

Borough of Washington, Warren County, New Jersey
Recreation Committee Minutes
April 22, 2009

Call to Order

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Washington Borough Recreation Committee was called to order on Wednesday, April 22nd, by Recreation Director Gary Masenior at 7:40 p.m. Also in attendance were committee members Candy DeFillippis, Rick Feldman, Erica Kilkinney and Adam Zimmer. Beth Uporsky arrived at 7:45. Paula Aron and council liaison Patrick Boyle were absent.

Communications

Gary received a Right to Know survey that needs to be completed by July 15th. Park personnel need to be aware of this.

The Warren County Health Department will conduct a pre-inspection in regards to the Virginia Graeme Baker Act. Gary stated that if we do not pass, the pool cannot open.

Gary stated he received his CPO certification and has a temporary letter. His certificate will arrive in approximately eight weeks. The certification is good for five years.

An e-mail from Andrew Turner regarding the committee's March 25th meeting was received.

An outline of Little League's opening day events was received.

An athletic field request form was received from council seeking the committee's comments. Candy asked how we could discriminate against who uses the field or not if it was paid for by Green Acres. Gary replied the form is to provide structure. Councilman Cioni prepared the request form and presented it to council. It was then given to the committee for our comments which will be discussed later in the meeting.

The vending machine proposal was distributed to committee members as was discussed at the last meeting.

Review of Past Minutes

A motion was made by Candy DeFillippis, seconded by Adam Zimmer, to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2009 regular meeting as submitted. Motion carried.

Audience Participation

Mary Finnegan, 23 Youmans Avenue, stated she is a sophomore and key club president at Warren Hills Regional High School and would like to discuss the idea of a community garden with the committee. The garden would be located near the Washington Gardens apartments and would benefit residents with small lots. The Key Club would fundraise and apply for a grant under the youth opportunity fund. There would be a fee of between \$25 and \$50 dollars per year to have a plot and gardeners would be responsible for their own area. A fence will be put around the area to keep deer out. Water barrels can be used. Mary is looking into getting a spicket attached to the fire hydrant for the gardeners' use. A list of general rules would need to be followed. Planting is planned to begin next Spring. Mary stated the fifty key club members would like authorization to move forward and continue to plan over the summer. They will be getting help from the agricultural society and school science teacher as well as long standing citizens.

Gary feels this is an admirable project. Beth also feels this is a great idea and feels Diana Dove and Gary would be good resources as well. Beth asked if other models were looked at. Mary replied she looked at other towns on-line. Clinton divides plots into small areas and uses water barrels, has rules, and people sign a contract regarding plot maintenance, garbage, etc. Organic vegetables will be the primary growth. Plots will be separated by grass strips. Candy suggested using 8' fencing to keep the deer out. Local business may be willing to donate the fencing. Gary stated 4' fencing could be used with turkey netting above for a cheaper alternative. Adam asked if the key club had any fundraisers in mind. Mary stated they will have a car wash and sell water bottles at graduation. They will be working with Cold Stone to receive part of the profits from an event. Gary suggested possibly having a recreational fundraiser that the committee could help with like a fast-walk marathon. Gary asked Mary what she was told by council when she presented her idea to them. Mary replied she was asked to research the project more and have a general plan. Rick feels it is council who needs to approve this. The committee could recommend it as a good idea. A motion was made by Adam Zimmer, seconded by Rick Feldman, to recommend the idea of a community garden to council. All committee members were in favor. Motion carried.

Dave Hackney, 11 N. Prospect Street, provided the committee with an invitation to Little League's opening day activities. Dave stated they would like to run a concession stand under a small tent and has enough volunteers to do so. The parade will run from the playground at Memorial School to Vara Field where there will be a brief speech and announcement of the teams. Dave appreciates the fact they can use Vara Field for T-ball. Gary stated the field will be cut Thursday or Friday. Dave stated little league is in need of volunteers at the Warren Hills level. Warren Hills Little League Association is giving \$1,500 towards field maintenance to each town who will host an All Star game. Dave feels this is a good way to bring money into the town as it could off-set the field usage fees. A scoreboard needs to be put up for the All-Star game as well as a PA system. Dave will install foul poles at Steinhardt Field and asked if there is any reason they cannot do a concession stand. Rick stated the concession stand was discussed in the past and the money was to be split between recreation and little league. Rick inquired about the meeting regarding little league joining with the committee. Dave feels little league needs help from the town mostly with the cost of insurance. Rick stated it is up to little league to decide what they want to as a group before the committee can discuss it. Dave asked if the committee would have full control of the money if it takes over little league. Rick replied that it would. All sign-up fees would come to the recreation department. Gary stated they could still have a parent's association to fundraise and generate money. Rick noted there would still be a need for little league volunteers. Gary asked Dave to come to the committee as a group to see what needs to be done. Beth asked them to bring what the fee structure goes to per team fee and suggested she and Gary meet with Frank Spender in the meantime to see how it is done in Independence. Gary approved the concession stand. Dave noted the town would need to be ready by early April to be considered for hosting an All Star game.

Dawn Higgins, 113 Harding Drive, noted that the picnic tables have been severely damaged by kids skateboarding in the pavilion. Patching has not worked in the past and suggested auctioning those picnic tables and purchasing wooden tables such as the ones in the pavilion at Meadowbreeze. They are made of thick wood and not worn down like ours. Gary stated the tables should have a seven year warranty. Dawn feels that even if they are repaired, the kids will grind them down again. There are cigarette burns and knife cuts in them as well. Gary stated the police have been to the park four times this week. Nothing can be done this year due to budget restrictions, put possibly in the future.

Recreation Director Report

Finances

Gary stated that \$5,172.24 has been encumbered to date in salaries and \$10,386.10 has been encumbered as operating expenses. There is \$32,000 left in the temporary budget. Gary stated there is a plan of \$50,000 for operations. He is not sure of the salary budget. Rick asked if referee fees come out of salaries or operations.

Gary replied they come out of operations. Beth will provide Gary with an approximate cost for softball umpires this season. Gary explained a letter which was given to each committee member and program leader requiring all expenditures be brought to his attention prior to purchasing.

Non-Park Related Activities

Gary noted little league will have their opening day ceremonies on Saturday.

Park Related Activities

There is a new six foot dumpster for recycling at the park. The swings were put up today. In regards to the Virginia Graeme Baker Act, Gary stated he still does not have a definite answer regarding the cost. He believes one pump and two set of grates will be needed. Only the grates will need to be replaced as long as there is 36" from center to center. Rick provided Gary with a document from the previous Borough Manager and T&M Associates regarding antivortex drains in the baby pool. Gary stated these drains are no longer acceptable. If the grates in the main pool are an unusual size, they will have to be custom made. Rick suggested Gary contact T&M Associates for the name of the company who originally built the pool. Gary stated he is in the process of having the pool drained and the paint will be ordered. The pool will be washed before being painted. The mound will be removed from the ball field at Borough Park tomorrow for the upcoming softball games and Gary asked Beth to meet with Dave Dixon tomorrow regarding this. Gary stated the netting quote came in at approximately \$5,000. Gary found a company in Flemington where we can get turkey netting for above the fence for a total of \$875. Rick asked how this differs from the higher price netting. Gary replied the turkey netting will essentially look like driving range netting.

In regards to scheduling, Beth feels we are already degrading the service to those who have paid to be part of the recreation program and doesn't want to tell them they are secondary to another team's schedule. The Borough is not charging the men's baseball team and they are not part of the recreation programs. She feels it is unfair to the girls not to get first choice of field time. Candy feels it not fair to the men's team either since they were already told they could use the field. Gary explained that he inherited this problem of being asked to play junior and senior softball as well as men's baseball all on the same field. Adam stated this was not his intention. Rick asked Beth if there is anything wrong with the girls playing on Steinhardt Field. Beth replied that there wasn't. The mound is in the wrong place for the girls at Borough Park. Beth explained that rained out softball games need to be played within one week. Gary stated that games come before practices. The committee discussed the options. Rick noted that when the committee first discussed this, all agreed everyone could play at Borough Park. Candy noted the same thing happens to field hockey when soccer needs to use the field.

Adam left the meeting at this point.

A removable mound is needed in order for all teams to play. It is up to the individual teams and umpires from other towns if they can play on the field with the mound. The committee discussed the portable mound in the shed and it was determined it cannot be used.

Secretary Report

Ann stated she is following up on the compliance of the bleachers at Steinhardt Field. Rudy Bescherer is looking into local code and is waiting for response back from the State. Pool passes are being printed and free pool pass coupons will be distributed at swim lesson sign-ups this weekend to non-Boro residents. Residents will be receiving a coupon in the mail. Ann is following up on recycling containers for the park. The catalog for the movies in the park has been received and paperwork is being processed. Ann is continuing to update the field usage calendar and track expenses and deposits.

Program Liaison Reports

Gary read the letter he sent to the street hockey representative inviting him to the meeting but he was told no one from street hockey would be coming before this board and that Gary would have to go to them if he wants to discuss the program. Candy feels this is disrespectful as Gary is the one who runs the programs. Gary stated he is looking into the requirements regarding fingerprinting and will table the discussion until he has more information and the policy. Gary asked all liaisons to get in contact with their coaches before the next meeting to see what is needed for their programs.

New Business

New Programs

Rick suggested volleyball and indoor games such as cards and pinochle that can be played in the fire hall. Candy suggested something for the seniors such as a bus trip to a Yankee's game. Beth stated she has a document put together and will forward it to Ann for distribution. Her ideas include a climbing wall, pajama dance, skate park and track club, dodge ball, bocce ball and quoits. Gary asked why the volleyball court is no longer in the pool area. Candy explained that the pool area flooded when Smith Motors put their parking lot in, and the sand ran into the pool. Dawn Higgins suggested the old shuffleboard area could be used for quoits. Gary would like to do an arts & crafts program as well as a sport activity program.

5-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Gary tabled this discussion. He has received a positive response to his idea of an outdoor street and/or roller hockey rink.

Field Usage Request Form

Gary feels this is a good form for a non-resident group but not for existing groups. Gary will modify and provide to the committee at the next meeting.

Vandalism in the Park

Gary stated that in the past two weeks there has been graffiti on the shed and playground picnic tables. All incidences have been reported to the police. Gary would like all to be in agreement to go to council requesting cameras as recommended by the police department. Councilman Cioni provided information he researched totaling \$10,350. Gary also noted the lock was broken off the metal electrical box. Rick stated there was graffiti on the starting blocks and lifeguard stand last year. The graffiti was not removed properly and the starting blocks were damaged. Gary feels "No Skateboarding" signs are needed at the pavilion. Candy feels motion lights would be a deterrent.

Unfinished Business

Railroad Avenue

Gary has the letter from the Borough Manager stating we were awarded the \$500,000 Green Acres loan. Per the manager we are not going to accept the loan due to the approximate \$10,000 it would cost per year in interest. Rick stated the plans for the project have not been approved. The commission was approved to apply for the loan but he thinks we have three years to accept. He suggested Gary contact T&M Associates regarding this as a lot of effort went into getting this loan. Candy doesn't want the taxpayers to pay more than they already are. Gary will continue to look into this.

Field Usage Fees

Gary stated the field usage fees were accepted as presented to council. He will present them to council again at the end of the year.

Easter Egg Hunt

Gary told the committee about a program he saw in Washington DC called "Peeps Are People Too". It is a contest where marshmallow peeps are put in outfits and placed in a setting and prizes are awarded. This could be done next year in conjunction with the Easter Egg Hunt. Candy also suggested an Easter parade and flower sale.

Swim Team Food Sales

Gary stated he received permission for the swim team to sell food at the swim meets as it is their primary fundraiser. They cannot sell anything in the concession stand. Gary will look into the Green Acres ruling regarding this. Rick asked if the committee will have input to the contents of the vending machine. Gary replied they will and it will be discussed at the next meeting. Candy asked how long it will take to repair a broken vending machine. Gary stated he has a call into the company and will be meeting with them. Beth feels the vending machines are a horrible idea. Gary noted it is a one year trial program which will be re-evaluated at the end of the season. The committee discussed the placement of the vending machines contingent on amperage. The machines will have outside access when the pool is closed. Gary stated the concession stand can be open for special events. Candy stated on the 4th of July the pool is usually open until the parade starts and asked if we will be having a dip 'n dance this year. Gary replied he would like to and would also like to have a tube night. Dawn Higgins suggested the fire department may be able to donate their emergency lights for extra lighting. Candy stated everyone is always working or taking their children places and would like to do something to make the town into a community. Beth feels the town should be a place to get away from work and driving. She likes the idea of the little league opening day parade. Gary stated Habitat for Humanity has purchased the CYO building and will be opening it up as a youth center. Gary will see if we can get involved and sponsor activities. Rick stated this will be good for senior citizen activities. Candy would like to see an all sports day were children could participate in a sport to see if they are interested before signing up. High school hockey coaches could possibly hold a clinic here in the park to improve participation. Beth stated she could host softball clinics to help boost participation.

Committee Comments

In an effort to attempt to clarify the communication from Mr. Turner concerning the swim team and the street hockey party, Chairman Feldman stated that at the Borough Council meeting of August 5, 2008, Mrs. Grodkiewicz, Washington Swim Team Parents Association Treasurer, questioned the councils' previous decision to forbid the sale of food at swim meets by the Washington Parents Association. Rick stated after some discussion, but with no change in the councils' original position, the Swim Team Parents Association was requested to submit a proposal for the next swim team season to the Borough Council for discussion; to date, this has not been done. Regarding the issue with street hockey and their end of the year party, Rick stated Mr. Turner again does not have all the facts. Rick stated the members of the recreation committee discussed the matter and it was the committee's decision, not one member's as Mr. Turner alleges, that a recommendation be made, that based on past history and fairness to all sports participants, the borough should not finance a party for any sport at the conclusion of their season. Rick stated ultimately, it was the Borough Council that made the decision not to pay for the street hockey party. Rick feels it is truly disappointing that Mr. Turner does not remember that the committee can only advise and make a non-binding recommendation, because this is the way he and the rest of the council structured the present recreation committee.

Recreation Director Comments

Gary stated he would like to draft a letter to the NJ Devils thanking them for their support of the Street Devils program. All committee members agreed. After briefly discussing the end of season hockey incident, Beth stated she would like to be able to support a small party at the end of each sport. It could be at the fire hall or park, depending on the season, with homemade items. Gary would encourage street hockey to form a parent's

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association to take care of incidentals such as pizza parties and the awarding of trophies and stated we are approaching all activities as recreation programs. What we provide for one sport we should provide for all.

Adam came back to the meeting at this point.

Beth stated we could do something for the kids who graduated at the end of their years in the recreation program and feels we should be thanking the volunteer coaches with a Volunteer Appreciation Day.

Gary stated the meetings will hopefully get shorter as information is given to the committee. Rick noted this is the start of our busy season.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by Ann Kilduff