

**OAKLAND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING FOR OCTOBER
Monday, December 18, 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, Roy, Wall, Scalabrini, Catalano

Absent: Liaison Steve Saliani
Commissioner Ives (arrived late)

Chair's Report: Chairman Guadagnino – IHHS hired a new football coach. Start of a change in the Indian hills. Held the Cheer/Football celebration at tree lighting seemed out of place, but its where the borough wanted it done, although it was nice it was on TV but not too many kids.

Patricia from Patricia Photo – End of season/pre-season check in. Happy with the way they got the fall done with all the rain. Megan was fantastic getting the Senior Center to do photos inside.

Rebates: Cheer – \$400, Football - \$585, Soccer- \$1067.

Wanted to do football and cheer outside, they look better outside but got them done.

Siblings are being grouped together. Some parents said they didn't get the photos. Comm. Rotondo said her feedback was good. Just a matter of which coach hands the photos out first. Parents just have to wait a day or two. Football/Cheer – Comm. Catalano said football was fine. Comm. Roy suggests maybe giving the photos to the oldest child but Patricia stated it's given to the child that takes photos first. Chair Guadagnino has not heard any complaints with fall photos.

Chair Guadagnino stated this Spring, we are going to do photos as part of a festive atmosphere. Chamber of Commerce is going to get involved and sponsor teams. We are going to add food and pictures with the sponsors. We will want pics of the sponsors. Patricia asked if we want sponsor plaques and Chair Guadagnino said they will discuss that. Comm. Logatto stated that the Chamber of Commerce will coordinate with Patricia and the Parade this year will be on June 8th. We want to hand out pics at parade or before.

Patricia wants a copy of the baseball rosters in advance, so she is sure all the coaches receive emails. Comm. Catalano said he will add Patricia to all the team snaps so that she has access to all the coaches and teams. They feel parents are more interested in the travel pictures and the changing of uniforms takes up a lot of time. They will work on making sure they get the whole team. Chair Guadagnino suggested they do a travel day and a rec day. Comm. Catalano stated that by mid-January travel teams are made and they have their uniforms so we can do travel pics even earlier to get them out of the way. Youngest group may not have their uniforms.

Basketball is on the Calendar for pics. Chair Guadagnino asked about wrestling pics and said Comm. Wall will coordinate with her. Pics to be taken in the new wrestling room. Comm. Bleeker stated they were going to do Roller Hockey pics this year also. Season ends at the end of February. January date for pics but still waiting for some jerseys. They want pics taken outside in the rink. Chair Guadagnino state the funds that Patricia gives back goes directly into the SAO and is used towards fundraised funds.

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

Katie and John O'Neil, 47 W. Sheffield St. – Katie stated, husband John is Pee Wee football coach. She is team manager. Some issues with parents and coaches. Some language was used in front of the kids. Some coaches were unkind to some of the players. A coach was removed. There were other instances where in a handshake line an Oakland coach was completely out of line, inappropriate and unnecessary behavior was used toward John O'Neil, head coach, in front of players. Katie received texts and emails from moms asking her if the story was true. Next sport is now starting and this coach is participating in that sport and there doesn't seem to be any repercussions for this type of behavior.

Katie stated wants to help with ideas. Families dedicate countless hours to teaching and building programs and these coaches should have no place in sports and they continue on to next sport. The coach on the handshake line was removed and another coach was removed as well per Comm. Catalano. Chair Guadagnino asked what sport they are coaching basketball right now. Comm. Catalano did not think so but they are involved in some way. Coach O'Neil has thoughts he wants to share without putting names out there. They are all friends. It was not just foul language, there was targeted stuff this year. Football is a full time job, six days a week plus some. There are repeat offenders who target coaches, usually specific around their kids, always comes down to playing time or A vs B teams. John wants some sort of repercussion for this type of behavior. There is no place on a handshake line to embarrass a program or a town. When family and reputation gets dragged in the mud. He sees people that have a track record of bad behavior still coaching.

Chair Guadagnino states the issue with putting together grievance committees is that no one comes forward to say anything when asked. The O'Neils are the only ones here, and that's huge but they can't be a spokesperson for others. When things happen people have to come forward and speak to Chair Guadagnino instead of just going to the Mayor then and stating that people want to throw them out. We want our sports clean. We want bad coaches removed or what they described going on stopped. Parents post on Facebook but then don't want to come forward because the kids are friends and names are left anonymous. We can't just ban someone without evidence, there is a fourth amendment to the US Constitution that we must follow. We do have a grievance committee but people need to come forward. John fired two people as coaches this season for being a problem and having behavioral issues.

John stated there is no fear and wants something in place that makes people hesitate before they act. We need three or four people to come forward. If no one comes forward. They move on to coach another sport and the behavior continues. Chairman Guadagnino stated that we need to know but we need evidence from multiple parents. Katie stated that we make people do the Rutgers Class but we need to remind them of what the class teaches. Comm. Rotondo stated that to remove a coach is a process and we have to interview multiple people, not to accuse anyone of lying but to make sure that the story is straight before the commission takes action. Chairman Guadagnino stated we needed to involve the borough attorney in a past case. We can't just remove people on the word of one person. The grievance committee is made up of three random commissioners from another sport. They do their due diligence and gather proof and then make a recommendation. We then go to the borough attorney, show him the evidence and if there are no issues, we can take the recommended action.

A commissioner has the authority to suspend a coach or remove a coach. John wants commissioners to tell certain parents they are banned from a game etc. as a wake-up call to change their behavior. Chair Guadagnino stated that we have done that in the past.

Comm. Catalano suggests if you are removed as a coach, you should automatically go in front of the conduct board. A commissioner can only remove someone from their sport not from coaching other sports in the future. Comm. Logatto keeps on encouraging people to show up to the meetings and voice their concerns.

John feels one of these coaches should not be around kids and the other is a repeat offender and both need to be reevaluated is his opinion. This is his third-year coaching, he sees it more and more and thinks bad coaches need to be removed. There is a shortage of coaches but he would rather have less good coaches than a bunch of bad ones. John has brought his concerns to the basketball commissioner as well. Per Comm. Logatto a grievance needs to be filed and they should start with an email and have witnesses come forward. Comm. Catalano explained, once the grievance is filed, Chair Guadagnino can put together a committee.

John is also not a fan of IHHS boys coaching basketball and then Dad's managing them. He has seen these two bad football coaches now helping with basketball. He is not trying to ban them from watching their child play just from coaching.

Katie asked about the three steps to becoming a coach and how often the list is updated. Rec Secretary, Rosa Kilpatrick stated that the list is updated frequently and had been updated earlier that day. If they are not on the list, they are missing one of the three steps and the commissioners check the list to make sure the coaches they appoint are up to date. Chair Guadagnino explained that coaches have 30 days from the first practice to complete the process. High School student coaches are not fingerprinted because they are under 18 and have an adult coach above them. Comm. Roy explained that cheer is run that way with a high school coach monitored by an adult coach who is certified. Katie stated there was a coach not on the list when she checked. Rec Secretary, Rosa Kilpatrick stated she keeps a spread sheet and can check if they are in the process. Currently there are coaches who have completed the Rutgers and Concussion portion but we are waiting for finger prints and others that are waiting to take the Rutgers class, next one not until mid-Jan. So, there are coaches that are not added to the approved list but are in the process of completing the requirements. Chair Guadagnino explained sometimes it can go over 30 days but that person has an appointment for fingerprinting or to take the next Rutgers class. Rec Sec, Kilpatrick stated that most people inform her of their appointment date for fingerprints or the date they will take the class and that information is also entered into the spreadsheet. Fingerprints come back quickly if correct codes are entered during their appointment but if a code is entered incorrectly the results can get lost.

Jim Folkert, SAO president – has nothing specific to report. They had a couple of raffles in motion but wants to remind everyone that they need to be notified 6 weeks before a raffle so that they can complete the steps that need to get done in a timely manner.

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

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

The following reports were made and unanimously accepted.

BASEBALL – Commissioner Catalano – No Report

BASKETBALL – Commissioner Ives – Not present at the time. – No Report

FOOTBALL – Commissioner Catalano – No report

GOLF – Commissioner Bleeker – No report.

ROLLER HOCKEY – Commissioner Bleeker – Season is underway, couple of rainouts but everything is going well.

SOCCER – Commissioner Rotondo – No Report

SOFTBALL – Commissioner Logatto- Come January 1, 2024 sign-ups will be open.

SPECIAL NEEDS – Commissioner Scalabrini – SN. Football is over. SN. Basketball signups are underway and will start on Jan. 9th and they usually sign up late.

TENNIS – Commissioner Scalabrini – No Report

WRESTLING – Commissioner Wall –Wrestling doing great. Still in preseason but practices going smoothly and parents are enjoying it. They have a good group of people. They have a board to bounce ideas from for the parents for the three groups and parents feel like they have a voice in how we are doing things and decision making. They are thriving off it, practices going well. No issues with high school coaches, no interruptions with the basketball program. People kept signing up late but a good problem. Comm. Logatto asked if the HS Head coaches are getting involved and Comm Wall said they each come to one night a week. Three nights for the older ones. Younger kids are doing great too. Same kids as his football program and parents are helping. Parents are all still helpful and get along. It's a fun group. They had pizza party with the grinch. They are having fun and the numbers are growing. They struggle with 2nd, 3rd & 4th Grade same as football. No one wants to volunteer but they like to complain. Comm. Logatto suggests doing surveys of the parents in regard to their complaints. Comm. Catalano stated he does assessments for football.

Chair Guadagnino – circled back to wrestling, asked Comm. Wall about our wrestling mats that are still at the old place. Comm. Wall stated that the owner of the facility has not gotten back to him. Chair Guadagnino stated that we can send a letter from the borough attorney if they don't respond.

CHEERLEADING –Comm. Roy – Still hanging up uniforms. Fall is over. Gearing up for winter cheer. Middle School girls can cheer in competitions in the winter. There are 20 girls only allowed on the court at one time. They will support wrestling and basketball. Everyone will get a chance to cheer but girls will be chosen by seniority. No Tryouts. They will Rotate, 8th, 7th, and 6th grades. No competition is more than ½ hour away. Comm. Roy does not like the girls just doing competition cheer but likes them to cheer for a sport also. The Senior coaches are excited about winter cheer.

LACROSSE – Ives – No report

SUMMER CAMP – Chairman Guadagnino- No report

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS - Chairman Guadagnino- stated he spoke to Vlad from last week. They have a whole plan to redo the playground. They have some grants lined up and other monies lined up. Carrie from Access From All, will have the ability to get some money. They discussed a pour in place with some color for the floor. Some sails for up top. It will be a tremendous playground. They have been working on it for a month. Vlad is willing to volunteer time, Chair Guadagnino has spoken with Rich the Borough Administrator about the park and looked at different grants. It won't be this summer but by next summer because the grants take about a year. Comm. Bleeker asked if we have a designer for the park yet. Chair Guadagnino said not yet. Comm. Bleeker stated that Mahwah redid their park, and everyone talks about how great that park is. Chair Guadagnino asked who the designer was and Comm. Bleeker will find out from a friend. Chair Guadagnino stated he will have to get Boswell involved. Our lights are shot and not great. After the season they will order parts because half the complex needs updating. They will have some fixed this week so that the walkers can continue to walk.

SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMS – No Report – A lot of the High School Coaches might be pulling out because they don't want to pay us fees. They will let Chairman Guadagnino know if they will do it on their own or through us. Comm. Catalano asked if they don't do IHHS baseball camps can we do our own. Chair Guadagnino stated yes but we can't make money off it but if Coach Hill from IHHS does the baseball camp, then we can't hold a camp that competes with his. Our admin fees went up and the coaches are mad they weren't getting the full amount they were charging for the camp. Chair Guadagnino explained to the AD that we took them on because they were paying to rent our fields but being part of us, they don't have to pay for field use and they don't need their own insurance. So now they are thinking of doing it on their own but will let us know. They are thinking of running it through their PAC program but they would still have to buy insurance, liability etc.

MOUNTAIN BIKE – Comm. Rotondo– No Report

VOLLEYBALL –Comm. Roy – is working on it.

CAPITAL PROJECTS –

Tennis Court – Resurfacing – Chair Guadagnino was told it would happen in March.

Shed damage: Contractor has been selected and are working on a date. Several commissioners stated it was getting worse in there.

Field Upgrades Phase Two- Chairman Guadagnino Once the grants come through we can proceed.

Truman Lighting: They promised us May. Everyone was wondering what part of it was under water because of all the rain. Only a portion was underwater.

Bandshell – Electricity - Rockland Electric has a contractor.

COMMITTEE REPORT – No report

COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMISSION – No report

OLD BUSINESS – Budgets- Approval of Uniforms – no liaison currently Chair Guadagnino is getting the information himself. Shouldn't be a problem to get it done.

Current Budget – Neil Malmud, Treasurer and Chair Guadagnino met with Rich Kunze, Borough Administrator got all the budgets together. Our rec fees will be out before the budget is approved but should be OK.

RECREATION REPORT – Rosa Kilpatrick, Recreation Aide – No Report.

NEW BUSINESS – Comm. Wall would like to modify his registration form to just say small, med. Etc. no comments. He said some parents complained there was no adult small. He wants a drop down, no comments. Comm. Bleeker stated that the roller hockey size forms work great. Only one complaint. Wednesday at the 7pm council meeting Rec Commission will present Linda Schwager with a plaque for all her support. Comm. Roy will also get flowers. Next meeting will be on January 9th. Per Chair Guadagnino, He would like to review the bi-laws.

LIAISON REPORT- No Report

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

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

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

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE RECREATION COMMISSION WILL BE HELD on January 29, 2023, Reorganization Meeting at 7:30PM and Regular Meeting at 8:00PM.