A motion was made by Candy DeFillippis, seconded by Paula Aron, to approve the minutes from the March 25, 2009 regular meeting as submitted. Motion carried.

Park Director Report

Finances

Gary stated salaries will be paid outside of programs. The department has encumbered \$3,668.00 in salaries to date. Programs have encumbered \$7,716.00 to date. There is an operating budget of \$50,000. The DPW is responsible for the maintenance of the park facilities with the exception of the swim program. They are also responsible for Steinhardt and Vara fields. The fields will be lined by park maintenance.

Dave Hackney feels the field needs to be hard-raked at least once a week. Tony Luongo asked if the Board of Education and Recreation can work together to make the fields playable for the kids. Bill Smith stated it is a trade-off. They are not charged for the sports, but the need to maintain their fields. Gary stated he will speak to the people at the schools to see what can be done to enhance the programs. Bill stated it would help if the fields were dragged once a week. It works better than just raking.

Candy stated the Boro owns fifteen acres on Railroad Avenue. It was purchased years ago for an all purpose field, football field, walking track, tennis courts, tot lot, etc. She would like to see the property developed. The State approved the Green Acres loan for \$500,000 three weeks ago. Brian Hammond, 218 Belvidere Avenue, feels we have adequate fields that just need to be utilized properly.

Non-Park Related Activities

Gary stated Rebecca Copenhaver resigned from the committee. He asked the committee to see if anyone is interested in joining the committee. Gary will take the request to council to accept her resignation and see what the process is to replace her on the board.

Park Related Activities

Gary stated the request from Little League to use Vara Field for T-ball, both throughout the season and for the day of the parade, is approved. Rick asked if anyone had walked the field. Dave Hackney said it needs to be groomed but is in decent shape. Dave feels it is feasible to run a concession stand if all games are played in the same area. Gary stated a request for field use form will be put on the website to be downloaded.

Gary would like to assign liaisons to each sport and/or program. He would like a quick report and any budget requests at the next meeting and subsequent meetings. Gary will be inviting each organization to a meeting to present program needs and to give a recap. Liaisons were set as follows: Adam and Beth will jointly take care of little league, softball and baseball; Paula will take care of soccer and men's basketball; Candy will take care of field hockey, the Easter egg hunt the tree lighting and holiday house decorating contest; Rick will take care of the swim team; Adam will take care of street hockey; Erica will take care of karate; and Beth will take care of youth basketball.

Gary asked each committee member to be ready to discuss a new program to be implemented between now and next year to bring recreation to the next level. He wants to develop a five-year capital improvement plan as well as a five-year program development plan.

Gary stated the vending machines were approved by council and will be placed in the area between the main entrance and the concession stand. They will have access from inside the pool area as well as outside. Gary stated that council has stated the concession stand hasn't made money in the past five or so years. He has permission to open the concession stand for special events such as swim meets, a Dip 'n Dance and entertainment in the park. Beth wondered if council will reconsider their decision if they receive much negative feedback. Brian Hammond feels the concession stand is very inadequate with what can be made and needs to be improved. A tray of food could be purchased from a local restaurant and make a profit made on the sales. Dave Hackney asked if there will be access to the vending machines when the parent's associations are trying to raise money. Gary stated the swim team also requested selling food at their meets. Per the Boro Manager, this is a violation of Green Acres provisions. Any outside group has to go out to bid to sell food.

Gary stated there is a situation at Boro Park where softball conflicts with men's baseball ever since the mound was built for baseball. This has become a safety issue for softball. Gary will be cutting a new regulation little league field at the center field fence which will have a grass infield. He is looking to accomplish this by early May and is looking for volunteers to help cut the field to little league specifications. Both little league and softball require a backstop to play. Beth feels the ultimate goal is to bring people to the park and have as many teams play there as possible. Gary stated the baseball mound can be removed for special one-time games.

Adam left at this point.

Gary stated the pool is in the process of being drained and painted. The hiring process has begun. Arrangements will be made for CPR and First Aid training which will be done in conjunction with DPW. The need for fingerprinting needs to be addressed. Candy feels they should be done yearly. A safety inspection will be done at the park to see if any compliance issues exist. Employee Right to Know training will be conducted.

The swim team is requesting the coach start two weeks early. This will be approved based on salary concerns. Vandalism is still a problem with both damage and graffiti. Gary will discuss cameras in the park with council. Gary is in receipt of a quote of approximately \$4,000 for nets in the outfield for mens' baseball. He is currently looking for alternate materials. Councilman Boyle stated the netting will need to come down at the end of the season to ensure its longevity. Gary stated the fire department has already agreed to put up and take down the netting. The mulch on the playground surface will be raked.

New Business

Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act

Gary stated this act came about when a young girl sat on a drain in a municipal pool. The suction held her down and she later died because of it. A law was put into affect in December of 2008. This anti-entrapment law states that special grates need to be placed in the pool. We have two sets of four grates in the main pool and two sets of grates in the baby pool. We are not in compliance and need to replace them before we open. If there are two separate drains that go back to the pump house, we will also need to add a Safety Vac Release System to make it compliant. The cost for the grates will be approximately \$750 - \$1,000. The SVR system will cost approximately \$650 - \$1,000 for each pump. This should have been addressed last year.

Free Pool Passes

Free pool passes will be distributed for a family day at the pool in a general mailing that will reach 4,000 homes. 500 passes will also be put in select locations just outside of the Boro.

Unfinished Business

Borough's Budget Issues

Gary stated that due to the borough's budget issues there is a hiring freeze in affect. There will be no non-essential capital projects. Salaries will be at or below the 2008 levels for part-time employees. Candy asked Gary if he will require the lifeguards be certified. Gary replied they will have lifesaving certificates, CPR, and first aid training. The need for defibrillator training will be addressed. Rick asked if this will apply to swim instructors and as well. Gary replied that it will.

Field Usage Fees

Councilman Boyle stated council tabled their discussion of field usage fees until their April 21st meeting. Beth stated Lopatcong and Independence do not charge anything for field use. Independence makes their money thru the concession stand. Councilman Boyle suggested giving feedback to council regarding this matter. Beth stated she would like to see money coming back into the Boro for money expended for men's baseball and feels the Recreation Supervisor, Committee and Council should work together to determine the field usage fee. Rick made a recommendation to charge the following usage fees for Boro Park only: \$50 for one-time event; \$200 for five or more times per season. The committee discussed the recommendation with Gary. Beth asked if this includes groups such as brownie troops, ladies auxiliary, etc. Paula suggested speaking to the Boro's risk manager to see who is insured and base the fees on liability. The committee discussed. Gary will see if more insurance is necessary as more sports are added. After discussing, the committee changed the \$200 fee from five times per season to four. Gary stated that until the end of the year, teams using the fields as of this date will not be charged and will recommend to council based on the committee's comments. Gary suggested the fees mentioned should be for daytime. If a night event, an additional \$50 should be charged for use of the lights. The committee will reevaluate at the end of the year and make another recommendation if necessary.

Railroad Avenue

Rick explained the property was purchased by the Boro. He commission had a consultant draw plans which were approved by council. A request for Green Acres funding was submitted and just approved three weeks ago for a \$500,000 loan at 2% over twenty years. Rick would like to see the Boro go through with this, but realizes it may not be possible due to the current financial status. Everyone agreed with Rick to make a recommendation to council. Gary said he would first check to see if the application has been approved.

Street Hockey

Gary stated council did not revisit the trophy issue at their council meeting. The expansion of the hockey program was directed to the park director. The committee discussed their prior recommendation. This discussion is tabled until the next meeting. Gary will invite a hockey representative to the meeting.

Easter Egg Hunt

Candy stated there were less people present then previous years, but the weather was very cold and windy. A bullhorn and access to the grandstand is needed for next year. Candy thanked those who helped. Four swim lesson sessions were given away in the eggs. Candy would like to have a flower sale in conjunction with the egg hunt next year.

Park Director

Gary stated he was hired as a year round part-time employee with a maximum of 18 hours per week due to budgetary concerns. Rick asked who will supervise the pool the rest of the time. Gary replied he will recommend to the manager that two of the pool supervisors have CPO training. A person with a CPO must be employed in order to open the pool, but they do not have to be on-site at all times.

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Candy stated there have been problems in the past with vacations being taken by pool employees. Gary will staff the entire pool with lifeguards to ensure coverage. Lifeguards will be required to be in their uniforms, including whistles, at all times. Councilman Boyle asked if there will be team meetings with the lifeguards. Gary replied he will hold a meeting at the beginning of the season at the pool and also conduct rescuing drills. Candy would like the lifeguards to know where the gate keys are in case of an emergency. She would also like to see a picture posted of the supervisor on duty.

Park Director Comments

Gary stated he appreciates the committee and will do his best to keep everyone informed. He feels he cannot run the programs without public input.

Committee Comments

Councilman Boyle was asked if he knew the length of the vending machine contract. He replied that he was not sure but would look into it.

Candy asked Gary what he expects from the committee. Gary replied he would like to have a nice interaction at the meetings and would like some ideas as to where the committee would like to see the programs go. He would like to keep the lines of communication open. Gary would like to see the programs expand, and offer something for all age groups, including seniors.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 11:00 p.m. by Candy DeFillippis, seconded by Beth Uporsky.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Kilduff