

LEONIA RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF January 18, 2022

Chairman Jon Abouaf called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m, duly publicized, and in accordance with the Sunshine Law in the Leonia Recreation Meeting Room.

PRESENT:

Chairman Jon Abouaf, Commissioner Andrew Choi, Commissioner Anthony Vassallo, Council Liaison Louis Grandelis, Commission Alternate Jason Klein, Commissioner Dennyse Hernandez, Commissioner Vito Mazza, Commissioner Marilyn Mulato, Superintendent Sean Krakower, Office Manager Grace An.

Absent: Program Director Torres.

MINUTES:

Approval of Minutes, July 19, 2021

Motion to approve the July 19 minutes was made by Commissioner Mazza and seconded by Commissioner Hernandez. All were in favor. Approved.

Approval of Minutes, November 16, 2021.

Motion to approve the November 16 minutes was made by Commissioner Choi and seconded by Commissioner Hernandez. All were in favor. Approved

Chair: Jon Abouaf

Nominated by Commissioner Vassallo

Second by Commissioner Mulato

All in favor.

Vice President: Dennyse

Nominated by Chairperson Abouaf

Second by Commissioner Mulato

All in favor.

Treasurer: Vito Mazza

Nominated by Commissioner Mulato

Second by Commissioner Vassallo

All in favor.

The Commission presented former Commissioner Paul Springob with a gift of appreciation for his time served as a Recreation Commissioner.

FINANCIALS

Superintendent Krakower reported to the Commission that the Activities Trust account generated a much higher revenue than 2021, especially due to the permits. Commissioner Klein mentioned that if our permit holders are from other towns, because it would be nice to keep them coming back. Superintendent Krakower mentioned that the reason we had a huge increase in permit income was because we opened up a lot of space with the new turf field being installed. Commissioner Vassallo brought up the bug issues at Sylvan Park. Councilman Grandelis said the county determines where the area of need is and where they need to concentrate their efforts to spray. Chairperson Abouaf mentioned that we need to continue to look at the pricing structure to make sure we have a fair and honest price point. Commissioner Vassallo asked if there is a system to keep permit holders accountable for any damages that may be caused to the field. Supt. Krakower said we have a permit policy that has verbage to handle the problematic permit holder. Superintendent also stated that the police should be going around to check fields and permits of any group of 10+ people that may be playing on the field. Commissioner Mazza suggested implementing a security deposit to incentivize permit holders to not destroy our field. Supt. Krakower responded that we have some wording about security deposits in our current permit policy. Councilman Grandelis says the council must have an ordinance over the Commission's policies. Do we have a damage fee? Chairperson Abouaf said it is unenforceable because there are no cameras to determine proof to present that someone or a group damaged the facility.

Superintendent Krakower mentioned the Swim Club financials and that we generated enough money in 2021 to offset the deficit from the 2020 year, so now we are back on track. Superintendent Krakower said the Mayor & Council is in favor of approving the budget we presented to them in December. Chairperson Abouaf asked for any updates from Councilman Grandelis on the budget. Councilman Grandelis said there is no issue with our numbers; they just need to better understand the utilization of the senior bus driver. Commissioner Mazza suggested putting a GPS tracking system on the bus in order to print the data of bus routes and bus use frequency. Superintendent Krakower said we have the data and numbers on where the bus goes that we keep track of.

PUBLIC PORTION

Eagle Scout David Meyer: Construction of a Gaga Ball Pit

Address: 348 Vreeland Ave, Leonia, NJ 07605

Eagle Scout David Meyer presented his idea to build a Gagosphere Pit in Wood Park. He informed the Commission that this pit has many benefits to the community. For example it develops motor skills, good for exercise, builds social skills and most importantly it creates fun for the community. He offered two locations in Wood Park. Option one was to build it next to the toddler playground but the concerns of this placement would be the leveling of the ground. Option two would be next to the shuffleboard courts and the concern for this placement would be that it would crowd the big playground. The Commission felt that option one is better the better placement.

Reverend Leah Fowler

Address: 14 Linden Terrace, Leonia, NJ 07605

Reverend Leah Fowler asked the Commission if they had a Child Protection Policy. She feels like it is important to have a Child Protection Policy because it helps to ensure that program's thrive and children aren't harmed. She informed the Commission that she is on a committee in her Church that creates and implements a Child Protection Policy.

The basic premise of the policy of the Presbyterian Church is that two adults be present in any program that involves working with children. She believes having a good policy in place helps prevent certain legal situations. She urges the Commission to have a policy of this nature and that this policy has to be a universal policy and that it is not personal.

For example, currently our programs only have one instructor and this could potentially lead to a situation where the instructor is accused of illegal activities with the children or most importantly a child is harmed by an instructor.

CORRESPONDENCE

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Selection of Committees:

Pool Committee: Dennysse Hernandez, Andrew Choi and Vito Mazza.

Programs & Fees: Marilyn Mulato, Anthony Vassallo and Jason Klein.

Personnel & Finance Committee: Jon Abouaf, Dennysse Hernandez, and Vito Mazza

Personnel and Finance Committee: No Report

Programs and Fees Committee: No Report

Swim Club Committee: No Report

Program Director Update: Superintendent Krakower is giving the report on Program Director Torres' behalf. Our basketball league had its opening day this weekend and it went extremely well. Superintendent Krakower & Office Manager An filled in for Program Director Torres because of his injury. All grades have seen a great increase in registration numbers. Thank you to the Sports Boosters for the wonderful new scoreboards. We are able to play two games at once in the 3rd/4th grade league because of the new scoreboards. We have implemented new yoga classes and pickleball for the 55+ age group. Beginner's pickleball has been organized by Senior Coordinator Browne.

Councilman Report: Councilman Grandelis has been reappointed as the Recreation's Council Liaison. The Council is moving toward going over capital budgets and asked Superintendent Krakower to update any needs for the Capital Budget.

Sports Boosters Report: Commissioner Mulato told the Commission that the tree sale went well and they completely sold out of the trees. Leonia High School has approved the donation of workout wear for pre games. The Boosters can now start the fundraising for them.

Chairperson Report: None

OLD BUSINESS

None.

New Business:

Child Safety Policy - Commissioner Klein noted that it is hard finding people to volunteer. Commissioner Choi mentioned the possibility of getting high school aged volunteers. Commissioner Klein mentioned that we could place in our policies that parents have to be active members in the safety of the children. Chairperson Abouaf said we have to remember that we are not a daycare service and we do not babysit children. Councilman Grandelis says that any participation on Borough property should be safe and secure and is in favor of a policy. To further his point, the Commission needs to come up with a way that protects the Borough's liability, employees, and children. We must get the Borough Attorney involved and set a policy in place that overreaches everything such as child predation, supervision, injury prevention, etc. Chairperson Abouaf says the program & fees committee should be involved in the development of this policy.

Eagle Scout Gaga Pit - Commissioner Mulato wants to make sure it doesn't look like it's out of place. Commissioner Vassallo suggested a spot closer to the library. Commissioner Mazza mentioned that the area shouldn't be too far away, which would make it harder to supervise children. Chairperson Abouaf said the boy scouts are taking care of all costs. Superintendent Krakower mentioned that professional contractors and Eagle Scout leaders will be involved. Commissioner Choi is concerned about the quality of the gaga pit to ensure safety of children and asked to get DPW involved to ensure that the grade is fine, but who is ensuring that the quality of the final product is good? Commissioner Hernandez agreed. Chairperson Abouaf wants the Recreation staff to do more investigations with the proper departments and organizations to ensure we are following proper procedures in the building of this gaga pit. Commissioner Mazza was interested in getting this completed in time for summer camp.

Capital Budget Update - Superintendent Krakower gave the Qualified Purchasing Agent three more companies in order to receive bids for the roofing project. Superintendent mentioned that we have contacted six companies to bid on the roof and have not received a quote from anyone yet. Commissioner Mazza asked if we have any emergency appropriation funds that we could access for a temporary fix instead of

waiting for the project to be awarded and finished.

RESOLUTIONS

None.

PUBLIC PORTION

Leah Fowler: suggested doing boundary training with volunteers & staff so they know how to handle situations.

A motion to go into closed session was made by Commissioner Mulato at 8:45pm. Commissioner Choi second. Approved by the Commission

The Commission came out of closed session at 9:16pm.

At 9:20 P.M, a motion was made by Commissioner Mulato to adjourn, second by Commissioner Vassallo. Approved.