

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE EMERSON RECREATION COMMISSION WAS HELD ON FEBRUARY 21, 2019, AT 8:00 P.M. IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE RECREATION CENTER.

Presiding Officer Afrim Hoxha welcomed everyone and called the Regular Meeting of the Recreation Commission to order at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday February 21, 2019.

Roll Call: Presiding Officer Afrim Hoxha, David Cannici, Anthony Gismondi, Paul Coombes, Rich Solimando, Mike Graham, Willie Ortiz, Bob Quinones, Eilish Viggiani

I Track Program

The Track Board attended the February 19 meeting of the Mayor and Council when the fee ordinance was introduced. Their proposal gained unanimous approval. There will be one more reading of the ordinance at the March 5th meeting and if it is approved the Track program will be able to start registration. At the moment over 70 kids have signed up.

II Sports Board Round Table

Afrim welcomed the members of the Sports Board attending and asked them to introduce themselves.

Dayna Bane-Football
Bryana Paino- Wrestling
Chris Butler-Soccer
Van Seretis-Softball
Scott Messick – Baseball

Afrim thanked everyone for attending.

Football

The focus for the football board at the moment is fundraisers and sports apparel. The board is considering holding a beefsteak dinner and/or pancake breakfast and working with Bauer Sports for team wear. Bauer have been used in the past to produce team hoodies and end of the year gifts by individual teams. The suggestion is that they are used for other items. Bauer is going to put together a flyer with all available items which could be distributed and then people order from that. Alternatively they could set up a web page and orders would be placed directly by teams/individuals and then picked up by them. Football had used Fancloth in the past and not had a good experience, particularly when refunds were needed.

Other attendees reported that they have had a good experience with Bauer. In the past when Bauer made mistakes they corrected them and resupplied items at no extra charge.

The football board has just taken on two new members Dave Dillo who will be the new treasurer and Josh Urban. They have younger kids so have the potential to spend a longer time on the board.

Wrestling

Wrestling had their district tournament the Sunday prior to the meeting which went well. They were a home host for the district competition. Although it is only a one day event it involves quite a lot of work and it is often not easy to get volunteers. That said, it is worth doing because it provides an opportunity for fundraising and raises the profile of the program. Funds are raised through an entry fee and snacks and drinks. The league pays for the brackets and trophies and provide a check to be used for facilities and referees. Emerson should be able to host the event next and future years as the previous host town Westwood are no longer interested.

The regional competition is held the weekend after districts and the state competition the week after that. Eight Emerson will be competing in the regional competition.

Currently wrestling do all their registration in person but would like to move to on-line. They would like to work with the soccer board that has experience setting up on-line registration.

Baseball

The flyer for the March 30th fundraiser was recently finalized. The event will be held at the Knights of Columbus in Westwood and cost \$60. The format will be the same as last year using a DJ as this was very successful with over 100 people attending.

The baseball board has had issues with Fancloth in the past. The particular problem is that they deliver everything at once which makes distribution difficult. They have used Sports time for uniforms for quite a while and have always had a good experience. The high school also uses them. They are thinking of using a different company for extra items and will look at Fanwear and Bauer.

Currently 235 kids are signed up for the program. Like last year baseball want to pay the umpires cash on the field. The CFO provides the coaches with a check to cover payment of the umpires and any over or underpayment is reconciled at the end of the season. The board will use a new umpire assigner, Chris (last name to be provided) from Mahwah who has been recommended. His payment will be made at the end of the season.

Scott currently doesn't have access to the Civic Permits portal which is holding up booking fields. Afrim will reach out to Rich about this.

Baseball would like to be able use the high school fields to play one game per team before the season starts. He has spoken to the Athletic Director at the high school who suggested he do all the bookings through the Board of Ed. Scott spoke to Phil Nisonoff

and he is comfortable with this arrangement and the Recreation Commission are supportive.

Soccer

The soccer board has submitted their request for field usage and is working on schedules. The weekend schedules are finalized for Sundays except May 18 when the fields are being used for another event. Weekday evenings for practice are going to be a bit tight but should be OK. The high school fields are not available till 6:30 on some days which causes a problem for soccer because they pay their trainers under contract for 1.5 hours. If that gets cut back to an hour then parents are paying for training time that they don't get. They will work around it.

The board is looking to move the pre-K program from Friday afternoons at 3:30 to Saturday mornings at the high school grad field or football practice field. The feeling is that this will increase numbers because Friday afternoon can be difficult for people who work and this has led to complaints in the past.

On-line fall registration opens March 31 and closes May 31 with one in person session at the recreation center. Most people register on line. This season late signups will be put on a wait list and late registration will not be allowed. The board spends a lot of time balancing teams in terms of skills. Significant numbers of late sign ups (40% last year) upset this balance which is why they will not be allowed this year. Charging a late fee does not seem to help.

Tryouts for fall travel teams will take place in the spring. There are currently 9 travel teams.

The Soccer Board need a treasurer as the current treasurer no longer has kids in the programs

As far as apparel is concerned they have just moved to Sports Time who also provide a good service. Soccer has a web page where people can order items and have them sent directly which is much more efficient.

Softball

Softball are starting a summer league, Kinderkamack Softball league for levels three through eight with seven other towns. It is an opportunity for kids who aren't playing travel but want to play through the summers.

Opening day will be April 6 with baseball and the fundraiser is set for June 1st. The money raised, usually between \$6000 and \$8000 will be used to further improve the fields. Background checks are progressing. The Sunday clinics are doing very well.

Softball use Gem Sports, Fair Lawn for apparel.

Recreation Commission feedback

The summer kick off date will be June 22nd with a rain date of June 23rd. Involvement of the various sports boards will likely be follows

Baseball-Home Run Derby

Soccer-Red Bulls will involved

Football-Will does the same as last year

Track-will be contacted to see if they want to be involved

Wrestling- May do an exhibition but will confirm

Softball-are not usually involved

III Sport by Sport Review

Background checks

These are progressing but at the time of the meeting only 12 volunteers have been approved through both fingerprint and Protect Youth sports and provided pictures to enable production of cards. Forty eight volunteers have registered with Protect Youth sports and twenty three have submitted for fingerprint checks. The meeting agreed that this number was low and a reminder needs to go out.

As discussed previously any volunteer involved with the youth sports program has to have been cleared through both background checks and possess an ID card. There was some discussion about how this would be enforced. The initial discussion centered on providing coaches with the card, a holder and a lanyard so the card was clearly visible, that was seen as a good idea. Subsequently it was agreed that an email from the Recreation Commission stating that if a coach did not have their ID card clearly visible they could not go onto the field would be sent to the sports boards for distribution to their coaches. This should be reinforced at the pre-season coaches meeting and subsequently when coaches have pre-season meetings with the players and their families. It was also suggested that Sports board members do spot checks at the start of the season and that this is backed up with a request to parents to email the sports board president if they see a coach with no card. The Commission also supported the suggestion that umpires and referees help support this.

The view was that when the coaches, players and families become aware of the requirement to visibly display these cards they will become part of the enforcement. It was accepted that this wouldn't be perfect in the early days but as it became the norm then coaches would remember they needed their cards.

There was some discussion as to whether coaches who were fingerprinted in 2018 needed to have the check repeated as part of this process. This will be confirmed and then communicated to the sports boards who can in turn tell their coaches.

Field Usage

Rich has a meeting with Civic Permits on Monday February 25 at 12pm, after which the program should be live. Sports board members and other individuals who have been given access to Civic Permits will be able to view all fields including the high school fields. These individuals will be able to book fields but they booking will have to be approved by Rich and the Board of Ed before they are final. Baseball have submitted their requests for umpires and so want to be able to confirm the bookings as soon as possible.

14U Baseball

The 14U baseball travel team which normally goes to Cooperstown is looking to use the Borough fields for practice and games. Historically this team has had a roster of 75% Emerson players. In 2017 three kids were taken from other towns. Because of changes in the roster since last year there are not sufficient Emerson players to meet the 75% rule. This means the cost of field usage is \$150 per use. (This has just increased under the new ordinance). Scott Messick was hoping to prevent Emerson families to have to pay extra for the fields. He wanted to discuss the possibility of paying a flat fee for all usage and then making some type of donation to the town. If granted this would be on the understanding that his team would only use fields when all rec and travel Emerson teams did not require them. As Scott does the scheduling this would be achievable. The cost to play on this team is \$1,100. It was pointed out that the fee is set through and ordinance so if a reduction in the usage fee was to be offered it would need to be approved by the town. Scott was complimented on the fact that he had brought this to the Recreation Commission.

Track Program

A suggestion was made that the Recreation Commission make a recommendation on which of the existing two track programs should be recognized as the 'flag bearing' official feeder program for the high school. The longstanding program, Emerson Road Runners, is run by someone from out of town and takes kids from Emerson and out of town. The new program is run as part of the Recreation Commission by Emerson residents for Emerson children. Also the new Emerson program can accept any and all kids from Emerson and no Emerson kids would be disadvantaged if the Road Runners program was not available.

Motion made by Willie Ortiz and seconded by Bob Quinones to recommend to the school system that the Recreation Commission recognizes the Emerson Recreation Track program and their requests for facilities be given priority over other track programs. The motion was passed unanimously.

IV Approval of Minutes from February 7, 2019 Meeting

Approval of the minutes was deferred to the March 7 meeting.

Willie Ortiz proposed a motion to move into closed session, Paul Coombes seconded.
Voted unanimously to go into closed session

Meeting reconvened

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Willie Ortiz, seconded by Paul Coombes,
approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Morris
Recreation Secretary