

Harrington Park Recreation Commission

Minutes of Meeting

January 15, 2014

Commission

Siobhan Bailey	Present
Paul Baly	Present
Joseph Cho	Present
Brian Fitzgerald	Present
Tom Gleason	Present
Betty Ann Niece	Present
Steve Pacicco	Present

Town Council Liaison:	Michelle Ryan	Present
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Mayor:	Paul Hoelscher	Present
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Lance Symons	(Sports Commissioner)	Present
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Joseph Niece	(Eagle Scout member)	Present
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Secretary:	Michael Amdur
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Meeting called to order at 8:05 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call to order. In compliance with the Sunshine Act of 1975, adequate notice of this meeting was made.

OATH OF OFFICE FOR NEW MEMBERS

Mayor Hoelscher expressed his appreciation for the work that Recreation Commission members have done.

Mayor Hoelscher read the oath of office to the new three members: Joseph Cho, Brian Fitzgerald and Betty Ann Niece. The three took the oath of office and the Mayor said he will have the oath signed and sent to the new members in the near future.

FOLLOW-UP: At some point, Michelle and/or all three new members should be on the lookout for – and possibly follow-up on – their signed oath document.

ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Joseph Niece provided the Commission with an update on his Eagle Scout Project (involving constructing and placing 15 signs about local flora and fauna, as well as building a single kiosk that will provide a seat and shade).

Joseph brought with him an exact model of the information plate that will be bought and used. The plates are made from fiberglass with a polyester coating.

COSTS:

Total cost of all plates, plus shipping cost: \$439

Total cost of kiosk: \$200

TOTAL COST OF BOTH/ENTIRE PROJECT: \$639

For fundraising, Joseph plans on using the ShopRite gift card fundraiser to gain the bulk of his needed project money. In addition, he will ask for donations. For public recognition, he will have a car wash with a lemonade stand to ensure that all scouts are busy.

Joseph hopes to have the materials for the project gathered between the end of January and March/April. All of the signs will be constructed at his house during the Spring. He hopes to work quickly and then will place them into their designated locations.

Joseph already received approval by the Environmental Commission. He said that he was looking for approval by the end of January so that the project would be finished and ready by summer.

First, the signs and kiosks will need to have holes dug out. Then something will be used (possibly donated gravel) to keep the signs and kiosks anchored.

[On a related note, the Commission was informed by Joseph that Kurt Sigler had finished and placed his bat houses at Pondsider, Upper Highland and the Swim Club – as per Kurt's May 22, 2013 appearance before The Recreation Commission]

A discussion ensued as to where the signs and kiosk should go.

As far as choosing subjects for the informational signs, Joseph said that – although he felt comfortable identifying trees – he did not feel knowledgeable about identifying plants. Joseph offered to discuss the issue further and – possibly – bring up at the next Commission meeting he attends.

Betty Ann suggested to incorporate birds into the signs and – in response to Joseph's concern about identification difficulties - she specifically recommended incorporate herring, turtles, carp, geese into the informational signs at Pondsider.

Tom suggested putting: two signs (at the two sides of the circle) by the path at Highland between fields #1 and #2, three or four signs at the meandering side, two signs at the other side, one sign by field #3 and one sign near the 9/11 memorial.

The Commission agreed in principle to put two signs at Beechwood, ideally incorporating turkey and deer into the informational signs. Also agreed to seven signs at Highland Field (one by field #3) and six signs at Pondsider.

Members agreed to place the kiosk in the open space between the tennis courts. Tom said that if the kiosk does not work out successfully at the tennis courts, it could be relocated to Pondsider.

FOLLOW-UP: An unspecified Commission member should contact Joseph's mother (when necessary) in order to reach him. As such, Joseph said that he will let members know when he could do a walkaround for exact placement of signs at the different locations. Tom suggested that – during the walkaround – appropriate field paint be used to mark exactly where the signs will go.

FOLLOW-UP: An unspecified Commission member should contact Mark Kiernan for any maintenance-related conflicts that might occur with placement of the kiosk (presumably if relocated to Pondsider).

Lance Symons briefly mentioned that he will submit a request for field usage. Steve suggested that Lance wait for a fuller discussion of the issue at the February Recreation Commission meeting. Tom added that if Lance could get the request in sooner, then Tom could try to get the discussion going with baseball and softball.

TO-DO: Tom mentioned that he needs to contact baseball about getting the field use form.

MINUTES

Motion passed unanimously to approve the November 2013 Minutes as they were originally sent to members.

REC OVERVIEW AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR NEW MEMBERS

Steve (with contributions from Tom) offered a detailed orientation for the three new members. A few key highlights:

- The Commission members see the overall purpose and set of responsibilities as managing and maintaining the parks and the fields.
- The budget has declined in recent years.
- Basketball (boys and girls) and indoor soccer are at the school. Rec coordinates the court time with the sports and the school.
- The Commission is working toward a five-year plan: listing the projects that it wants to do, prioritize them, then figure out a way to fund them and then maintain them. Steve expects that the Commission will work through this plan in the first half of this year.
- Tom emphasized that there are pieces of town property that are designated as Recreation Spaces on the map...and Rec is responsible for those. Thus, Beechwood and

playgrounds are Rec areas and are amongst Rec's responsibilities. There are some areas around the Swim Club that are unusable, but designated as Rec responsibility.

- Rec charges a fee for groups to use the fields. The fee for field use is \$120 per field per day and \$50 charge for usage of the bathroom. These charges only amount to (a range between) \$500-\$1,000 per year.
- The Open Space fund is not at Rec's discretion. Recommendations can be made to the M & C. If there are capital expenses, that is in the realm of M & C.
- There are subaccounts in the Rec Trust that the Commission tries use as "deferred maintenance" – the basketball court, the walking track. When Town Day donations are made, they go into Rec Trust. These monies carry over from year-to-year; it does NOT disappear after December 31.
- Rec tries to ensure that when activities are going on in town, the activity is insured. If it is a town program, it is covered under the Joint Insurance Funds (JIF). If it is not a town program, it can still be covered but a resolution is needed in order for it to be covered by JIF. Some Sports choose to get insurance on their own.
- Part of getting a commitment to use Open Space funds is putting together a maintenance plan and then get competitive pricing on it (soliciting three bids). The hope is to get a multi-year commitment with that. Currently, the Fall maintenance is mostly done – it got done during the last week of 2013. There was some remediation work that needed to be done on Upper Highland that was not undertaken.
- Amongst the Rec-sponsored programs: Fishing Derby, Ski Club (new Rec program), RagaMuffin Parade, Town Day.

TO-DO: In response to a question about the status of tennis badge sales, Michelle will send an email to former Commission member Jerry Esposito inquiring about the situation.

FINANCE & BUDGET

Michelle inquired as to how/when the Commission should put together a budget. Steve recommended that the budget remain the same as last year.

Michelle is meeting with June, Chuck and Mike Ritigliano on Jan. 22 to go over the town budget resolution in order to have something to present M & C. She suggested that Rec may wish to consider presenting a budget in February or March.

TO-DO: Responding to a question about the next step, Michelle recommended to Steve that he submit a budget via email to Judy (memorializing it).

TO-DO: Michelle will let Steve know what date Rec's budget will be discussed. Michelle said that she could present the budget to M & C.

MAINTENANCE ISSUES/CONTRACT

Steve noted that it would likely take approximately \$41,000 to perform maintenance correctly. The sources of the funds would be approximately: \$8,000 from the town budget, \$8,000 from Sports (registration fees), and then \$25,000 from Open Space.

Steve said that the Open Space money has never been used by Rec before. The resolution is to use \$25,000/year for three years to maintenance. That would be added on top of what is in the budget to fund the maintenance of the fields in town: soccer, baseball, and softball fields at the school infields, Highland, Upper Highland and Pondsides.

The school takes care of the grass at their fields, while Rec maintains the infields themselves.

Steve explained that DPW goes around from April – October twice a week and drag/scarify the infields. That is in addition to the maintenance.

Steve's recommendation on the bid process (for the maintenance contract) is to wait until the resolution is passed before starting (the bid process).

TO-DO: Responding to a question about when the contract will be signed (when the resolution will be approved so that Rec can bid), Michelle will send an email to Ann Bistriz inquiring about that.

In response to a question about what maintenance contract is in place for 2014, Steve said that Rec is (practically speaking) following a "fee for service" format at the moment. Steve said that a maintenance contract should be signed by March 15 to get the fields ready. Currently, some wear-and-tear issues have recently been addressed: cleaning up baselines, doing the work on the outfields, removing grass, redoing the pitcher's mound, checking the bases.

TO-DO: Steve will send an email to Ann B., as per Mayor Hoelscher's offer to fast-track Rec's maintenance needs (above).

Michelle related to members that she spoke with Mike Neglia (Neglia Engineering) directly concerning Pondsides field remediation and the grading problem.

[Three or four years ago, Pondsides was redone – the field was moved back, etc. When they graded it, the pitcher's mound was too high versus home plate. As a result of that, water runs down and creates erosion on the field. The grading was off and the Borough's engineering firm (Neglia Engineering) went back to the contractor. The contractor needs to remediate it, but it is at the contractor's convenience.]

TO-DO: Michelle will send an email to Greg Poliniak (of Neglia Engineering) and get a status update concerning this issue.

FIELD REQUESTS

Tom reported that baseball has not submitted the request, but has asked for the form.

Former Rec Commission member Steve Marotta is forming a high school club team. They want to play at Pondsides (in the Spring???). Steve will send his field use request (and insurance).

Mark Torrey, gym teacher at the school, will be running a sports camp again in April, as well as a summer camp. Rec has been charging him \$600/week for the last few years. Rec was given a discount for the H.P. soccer camp.

Motion passed unanimously to approve the Mark Torrey contract.

TO-DO: Tom will fill out the contract and send it over at some point. As soon as the dates are finalized, Tom will inform the Commission.

Tom said that, when baseball and lacrosse requests come in, if they can agree on tentative starting times, Rec should approve immediately. If they cannot agree, Rec can invite them both in and adjudicate.

SCHOOL COORDINATION

Tom relayed to the Commission that there are a couple of coordination “issues” with the school because of the enrichment (program). Basketball didn’t show up one day because of some scheduling snafus.

TOWN PROGRAMS (SKI)

Siobhan reported that the ski trip was well-run and well-coordinated. 25-30 youngsters attended.

PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS

Paul said that a female resident emailed him about trying to construct a barrier at George Street Park (between the road and the park). A group of residents go to the park on a regular basis with children in tow and they have found the situation dangerous. This follows up an initial attempt (sometime in October) by the same resident to alert Paul as to her concern.

Paul responded to her email and informed her that there were other priorities that the Commission was looking at. The resident responded that she could get the Juniors to fund construction of something. Paul asked Commission members if the resident has a forum to discuss her concern.

Members discussed various angles of this issue, exploring possible alternatives and their opinions on this issue.

A recent risk assessment has not identified the location as a high risk for the Borough.

Motion passed unanimously to deny construction of a fence/barrier.

TO-DO: Paul will send an email to the resident. Paul suggested that the email would convey the Commission’s sentiment (including aesthetic concerns), but allow for recourse by allowing the resident to come to the February Commission meeting and present.

GEORGE STREET POND – SIGNS FOR STICKS

Children have been throwing things out on the pond, which then subsequently freeze into the pond. Steve inquired as to whether there should be a sign put up to try to discourage residents – despite the fact that it is basically children.

No discussion or reaction from members.

FIVE YEAR PLAN

FOLLOW-UP: Will be discussed at future meeting of the Commission.

WALKING PATH LIGHTING PLAN

[The project puts lighting around the front path at Highland that passes the basketball court area]

Siobhan informed new members that – last August – M & C passed a resolution that would allow for the submission of an application for a matching grant to Bergen County Open Space (matching grant would be approximately \$75,000). Sports Boosters was going to contribute \$5,000.

The county has approved the application.

Michelle reported that, in October, M & C received an email stating that the number of submissions and the monies in the pool/pot allowed for full funding of all the projects that were submitted, but that they would get back to M & C. Neither Mayor Hoelscher nor Michelle have seen any correspondence from the County since.

Siobhan asked if she could monitor the progress with the County or “take over” the project.

TO-DO: Siobhan will check with Ann B. as to the possibility of Siobhan monitoring/taking over the project with or without the Council. Ann would be receiving correspondence and emails from the County, thus she should be a key point of contact. Michelle informed Siobhan that she is welcome to contact anybody at the County level.

PONDSIDE POND DREDGING

FOLLOW-UP: Will be discussed at future meeting of the Commission.

CPR/AED MACHINE(S)

Tom reported that the school now has a CPR/AED outside the doors to the back field.

A question came up as to how the school received their machine (via donation?).

TO-DO: Tom will contact Dr. Fried about the school’s machine, as well as the lightning system.

Tom also reported that the school’s lightning system is now installed and probably works.

Tom believes that there will be a need to educate everyone about how the lightning system works.

50/70 FIELD AT HIGHLAND

The Commission is trying to turn the upper back field at Highland into a 50/70 field. Sports Boosters has committed to funding this. A mound is needed as well as a shed. The base anchors are there already.

CEMETERY WALL ISSUE

Michelle reported that Neglia Engineering has already submitted a proposal for the retaining wall, however, there is a drainage problem at the top which also needs to be addressed.

Neglia needs to put together another proposal and the numbers will be revised.

Mayor Hoelscher said that – what came out of the Saturday morning meeting – was a review of the proposal. There are two plans: (1) a five foot wall plan and (2) two-and-a-half to three foot wall plan. One plan dealt with railroad ties or pressure treated wood. The other paved the stones/blocks. Mayor Hoelscher thought that the Council was leaning toward the plan that deals with block, as opposed to wood.

It will cost \$6,000 to do a study of the gravesite location - in terms of how the town is going to handle the drainage. The total cost could be anywhere in the range of \$151,000 - \$190,000, depending upon whether it is one level or if it is tiered. Now with the drainage on the top, depending upon the plan, the cost could be edging toward \$200,000.

Siobhan inquired as to the category/availability of the grants. Mayor Hoelscher responded that the grants change every year. The Mayor confirmed that - although initially the project became shut to grants - there seem to be new grants available with new qualifications.

A key issue is that, because no one owns the property outright, many grants are not available. As far as Title Action being taken, the Mayor said that the Historical Society has some kind of control or custodial status. Michelle added that the Historical Society is pursuing ownership over the property.

REVISED FEBRUARY RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Members decided to change the date of the next meeting to February 12.

VENDOR ISSUE

Michelle has been communicating with a vendor to do a craft show at Highland Field. The vendors would bring in other vendors, she would provide insurance, as well as any clean-up.

TO-DO: Michelle will invite the vendor to come to the February meeting in order to propose the project. Some members expressed concern about parking issues at such an event.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Town religious leaders asked Mayor Hoelscher if Rec activities can be put off until after noontime on Sundays.

FOLLOW-UP: Mayor Hoelscher emphasized that the issue does not have to be decided at this moment.

TO-DO: Although no one was specified for this duty, there was general agreement to pass along the religious request in an attempt to influence those baseball teams/leagues currently playing before noontime.

Tom emphasized that, in general, most of the organizations try to keep religious considerations in mind when scheduling Sunday activities. However there is some club and mens activities on Sunday that do conflict with the timeperiod.

DOG PARK

Michelle mentioned that there are more requests from residents to establish a dog park. This issue has already been discussed by the Commission.

Bergen County said that it would cost them \$50,000 to start up a dog park (construct fencing, add mulch, clear an area, add receptacles). There would be daily maintenance.

Already, there has been some discussion of locations by residents.

TO-DO: Tom will reach out to his contact at the Recreation Commission in Closter for more info about their dog park and – in particular – about their clean-up issues and effective geese chaseaways.

TOWN DAY

Betty Ann volunteered to co-chair Town Day with Michelle.

Although a specific date was not chosen, there was agreement that Town Day will remain in the month of September.

TO-DO: At February Rec Commission meeting, a date will be suggested and possibly confirmed.