

WYCKOFF DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
June 25, 2018

Doug Arone opened the Recreation Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Recreation Office at 195 Woodland Avenue with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act. “This Regular meeting of the Wyckoff Department of Parks and Recreation Board is now in session. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting has been posted on the bulletin board in the Memorial Town Hall and the Recreation Office; a copy has been filed with the Township Clerk, *The Ridgewood News*, *The Record*, and *The North Jersey Herald and News*, all papers with general circulation throughout the Township of Wyckoff.” At least 48 hours prior to this meeting the agenda was similarly posted, filed and mailed to said newspapers.

Members Present: Doug Arone, Hayley Rooney, Chris Beane, Moe Ismael, Ann Smith, , Heather Alnor, Sue Buchanan

Members Absent: Tom Valente, Rich Sica, Jeff Eischen, Mike Ferrara

Staff Present: Andy Wingfield, Recreation Director

Guest Present: None

The minutes of the April 16, 2018 meeting were discussed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Chris Beane and seconded by Moe Ismael. The motion was carried.

Recreation Director’s Report:

Recreation Baseball, Softball, & Lacrosse Seasons Complete:

The Director reported that the Recreation Baseball, Softball, and Lacrosse seasons have come to a close. Despite the terrible weather this spring, all baseball and softball teams were able to play a minimum of 8 regular season games and participate in the full postseason schedule. At the Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade levels, the Director extended the season by a week since there are no playoffs for those levels and their seasons would have been shorter than everyone else’s otherwise. The lacrosse program, playing their home games on the turf at Pulis, completed it’s entire season’s worth of games. The Director advised that next spring, it is likely that the baseball and softball seasons will be scheduled one week longer to mitigate the loss of games due to weather.

The Director also reported on the Opening Day Ceremony at Community Park from back in April in which Mayor Scanlan threw out the ceremonial first pitches, both for strikes, for the Recreation Baseball and Softball seasons. Taline Banks, a resident 8th grader, sang the National Anthem prior to the games that day as well and performed beautifully.

Wyckoff Lacrosse Day:

The Director reported to the Board that Wyckoff Lacrosse Day in May was a tremendous success. On top of a great day of games at Pulis Field, the Lacrosse Boosters were donated a dunk tank for the day and raised almost \$1500 that was donated to the Matt Larsen Foundation in Ben Landel’s name. Our volunteer coaches, notably Sal Sassano, spent the day getting dunked in the tank to raise the money. A wonderful time was had by all in attendance.

Official Ceremony at Ben Landel Field:

The Director advised the Board that Pulis Field #2, the field closest to the parking lot at Pulis, was officially renamed Ben Landel Memorial Field in a touching ceremony on June 16th. A

plaque at the entrance of the field was posted and a banner revealing the new name of the field was unveiled. Going forward, the field will always be referred to as the Ben Landel Memorial Field.

Travel Baseball Boosters Donate to Improve Community Park:

Throughout its fundraising efforts over the past few years, the Wyckoff Baseball Boosters have donated several items to the Township in order to bolster the program and provide things to our Recreation and Travel teams that could not be supported solely within the Recreation budget. The batting cages at Community Park (\$7500), several portable pitching mounds in town (well over \$10,000 worth), new dugouts at Memorial #1 (over \$7,000), and other baseball equipment have all been purchased by the Baseball Boosters over the past 5 years. This spring, the Boosters purchased new benches for Community Park #3 and, with the help of the Wyckoff DPW, installed concrete floors to the dugouts at that field. The Director expressed his thanks to the Baseball Boosters and to the many residents in town who contribute to the fundraising efforts. Once again this year, the Boosters will also be paying for every child's and coach's entry fee to the Cooperstown Dreamspark week-long tournament in Cooperstown, NY (\$995 each, two teams worth, almost \$30,000 total).

Recreation Baseball 4, 5/6th Grade Equipment Discussion:

The Director reminded the Board that during the Board meeting in May, they voted against changing from wood bats in the above mentioned leagues to the new USA Baseball bats mandated by Little League Baseball, despite the new bats being essentially equivalent to wood in terms of ball exit velocity off the bats. The Director, directly after the meeting, relayed the vote to the coaches who immediately responded that they disagreed with the vote as many of their players had already begun using the new bats and because they are lighter than the wood bats, were having greater success putting the ball in play. At the Recreation level, this is extremely important for the confidence of the children playing. The coaches advised that they are completely aware of the new rules and would have no problem identifying if someone tried to use an outdated aluminum bat. Many parents had already purchased the new bats with the hope of the Board approving their use. After receiving the concerns, the Director emailed the Board at which time the Board acquiesced and agreed to the use of the new USA bats since their main concern was alleviated with the coaches being very up to speed on the new bat rules. To make this new policy official, the Director asked that an official vote be taken now to memorialize the approval of the new bats and to allow them for the 2019 season and forward. Moe Ismael motioned to approve the new policy and Hayley Rooney seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Facility Use/Rental Applications Review:

The Director requested the Board review the following field use applications, based on the Township's procedure of involving the Recreation Board in the approval process for field rental after a review of the paperwork by the Recreation Director and Township Administrator. Two applications were discussed by the Board and approved for use/rental. The applications at this meeting included the following:

1. Ram Rock Soccer – This group has submitted its application and insurance to utilize the Ben Landel Memorial Field for their adult soccer games in the summer on Sunday mornings from 7-9am. The group requested a lower fee to use the fields since they would not be able to use it for 3 hours due to the Torpedoes sometimes needing the field at 9am. The Township Committee has since approved this request from \$300 per use down to \$200 per use provided the Recreation Board didn't have any objections. The revenue for the 10 Sundays they would use the field would be \$2000. If they weren't able to get a reduction in fee, they would likely look elsewhere.

The Director advised the Board that that his review of the application, Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement, and Certificate of Insurance for this request determined the applications to be in order.

Finding the application in order, the Recreation Board unanimously approved the above applications after a motion to approve them was made by Doug Arone and seconded by Chris Beane.

Code of Conduct Committee Investigation Complete:

The Director reported to the Board that the Code of Conduct investigation into the allegation of improper conduct in a travel baseball game last year was completed and closed. All parties were interviewed and the decision was made by the Committee to advise the coach of proper conduct procedures and to observe him during the summer to ensure that the atmosphere around the coach and the team is a positive one. The Board agreed with the findings and the results. The decision was emailed to the complainant by the Director.

Midland Park Player Injury:

The Board discussed a head injury incurred by an 11u baseball player from Midland Park while participating in a weekend tournament at Ripken Baseball in Aberdeen, Maryland. The boy was pitching when a line drive hit him in the head causing injuries that necessitated him being airlifted to Johns Hopkins University Medical Center. Thankfully, the boy is recovering. The Board discussed whether or not we should mandate protective head equipment for all players as a result of this injury. The Director advised that there are helmets, plastic inserts, carbon fiber materials, and more that can protect the pitchers' heads while pitching. The Director also advised, however, that the Ripken Facility very minimally limits the types of bats that can be used there. They are of the "you bring it, you swing it" philosophy which leads to balls being hit much harder than in the typical baseball game. Our players participate in a league where only USA Baseball bats are used and, as discussed earlier, the ball comes off them at a much lower speed. After a robust discussion, the Board agreed not to mandate head protective gear for pitchers or other players but rather to inform our program about the injury and what protective gear is out there should parents wish to protect their players.

Football Update:

The Director updated the Board with registration numbers for Cheerleading and Football. Cheerleading numbers are stable and in line with previous numbers and the program leaders have already begun planning for uniform sizing and spirit wear ordering. Football numbers, on the other hand, are significantly lower from previous years. They are now in line with other towns who have been dealing with declining numbers for years now. The Director has had conversations with several parents and the main reason for the lower numbers is the heightening concern and awareness of concussions. Despite the new concussion protocols which require children to sit out for weeks at a time if they suffer a concussion and require a doctors note to return to play, and despite the fact that kids get concussions from other sports and in every day activities just as often or more than they do in football, parents are concerned that even one football concussion is too much. Other parents simply advised that their kids don't like football and are focusing on other sports at this time. The Director is expecting more registrations in the next month and will update the Board at its next meeting.

501c3 Discussion:

The Board concluded its discussion on the possibility of having the Recreation Board itself establish a 501c3 and run it for the individual programs in town rather than having the individual booster groups run themselves. Tim Shanley sent an email the Director during the month advising that the Recreation Department/Township can encourage and help to support the individual sports but can not operate a 501c3 on its own. The Board understood and will continue to support our current booster groups, some of which are 501c3 organizations and some of which are not.

Open Comment Period:

No comment.

Report from Board Members:

New or Old Business:

None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Wingfield
Director, Wyckoff Recreation & Parks