

Harrington Park Recreation Commission

Minutes of Meeting

October 19, 2011

Commission

Chris Apostle	Present
Jerry Esposito	Absent
Jennifer Brackenbury	Present
Mickey Franklin	Present
Tom Gleason	Present
Steve Marotta	Present
Steve Pacicco	Present

Town Council Liaison: John Roth
Secretary: Michael Amdur

Meeting called to order at 8:11 PM

Announcements:

- 1) A welcome extended to Jennifer Brackenbury as the newest volunteer on the Commission.
- 2) A welcome extended to Michael Amdur as the newest secretary on the Commission.

UPDATES AND DISCUSSIONS

Discussion of making the secretary role a more “serious” administrative position. Steve M. explained his vision of this individual's responsibilities, including:

- *maintain and report on our budget at each monthly meeting*
- *handle all external communication with announcement of events via the HP newsletter and/or create a Rec Commission Quarterly newsletter*
- *track our meeting Agenda items*
- *maintain our website, including certified coaches list.*
- *track Booster Funding requests from the individual sports*
- *research potential grants and pursue applications*

- Discussion of how the recording secretary position might be elevated, as per a similar position in Old Tappan.
 - Steve M. said that O.T. has someone employed by the Borough who is paid, not an appointed member of the recreation commission.
 - Steve P. said that the position in O.T. takes up a lot of time and may not be necessary in H.P.
 - Steve M. explained that the big bang for the buck would be to get this person involved with the grants.
 - *Jennifer reminded the group that Mary Dunley was successful in securing the grant money ultimately used for the redevelopment of Pondsides Park redevelopment and she could be a resource for research on future grants.*
 - Back-and-forth discussion among members on the issue of whether the position is a full-time \$30,000 job or is something less than that (\$2,000-\$4,000 a year part-time).
 - John R. inquired what the Rec. Commission might be doing (or perceived as doing) if the Commission is paying someone to handle field maintenance and grant research.

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEM:

-- (Mickey) Between now and the next meeting, if we all could come up with a list of pros and cons for instituting this position and all the things that go along with that, then we can debate the issue. Next month begins budget season; think about if you wish to submit for this position, if so, it will need to be justified.

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

-- (John R.) There are two new members on the Council; this could affect the outcome of a decision/request by Rec Commission.

1) (John R.) Town revenues are down, a lot of tax appeals are going on - including one from United Water - contractual expenses are up, and we have a 2% cap to work with. When you look at all those things (revenues are down considerably), the town is considering reevaluating everything. That takes years and might not take effect til 2013 or 2014. To go before the Council and ask for additional funding will be difficult to get.

2) (John R.) If the Rec. Commission goes before the Council, we need to be prepared to answer the questions: What will the Rec. Commission members be doing? Why does the Commission need a paid person when – for years – they were getting by without that individual.

Discussion extended into Sports as related to the Recreation Commission.

-- Steve M. said one of the advantages of aggregating the sports into this group is that O.T. has one treasury function, so all the fees go into one pool, then Sports go in and request the money to pay the bills.

-- John R. suggested that one of the critical factors that can be accomplished would be to pull the Sports under Recreation. All the money filters into Rec, Rec spends the money that needs to be spent on an individual and Rec makes all the decisions regarding the fields.

Discussion of quality of playing fields, especially between O.T. and H.P.

- Steve M. explained that O.T. rebuilt all their fields; H.P. only remediated a bunch of fields.
 - Chris A. said that ten years ago, we started out with the goal of having the best fields in the area. Soon after that, we downgraded that to facilities we can just be proud of.
 - Steve P. said we had that goal for about 20 minutes and everybody said we are okay with "average". He also said that we don't maintain the facilities/rec areas...we don't have the time to do all the work to ensure and follow-up with Mark Kiernan.
 - Jennifer tried to encourage everyone to put themselves out there because what everyone is looking at are the fields.
 - Mickey said that what Jennifer said only represents a small minority. Probably two-thirds of the town complain we put too much into the fields and recreation.
 - Hackensack Woods fields have been redone three times in the last seven years. \$20,000 in seven years. Every fall, it (grass) grows back.

Discussion of BLEACHERS

- John R. said there is \$\$\$ to be spent on the bleachers. Rec. Comm. needs to find out from the Boosters how much they are planning to contribute. It's probably \$10,000-\$15,000 – from the bond reallocation. The money from the bond needs to be spent! Tennis courts cost \$35,000. That leaves some \$40,000 – if we include the \$10,000-\$15,000 from Boosters. We put in for bleachers, backstops and dugouts.
 - Steve M. would rather put in for replacement of backstops.
 - Tom would like to (firstly) see the wooden bleachers replaced. All of the wooden bleachers are out of code. Also, they come apart – cracked wood on all of them.

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEM:

- **(John R.) would like someone on the Commission to take charge and price out the bleachers: what we want, price them out, here's what they are, here's where they are going to go, and the cost. Then we have to submit for it!**
 - Tom said bleachers range from \$3,000-\$8,000 for a set. The ones on the basketball court (21 feet) are probably \$5,000-\$8,000.
 - Chris volunteered to do the leg work – as per John R. suggestion above. Mickey offered assistance.

- Mickey read off a list from his cell phone stemming from an email from Steve M.
 - Mickey will forward that email message/list to the Commission members.
- John R. says it is up to Commission to say what we want and go out and get 2-3 bids.
- Mickey would like to see sprinklers on Highland Field, despite the probability of \$\$\$ running out.
 - Brief discussion of whether the Penny Tax can be used for sprinklers

Ragamuffin Parade

- Jennifer says the work is all done!

Maintenance Items

- Two issues: (Tom relating the following)
 - 1) Firstly, there are three lamps burned out at Highland on the poles at soccer fields. Been burned out for a year and a half. Tom will inquire about fixing them again, despite the expense.
 - 2) FYI - Our fields got “trashed” twice this year when they were mowed and wet in preparation for the Fire Chief Parade and they really chewed up the grass.
 - 3) Secondly, the soccer field fence that has the signs on it, ten sections are lying down with signs on them. The contractor bent one pipe and ripped two others. Tom wanted to know if he should send an email. Mickey suggested “absolutely”: either Tom can send it or Tom can forward to Mickey and Mickey will send it to him. Mickey insisted that they have to fix it.
- Chris suggested that the Commission should have a Facebook page.

ACTION ITEM, AS PER CHRIS: We should go in front of the Council and be sure Council is okay with us doing that. Chris offered to do research on the issue – will research what other towns use that. Someone would need to manage the webpage on Facebook. Access would only be given to certain people. Chris will try - for the next meeting - to put something together.

-- Steve M says a proposed certified coach’s list (on the website) is a great idea.