

RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

August 17, 2020 – 8:00 P.M.

Len Bicher	Chairperson	x
Scott Yappen	Vice Chairperson	x
Bob Androsky	Member	x
Jeri Quirk	Member	
Jennifer Kerr	Member	x
	Member	
Nicole Halajian	Secretary	x
Donna Griff	Alternate 1	
	Alternate 2	
Jack Gallagher	Council Liaison	x

Also present: Phil Crosson, Alex Rubenstein, Joe Sabatini, members of the public (below)

Call meeting to order, Meeting opened at 8:00pm

- Minutes from July 20, 2020 – Motion by Scott Yappen to approve the minutes with the following amendment: Scott voted no to cancel Byram Fest because he wanted to wait one month because it was not on the agenda. Scott felt more committee members should be present. Second by Nicole Halajian to approve the minutes with the amendment. Jen abstain. Motion passed
- Dog Park update – Len explained that the survey is half way through and it is too early to act on the results. The Committee should wait for the full analysis before discussing any action. Scott stated there are over 400 responses only a couple weeks in which is a good sign.
- Open Space – Scott reported Greener by Design will present a video and signage/graphics for parks and trails. Scott believes the Council has approved forestry stewardship with tree cutting at Tamarack Park. Scott reported that he hears ridicule of the Recreation Committee and productivity of the Committee. Scott would like the Committee to prepare for the 9/8 meeting.
- COJ Fieldhouse Update – At the last Council meeting it was decided to discuss COJ Fieldhouse improvements/renovation at the September 8 meeting. COJ Fieldhouse is a priority of the Council. The purpose of the meeting is to review the results of the Greener by Design survey and decide what projects are priorities. Alex reviewed the responsibilities of the Open Space Committee.
- Halloween Spirit Celebration – Phil distributed a sample write-up for the celebration, similar to Patriotism Week. The celebration will run from October 15 – November 1. Phil will post the information on social media.

- Shared Services – Soccer uses the fields in Netcong and Indian. Football stopped using the high school fields. Soccer uses Tamarack because the schools are currently not available. Joe stated Phil can send out the applications and field use to the Committee if requested. Football and lacrosse use Indian but Lacrosse was terminated because they did not follow Netcong’s rules. If soccer has full access then should Lacrosse be offered fields in Byram, which has more space? Scott stated it’s important for sports to have access to the concession stand. Byram looked at working with Netcong but Netcong declined. Byram pays more resources. Joe stated Scott can have a discussion with Netcong. Arbolino field took down the nets for foul balls. Lacrosse and football have access to LVR. The Council would need to have a discussion with LVR to have the facilities available. The sports group would have to pay for lights and custodial fees.
 - Alex stated that no sports groups have approached the Council to state they cannot pay for field fees.
 - Scott stated that LVSC asked sporting groups to pay \$300-\$400 per game for use of the field. Joe stated this was a long time ago and is not relevant now. Field use is now and COJ is available.
 - There is no usage fee if sports play during the day since they don’t have to pay for lights. The custodial union does not work on Sundays.
 - Joe stated if people approach Scott regarding field use, Scott should refer them to Phil. Administration has not heard of any issues.
 - Len stated the Committee cannot take point with scheduling fields. The applications should go from the organization to Administration.
 - Recreation Coordinator: Scott feels the towns should share the cost of a Recreation Coordinator. What is Byram’s plan? Joe stated if the Council directs Administration to hire a Recreation Coordinator then he will. Administration is directed by the Council policy. Scott was advised to bring this up at the September 1 Council meeting.

- Byram Fest 2021 – Sub Committee – tabled until September. Donna and Jeri are not here. The sub-committee can have 3 members from the Recreation Committee and unlimited volunteers from the public. Alex has a list of volunteers. Len will email the Recreation Committee asking for volunteers for the sub-committee. Len reminded everyone not to “reply all.”

- NJ Parks & Rec Association – Byram does have a membership. Phil will check if he can add additional logins.

- September 8 Meeting –
 - Len: the meeting will be direct dialogue with the Council
 - Bob: no comments
 - Jack: be clear. What do we want to accomplish for next year. Set a budget

- Joe: 11 items identified with the public's priorities. The survey is a 10 year plan and the Council will begin a plan of action. The survey will be a tool. The Recreation Committee suggested: renovation of COJ Fieldhouse and a dog park
- Open to the Public –
 - Amber Pregno: When was the survey published? (Township page, sent through Nixle, will be published on the Township Journal this week, Town Facebook, Mayor Facebook, Town Manager Facebook. Nixle kicked off the day of the storm, 8/4, and was not delivered to everyone, it will be republished. Amber heard about the push for COJ and now all of a sudden a push for a dog park. What does it bring to the community? Amber sees the potential for COJ and lights but a dog park brings foot traffic, car traffic. There is only a few ways in and out of Mohawk View. Kids are on bikes. Alex said GbD survey received over 1,000 responses with over 500 for a dog park, which was the most sought out item. Alex can send the statistics. Amber hopes the dog park survey is sent out to active community members. Alex stated it is not reasonable to send every communication through the mail. Community members have a responsibility to be engaged and come to meetings.
 - Mrs. Chewbokien: 2 years ago there were 2 buildings at Indian fields for snacks and to store uniforms. Mohawk View backs up to houses. The lacrosse team use to use the field and now high schoolers are going informally. Mrs. Chewbokien sent a letter to the Council with concerns for a dog park. She heard Mr. Yappen said the Mohawk View residents are “all for” a dog park. Scott said he spoke with people on a casual walk and he never said this. Scott spoke with more than 40 dog owners and this is from the grapevine and not true. Mrs. Chewbokien said the survey is on Nextdoor and the survey is compromised with people from out of town. This could bring strangers with dogs into the community. Mrs. Chewbokien suggests a gazebo, electricity, playground. Mrs. Chewbokien said no one at Mohawk View wants a dog park there. Other concerns: safety, inviting people all over to come in, noise, cleanliness, she is afraid of dogs.
 - Diane. Bridget Way resident: Feels a dog park would be a non-stop problem. Dogs flip out and people will look in the back windows. Diane does not want a dog park in Byram. This is a rural area and there are plenty of trails and open space. Focus the money on sports facilities. She lives in Mohawk View and feels the money will not be well spent.
 - Jessica Weber: Also lives in Mohawk View. She doesn't own a dog but use to. She heard about the survey through Nextdoor. The survey has reached other communities. Feels a dog park will bring traffic, noise, people around town. 911 takes 12 minutes to get to her house. Stonehedge Kennel is local and is \$20 for dogs to run around. Jessica did not receive the Nixle notification. She feels there should be one general place for communication. There are too many Facebook pages. Alex stated the Byram Township government page is official. Joe stated Nixle made changes to the system and will only send out advisory notifications. Phil and Joe will work out the notifications. Important information is posted to the Byram Township

- Government page, “News & Noteworthy” on Byram website. Jessica stated this is a different time and opinions from months ago may be different now. Mohawk is a great field on a back road. There is no main road. Turkeybrook is perfect. Scott stated he received an email from Nixle on 8/4 and 8/12 but didn’t get a text. Phil stated only Nixle advisories and warnings go to text. The Nixle app will be available soon.
- Janine Ruppert, Lynn Dr: Agrees with Amber, Jess, Tracey <dog park> is not a great idea. Did not get the Nixle notification. Husband Dave is on the Lenape Soccer board and soccer has no interest in leaving Byram and are using Tamarack. The older kids are using Indian because it’s bigger. Tamarack is beautiful and a pleasure to use. Mohawk is unplayable because of rain and swamp. The drainage has to be addressed. They are rotating fields and will give Indian a break in the spring and had an issue with Morris County referee. Concessions would help. Scheduling at Tamarack and COJ are too small and too many games were cancelled at Mohawk, a French drain would help. Len stated he didn’t know about the rain and field 8 has the same issue. LVR has a turf field and would help for earlier practice. Turkeybrook is a great location and COJ is a logical choice.
 - Angie, Bridget Way: Angie’s home backs up to Mohawk. No objection to a dog park but does not want one behind her home. This opens up to a lot of issues. How do we identify people who live outside of Byram? People get excited and misidentify themselves in the survey. She understands it’s in the idea phase but will be disruptive to surrounding homes and outside traffic is a concern. Vote for a dog park at CO. Joe stated they tried to add questions to aim towards Byram residents. A closed survey with an access code runs risks. Scott: can we avoid people out of town? We give restricted access to fields, can the dog park be only for Byram residents or charge people from out of town.
 - Clarissa Brennan: has 2 dogs and are opposed to a dog park. They bought in Forest West because it’s safe and quiet. Kids can ride bikes without worry. <dog park> brings strangers, they know who belongs. There is Stonehedge Kennel, people should support a local kennel. Live on ½ acre. The survey should be direct to the people who live at Mohawk View. The money should be used for the Fieldhouse. We have trails and roads to walk on.
 - Shannon Tobin, Mohawk resident: against dog park. Her daughter is 9 and just beginning to feel comfortable with her riding and walking around. Also has a son with special needs. Concerns with strangers backed up to her yard. Goes to cheerleading. The money would be better spent at COJ field and other places.
 - Ann Marie Kraemer, Manor Drive: Have kids and at that age venture out. Ann Marie doesn’t want the park in her neighborhood where people ride bikes and walk dogs. Doesn’t want strangers, Mohawk is not the right spot. She doesn’t know if they would use it. A more public area would be a good compromise. Stonehedge is not far and she feels her dog should be safe in her own yard. She received the information from Facebook and neighbors and also saw it on Nextdoor. Appreciate that the survey tries to filter out only to Byram residents.

- Amber Pregno: Does COJ have to have turf fields and lights together? Len stated no but a turf field means practice can go later into the night during fall/winter months and lights are required for night practice. It would be easier for construction to do everything at the same time. Amber stated some people are opposed to turf fields but not against lights. COJ has lights now and the baseball fields do not. She feels lights should be considered independently. Len stated historically Roseville Road residents did not want lights. Amber stated it would be good to invest money into tournaments, like baseball, so sports do not have to travel far. Investing into COJ is wise. There is a different clientele between dog park vs baseball, it's a different purpose.

Motion by Bob Androsky, second by Jen Kerr for adjournment at 10pm – approved by all. The next meeting will be September 21, 2020 at 8:00pm, location TBD.