

OAKLAND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING FOR OCTOBER
Monday, November 27, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Oakland Recreation Commission was called to order at 8:00PM by Chairman Guadagnino, at the Danny D'Elia under the public sunshine laws.

Attendance:

Present: Chairman Guadagnino, Commissioners - Rotondo, Bleeker, Logatto, Ives, Roy, Wall, Scalabrini, Catalano

Absent:

Chair's Report: Chairman Guadagnino along with Neil Malmud, Treasurer and David Young Borough CFO helped to get money transferred to Recreation because we were running short on money. The programs brought in a lot more players than expected, and when we draw in more sign-ups than budgeted for, we do not have access to those extra funds. Although we still need to pay for equipment, uniforms etc for those new players. Because we are unable to touch the money, recreation was running very short of paying all our bills. So we worked with the borough to transfer funds that came from unused DPW gas money.

There is a Christmas tree that represents the town of Oakland in Bergen County located in Hackensack. Chairman Guadagnino was asked by the Public Events Committee if recreation wants to contribute anything to the tree.

Open Session- A motion to open to the public was made by Commissioner Dan Logatto and seconded by Commissioner Scalabrini. The motion passed unanimously.

Mike Guazzo – 3 Dartmouth Way – Volunteer Head Coach Seniors Football - Volunteer Coaches wants a barrier between coaches and parents. Chairman Guadagnino asked if it was for football but coach thinks it's good for all sports. He spoke to other coaches from other neighboring towns, Wyckoff, West Milford, and Wayne. All football coaches having similar issues with parents going above and beyond speaking to the coaches about playing time, issues on the field etc. At the beginning of the football season, he made it a point to tell the parents if you have issues please come speak with him. One parent came and spoke to him at the beginning of the season and then no one came and spoke to him. Apparently, there were some issues and conversations and calls made to Commissioner Catalano. He wants a way to prevent that from happening before parents speak to the coach. Coach wants parents to come talk to the coaches before escalating. A lot of things got misconstrued. His name was dragged through the mud and he is just here to coach the kids.

Story: A second conversation with a specific player got misconstrued. The player ran down the field in a B game with younger kids less experienced. Play looked illegal, no penalty flag and the player taunted another player. The player was much bigger than the kid he taunted and coach told the player that he as well as the coach can get suspended depending on league rules and that he needed to speak to commissioner Catalano. That got misconstrued, and it was said that coach told child he couldn't play at 100% but coach said he would never say that. Parents could have had a conversation with coach and it could have been cleared up.

Per Chairman Guadagnino – There is a process posted on the website on how parents are supposed to handle an issue. The process is to wait 48 hours. First contact coach, then the commissioner and if no resolution is achieved, then it should be escalated to Chairman Guadagnino who will handle it from there.

Parents should be reminded and encouraged to speak to the coach first. We can send out something to the parents at the beginning of the season giving them the process they should follow and encourage them to speak to coaches first.

Wyckoff has an agreement parents have to sign. Coach thinks it's a good idea. Coach thinks it's a good idea for player to speak to coach twice first before escalating. Not for younger players but for kids 6th grade and up player needs to speak to coach first. Chairman Guadagnino will work with Coach Guazzo to write up a process/create an agreement that parents can follow. Some of our coaches are frustrated with all the questions and emails from the parents without the kids or parents ever approaching the coaches prior. Makes coaches not want to volunteer. Coach wants to prepare older kids for next level. At high school level, coaches don't want to speak to the parents.

VLAD VOJNOVSKI – 31 Aspen – Playground – he comes to the playground with kids every day. Playground condition is poor. He noticed a lot of safety issues like gaps in the rubber floor tiles. As a parent, he wants to bring it to the attention of the commission. He feels responsible to bring it to someone. Chairman Guadagnino stated we are not at the playground daily, so we only know about issues if they are brought to our attention. Vlad's wife posted complaints on Facebook. Chairman Guadagnino asked DPW inspect and fix the flooring tile, which they got back to him with a report status. When an apparatus breaks, the tiles are removed to fix what is broken. Parents were complaining about dirt pit but they were referring to the Boche court and seniors and special needs play on that court and it cannot be removed. Chairman Guadagnino explained that dirt pit is our bocci court and is used by special needs programs and seniors. Also, parents inquired about a green tarp over the utility pole which is temporary until it is fixed in the near future. Chairman Guadagnino thanked him for bringing to his attention and needs these things until someone brings it to his attention and stated that in the past, we had shredded tires that were dirty and unhealthy as flooring, and it was replaced with the tiles. It was discussed in the past to put a pour in place to fill the holes in between tiles but the reason they didn't do it is because if something breaks, they have to cut up the flooring to make repairs. Chairman Guadagnino will have DPW work on the playground and agrees the playground should be safe. He asked VLAD to let him know if things get fixed. Vlad wanted to know if there were plans to replace entire playground. Chairman Guadagnino told him in order to do that we would need to raise money and look for grants. Recreation doesn't have the kind of money needed to replace the entire playground. The best way is to raise some money and apply for grants. Oakland is fluent and only gets approved for about ¼ of the grants applied for. County grants are not available until the summer. We would need to raise what we can't get in grants. Our playground is about 10 years old. Chairman Guadagnino agrees updates are needed. Vlad is the first person to come to complain. Grants take about 1 year and half to get and then we would need another grant to match it. If we add a couple special needs apparatus into the playground, we may be able to apply for a special needs grant as well. Vlad said benches are rusty. DPW can replace benches and will inspect them.

A motion to close the open session was made by Commissioner Wall and seconded by Commissioner Catalano. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of previous months minutes- A motion to approve the October 2023 minutes was made by Commissioner Logatto and seconded by Commissioner Scalabrini. The motion passed unanimously.

The following reports were made and unanimously accepted.

BASEBALL – Commissioner Catalano – No Report

BASKETBALL – Commissioner Ives – Program is on its way. Travel league schedules – games start next week. Various teams participate in tournaments. Rec program practices begin next week. Many late requests filtered in 40 days after sign ups. Games starting soon.

FOOTBALL – Commissioner Catalano– Football is over. A Championship was won by Juniors, they beat Ridgewood. Good year all around. Championship trophy is still at Commissioner Catalano’s house. He will bring it in to be displayed. Awards to be given to kids on Sunday’s tree lighting. Grades 5th/6th. Cheer was great too. Relationship between cheer and football has improved due to Commissioner Roy with the help of Katrina Larsen.

GOLF – Commissioner Bleeker – One minor tripping incident. No other report.

ROLLER HOCKEY – Commissioner Bleeker – Wishes late sign ups would end. We ended on October 31st because we need to order hockey jerseys. Can’t order hockey jerseys during hockey season. He was in the 20s at that point for Clinic and didn’t have enough for any team at that point. Two weeks after we had all the teams filled except for Seniors and he still has people who want to sign up. Right on schedule with last year.

Rosa Kilpatrick, Recreation Aide stated we need to put in late fees and not give refunds to those who drop out late or after ordering jersey and socks. We didn’t put in the late fees because kids have been signing up late consistently. Chairman Guadagnino stated they need to be responsible for cost if they order jerseys then decide not to play. Commissioner Bleeker said because of the late sign ups he put the order for Jerseys in late. Comm. Bleeker said it’s hard to add late fees because the league is dying. A lot of towns can’t fill all the levels. Chairman Guadagnino suggests announcing the late fee and next year, just adding in a late fee after the date. Comm. Bleeker is worried we won’t have enough kids join if they have to pay a late fee. League is in trouble. Two more towns disappeared last year, Ridgewood and Little Ferry. Comm. Bleeker reached out to another league further away but they are dying too they said. We are down to six towns playing.

Late signups are happening across all sports. Same with basketball and wrestling.

SOCCER – Commissioner Rotondo – finished collecting everything. Good Season.

SOFTBALL – Commissioner Logatto- Come January 1,2024 we will open up sign ups once Neil Malmud, Treasurer confirms budgets and fees. Budgets meeting is on Tuesday.

SPECIAL NEEDS – Commissioner Scalabrini – SN. Football is over. Finished last weekend and SN. basketball signups are under way and they will start January 9th at Manito.

TENNIS – Commissioner Scalabrini – Lights are off as of Sunday. He will talk to Jimmy McWilliams, DPW, to remove pickleball nets. Commissioner Bleeker asked if they can have code for the lights for roller hockey.

WRESTLING – Commissioner Wall – We have 108 kids registered. Today was the first day. We have three groups and only had two groups in the past. First group is K & 1ST, Second group is 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade, Third Group is & 5th – 8th grade. Each group averages 35 -37 kids. We have parent head coaches/general managers for each group to manage kids being dropped off and picked up and handle weigh ins at some point. Practices being run by high school coaches it was important to get general managers/head coaches to manage the other stuff so that coaches don't have to. Everyone has been great. A lot of energy and parents are excited. Several meetings were held. Only one parent had complaints. Wellness seminar at the high school had a nice turnout. Guys from US wrestling, nutritionist, Dr. Bavarian went over brain mapping. Good Group of people. Second meeting went over culture and parent expectations, how to manage problems and issues if they come up and what team goals were and to get everyone going in same direction. We have 20 volunteer coaches, no one wants to be head coach. This continues to be a challenge. First practice today there were 15 dads who wanted to help but no one wants to have the responsibility of head coach, siting work etc. Communication, TeamSnap, and culture has been great. It's not going to be perfect and mistakes will be made and for most part it will be different from last year. Guarantee there will be mistakes but commissioner Wall will make it right. Door at high school will be open so that parents and kids don't disturb the basketball coaches. Everyone is happy about the new mats including high school coaches. Turkey trot from Thursday, everyone had a good time. Chairman Guadagnino said next year recreation can help. Commissioner Wall said it would be great for all sports to do it and maybe make it a fundraiser. Good group of people. Plenty of volunteers. Chairman Guadagnino stated it was difficult to get the wrestling program started and Austin did a lot of work and a great job and we have 108 kids registered. We have some late 8th graders signing up. Cross promotion with the benefits of wrestling for football players has been successful. Trying to make it more marketable to kids to say hey you can use wrestling as a training tool for football. One parent called and didn't want the uniform etc. but would like to be part of the team for workouts.

CHEERLEADING –Comm. Roy – Girls did great. They are done. Couple more celebrations and then we will open up world of winter cheer and competition cheer. Neil Malmud, Treasurer will add that to next year's budget.

LACROSSE – Ives – No report

SUMMER CAMP – Chairman Guadagnino- No report

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS - Chairman Guadagnino- already spoke about the playground issues.

SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMS – No Report – Dan Logatto to take over.

MOUNTAIN BIKE – Comm. Rotondo– No Report

VOLLEYBALL –Comm. Roy – it will happen - High School does not have space for us. Chairman Guadagnino suggested outside area but Commissioner Roy did not like the idea. Last year was fantastic inside but it was just too small. It's during softball and baseball season. IHHS AD Duncan can accommodate us after 6pm but so many softball players loved doing it because it was an hour long and then they could go to their next sport. Volleyball is a clinic not a league. Big numbers, 30 something freshman at Hills came through the program. Some of the girls didn't make the high school team but want to play. Commissioner Roy needs a safe space. Poles at the high school are not safe. If outside they can go on field 6. Chairman Guadagnino suggested maybe the Elks Club building where we can rent space but the linoleum tiles are not great. We need to figure something out.

CAPITAL PROJECTS –

Tennis Court- This was to be put out to bid in the spring. Many residents were upset, one came to a council meeting, the commission was in agreement with the residents. Councilman Saliani said Borough Admin. Kunze is still not finished with the contract bids.

Shed damage: was damaged in the spring, still waiting for it to be worked on, equipment has been damaged. Councilman Saliani said Jimmy McWilliams from DPW has the information to fix the shed in a couple weeks. No change from last time.

Field Upgrades Phase Two- Chairman Guadagnino is still waiting on grants, happy to announce that the fields will be repaired as soon as grants are received. Commission does not have to go through an arduous and expensive bid process with the borough.

Truman Lighting: We were promised this would begin in May. Councilman Saliani said Kevin Boswell, personally said he is managing it. Chairman Guadagnino asked if Councilman Saliani said it will be done by May, which he stated yes.

Bandshell. Councilman Saliani said he was personally taking this on back in August. Chairman Guadagnino wanted to know the status. Councilman Saliani did not know.

COMMITTEE REPORT – No report

COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMISSION – No report

OLD BUSINESS – Budgets- Approval of Uniforms – Per Councilman Saliani - Borough Admin. Rich Kunze reviewed it and said it was OK. Chairman Guadagnino asked when we will need to go before the council as our budget process has begun. Councilman Saliani did not know but that Mr. Kunze will discuss it with Chairman Guadagnino at the budget meeting next week.

Field 6 Scoreboard – Coming out of the Trust Account. Commissioner Logatto has two quotes. He will send Rosa Kilpatrick, Recreation Aide, the three quotes once he has the last one and we will pay it out of the Trust. There will be a brand-new scoreboard. Frame only will remain.

Banners – Banners need to be moved over to hockey. We will add wrestling to the banner form. Rosa Kilpatrick, Recreation Aide will change the form.

Current Budget – Neil Malmud, Treasurer and Rosa Kilpatrick, Recreation Aide, worked on budget to pay last minute bills for 2023 and found whatever money was left out of all the budgets to help pay outstanding invoices.

RECREATION REPORT – Rosa Kilpatrick, Recreation Aide, will open up a new Catalog for January 2024 in the next week. Only wrestling, basketball, cheer and roller hockey are still open for 2023. Commissioner Logatto wants to add uniform sizing into sign ups. When we create the form at sign-ups that question or any other question can be added in. Football and wrestling both add in sizing.

NEW BUSINESS – No New Business

LIAISON REPORT- Councilman Saliani- No Report

OPEN SESSION- A public open session was motioned by Commissioner Logatto, seconded by Commissioner Wall and passed unanimously.

Seeing no additional members of the public wanting to speak, a motion to close the open session was made by Commissioner Rotando, seconded by commissioner Ives and passed unanimously.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Ives and seconded by Commissioner Bleeker. The motion passed unanimously.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE RECREATION COMMISSION WILL BE HELD on DECEMBER 18, 2023, at 8:00PM.