

WESTWOOD RECREATION DEPARTMENT
RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
Minutes of February 15, 2022

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 8:04 P.M. by Chair Angelo Pira

Present: Chair Angelo Pira, Members Amy McDevitt, Yash Risbud, Jennifer Scardino, Karl Seitz, Holta Xhillari, Recreation Director Gary Buchheister.

Absent: Councilmember Robert Bicocchi, Vice Chair Bermari Roig, Members Eric Dougherty, Michele Hastings, Kenroy Morrison

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Member Roig made a Motion to Accept the December Minutes as presented, Member McDevitt seconded the Motion. All in favor, the Motion was Approved.

3. OPEN PUBLIC FORUM:

4. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT: Councilman Bicocchi stated that he was very pleased to be Appointed as the Recreation Board Council Liaison.

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Director Buchheister reported:

- a. Program Updates: Director Buchheister distributed a report on the winter program registration which began January 4. Westwood residents have almost filled all of the programs and Non-resident registration began January 10. New classes include Indoor Tennis in the Community Center, Improvisation, Magic, Crime Scene Investigation, two Band programs, Pickleball for Middle School children, etc. Discussion followed.

Forever Young Program: All participants are requested to re-register each January; the registration for all of the programs is almost at capacity and the residents are very pleased with the programs.

Pre-School: The program is doing very well. It was shut in late December for one week for COVID exposure, the school re-opened after the December holiday break.

- b. Capital Project Updates: The renovation of the Community Center kitchen has been delayed. Mr. Buchheister will contact the Borough's Code Enforcement Department to help expedite the project. Councilman Bicocchi offered to assist Director Buchheister in his efforts.

The proposed projects in Brookside Park for a Pavilion and the replacement of the playground equipment should be completed before the Summer of 2022. Discussion followed on the many advantages of a Pavilion for the Summer Playground Program i.e., resident use for picnics, parties, etc. Director Buchheister and Councilman Bicocchi will meet to review the plans.

The installation of a new Bocce Court in McKinley Park should be completed in May, 2022.

A new walking path in Voorhis Park will be constructed with the help of a N.J. State Open Space Matching Grant. The walkway has not been fully repaired for many years and was the overwhelming survey response for improvements from residents in the Voorhis Park area.

Director Buchheister reported that Mayor Arroyo is enthusiastic about a proposed Pump Track and has undertaken doing research on the project. He has directed Boswell Engineering to submit an opinion on the feasibility of the project. A Bergen County Open Space Matching Grant

would be submitted to help fund the project. The Board will be apprised of further developments. Extensive discussion followed.

5. c. Basketball and Wrestling Updates: Director Buchheister postponed all basketball games and practices for one week due to the number of children quarantined in town. Attendance at practices and games in Westwood is restricted to parents only to respect social distancing and masks are required for anyone not actively participating in an activity. Discussion followed on the different towns' COVID regulations for masking, testing, etc.

Westwood and a number of other towns chose not to participate in a wrestling tournament in Saddle Brook in December due to positivity rates. A few individuals chose to participate on their own and their participation at the tournament is being reviewed.

- d. Teen Center: Due to positivity rates, the Teen Center re-opening is postponed until the end of the January. The number of children participating in the program has been curtailed for social distancing purposes. Director Buchheister intended to expand the participation in January but that is not possible due to the positivity rates. The Afterschool Kids Club has also been postponed to the end of January.

The current COVID status will be reviewed before re-opening the Teen Center and the Kids Club.

6. OLD BUSINESS: Tabled

- a. Committee Assignments:
 - Over 55 Programs;
 - Teen Center;
 - Youth / Pre-School Programs;
 - Facility Improvement (Parks / C.C.);
 - Sponsorship.

7. NEW BUSINESS: Director Buchheister distributed a draft of the Recreation Year End Report, which RoseAnn Ciarlante has designed. The Report will be posted on the Borough website and distributed electronically. Paper copies will also be available. Discussion followed on the changes over the years of reducing paper usage through on-line registration, the Borough website, social media, etc.

Director Buchheister requested that the Board consider and submit ideas for decorating the Community Center at holidays, particularly in December. Discussion followed on the Borough's excellent events and decorations. Proposed ideas will be discussed at future Board meetings.

8. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 8:31 P.M. The next meeting will be the third Monday, February 15, 2022 at 8:00 in the Community Center.