

**LEONIA RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF JUNE 21, 2022**

Chairman Jon Abouaf called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM, duly publicized, and in accordance with the Sunshine Law in the Leonia Recreation Meeting Room.

PRESENT

Council Liaison Louis Grandelis, Commission Chair Jon Abouaf, Commissioner Kenneth Fernandez, Commissioner Vito Mazza, Commissioner Dennysse Hernandez, Recreation Superintendent Sean Krakower, Program Director David Torres, and Office Manager Destiney Sampson

ABSENT

Commissioner Andrew Choi, Commissioner Anthony Vassallo, Commissioner Marilyn Mulato, Commission Alternate Jason Klein

MINUTES

Approval of Minutes – March 15, 2022

The minutes of March 15, 2022 were tabled due to not having a quorum to vote or discuss them.

Approval of Minutes April 19, 2022

The minutes of April 19, 2022 were tabled due to not having a quorum to vote or discuss them.

Approval of Minutes May 17, 2022

The minutes of April 17, 2022 were tabled due to not having a quorum to vote or discuss them.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

None

PUBLIC PORTION

Robbie S. from the Eagle Scouts presented his project proposal, “Keep Leonia Green”, an initiative to educate the public on tree conservation, preservation and restoration. by adding. Robbie plans to create educational web pages listing species and conservation information for each of the at least 15 species of tree found in Wood Park. Plaques with QR codes to these pages would be installed in front of the trees, with the goal of incorporating the pages on the borough website. Both Commissioner Mazza and Council Liaison Grandelis agreed this would be a great idea to have on the town’s

website. Program Director Torres offered to help Robbie with incorporating the pages onto the Borough of Leonia website when they are ready.

Kyle S. from the Eagle Scouts presented his “Bat Box” project. This initiative intends to help limit the amount of pesticides we use in our parks as well as help with insect control (i.e. mosquitos). The bat boxes are easily set up and can be moved anywhere. In his research into the benefits of “Bat Boxes”, Kyle found that each bat could consume up to 1000 mosquitoes per hour, drastically reducing their presence. He reported on three concerns: the potential risk of rabies, the safety of the bats, and the feces mess. Kyle stated that he is investigating potential design options to help mitigate mess.

Ideally, Kyle would like to place these bat boxes at Wood Park, Sylvan Park and Kirkland Park. Superintendent Krakower stated that he will speak with other department heads to get their thoughts on this project. Due to the current vandalism issue the Recreation department is having at Wood Park, Superintendent Krakower is concerned that the boxes may be tampered with if placed in Wood Park.

CORRESPONDENCE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chairperson: Chairman Abouaf announced that the AYSO soccer program will be transitioned to a program run by the Recreation Department come Fall 2022. He also mentioned there is interest in offering a swim class at the pool for the special needs population. There has also been an issue regarding religious exemptions and the current covid vaccine policy. As per the Borough Administrator, the current covid policy is that anyone who works for the borough must be vaccinated and for those who are unvaccinated- they are required to hand in a letter of religious exemption and get tested weekly. Commissioner Mazza questioned if there will be a layer of protection for the Recreation Department and the Borough regarding this policy. Council Liaison Grandelis replied yes, any issues with the policy will be handled by the Mayor, Council and Borough Attorney.

Programs and Fees: Superintendent Krakower announced the changes regarding the park permit policies and prices. The first major change was including blackout dates. The second major change is tiered pricing matching the kind of permit being submitted. This change is to avoid the Recreation Department being taken advantage of when dealing with ‘for profit’ organizations. Chairman Abouaf believes having six openings for big events held by outside organizations may be a lot for the Recreation Department to handle all while running our special events. Commissioner Fernandez feels having those six openings for large events is a fair compromise to the public. Commissioner Mazza agrees with Chairman Abouaf that six openings may take away from recreational events. Superintendent Krakower announced that he met with other department heads regarding this matter and it was agreed that the vendor fee should be a fixed fee and any additional costs would cover any costs for personnel (i.e. DPW and Police).

Swim Club: none

Program Director- Program Director Torres announced that Wood Park Summer Camp for children entering grades 1st-8th, will begin on Monday, June 27th. Our Summer Camp has achieved record high registration numbers this year with 155 campers signed up with field trips included and 36 signed up without field trips for a total of 191 campers.

Councilman Report – Municipal complex construction has begun. The Leonia Police Department parking lot is currently closed and emergency vehicles have been moved to the adjacent Library Parking Lot.

Sports Boosters Report: Chairman Abouaf announced that Summer Sports Booster Soiree took place on June 18th. Chairman Abouaf said it was relatively successful and he thanked all the boosters on behalf of the Recreation Department. Carnival will not take place this year.

OLD BUSINESS

Summer Camp/Swim Club Salaries: New Jersey seasonal minimum wage is increasing annually. There will be a bump every year for seasonal employees. Commissioner Mazza asked if prices for summer camp or pool membership would need to be increased. Superintendent Krakower stated that both the camp and pool are in good financial standing and on track to make budget this year, however price increases will be necessary in the future.

Senior Bus Driver Agreement: Superintendent Krakower states a contract was drawn up by the Borough Attorney. The Mayor and Council voted on the agreement and it was approved. This agreement states that the 270 Glenwood Ave Building will help pay the cost of our full time senior bus driver. 270 Glenwood Ave building has agreed to pay us \$13,000 each year for the next 5 years. The contract has now been sent to the Board of the 270 Glenwood Ave building for their review.

Eagle Scout Projects:

“Keep Leonia Green” project – (OQ Codes) Chairperson Abouaf does not think there will be any harm done with this project.

Bat Boxes - The Commission and Superintendent have some concerns regarding this project. Superintendent Krakower and Kyle will have meetings with the Health Department and Building Department to review and find out if any extra steps or permits are needed to proceed with this project. Commissioner Hernandez questioned if these boxes need to be on a 15-20 ft. pole or if they can be hidden better somewhere to eliminate safety concerns.

Park Vandalism: Superintendent Krakower is talking to the police on getting cameras installed in the parks to help the vandalism issue.

Employee pool discount/Employee pool party – Superintendent Krakower mentioned that the Borough Administrator requested permission from the Recreation Commission to give employees a discount to go to the Swim Club. Superintendent Krakower’s idea was that borough employees could get the discount resident membership rates and/or get daily guest passes without having to get a membership. The Commission agrees to this request. The borough staff has also requested to have a pool party since they did not have a Christmas party due to Covis. The Commission would like to make sure if alcohol is being served that it is only adults and no children can be involved.

Library Parking Lot- with all the construction happening, the library parking lot is being utilized to park emergency vehicles. Superintendent Krakower and Program Director Torres are encouraging people to not use the Library parking lot for drop off and pick up of campers. Parents and guardians must use the Broad Ave and Leonia Ave entrances to pick up and drop off their campers. Chairperson Abouaf feels we should just close off that area for the time being.

RESOLUTIONS

PUBLIC PORTION

At 9:00 PM, a motion was made by Commissioner Abouaf to adjourn, second by Commissioner Hernandez. - Approved.