

WYCKOFF DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
September 12, 2022

Tom Valente opened the Recreation Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m. 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: Moe Ismael, John Giovacco, Chris Perneti, Tom Valente, Mike Ferrara, Jennifer Saxton, Rich Sica, Jeff Eischen

Members Absent: Sue Buchanan, Doug Arone, Chris Beane

Staff Present: Andy Wingfield, Recreation Director

Tim Shanley, Township Committee Liaison to the Recreation Board

Public Present: Yes

The minutes of the August Recreation Board meeting were discussed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Moe Ismael and seconded by Rich Sica. The motion was carried.

Prior to the Recreation Director's Report, a resident asked to be heard by the Board regarding eligibility of his son to try out for Travel Baseball if he plans on attending a sleepaway camp beginning in the end of June and through the rest of the summer season. He addressed the Board with his thoughts and ideas and even suggested some 'out of the box' ideas that gave the Board much to consider such as being considered a substitute player or adding a 13th spot to the roster (current policy limits baseball rosters to 12). Afterwards, the resident departed the meeting and the Board had a robust discussion on his request. After much discussion on how to possibly accommodate the request, how to deal with the exception, and addressing other options such as making the player and alternate or a substitute player, the Board finally settled on the fact that making this exception would be contrary to our efforts of building teams, developing players both in their skills and in their roles as teammates, and our overall mission of teaching commitment to one's team. If exceptions were made here, others would be able to convince us that their reasons to miss would be equally valid and the cohesion of our teams would begin to disintegrate. The Board also agreed that having a player leave mid-season might be fine when the players are younger and the 'first time parents' are just getting involved. But the feeling was, with the vast experience that many of our board members have in travel sports, that eventually, leaving the team mid-season would cause resentment among the parents and players on the team. The Board understands the player's plight here but, in the end, denied an exception being made and asked that the Director communicate this to the family and thank the resident for his candor and his respect for the process and the ultimate decision.

Recreation Director's Report:

Recreation Cheerleading Coach Recommendations:

The Director submitted a list of coaching candidates for Football Cheerleading. After review, Tom Valente motioned to approve the list of coaches and Chris Beane seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Pickleball Concerns from Neighboring Residents:

A Board member addressed the Board with concerns from residents on his street regarding pickleball at the Memorial courts. The Board member started off by saying that he does not wish for pickleball to be banned from our courts as he understands it's a very fast-growing sport with a huge following and the courts are there to be played on. His primary concern was the noise level of the pickleball games combined with the times of day that the pickleball players start and end. He advised that it is not uncommon for them to start playing at 6:45am and end their time on the courts well into the evening past 9pm. He asked if there was an avenue by which we could prevent them from playing so early and so late and requested that 8am-8pm be the pickleball hours. The Director and the Township Committee Liaison agreed that without an ordinance in place, we have very little leverage in demanding people not play early or late. The Board requested that Committeeman Shanley bring this concern to the Township Committee for further discussion on whether or not an ordinance could be developed to prevent such early and late play. The Board member also noted that in Ridgewood, they have rules that only "muted" pickleballs are able to be used. The Board discussed this and felt that it probably isn't realistic to ask players use the softer balls that are available as they don't play or feel like an actual pickleball. A Board member suggested that if people do come early or late, maybe the muted pickleballs could be used then. Another member suggested not allowing out of towners to play pickleball at our courts since the numbers have reached high levels but the Board agreed to table that thought for later in the year or early in 2023 prior to the startup of the spring season. Committeeman Shanley will bring the request to limit playing times for pickleball and will update the Board with any progress at the next meeting.

Girls Volleyball:

The Director advised that the girls volleyball season would be starting on September 20th and recommended James Parks again as the Program Director. Rich Sica motioned to approve Mr. Parks as the Director and Moe Ismael seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Ongoing Registrations:

The Director reported that registrations for travel baseball, softball and basketball were ongoing and would continue until September 19th. Tryouts for travel baseball and softball will take place in October while those for travel basketball will take place in November.

Upcoming Registrations – Winter Gym Access Problems:

The Director reported that winter sports registration for Recreation Basketball, Roller Hockey, and Wrestling would run from the end of this month until October 17th. He also advised that he is discussing gym space needs with the Board of Education with the hope that they would be able to accommodate our winter gym needs this coming winter. He recently received a call from Eastern Christian advising that we would no longer be able to use their gym in the winter for our travel basketball season due to in house coaches utilizing and renting the space. He proposed the possibility of using their gym on Saturday afternoons which would help but advised we would need a volunteer to unlock the doors and supervise. The Director will do what he can on that end if it means securing the gym space. Without that space, our recreation and travel program will be impacted as we will need to find space for four games each week of the winter season. The Director has made countless calls to local gyms and has been shut down at every turn. Chris Perneti offered to call Downtown Sports to see if they would potentially rent to us.

Facility Use/Rental Applications Review:

The Director requested the Board review four 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.

The Director advised the Board that that his review of the applications, Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreements, and Certificates of Insurance for these requests determined the applications to be in order.

Finding the application in order and discussing the history of successful use by these four programs, the Recreation Board unanimously approved all of the above applications after a motion to approve them was made by Rich Sica and seconded by John Giovacco.

The four applications approved at this meeting were Horizon Landscape for a one time use of Pulis Field, NJ Challenge Softball and Vipers Softball for fall practices at Community Park, and A-Flight Sports for their men's softball games at Community Park on Sunday mornings with most of the two teams using the field being comprised of Wyckoff residents.

Football Update

The Director reported that he held the annual football parent meeting on August 30th. This is a very productive meeting in which the Director spells out the overall philosophy and rules of the program while emphasizing that all of our head coaches and the majority of our assistant coaches are non-parent coaches. Football games started up this past weekend with victories by all of the A teams on Saturday evening versus Fair Lawn.

Open Comment Period:

No comments

Report from Board Members:

None

New or Old Business:

None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Wingfield
Director, Wyckoff Recreation & Parks