

**LEONIA RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF AUGUST 15, 2023**

1. Chairman Jon Abouaf called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM, duly publicized, and in accordance with the Sunshine Law in the Leonia Recreation Meeting Room.

**PRESENT**

Chairman Jon Abouaf, Commissioner Ken Fernandez, Commissioner Vito Mazza, Commissioner Dennyse Hernandez, Commissioner Marilyn Mulato, Superintendent Sean Krakower, Program Director Destiney Sampson, Administrative Assistant Jayjoon Sin, and Commission Alternate Jason Klein. Commissioner Jason Klein left at 8:22pm.

**ABSENT**

Commissioner Anthony Vassallo, Commissioner Andrew Choi, and Council Liaison Louis Grandelis.

2. **MINUTES**

The minutes for the March 21, 2023 Recreation Commission meeting have been tabled to the September 19th meeting due to not having a quorum to vote.

The minutes for the May 16, 2023 Recreation Commission meeting have been tabled to the September 19th meeting due to not having a quorum to vote.

The minutes for the June 20, 2023 Recreation Commission meeting have been tabled to the September 19th meeting due to not having a quorum to vote.

The minutes for the July 18, 2023 Recreation Commission meeting have been tabled to the September 19th meeting due to not having a quorum to vote.

3. **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

None

4. **PUBLIC PORTION**

**Richard Alicchio- 165C Fort Lee Road, Leonia, NJ-** He stated that the pool is fantastic, but for the last 2 years people have been breaking the rules by eating in the areas that they are not supposed to be causing garbage to be left. He stated that he tried to have a discussion with the Pool Manager but he had walked away from him. He noted that lifeguards are not taking any action and are afraid to confront people. The dryer in the men's room is broken, one day the shower was running, and a manager told him that it was the Superintendent's problem. Shoes are kept where people can trip over them. People are sneaking in, lounge chairs are broken, basketball has been

thrown from one end to the other end. Lifeguards are not using whistles and announcements are not being made. These are little issues but they can become big issues. There were 286 kids eating pizza everywhere and it's unacceptable and the pool is no longer relaxing. In the last two years nothing has been done.

**Susan Paladino-Cohen - 292 Broad Avenue, Leonia, NJ-** Times have changed, but no longer the same pool the way Barbara Davidson ran in. In the past, you couldn't eat or drink anywhere but under the pavilion. Guards do not feel that they have the power to enforce rules. Barbara was never in the office, she was always walking around, and always picked up garbage. Barbara was also polite about asking people about garbage, always hosing the deck, and never stopped moving. How many drills are during a year? Pool Manager Ryan responded every other week before hours of operating. He is following the guidelines for the American Red Cross. Susan would love to see adults swim and it is hard to bring little ones, when there are too many people. This is a family pool, there were 2 women with a baby, where they were more focused on taking pictures of themselves and have on inappropriate bathing attire. Children were near the poolside eating bags of chips. Guards do not feel empowered, and they need to come out of the office. She complimented the Lighthouse snackbar by saying it is much better this year than the past couple of years. Bathrooms situation has been going to the guards, has been attentive, but are not going in every hour or so to check the bathrooms, about the cleanliness of the bathrooms. There should be a checklist of when bathrooms are cleaned. Someone should be held accountable, try to remedy it, but the lady's room is always nasty/gross and you are standing in your hair.

**Denise Torre- 138 Reldyes Avenue, Leonia, NJ-** last couple of years, things have been going downwards. Maintenance is what she is concerned about. She has to arrive at 11am in the morning to get a lounge chair secured because there are very few. She also wants adult swim and wants the lifeguards to enforce rules and regulations.

**Karen Papadopoulos 149 Schor Ave. Leonia, NJ -**She would hate the pool to become like the Palisades Park Pool. She sees the deterioration happening along with chairs having mold on them. Shoes are ridiculous leaving them out where people can trip. Barbara had shoe cubbies. She mentioned there are not many areas where there is sunlight. Can trees be trimmed to get more sunlight? She wants to bring back Adult Swim. Guards should be more active in enforcing the rules and regulations of the Swim Club. It is not fair to compare Barbara, but we should be keeping people accountable. Can we reinstate the old policy from the past decade about not letting outside towns in?

**Gayle Dottino- 34 Brook Terrace, Leonia, NJ-** Summer Camp kids are all over the place on Fridays and eat pizza on the chairs. They take over half of the pool. It is not about SACC, but it is about the Recreation Summer Camp. They leave their plates on the floor. She echoed the suggestions about bringing back adult swim.

**George Greenfield, 170 Moore Avenue, Leonia, NJ -** George does not feel the pool will ever close due to the staff renting it out in the mornings. There are a lot of guests

coming and parking lots are always full. Echoed bringing back adult swim. Pointed to the Pool Manager that he has to get people that can control the pool, not high school kids going to college, and needs to get older people that can control and take leadership.

## 5. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### Chairman Report - None

Programs and Fees - Program Director Sampson discussed the meeting that took place on August 2nd, 2023. The committee discussed sponsorships for the basketball league. It was agreed upon to do a \$300 donation in exchange for sponsorship of one team during the Winter Basketball League. This would allow the entire league to get brand new jerseys and the participants would be able to keep them at the end of the year. Commissioner Hernandez asked if you have to be a company to donate or can just a person donate their own money. The Commission agreed that you do not have to be a company to be a sponsor. Program Director Sampson stated that we are looking for both in town and out of town sponsors. Superintendent Krakower stated there is a Leonia business directory that we can use to reach out to the businesses in Leonia. Commissioner Hernandez stated she will reach out to her company to see if they would like to sponsor a team.

Program Director Update - Program Director Sampson mentioned that the Fall program registration will begin on August 28th. She reported that we will be starting our Winter Basketball League registration earlier than previous years. This will allow us to offer more clinics before the season starts. We will be using and marketing the clinics as a player ranking tool.

Swim Club Committee Report - Commissioner Mazza stated that the Swim Club Committee had discussed adolescent behaviors at their last committee meeting. Commissioner Hernandez mentioned that the chairs are falling apart and there are not enough chairs. Superintendent Krakower said we have to add it to the budget but we have big expenses coming near. There will be a hefty cost to fix infrastructure issues and if we do not the Swim Club will not be able to open because it will not pass inspections. Superintendent Krakower explain that we have well water issues causing us to have to use Hackensack city water. Using Hackensack city water costs us money. Our water bill increases by \$1,500 a month. Commissioner Mazza asked if the well has been drying? Superintendent Krakower replied yes and the fix will need to be drilling 200 feet deeper into our well. Pool Manager Ryan mentioned piping issues that need to be addressed. Commissioner Mulato mentioned that the shoe issue is a problem.. Superintendent Krakower said we have lifeguards that walk around every half hour. Chairperon Abouf said the concern is the lifeguard staff does not feel empowered. Pool Manager Ryan said we have a young staff and the staff of mainly high school students are not used to confronting patrons. Pool Manager Ryan and Superintendent Krakower have tried to fill the assistant manager position for three years, it has been posted

everywhere and we are still having trouble finding people who want to work the summer. Commissioner Mazza said the one time he was there, group of young boys using language that are not appropriate, kids are uncomfortable and parents are uncomfortable. Commissioner Mazza spoke with the manager on duty, two were members and six were guests. He mentioned that no one kept them in check and guards are afraid of the confrontation. He stated we need set boundaries and give them proper warnings. Commissioner Klein said if there were some warnings in place, they could be brought to the attention of the Recreation Commission, and membership can be revoked. Pool Manager Ryan mentioned that none of the public portion speakers had spoken to him about these issues before coming to this meeting. Chairperson Abouaf said that he spoke with Mrs. Cohen last year and the issue was solved and she has not spoken to him this year yet. Commissioner Hernandez questioned what happened to adult swim? Pool manager Ryan stated that an Adult Swim can be enforced if requested by a member. He has no problem doing adult swim and that the protocol for adult swim is in our rules and regulations. Pool Manager Ryan said we can make a schedule for Adult Swim, but it really is useful only when the pool is crowded. Commissioner Mazza asked what is the limit for bringing in guests? Superintendent Krakower mentioned that the max is five per family and we are allowed to stop allowing guests in if it is too busy. Superintendent Krakower stated we have 13% of our membership are non-residents. Commissioner Mazza asked about the camp? Superintendent Krakower said we have more kids this year and we try and only take over the pavilion for a short period of time and this creates overflow to the grass area. Commissioner Mazza suggests to laminate the checklist and use it to give a sense of acknowledgement that members can recognize.

Sports Booster Report- Commissioner Mulato stated that the Carnival is August 16th-20th in Overpeck Park on the Ridgefield Park side. Program Director Sampson offered to reach out to the summer camp employees to ask if anyone would like to volunteer to work the carnival.

Council Liaison Report-  
None

6. **OLD BUSINESS**

Monkey Bar Petition - Superintendent Krakower did research and presented four different options with costs to the Commission. He recommended the Health Ladder which will be \$3,700 for the equipment and installtion. He needs to make sure with the installation company that we are in the limits of the park safety guidelines before we can choose a spot for the ladder.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

Superintendent Krakower updated the Commission on the Senior Center ADA improvements. The upgrades will include the upgrading of the bathrooms and work will not be able to start until after August 28th.

Superintendent Krakower presented the Lost Control playground safety inspection to the Commission. His recommendations are to remove the sited equipment and change the purpose of both C.J. Kirkland and Upper Sylvan Park. Commissioner Mulato suggested pickleball courts at Upper Sylvan Park.

8. **CORRESPONDENTS**

None

9. **RESOLUTION**

None

10. **PUBLIC PORTION**

None

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the August 15th Recreation Commission meeting was made at 8:53pm by Commissioner Mulato. A second motion was made by Commissioner Fernandez. All in favor and the meeting was adjourned.