

**TOWNSHIP OF BYRAM
TOWNSHIP COUNCIL / RECREATION COMMITTEE JOINT MEETING
FEBRUARY 23, 2022
SPECIAL MEETING 8:00 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER – Mayor Alex Rubenstein called the meeting to order.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

This meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. Both adequate and electronic notice of the meeting has been provided, specifying the time, place. In addition, a copy of this notice is available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk, posted on the main door, the bulletin board of the Municipal Building, on the Township website at: https://www.byramtwp.org/index.php/town_hall/township_council, and has been forwarded to those persons requesting notice.

ROLL CALL OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL – Councilman Bonker here via phone; Councilwoman Franco, here; Councilman Gallagher, here; Councilman Roseff, here; Mayor Rubenstein here. Also present was Township Manager Joe Sabatini, Municipal Clerk Cynthia Church, Deputy Manager Phil Crosson & Recreation Leader Catherine Biancone.

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Rubenstein explained the purpose of the meeting is to define the purpose and future of the recreation committee. In 2017 there was a full-time recreation director, and then in 2018 it was determined to cut that down to a part time staff while being more event based. The discussion started because there was a feeling that the Recreation Committee meetings were not as productive as they should have been, and therefore the recommended changes were made to update the ordinance. Mr. Yappen read aloud the current ordinance. Mr. Sabatini said that he approached the council at the end of 2021 to the fact that the membership of the Recreation Committee was shrinking and felt that the current ordinance did not clearly define the current structure and functions of the committee. The focus moving forward was on planning events. Mr. Sabatini explained that the policy is defined by the budget. The council prepared a conceptual change to the ordinance. Mayor Rubenstein read aloud the proposed change to the ordinance and explained the changes. Councilman Roseff said he feels that in both ordinances' advisory was mentioned and should remain the forefront in the updated ordinance as well. The recreation committee should function independently. Councilman Roseff said that both Mt. Olive and Sparta has provided recreational services to Byram residents.

Mr. Bicher said he likes that the recreation leader and a councilperson will be a voting member on the committee. Feels that advisory should remain the same. The changes to the ordinance is just a restructuring of the function of the committee. The goals remain the same to be event driven, and to become more focused. Feels that the committee should be in charge of creating the ad hoc committees.

Mr. Yappen never knew the committee to be event driven. Feels that the residents want recreation programs. Feels that more programs are needed for all residents. He joined the committee and never knew it not to be program driven. Feels that the recreation committee has restrictions. The township does not have indoor facilities.

Mayor Rubenstein said that the council has decided that they do not have an interest in running programs.

Councilwoman Franco said that programs would be secondary to the events that they are providing. Feels that open communication is welcomed between the committees and the council.

Councilman Roseff thinks with the new structure and more coordination will help organize and facilitate the committee better. Does not feel that they should have a broad focus on programs, however, feels that the Recreation Committee could facilitate independently run programs.

Councilman Gallagher feels that the name of the committee should be changed if it is going to be focused on events. Would like to see a thriving recreation program, possibly combine both the Open Space Committee and Recreation Committee to provide more to the residents.

Mayor Rubenstein said for that to happen it takes money and resources.

Mr. Sabatini said that the council needs to decide on what they want to do and take ownership of it.

Shivani Rooney Opperman – 15 Crowns Nest Road – does not feel that it is the recreation committees' job to run recreation. There used to be a lot of programs in the township and asked what was done with the former recreation directors' salary. Would like the township to pay for a full-time recreation director, and more programs. Feels that the new municipal building should have a space for the recreation programs.

Georgette Schroeder - 9 Briar Lane – Recreation committee lost their momentum when they stopped sending out fliers. Needs a full-time recreation director to run programs.

Jackie Pellek – 2 Lee Hill Road – Thanked the committee and council for organizing the meeting.

Kelly Eller – 14 River Road – Would like to start with small programs with the space that we have. Would like to see afterschool activities.

Adrianna Allen – 47 Brookwood Road – Feels that there is a desire for programs. The PTA has started many clubs at no cost at the Byram Lakes School. It is all paid for by the parents. She works for an online ticketing program that costs nothing to register people for programs. Would like to see members of the community running the programs.

Donna Griff – 71 Brookwood Road – Gave a history of the past Recreation Department that used to be in Byram Township. It was there to bring in programs and pull the community together. The council should be listening to the residents and what they want.

Lee Amoroso – Camelot Drive – Grew up in the township. There used to be so much to do in the township. There is nothing left in town to keep people here. Feels that the township should be caring about the children. Kids should be going to programs in the township, not outside it.

Carlos Luaces – 7 Johnson Boulevard - Said that the township has nothing in recreation programs since the past recreation director has left. Does not feel that a councilperson should be a member of the Recreation Committee.

Daniel Conroy – 65 Lynn Drive - Would like to see more programs in the township. Would like to see her kids in programs with other kids in their community. Would be happy to volunteer to contact individuals to see if they are willing to run programs. She ran a field hockey program in the past and used the high school students to help run the programs.

Michelle Gatta - has two young children who need programs to participate in.

Jacqueline Richards – 2 Partridge Road - There use to be so many events in the township. There needs to be more. There needs to be more involvement in recreation.

Sean Connor – 20 Birch Road – Would like to see more programs in the township.

Wayne Ziegert – 85 Lynne Drive - His wife ran programs after school for kids with the YMCA. Should be putting more money into C.O. Johnson Field and lights.

Katherine Bethon – 7 Camelot Drive – Moved here from Bergen County has been doing paint programs at the school through the PTA. Does not understand why the council does not want sports in the township. Suggested reaching out to Sparta and Mt. Olive to ask why they are successful.

Colleen Gould – 23 Cranberry Ledge Road – Does not understand why the programs are not in the township, and why they must travel. Mr. Dennehy explained the reasoning for that.

Michael Dennehy – 70 Whippoorwill Lane – Serves as the president of little league and girls’ softball. Enrollment is up. Needs a nucleus that can be the voice of events, sports, and activities.

Shawn Armstrong – 57 Brookwood Drive – use to be on the Recreation Committee. Money needs to be used properly to decide where it is going to. There needs to be better communication and organization in the sports programs, schools and recreation committee.

Dina Trunzo – 194 Lake Drive - Recreation programs should be available in all towns. Sports programs should remain separate.

Mike Henry – 5 Partridge – Chester Township offers a lot of programs. There have been changes throughout the years in Byram Township. Lights are needed on the fields.

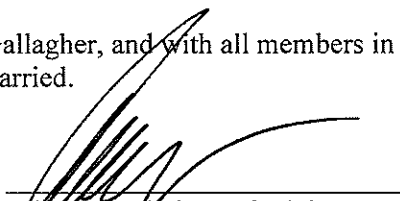
Mike Pellek – 2 Lee Hill Road – the Byram Recreation page is outdated. With what was discussed tonight he hopes that the consensus is no longer just to be event driven.

Matt Alderson – 32 Manor Drive - Moved here in 2012 there were more programs then. Now they need to go to other towns for programs. Would be willing to pay more in taxes for a full-time recreation program.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Councilwoman Franco, second by Councilman Gallagher, and with all members in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50p.m. All members were in favor. Motion carried.


Cynthia Church, RMC
Township Clerk


Alexander Rubenstein, Mayor