

Harrington Park Recreation Commission

Minutes of Meeting

February 13, 2013

Commission

Chris Apostle	Absent/resigned from Commission
Siobhan Bailey	Present/new member
Jennifer Brackenbury	Present
Jerry Esposito	Absent
Tom Gleason	Present
Steve Marotta	Absent
Steve Pacicco	Present

Town Council Liaison: Michelle Ryan

Secretary: Michael Amdur

Meeting called to order at 8:10 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

RESIGNATION

Steve P. informed the Commission that Chris Apostle had resigned from the Rec Commission.

ACHIEVING A QUORUM – ISSUE DISCUSSION

Steve P. introduced the topic of whether the Commission can achieve a quorum via conference call. Steve said that the answer currently is “no”. Michelle Ryan confirmed that Jack Dineen told her that she can quote him...and that his response was “no” as well.

Steve P. floated the idea that people could call in and - at least - participate in the meeting, even if it means that the member(s) would not even be able to vote. He suggested that the key detriment is that – under the current rules – “it shuts down the progress” of the Commission when members are not present (in person or remotely) for meetings.

FOLLOW UP: Tom asked Michelle to ask the Council (coming up on Tuesday, Feb 19) if they are willing to be flexible on this issue.

NEW/CONTINUING MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Steve P. agreed to be responsible for the financial issues within the Rec Commission.

A back-and-forth discussion ensued as to the value of keeping paper versus electronic files – for future members. Jen and Tom suggested that the Commission should keep both paper and electronic records.

Tom volunteered to take care of school coordination and billing issues. He subsequently agreed to manage field use requests again this year.

BACKGROUND

Steve P. introduced town employee Marlene Casey, who works for the town and is the grant coordinator. She receives a percentage of a grant, assuming it is secured. Michelle suggested that she thinks Marlene would be coming in March, when the Mayor and council meet to talk about grants overall and to talk about a historical grant that the town may be able to apply for.

FOLLOW UP: Michelle volunteered to ask Marlene Casey about whether the Commission would qualify for something in Recreation or other projects.

(RETURN TO MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES)

Siobhan expressed an interest in doing grantwork. After some discussion, she agreed to take on that set of responsibilities.

Steve P. assigned sports coordination to Jerry (which was previously done by Chris).

Jen volunteered to take main responsibility for Town Programs (with some assistance from Michelle and further assistance, when needed, from other members).

Tom offered to manage the Fishing Derby event.

Steve M. would hold main responsibility for field maintenance. However, Steve P. would be involved in the finance involved there. Tom asked to be involved/consulted concerning those issues.

Discussion ensued as to the advantages and disadvantages of holding Town Day in May or Sept.

TURFING/ADDITIONAL FIELDS

Steve P. introduced the topic of a project: the two high schools (NVOT & NVD) are trying to put a bond together or referendum together (Steve was unsure of the form or what the funding will be) to put turf fields at both high schools – in addition to the football fields. The district school board is involved, a company is involved; Steve sat through a presentation a month ago and suggested that the Rec Commission should attend some meetings, bring back some information, communicate to the Mayor and council (act in liaison role).

As per Steve: “The sell to the town is that the H.P. youth programs would have access to these fields – more access than they currently have.” To date, Steve P. has been representing the Rec Commission. Jen volunteered to attend some meetings (under the assumption that there have been/will be approx. two meetings every three months).

WALKING PATH PROJECT/LIGHTING

Steve P. inquired as to whether this is a real/live project.

FOLLOW UP: Michelle offered to find out for Steve P.

Steve informed Siobhan that the Commission had made a decision to put lighting around the front of Highland (around the hut and around the playground), not the rest of the walking path. Although the Commission has engineering estimates, Steve P. doesn't know the current status of the project.

PONDSIDE DREDGING

Steve P. outlined four elements of the project:

- 1) Pursuing the grant
- 2) Get soil testing done to ensure it is not contaminated
- 3) Contact mosquito commission
- 4) Plan with DPW to see if they can remove the muck and bring it someplace

Tom explained the background of Pondsides to Siobhan: It is an artificial pond that is sunk in. It used to have an aerator on it, so it is gradually filling in and will not last much longer. It's been on the list to get dredged – and possibly relined – for a long time. It costs a lot of money and – now that it has been deferred as long as possible – the Commission has decided to get the project started. When the new aerator broke (approx. 8-9 yrs ago), it was too shallow for an aerator. The dredging's main purpose is to make it deeper, rather than clean. The mosquito commission exists and this is one of the things that they do - instead of spraying DDT, they dredge ponds.

Steve P. informed Siobhan that the Commission received a dredging quote from Greg Poliniak at Neglia Engineering.

Steve P. explained the background of the Penny Tax to Siobhan: The Rec Commission has an Open Space account that has a penny per thousand dollars of assessed property value in town – “Penny Tax” that the Commission gets from the County. (The Rec Commission had applied for it years ago and participates in the program) The Rec Commission receives \$106,000 every year and the money had been intended to develop Open Space. So, the Rec Commission currently has \$440,000 in the account and it has been increasing by \$106,000 every year.

Steve P. informed the Commission that the Mayor and Council agreed that the Commission could request \$25,000 a year out of the account for field maintenance.

Tom asked Michelle if – due to a recent reassessment – the Town knows what the current totals are. Michelle responded that she asked Ann Murphy -- Ann said that she would know in a few days. Tom thought the amount was “80% of the old assessment”, based on his own statement of assessed value. Tom estimated that – for this round of reassessments - the total might go from \$105,000 down to \$82,000.

Steve P. mentioned that currently the feedback from Poliniak at Neglia is that the mosquito commission will do the dredging (saving the Commission \$770,000). The Commission could get DPW to remove it and find a place for it to go, though a conversation needs to be held. Steve P. was unsure as to whether this needs to go through the Council (Greg Evanella – liaison). Steve P. asked Michelle if she could talk to Evanella and ask if the Town has the capability (earth moving equipment, people) to do this, as well as what is the cost to dump the residue.

The most urgent issue right now (in the dredging project) is to test the stuff that is going to be dredged to see if there are contaminants in it. If there is, the costs would soar. Steve P. suggested that Evanella would need to do some research and find one or two testing companies and get bids/proposals. Then, the Commission could begin the project.

FOLLOW-UP: Michelle said that - at the Tuesday Council meeting - she will ask Evanella (the previous questions) to ask DPW.

REMIEDIATING LANDSCAPING AND WALKING PATH BETWEEN THE TENNIS COURTS

Steve P. related the story of the walking path: three or four years ago, an Eagle Scout project was undertaken to put in a new walking path and new landscaping. However, it has continued to deteriorate.

John [last name not mentioned] – who maintains the 9/11 memorial – offered a proposal to remediate the area from the bridge to the parking area. He would recut and excavate, put in a compact base, level it, line the path with this landscape fabric (gravel) for \$3,400. Then, it would cost \$100-\$200/year afterwards to maintain it.

Steve P. would like John to go to all the playgrounds and put down wood chips, etc. to maintain everything. For example, the playground at Pondsides is starting to grow in because no one has been maintaining it.

Jen asked if DPW maintains the area. Jen asked if Michelle would ask Evanella about using DPW before money is spent.

FOLLOW UP: Michelle will follow up on this DPW issue.

Jen inquired about who the Commission would ask as far as replacing the equipment at George Street Park.

FOLLOW UP: Michelle will follow up on this issue of replacing equipment tomorrow – Feb. 14.

Tom suggested that the Commission should have someone go to all of the Rec facilities each month and inspect things to see what is broken. Tom and Steve P. agreed to put that on “the job list.”

Michelle relayed that there will be a new beautification committee headed by Sue Ellen Spillane. Michelle suggested that, perhaps, the committee could contribute something to maintain the aesthetics of the landscaping.

LONG-TERM FOLLOW-UP: Jen suggested that the Commission advertise the accomplishment (when the project by the tennis courts is completed). The newspaper should take pictures.

TENNIS BADGES

Tom relayed that people have already been asking for tennis badges.

Jerry was assigned tennis court coordination duties.

A vote was taken on spending \$3,400 out of the general maintenance Rec trust on the tennis court project.

NOTE: There is approximately \$18,000 in general maintenance Rec trust fund and \$8,000 in tennis court maintenance from the badges.

Vote was unanimously approved.

BUDGET

Steve P. passed around a handout and highlighted expenditures in the budget – divided between 2012 and 2013.

The Mayor and Council asked the Rec Commission to cut contributions from the sports in half (easing burden on families). Baseball already charged \$150 per person (not reduced yet).

Steve P. offered several options:

- 1) Should the Rec Commission take the \$17,000 from sports and reduce the request from Open Space?
- 2) ...Or maintain the Open Space request and take the money from Sports anyway?
- 3) ...Or not take the money?

Tom suggested to send a note now to baseball and softball (who just opened their registration and tell them the Commission can cut their contribution. He suggested to refund the other people and change the price.

TO-DO: Steve P. will contact baseball and softball and inform them of the reduced contribution (\$10 – as suggested by Tom).

HUT CLEANING PROPOSAL

Michelle informed the Commission that a man named Godo has been – since 2010 and 2011 – cleaning the police station and Boro Hall. He has done a great job cleaning.

Michelle went out with him to look at the bathrooms at the hut, but it is sealed up so they couldn't go inside. However, Godo proposed \$110/week to clean the bathrooms, bringing his own cleaners, restocks, the soap, toilet paper and paper towels.

FOLLOW UP: Michelle will call Haskell and get a quote for cleaning.

LACROSSE USE AT COLUMBUS

No updates from Tom on lacrosse use. However, Tom said that Jerry was going to talk to Lance specifically about it.

SHORT-TERM FOLLOW UP: Tom said that a couple extra days with baseball was worked out and – at next month's meeting – that is something that should be finalized (everyone on the same page).

Tom doesn't have softball's field use application. Tom needs the school application portion for baseball.

FIELD MAINTENANCE USE

Steve P. updated the Commission that the soccer field was done, but Fields # 1, 2 and 3 were not done.

Steve P. suggested that if opening day (normally Apr. 6) was pushed back for baseball until after the break, then the fields could get done. Input would be needed from baseball to determine this.

Steve P. reminded the Commission that they're supposed to get together with all of the sports in April, thus they can get input from baseball on field maintenance. Tom suggested that talking about spring coordination in April will be too late and should be done in March.

Steve P. asked Jen to pick some dates for the programs with Ann.

TO-DO: Jen said she will do that with Ann and Jen (by next month) and will have the school calendar so she can match things up.

TO-DO: In response to Jen's comment about fireworks in Sept, Michelle asked Jen to send out a new letter that updates Mickey and Chris A. status. Jen felt that she should compose a new letter and should start mailing them as soon as possible.

Tom asked for a vote on the Juniors Extravaganza field use on Memorial Day Weekend. Vote was unanimous and approved.

Tom mentioned that there are (Mark Toury) soccer camps for April break, as well as in August. The Commission is going to use the same fee structure and contract as last year.

TO-DO: Tom will send the field use to Ann, and then come in front of the Mayor and Council within the next two weeks.

Tom informed Michelle that, since the Commission charges the Mark Toury soccer camps organization, that is why the Council has to approve and sign.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Michelle brought up the issue of having a plaque presented to Chris Apostle, who has been on the Commission since 2005 and was chairperson from 2008-2009.

Michelle suggested a message to go with the plaque: "The Harrington Park, New Jersey Recreation Commission recognizes and thanks Chris Apostle for his dedicated service and commitment to improving our community."

A vote was taken and unanimously approved for a plaque (\$40-\$60) to be engraved with the message and presented to Chris Apostle.