

**LEONIA RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF JANUARY 16, 2024**

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

PRESENT

Chairman Jon Abouaf, Commissioner Andrew Choi, Commissioner Ken Fernandez, Commissioner Jason Klein, Commissioner Anthony Vassallo, Commissioner Judah Zeigler, Superintendent Sean Krakower, Program Director Destiney Sampson, and Administrative Assistant Jay Joon Sin

Council Liaison Louis Grandelis left at 8:03 pm

ABSENT

Commissioner Dennyse Hernandez and Commission Alternate Christine Muir

OATH OF OFFICE

Council Liaison Grandelis administered the Oath of Office to Commissioner Jason Klein, Commissioner Anthony Vassallo, and Commissioner Judah Zeigler

2. **MINUTES**

The minutes for the July 18, 2023, Recreation Commission meeting were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Choi and second by Commission Vassallo. All in favor.

The minutes for the October 17, 2023, Recreation Commission meeting were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Choi and second by Fernandez. All in favor.

The minutes for the November 21, 2023, Recreation Commission meeting were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Fernandez and second by Commission Klein. All in favor.

3. **SELECTION OF OFFICERS**

A nomination to re-appoint Commissioner Jon Abouaf as Chairperson of the Recreation Commission was made by Commissioner Vassallo and a second motion was made by Commissioner Zeigler. All were in favor.

A nomination to re-appoint Commissioner Dennyse Hernandez as Vice Chairperson of the Recreation Commission was made by Commissioner Zeigler and a second motion was made by Commissioner Vassallo. All were in favor.

A nomination to re-appoint Commissioner Judah Zeigler as Treasurer of the Recreation Commission was made by Commissioner Klein and a second motion was made by Commissioner Choi. All were in favor.

The Swim Club committee will be made up of Commissioner Klein, Commission Zeigler, and Commissioner Choi.

The Programs and Fees Committee will be made up of Commissioner Fernandez, Commission Vassallo, and Commissioner Hernandez.

The Personnel and Finance Committee will be made up of Chairman Abouaf, Commission Zeigler, and Commissioner Vassallo.

4. **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Superintendent Krakower introduced the end-of-the-year financial reports for the Recreation Operating, Activities Trust Account, Senior Operating, and Swim Club. The Swim Club was introduced at the last meeting with a surplus of around \$55,000. Superintendent Krakower announced that in our Activities Trust Account account, we made \$108,000 by the end of the year. We also asked our Finance department how much we have in the trust account, which the total amount is about \$280,000. A motion to approve the financial reports was made by Commissioner Klein and a second motion was made by Commissioner Choi. All were in favor except Commissioner Zeigler who abstained.

5. **PUBLIC PORTION**

NONE

6. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Chairman Report

NONE

Programs and Fees

NONE

Program Director Update

Program Director Sampson announced that our Winter programs will start on January 22nd. The CO-ED Recreation Winter Basketball League and the All-Girls Basketball League have started and are running well. Program Director Sampson stated that she had her first Summer Camp meeting with the Camp Directors last week. She is working on planning to meet with the Leonia Board of Education to create an emergency plan for

summer camp by next month. Program Director Sampson is preparing for Spring permits and a meeting with Palisades Park/Leonia Little League.

Swim Club Committee

NONE

Sports Booster Report

Commissioner Vassallo announced that the Sports Boosters approved the funding for the All-girls Basketball League team supplies. He stated that the Sports Boosters funded a spotlight in the Leonia High School Gym for the wrestling team.

Superintendent Krakower is currently finding quotes for the Wood Park tennis wall and was contacted by Sports Boosters to join a meeting to request funding to help pay for the refurbishment of the wall. Commissioner Vassallo questioned whether the wall could be fixed or if would it have to be completely redone. Superintendent Krakower responded that it would have to be completely redone. He also mentioned that once the wall is finished we can look into the High school painting a mural on it.

Council Liaison Report

Council Liaison Grandelis reported that he was appointed to three committees this year including the finance committee where he will be looking into the 2024 budget. He explained to the Recreation Commission that this would be a tough year, but last year was tough too and they were able to navigate the budget brilliantly. There are a lot of holes that need to be filled. Our new CFO is doing very good work and we are starting to reasonably be able to understand the overall financial picture.

Senior Center Report

Superintendent Krakower would like to add a Senior Center Report to the Recreation Commission meetings since our Senior Department has grown exponentially over the past couple of years. All of the Recreation Commission were in favor.

Superintendent Krakower reported our Senior Bus transportation service is thriving. We have updated our policy stating that if you want to take the bus you must make reservations five business days in advance. The Senior Center has two trips planned which are the Kaya Garden and Chocolate Making classes using our Senior Bus. In addition, we used to use Grab and Go Apple Spice, but we decided to use Wolf It to support a local business. Chairman Abouaf asked if there would be a discount. Superintendent Krakower responded it would only be a \$7 lunch that includes a sandwich, soup, and a drink. Superintendent Krakower was pleased to announce that our Thai Chi instructor received a Creative Aging Grant for the amount of \$10,000. This grant will provide free classes for tai chi and music and movement classes.

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

2024 Grant Funding Projects - Superintendent Krakower presented the commissioners with a list breaking down the grants that we are eligible for in 2024. He advised the Commissioners to come up with ideas that are within the eligibility of the grants we can start the process of having projects to be approved by the Mayor and

Council. Doing this will allow Superintendent Krakower and the Grant Writer to be prepared and meet deadlines. Superintendent Krakower said our grant hit rate is close to 100% for the past couple of years. Commissioner Vassallo brought the idea of soundproofing the Recreation Center Gym could be an eligible project for the ROID Grant. Superintendent Krakower said looking at the grants, the earliest one is in April which is the Open Space Grant. He would like to lock a project in at the next meeting so that way he can bring it to the Mayor and Council for approval. Superintendent Krakower wants to utilize Upper Sylvan and Kirkland Park for projects since they are barely used and in need of refurbishment. Superintendent Krakower wants to meet with the engineer to expand the pool grounds. Commissioner Choi mentioned the multipurpose of at least four portable lighting towers that are battery-based, which can be used for community events, Station Park, and fields for a grant project. Superintendent Krakower mentioned that we have an Open Space Grant for the Wood Park tennis courts which should be completed by December of 2024. Commissioner Choi asked about the parking pattern at Sylvan Park, but the funds were allocated to the basketball court lines instead.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

Recreation Commission Phone Logs & Meeting Dates- Superintendent Krakower introduced Commission Phone Logs and Meeting Dates to be reviewed by the Recreation Commission. No changes were made.

Swim Club Rate Discussion- Superintendent Krakower detailed the 2024 budget for the Commission. He highlighted what the rates and shortfall would look like at 10% and 20% raises. Chairman Abouaf asked when will we need to finalize the rate increases. Superintendent Krakower would like to see the decision be made at this meeting and his recommendation is a 10% increase in rates with a \$5 increase in guest fees. Commissioner Zeigler asked about the infrastructure projects that need to be done at the Swim Club. Superintendent Krakower responded that the grates around the pool need to be upgraded to stainless steel, the well needs to be dug deeper due to the well drying up, and there is a leak in a pipe in the pump room. We are using Nautilus Pools, but Superintendent Krakower still gets other quotes as asked by Commissioner Fernandez. Commissioner Zeigler suggested we should add \$10 or double it to guest passes. While Commissioner Vassallo disagreed and said that would be too much. Commissioner Klein said a resident guest pass can be cheaper than out-of-town guest passes. Superintendent Krakower suggested that if the guest pass fees are high, it may entice the guest to get a membership instead. It was decided by the Commission to raise the guest fee rates to \$25 for nonresidents and \$20 for residents. Superintendent Krakower stated that not only infrastructure improvements are in the budget but other items such as new umbrellas, chairs, and picnic tables. Final discussions have led to Commissioners in favor of a membership increase of 10% for residents and 25% for non-residents.

9. **RESOLUTION**

A motion to close into closed session was made at 8:45 pm by Commissioner Choi and a second motion was made by Commissioner Vassallo. All in favor

The Recreation Commission returned from the closed session at 8:53 pm.

#24-01 Reappointment of Seasonal Pool Manager - Timothy Ryan

A motion to reappoint Timothy Ryan at the same rate of \$13,262 for the position of season Swim Club Manager for the 2024 Season was made by Commissioner Zeigler and a second motion was made by Commission Vassallo. The resolution was voted on by each of the Commissioners and was carried.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the Recreation Commission meeting was made at 8:56 pm by Commissioner Choi and a second motion was by Commissioner Fernandez. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.