

**LEONIA RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF MAY 21, 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 Judah Zeigler, Commissioner Alternate Christine Muir, Council Liaison Louis Grandelis, Superintendent Sean Krakower, Program Director Destiney Sampson, and Administrative Assistant Jay Joon Sin

Commissioner Anthony Vassallo at 7:51 pm

**ABSENT**

Commissioner Dennyse Hernandez, Commissioner Jason Klein,

2. **MINUTES**

The minutes for the April 16, 2024, Recreation Commission meeting were reviewed and there was no discussion. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Choi and a second motion was made by Commissioner Fernandez. All were in favor and Commissioner Zeigler Abstained.

The minutes for the Special Recreation Commission meeting on May 17, 2024, were reviewed and there was no discussion. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Zeigler and a second motion was made by Commissioner Choi. All were in favor.

3. **FINANCIAL REPORTS-** NONE

4. **PUBLIC PORTION-** NONE

5. **COMMITTEE REPORTS-**

Chairman Report- NONE

Programs and Fees- NONE

Program Director Report- Program Director Sampson reported that she is finalizing Summer Camp and Summer Programs registrations are now available. All information can be found on the Borough of Leonia website. The QR codes are all over the Recreation Department and Borough Hall, which leads to CommunityPass. We are currently focusing on the Run for Fun event and the main goal is transitioning from

Broad Avenue to Overpeck Park. The main reason is that there is an increase in runners and there are safety concerns from the Police department. We put in two permit requests for the Old Overpeck Park two months ago and we are having difficulty in reaching them. It is very hard to get in touch with them and they are waiting to hear back from the Sheriff's Department about a two-hour road closure. Program Director Sampson said she is trying to get the course certified and it takes about six weeks. Commissioner Zeigler responded we are too close to the event to get the course certified. Commissioner Choi added that having the race certified is a big draw for participants. Commissioner Choi said that there are already two courses in New Overpeck Park that are already certified. Program Director Sampson explained the two routes she has been working on to certify to the Commission. Commissioner Aboaf asked if we will keep the Broad Ave course if we cannot get the Overpeck course certified. Program Director Sampson responded that would be the worst-case scenario. Superintendent Krakower said we had around 300 runners/walkers and it covered all of Broad Avenue. Commissioner Choi said if we stick to the old course, we can use the standing skinny cones and the double yellow line on one side of the street to wrangle the runners. Commissioner Zeigler said that this should have been a commission discussion and is not happy with this being brought up right now. Chairman Abouaf added we should have the Programs and Fees Committee discuss this. Council Liaison Grandelis asked how this started. Superintendent Krakower and Program Director Sampson discussed this with Chief Tamagny. Council Liaison Grandelis said if we take the Run for Fun out of town, it takes away the aesthetics and town perspective. He also asked if there had been a problem in the past. Superintendent Krakower mentioned that this is more of a preventive measure. Superintendent Krakower assured the Commission that we would return to the Police Department and take more measures to address this. Commissioner Choi said he wants to be very involved and be used as a resource for the event. Overall, it should be brought back to the police department, and stated we are now too close to the event to make any changes and want to keep it in the heart of Leonia. Commissioner Choi said there are many things we can do with volunteers to make the event safer.

Swim Club- Commissioner Choi said we recognize that a very small number of applicants came for the assistant manager position. There was one applicant who applied for the position, Jodi Krakower. Commissioner Choi and Commissioner Zeigler had a good conversation, established duties, and direct contact with Tim Ryan, and addressed any further concerns that should be brought to the Swim Club Committee.

Senior Coordinator Report- Superintendent Krakower addressed that Sr. Coordinator Brown is looking into voicemail transcription options for the Senior Bus messaging service. The purpose of this is to transcribe voicemails to a document so multiple people can view the messages. We were also able to provide a free Music and Movement from a grant, which made it to the Gold Coast paper. Sr. Coordinator Brown found out that BergenPac is giving out free tickets to seniors and created a signup sheet. She got 61

seniors interested and most of these registrants have never signed up for our programs before. We were able to get their information into CommunityPass and they will now be getting updates. This is a major boost for numbers and access to the Senior Center. On June 7th, there will be a Sr. Wellness Fair and Barbeque, and the Fire Department will be cooking. Shoprite will be donating hotdogs and hamburgers. Riviera Maya Foodie Club will take place on May 29th, Spring Lake Tour on June 6th, Hamilton on Broadway on July 24th, Mafia Walking Tour on October 14th, and a trip to the Museum of Natural History. Commissioner Zeigler asked what is the benefit of being an age-friendly town? Superintendent Krakaower said it is to make the community more aware of aging seniors and AARP and Youth Foundation are giving out grants to start it up. We feel that in the future more funds will be accessible to age-friendly communities. We should form a Sr. Advisory Committee and get the whole town involved.

Sports Booster Report- Commissioner Vassallo reported that the Sports Boosters party is finalizing at the Leonia Swim Club. Program Director Sampson asked for a flier so we can Eblast it to our email list.

Council Liaison Report- Council Liaison Grandelis reported that he was not at the first Mayor and Council meeting in May, but attended the one on May 20th. Affordable Housing is still a hot topic at Mayor and Council meetings and they approved the new swim club budget for the staff. There was a discussion of changing the Beechwood parking lot hours from two hours to three hours to allow parking for three-hour programming at the Leonia Senior and Recreation Center. There was unanimous agreement and support.

## 6. **OLD BUSINESS**

Vending Machine- Superintendent Krakower met with the Health Department about putting specific items into the vending machines. The Health Department would like to see no sugary sodas or drinks and only put water in them. Commissioner Choi said there needs to be at least a sports drink, but is fine with taking out soda. Superintendent Krakower mentioned we also get a percentage of these sales. The Commission has no problems with not having soda but would like to offer sports drinks.

Acoustic Panels for Gym- Superintendent Krakower mentioned that Commissioner Vassallo and I measured the gym walls and found out they need a total of 45 acoustic panels. This will be an estimation of around \$6000 to \$7000 and if we need more, we can order more. We are looking to have DPW install them before Summer Camp. Commissioner Vassallo said we are covering the east and west walls for the time being.

Leonia Day- Superintendent Krakower said it was a major success this year and the most attended in the history of Leonia Day. The Fire Department sold out 800 hot dogs in an hour and \$1800 worth of ice cream was donated by Kulite. All the local businesses, participants, and organizations enjoyed the day. We had nothing but great

feedback. Next year Superintendent Krakower would like for a committee to take over Leonia Day.

**NEW BUSINESS-**

Swim Club Preseason- Superintendent Krakower is happy to present that we have passed our electrical inspection and have our health inspection on May 22nd. The Swim Club is ready to go and the water looks as crystal clear as ever.

Summer Camp Hires-

A motion to authorize the Summer Camp hires was made by Commissioner Zeigler. A second motion was made by Commissioner Fernandez. All are in favor.

Art Show- Superintendent Krakower was invited to a meeting by the President of the Library committee. They are planning to raise money for the Leonia Library and the Borough Administrator asked them to include Superintendent Krakower to obtain some of the funds raised for the Recreation Center. The goal is to sell a certain amount of tickets to the art show and sell pieces at the new municipal building. Commissioner Choi responded that we were not interested in their money and Chairman Abouaf agreed. We will do marketing, but not take any percentage of the funds raised. Superintendent Krakower will go back to the Library President and Borough Administrator to thank them for thinking of us, but no thank you to the funds.

Pride Event- Superintendent Krakower through M.A.C.O.R.E. asked the Commission if they can hang a pride banner for the Pride event on June 8th. There were no objections.

Rec. Commission Meeting to New Municipal - Superintendent Krakower requested to have the Recreation Commission Meetings in the new municipal building. Council Liaison Grandelis said as long as there are no conflicts with scheduling, there should be no objections.

7. **ADJOURNMENT-**

A motion to adjourn the Recreation Commission Meeting was made at 8:15 pm by Commissioner Choi and a second motion was made by Commissioner Zeigler. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.