

**OAKLAND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING FOR OCTOBER
Tuesday, January 30, 2024**

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, Catalano, Logatto, Roy, Wall, and Ives

Absent: Commissioner Scalabrini

A motion to excuse Commissioner Scalabrini was made by Commissioner Logatto seconded by Commissioner Ives.

Chair's Report: Chairman Guadagnino – Had a meeting with New Liaison Talamini and Uniforms have been approved.

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

Mark Ruebenacker- 7 Holyoke Drive – Coached for 7 years, brought to his attention that certain coaches should not coach in Oakland for a period of time and he believes he was one of them mentioned. He apologized for his incident to Mr. Catalano, his incident was during the end of football season 2023. Coached with numerous commissioners in the room and has several emails from parents supporting his coaching experience. Wants to make it clear that emotions got the best of him. It was a heated moment incident. He apologized and felt he should be cleared to coach. Chairman Guadagnino stated that there was no official grievance against him. The person who mentioned the incident did not give names. As far as we are concerned the matter was handled with the commissioner of the sport who was allowed to handle the situation. As far as the commission is concerned the matter was handled and is over. Mr. Ruebenacker stated he stepped away from coaching basketball but is coaching 9U Travel Baseball in the spring. Chairman Guadagnino thanked him.

Brandon Jaworski – 51 Andrew Ave. – Similar to what Mark said, the individual who did mention coaches by name was referring to him. He coached with a bunch of different coaches and just wanted to say that since the commission doesn't know him, he thought it was important to tell everyone why he coaches. His dad had cancer growing up and so he promised himself that he would be there for his children when it came time to coach and not just for his kids but for all kids who don't have a parent that could support them whether it's because of illness or they are working. Everyone loses sight about what it's about and it's about the kids. It's not about the adults. He can speak on behalf of Mark because he was there when the incident happened, and his son has had positive experiences under Mark and he would like to vouch for him. It would like to strongly recommend that the surveys be read by Chairman Guadagnino because he thinks someone besides the commissioner read them. It give a scope of what is going on within the sport. Statistically you will have 10% where people don't like you, 10% where people love you but the 80% should be good. If you are reading where 50 – 60% of the survey's are not good then something should be done because no one wants a toxic environment for the kids. He wants to read a text he got from a parent because it exemplifies why he coaches. "After 8U baseball – "I just want to reach out to you directly for making so and so's first year in sports what it was. He learned a ton and loved every minute of it. This individual learns differently than a lot

of other kids and not everyone can handle or coach that. You were so patient, positive and it kept him motivated to continue to learn. He learned what it was to be part of a team and was lead with a positive atmosphere thanks to you and your staff. We appreciate your work and how you have shaped to love these days more than you know. Enjoy your time of rest before football". That is why I coach. There are individuals that learn different or need support and it's not about winning and losing. Part of it is but if you develop the kids correctly the wins and loses come on their own. Mike (Commissioner Ives) is one of those coaches. He coaches his son in basketball. Plays every kid. They are winning because they develop. Saw it on multiple teams Steve (Commissioner Catalano) coaches, football, baseball. If you develop the kids, the winning will come. Saw it with Mark (Ruebenacker). He believes Steve said (Commissioner Catalano), if the kids believe in you, they will run through a wall for you. And that's the truth. With that said, he apologized for things he may have done in an argument behind closed doors. It wasn't in front of the children. He stepped down because there was a difference in coaching philosophy. He didn't believe in how the other individual was coaching. He apologized for how he handled his temper that night. Want everyone to know who he is and that it's about the kids. Chairman Guadagnino reiterated that there are no grievances and that the commission does share coach information and they do discuss coaches amongst themselves. He just wanted to be fairly represented because he felt indicted on some level.

Commissioner Catalano stated he is the football commissioner and although coaches will hear a lot of different things among town, unless he says something to a coach or someone from the commission addresses a situation, don't worry about what you hear around town. It's on record that there are no grievances and they are ok to coach when needed.

Commissioner Ives stated he will go on record that Brandon has coached basketball and run Clinic for years and done a tremendous job coaching Rec this year and although Mark stepped away from basketball this year, he is still the first to come and help out at games with the clock. These are the guys we can count on and his son has enjoyed playing for them both. Thank you for what you guys do and all the coaches in Oakland do.

Chairman Guadagnino state that whatever happened on both sides, no one is perfect and they just stated they were not perfect. If there is something we can all learn from and get better at to help the kids, that is what we are here to do.

Katrina Larsen – SAO- wants to remind everyone that the 3% fees go into effect in January to keep the SAO afloat and it is capped at \$500 per sport for the year.

Chairman Guadagnino stated just to clarify, the SAO has to buy checks, they have to pay for the accountant to file taxes and pay for insurance.

Katrina - Basically for Rec sports, there are legal fees that come with running a business and although the SAO is a charity their fees that need to be paid. Just a reminder that commissioners must sign any check request form. She is aware that the sports have treasurers but to take the liability off the rec program there needs to be more than one person who knows what is happening so all commissioners must sign the request. Last thing, there are funds available in the Altana fund in the SAO, about \$500. She proposes that they use the money for another CPR class for any new coaches that need it.

Chairman Guadagnino stated that there should always be one person down at the field who is certified and with that Matt Goodrich who runs the program can make sure coaches know CPR and know how to use the defibrillator.

Commissioner Logatto stated he would like softball to the program trained this year. Last year it was mostly football and baseball coaches. Commissioner Wall would like the wrestling coaches to also attend. Commissioner Catalano stated it was done at the Danny D last time and we may need a bigger space. Suggested was use of the senior center to host the CPR class for coaches.

Commissioner Guadagnino will reach out to Matt Goodrich and Rec Aide Rosa Kilpatrick will check the senior center availability once we have a date.

Commissioner Wall stated they spoke about making a push to have a treasurer for each sport. Wrestling has done it successfully and wanted to know if wrestling treasurer Harout Dovlatyan, could just sign for checks.

Chairman Guadagnino stated the commission has to answer to the borough not the treasurers.

Katrina – SAO can accept a deposit without a commissioner's signature but not a check request. In an emergency they will accept an email from the commissioner if they can't sign but actual signed form is preferred for an extra level of security.

Chairman Guadagnino stated he is always available if a signature is needed as well, and the commissioner can't be reached. We just added to the by laws a rule stating "All Fundraising must be approved by the commissioner of the sport prior to being implemented and all funds are to be deposited with the Sports Association of Oakland".

Jim Folkert stated that fund raising has become more complex and we need to be aligned with each sport to make sure everyone is on the same page, things are being done correctly and accounted for properly. He received a basketball email in regard to a fundraiser that had a specific date on it of February 6th and paperwork must be turned in a week before the council meetings.

Commissioner Ives stated for everyone that doesn't know, basketball is doing a multi-tier charity event. They started with direct donations for Covenant House in Newark which deals with helping homeless youth. The idea was from the 6th graders and couple basketball players and a softball player. They wanted to use basketball as an avenue and he loves the idea. First phase was straight donations using a QR code where funds go straight to Covenant House. They will do a free throw shooting contest. Frank's Pizza has donated gift cards for the winner at each grade level on each team. They have also donated a raffle prize of a free pizza per week for a year for the raffle. Also, donated was a football signed by Saquon Barkley they will raffle off. Hoping to raise \$3000 through these fundraisers. Commissioner Ives is proud of the kids for leading the charge on this cause. It will be over the course of a few weeks. Free throw contest will happen during travel basketball practices. Kids will raise their own individual funds for that. Kids will give funds to the coach and will be deposited into the SAO. Hoping to get one of the big checks made to present the money to Covenant House.

Harout Dovlatyan stated he has some gift cards which he is willing to share. Commissioner Ives is happy to pass them along. The more people that hear about it the more they will raise. The schools now want to get involved in promoting it.

Jim Folkert – wanted to add that SAO is trying to raise fundraising awareness between the sports because they have had to clarify a few things lately. Some groups starting a fundraiser without realizing it conflicted with another group.

Harout Dovlatyan – 22 Chickasaw Dr. – The \$500 – 3% cap for SAO fees does that include the 2% raffle admin fees or is that separate than the \$500 cap. Does SAO do 20 on each thousand or ... so he knows what to do in the future are there any other SAO fees

Jim Folkert – That fee per thousand is the state, not the SAO. What we haven't discussed is whether the 3% is coming out of gross or net of the money raised.

Chairman Guadagnino stated the 3% comes out of net proceeds.

Katrina Larsen stated that they won't be able to touch the 50/50s because there are different rules. They can take the fee out of the winnings.

Jim Folkart stated the \$500 fee may be adjusted as they move along. They are not looking to make money, just what is needed to stay afloat.

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

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

Assignment of Sports –

Chairman Guadagnino – Parks & Recreation, Summer Camp
Commissioner Logatto – Softball, Adult Sports, Rec Summer Sports
Commissioner Scalabrini – Special Needs Sports, Tennis
Commissioner Catalano – Baseball, Football
Commissioner Bleeker – Roller Hockey, Golf
Commissioner Rotundo – Soccer, Mountain Biking
Commissioner Ives – Basketball, Lacrosse
Commissioner Roy – Cheerleading, Volleyball
Commissioner Wall – Wrestling
Rosa Kilpatrick – Recreation Secretary
Russ Talamini – Council Liaison

A motion to approve the assignment of sports was made by Commissioner Catalano and seconded by Commissioner Wall. The motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee – Commissioners Scalabrini, Bleeker, Roy and Neil Malmud is the chair.

Policy Committee – Commissioners Wall, Scalabrini and Commissioner Catalano is the chair.

Conduct Committee – Commissioners Ives, Logatto, Rotondo and Commissioner Catalano (alternate)
Alternate if issue involves the sport of the committee member.

Conduct committee will do all the work, present their findings and then the commission will discuss what the issues are and what should be done.

Keys – Commissioner Scalabrini

Scheduling – Commissioner Logatto

A motion to approve committee members was made by Commissioner Ives and seconded by Commissioner Roy. The motion passed unanimously.

The following reports were made and unanimously accepted.

BASEBALL – Commissioner Catalano – Tryouts for baseball are finished. Teams have been made. Registration is open for 8U registration, and an assessment will be done at a later time. All other travel is registration is closed. Rec Baseball is open for registration.

BASKETBALL – Commissioner Ives – In the middle of the season. Travel going well. A bunch of boy's teams jumped up to the A division to challenge themselves but doing well. Girls program, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th all in first place except for one team which is only a percentage point behind because they had one loss. Our 8th grade team beat the #1 seed this weekend and all teams are off and doing really well. Proud of them. Rec Program brought in high school coaches to work with 3rd/4th grade program and are doing a tremendous job and he has had rave reviews and it has been a positive atmosphere. K – 2nd grade starting their scrimmages to get ready for games next year. 7th/8th Grade girls doing the rec program against other towns. That's been going great. Commissioner Rotondo's husband is one of the coaches and doing a tremendous job. Kindergarten Clinic was new this year and had 63 total kids, last session is next Saturday and there are three tremendous coaches within with the kids there. Basketball did their pictures. They are working on the fundraiser with Covenant House. They had an event at IHHS where they went to support girls' varsity basketball and had a great turnout. IHHS coach spoke with the kids after, ordered pizza and made a big thing of it. They are going to have boys program go on February 13th to support the boys' basketball team.

FOOTBALL – Commissioner Catalano – A lot of things on the horizon. IHHS hired new football coach. We are in the process of sending out our helmets to get done and will have the same colors as the high school, White with a gold arrow. Cool looking. On September 21st we will host a community night. Rec will play on Saturday all day against Wyckoff followed by the high school game. IHHS and Ramapo HS have their Schule and Hills trying to get away from Fridays, so they don't play at the same time.

GOLF – Commissioner Bleeker – Sign-ups are open.

ROLLER HOCKEY – Commissioner Bleeker – Season is halfway on the way but have had some delay due to rain and some snow. DPW has been fantastic in cleaning the rink. They have had nothing but compliments and clinic kids having fun. Want to have a fun day, go to one of the scrimmages and they will have a year end tournament. So fun to watch, kids are crazy and love to fall. Senior and Midget team was in first place up until last week. They are one point out now. The junior team is the youngest team age wise. They are trying to change the age to go down one year. If that doesn't go through there is not one kid that played last year that didn't play this year and will still be eligible to play next year. There is a two-year gap with almost no kids. Our junior team plays Seniors. Good Season and moral is high.

SOCCER – Commissioner Rotondo – Sign ups to start in April.

SOFTBALL – Commissioner Logatto – Rec sign ups open now. Rec season will start on or about April 1st. Dan will coordinate that with Baseball.

Tryouts:

10U – Monday, March 25th, 12U – Tuesday, March 26th , 14U – Wednesday, March 27th, 3rd and 4th grade and 8u – Mid April.

Coach Leicht's Clinic will be on Saturday April 20th. Picture day TBD. Parade on Saturday, June 8th.

Season ends within a few days after the parade. Would be nice to hand out pictures at the parade. Matt Goodrich wants to do a childhood cancer event. It will be a baseball/softball event. Commissioner Logatto will get together with Matt Goodrich and Commissioner Catalano about that.

Chairman Guadagnino stated he has to plan an opening of the band shell and wants to make sure there are no conflicts. Parade day may be a good day to host that event.

SPECIAL NEEDS – Commissioner Scalabrini – No Report

TENNIS – Commissioner Scalabrini – No Report

WRESTLING – Commissioner Wall – Just finished the tournament. About 400 kids, no complaints. Two incidents but one was the janitors left a door open. We hired security and custodians. Parents and board have been fantastic. Treasurer is great and there is a beautiful expense report, so they know what is coming in and going out. A lot of leg work by Jess, Nicole, Lisa, Harout. Coaches did a fantastic job. Three groups and all have been scaled appropriately. No one quit because it got hard. We have about 120 kids. Almost double to next year. Chairman Guadagnino told Commissioner Wall to have Treasurer Neil Malmud mark that for next year's budget. Still having late sign ups. Some of them are new and some because of successes of other kids or siblings. Not necessarily ignorance of signing up late. We had a first-year 8th grader sign up late but has had a lot of success wrestling. Going really well. Fundraising has been fantastic. A lot of work and thank you to all and Harout. Banners taken off and had success. Numbers are up, fundraising up, no conflicts with HS basketball, Duncan, IHHS AD, has been fantastic with scheduling. They had twin duals the other day. Two matches going on at once. Tomorrow doing back-to-back with HS and using the spotlight for the first time. Cheerleaders came to Duals which was nice. A lot of good energy and good feedback from rec and the high school. Having cheerleaders made it a bit like a college atmosphere. Harout handles all the money and has done a fantastic job with treasury items. Dual team 3 and 1. Couple kids were away with team they lost to.

CHEERLEADING – Commissioner Roy – Winter cheer a lot more difficult that she originally thought. Girls are doing their best. Great parents and great girls. Doing their best to get to wrestling tomorrow night. They will try to get to some basketball games. Commissioner Ives is all for it. Commissioner Roy explained to the girls and moms that they are supporting all the sports in town. This group of girls is like the rockets. Mrs. Schwager would like them to run out before the Rotary Club tricky tray. They are adorable and always smiling. It's creating a new culture. Typically winter cheer is competition cheer because it's competition season. The girls are super focused on that as well. Found a gym in Mahwah that can accommodate them with spring floors. Trying to get in there a bit. Hoping to expand it next year.

LACROSSE – Commissioner Ives – Just heard back from Franklin Lakes this week. We have full teams for boys all through to 8th grade. Girls they have enough for the younger but still looking for more for 5th/ 6th and 7th/8th grade teams but sounds like they will have enough for all those teams also.

SUMMER CAMP – Chairman Guadagnino – February applications for councilors is going out. April 1st – April 30th will be registration period with a hard close on April 30th. We won't have access to VMS this year. Spoke with IHHS about possibly using their school on rainy days but only the days when rain forecasted in advance. If lightning detectors go off mid-day, parents will have to pick up kids.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS - Chairman Guadagnino – Lights in part of the complex are out. Heard that a bird flew into something. Will follow up with Jimmy, DPW about the lights. Lights will be left on every night until 8:30 for the walkers.

SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMS – Commissioner Logatto was not sure if High School coaches were bailing. Per Rec Aide Rosa Kilpatrick, Volleyball Summer Camp, Baseball Camp, Softball Camp are all staying. Haven't heard from Boys basketball. Julie Halajian girls' basketball camp is going to run camp on her own.

MOUNTAIN BIKE – Commissioner Rotondo– No Report

VOLLEYBALL –Commissioner Roy – Big clinic coming up. Five groups, two locations, Dogwood and IHHS. No cheerleaders. Commissioner Roy will check out the nets at the high school and Dogwood. Just waiting to hear that it was approved. Chairman Guadagnino said to let him know what the program will need. Commissioner Roy believes the nets at Valley are ours but are broken, wheels are broken. She will look into costs for new nets.

CAPITAL PROJECTS –

Tennis Court – Resurfacing – It's a priority.

Shed roof damage: We have a PO and the Contractor has been selected should be fixed any day now. Chairman Guadagnino asked for a list of damaged equipment from the roof issue from the Commissioners.

Field Upgrades Phase Two- Chairman Guadagnino Spoke with Rich Kunz, Borough Admin and Russ Talamini, Rec Liaison and the grants should be in shortly. We are going to do two softball fields 3 and 6 and field 8. Per Commissioner Logatto, the scoreboard will be done around April, estimate. Softball fields need leveling and clay. Per Chairman Guadagnino work can start as soon as grant comes in hopefully by spring. Each field should take about 4 or 5 days.

Truman Field: Phase two – we will know specifics shortly.

Playground: Chairman Guadagnino had a good meeting today with Borough Admin Kunz and they will apply for a grant soon. We will have a beautiful new playground, colorful. Started by a resident coming to a meeting.

Bandshell – Electricity - Rockland Electric has a contractor PO done and work should be done any day now.

COMMITTEE REPORT – No report

COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMISSION – No report

OLD BUSINESS – None

Current Budget – No Report

RECREATION REPORT – Rosa Kilpatrick, Recreation Aide – Requested we establish permanent start and end dates for registrations during each season. Commissioner Logatto suggested we end registrations on March 15th for spring sports and will take exceptions into account. Commissioner Bleeker thinks it's a good idea to put all the sports from one season on the same schedule so that people know when to register. Chairman Guadagnino asked if we are charging the late fee. Chairman Guadagnino and Commissioner Logatto don't want to punish late registrants who are register late due to financial issues and then have them hit with a late fee as well. Commissioner Rotondo suggested we take those people into account but not everyone late has financial issues. Commissioner Ives stated some late signups later also make special requests to be on certain teams after others have signed up. Commissioner Catalano said those late signups in football are an issue because equipment and uniforms need to be ordered and the late sign ups are an issue because then people are no longer able to get the equipment or apparel because orders have already been placed. Rec Aide Kilpatrick informed everyone that we can not discount any fees or people who do not receive apparel etc. in one sport can not later ask for a discount in fees for the next seasons sport. Fees can not just be removed or discounted. We can not give away a free sports season if someone doesn't receive apparel etc. in another season. Commissioner Catalano stated he had a parent who asked for free baseball because he didn't receive the free jersey for football but because he signed up late. Football registration needs to have a hard end date for signups. Chairman Guadagnino said the same is true for rec summer camps. Rec Aide Kilpatrick stated parents who sign up late and then don't get apparel etc. assume they can be given a credit toward something else and that is not possible. Commissioner Logatto asked how we handle situations with financial issues. Rec Aide Kilpatrick stated we allow people who have financial issues to come in and register and make payments if they can afford to pay a little at a time or if they cannot pay at all then they have to fill out a financial scholarship form, Chairman Guadagnino must approve it and only then can we discuss discounting a fee or finding a sponsor for the child etc. There are many ways we can help those in financial need. No one sees those forms but me and Chairman Guadagnino. Commissioner Logatto asked if the form is online. Rec Aide Kilpatrick said yes and told everyone it can be found on our website and is listed as a "scholarship form." The form is then placed in the folder for the individual sport that has a person asking for a scholarship. For Registration date changes Rec Aide Kilpatrick suggests we start it with the summer seasons as spring registrations are already on their way. Commissioner Rotondo suggested a little leeway for Kindergarten parents who are new and don't know when each of the seasons starts or ends. Chairman Guadagnino just wants to make sure that no child is punished because the parent missed a sign up deadline.

NEW BUSINESS – Commissioner Logatto asked if we have any information on uniforms and how many sets we will receive. Chairman Guadagnino said they have half of them sold already (Sponsored). Commissioner Catalano asked if the hats were just going to say Oakland or if there would be a business name on the hats. Chairman Guadagnino did not know but would leave it up to the commissioners. He suggested putting together an email with the three commissioners who will get sponsored uniforms and asking all the questions they have. There are about 40 teams with baseball and softball. Commissioner Logatto said softball is not doing hats, just shirt and pants. Commissioner Catalano stated that baseball is doing shirts and hats and no pants.

LIAISON REPORT- Russell Talamini introduced himself as the new recreation liaison. Thank you to the Rec Commission. Rec was one of the greatest things to happen to him. Was not an athlete as child but coaching was phenomenal. This is his last season of coaching basketball for his son. It meant so much to make such great memories and dealing with the kids has been great. This is what people move to Oakland for...our rec programs, our schools and whatever the rec commission needs just let him know how he can help.

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 Catalano and passed unanimously.

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

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE RECREATION COMMISSION WILL BE HELD on February 26, 2024, Regular Meeting at 8:00PM.