

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE EMERSON RECREATION COMMISSION WAS  
HELD ON WEDNESD JUNE 3, 2019, AT 8:00 P.M.**

**This meeting of the Recreation Commission of the Borough of Emerson was held via the teleconferencing app GoToMeeting on June 3, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency.**

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**ACCESS INFORMATION**

Recreation Commission Meeting Wednesday June 3, 2020 8pm

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**I. Call to Order**

Alternate Presiding Officer Paul Coombes welcomed everyone to the regular meeting of the recreation commission and called the meeting to order at 8:03 pm. Motion to open the meeting was made by Willie Ortiz, seconded by Joe Vigna. All were in favor.

**II. Roll Call**

Anthony Gismondi, Paul Coombes, Mike Graham, Willie Ortiz, Eilish Viggiani, Phil Gianatasio, Joe Vigna

Councilwoman Jill McGuire and Councilman Ken Hoffman from the Council and Kevin Rooney and Christina Kostianis from TGA were also present

Apologies Bob Quinones, Steve Paino

**III. Reading and Approval of Minutes of the meeting on May 20, 2020.**

Motion to approve the minutes from the May 20, 2020 meeting made by Willie Ortiz and seconded by Anthony Gismondi. Approved by Paul Coombes, Willie Ortiz, Anthony Gismondi, Mike Graham, Phil Gianatasio and Joe Vigna.

**IV. Reports of Officers**

Presiding Officer-Absent so nothing to report.

Alternate Presiding Officer – Paul reported that the Mayor and Council have been excellent in the support that they have offered to the Recreation Commission in terms of cleaning and sanitizing buildings when sports/camps open up again. They have also purchased a thermal scanner for the Recreation Commission. At the moment no decisions can be taken about opening programs until the NJBOH releases specific guidelines as to how this should be done.

Council Liaison- Councilwoman McGuire agreed with the Alternate Presiding Officer that the Mayor and Council want to provide all support necessary to the Recreation Commission when camps and sports open up. The governor has announced that from June 22 sporting activities and organized sports in outside areas which have no person to person contact can start again and as of July 6<sup>th</sup> summer camps can reopen. They are also waiting to see what the guidelines from the NJBOH say about necessary precautions. Willie asked if the Recreation Commission could reach out the Board of Ed about the use of Memorial of Villano facilities for the summer recreation camp if it goes ahead. Paul said that they have already reached out to Dr. Nisonoff to see what the Board of Ed is doing about summer camps. They are currently reviewing their situation and will get back to the Recreation Commission when they have made any decisions. He suggested that the question is discussed in the item on Summer Recreation Camp in the Unfinished business section of the meeting. With regard to the summer Recreation Camp Eilish asked who would be responsible for taking campers temperatures. This will be decided when the NJDOH have released their guidelines.

Councilman Hoffman agreed with what Councilwoman McGuire had said regarding the support that would be available to the Recreation Commission from the Mayor and Council. He asked what the indoor and outdoor restrictions on numbers of people are. Paul confirmed it is 10 indoors and 25 outdoors which would require more than one indoor location. This circled back to the discussion about using Villano gym as the indoor alternative as it is a reasonable size. Paul suggested that the discussion was continued in the Unfinished Business section of the meeting, especially as the NJDOH guidelines have not been released.

Secretary- Nothing to report

## **V. Sports Updates and Reviews – Recreation Commission Liaison**

*Baseball*-Phil Gianatasio. Following the Executive Order allowing non-contact sporting activities June 22 baseball have opened a non-payment registration for a July and August season. Between 65 and 70 players signed up in the first day and a half that the registration was open. They will follow the Little League guidelines issued by the CDC. They provided a 40 minute video which the baseball board have listened to and they have no issues with the guidelines. Once they have final numbers they can decide what levels they can play and start forming teams. Emerson are the first Little League town to do this and they are waiting to see whether other towns will open up. If not, they can still have scrimmages so kids are out on the field having fun. Paul asked if they were still waiting for the NJDOH guidelines. Little League have downloaded guidelines from the CDC and

that is what they are using. In answer to a question about minimum numbers, Phil said that as long as they had 10-12 players at an age level they would field a team. Ideally, they would like two teams for an age group then if there were no other towns opening up they could play each other.

*Football and Cheer*-Eilish Viggiani The board met last night and Adam Lang formally resigned as president. Joe Moss was voted in as president and Craig Buckley as a member of the board. They will send out a nonpayment registration to gauge the level of interest in the hope that a fall season would happen. They are working on becoming a non-profit organization. They are also trying to generate more of a presence at Park Ridge. Currently the commentators at the games only refer to Park Ridge and they are trying to change that. Park Ridge baseball and softball have sent out a survey to find out how families feel about signing up for sports in the current situation. She thought this might be a good thing to do in Emerson.

*Track*- Joe Vigna The league that the track team compete in has been cancelled and there are no plans to restart it. That means that the track program is finished for the spring. There was a question about whether Cross Country would take place in the fall. Joe said he would check.

*Softball*-Mike Graham They have decided to wait until the full guidelines from the NJDOH are released and then they will move forward. It is difficult to do anything without them. He said that if the NJDOH guidelines are anything like the ones released today by the NJSIAA Medical Advisors Task Force it will probably not be possible to do anything in the summer. One of the doctors on the NJSIAA Medical Advisors Task Force is also a Medical Director at the NJDOH and Mike's view was that the NJDOH guidelines would be very similar to the ones released by the NJSIAA. The guidelines for 14-18 year old's were quite restrictive and he didn't see they would be any less so for 10-13 year old's. He also commented that the announcement of the date of June 22<sup>nd</sup> gave a lot of people the idea that sports would be starting up again on that day which is not the case.

*Soccer*-Bob Quinones was not at the meeting but Paul gave an update. He had not heard anything from rec soccer but the NCSA are ready for a fall season.

*Wrestling*-Steve was at the meeting so there was nothing to report.

## **VI. Unfinished Business**

### Summer kick off

Paul has been discussing the Summer kick off with Ue and he will be able to provide fireworks for the August 29/30<sup>th</sup> weekend. Paul is trying to get hold of the Fire Inspector, Rich Silvia and agree a date that he would be available to discuss permits with Ue. Paul has spoken to the Mayor about the ABC permit. The secretary will follow up with the Deputy Clerk to find out what needs to be done.

At the moment there is not much that can be done until the NJDOH releases its guidelines but Paul thought that at a minimum they could do fireworks. Mike suggested that if there is no progress by the next meeting (June 17<sup>th</sup>) in terms of number of people who can attend an outside event (currently 25) the commission should consider pushing the event into October for an Oktoberfest. How long should the commission wait? Paul said that the commission should progress until they start to incur costs. The event should be planned and started to be put in place until expenditure is required.

### Summer Recreation Camp

There was a view that nothing should be done until the NJDOH releases its guidelines. One of the issues unresolved is where the campers can go in inclement weather. Willie suggested reaching out to the Board of Ed about the use of Villano gym. Mike reminded the meeting that the Board of Ed had cancelled their summer camps and because of this would probably be unwilling to allow use of them by the recreation camp. That said, the Board of Ed are reviewing their cancellation of the camps.

### Tennis

The meeting agreed to discuss the Tennis program at this point as two members of the TGA organization, Kevin Rooney and Christine Kostianis had joined the meeting.

TGA have been offering tennis programs for kids and adults since 2012. Christine has been with TGA since the start and has been responsible for starting and growing the tennis program across Bergen County.

TGA is a multiple sport organization. They started in 2006 with just golf and then expanded to include tennis in 2012. As of now they offer eight different sports but golf and tennis are still their biggest programs in terms of number of players signed up. They want the program to be widely accessible and so keep costs reasonable. They provide programs from 4 years old to adult and can customize the programs to fit the needs of the group from communities to schools to YMCA's after school or during the summer.

Currently they have put in place protocols to address guidelines coming from the governor's office and the CDC. They have just started programs up again and the first one is this week in Franklin Lakes. Kevin discussed the safety precautions that have been put in place. There will only ever be four players and a coach on the court at any one time and the coach will field balls so the kids don't need to touch the balls at any time. The players will be asked to bring their own racket. If they are not able to do this, TGA will provide one which has been sanitized and the player will be encouraged to keep that racket until the end of the program when they will return it. As new guidelines are published TGA will modify their processes accordingly.

TGA are able to run after school, evening and weekend clinics to provide the widest opportunity for people to learn and play tennis. They provide all the equipment and keep staff to player ratio at 6:1 under normal circumstances. 4:1 during the coronavirus pandemic. All coaches are background checked. TGA have their own nets and can use them on a black top surface to create courts if none are available. Christine added that

TGA try to make the lessons fun and develop whole players TGA while teaching the etiquette of tennis, good sportsmanship and respectfulness. Christine and many of the other coaches are USPTR (US Professional Tennis Registry) certified. They are also heat and concussion and first-aid trained. Kevin and Christine left the meeting and there was further discussion.

Mike said he has spoken to Dr. Nisonoff who has been contacted by several residents in town about getting involved in setting up a tennis program in Emerson. Mike held a socially distant meeting in the junior/senior high school parking lot with these individuals which included a senior citizen. They are keen to get involved and be on the board; Jeff Bonn, Jeff Brenner, Alan Grasser, Kevin Abbruzzese (an Emerson HS graduate) and Nicole Graham. Mike wants to set up an Emerson Recreation Tennis program in the same way the Track group did and work with the Board of Ed on use of facilities. They will adhere to all the relevant Executive Orders on coronavirus guidelines. Two of the courts have been re-opened between 9 am and 6 pm as of Monday.

To get the program going the group of individuals who have expressed an interest should put together a proposal for an Emerson Recreation Tennis program and present it to the Mayor and Council. Paul asked for input from Councilwoman McGuire and Councilman Hoffman. Councilwoman McGuire told the meeting that when the Track program was being developed they had a need for funding which was found but that there was a spending moratorium in place at this time. Ultimately the sports are funded through the Recreation Commission. Mike said he did not think they would need any funds to start the program up as they won't need uniforms or equipment until the program becomes established. The tennis program would need a fee ordinance and Councilwoman McGuire suggested she and Mike meet (virtually) with the Borough Administrator. Once they had agreed this, it would go to the Mayor and Council for a first reading and they assuming there were no questions, it would be approved at the next meeting. She also commented that the point made earlier about Cross Country in the fall should be considered further as this may be one of the few sports allowed. Mike was asked if there was a season for tennis. He said no, most of the tennis programs are privately run and he hasn't found any other towns the run a tennis program. If there aren't any the program could be run as an in town program. When asked for an estimate of numbers of players who would be interested, Mike said he didn't want to guess that at the moment. He would prefer to establish the board, get approval and then advertise the program on social media to gauge interest. Councilwoman McGuire said the group should first get approval from the Recreation Commission and then submit to the Mayor and Council. She did not see any issue with the Recreation Commission approving the creation of a tennis program at the meeting.

Motion made by Mike Graham seconded by Willie Ortiz that the Emerson Recreation Commission approve the formation of an Emerson Recreation Tennis program.

Paul Coombes	Yes
Willie Ortiz	Yes
Anthony Gismondi	Yes

Mike Graham	Yes
Joe Vigna	Yes
Phil Gianatasio	Yes

Paul suggested that Mike ask the potential tennis board members to join the next Recreation Commission meeting to review their plan.

#### Summer Drive in Movie Event

Willie hasn't spoken to the County about using the Soldier Hill Golf Course parking lot but he didn't see that it would be an issue.

The NJDOH guidelines on drive-in movies are that they should be in a space 150' wide by 200' deep which will fit about 80 cars

Bob has reached out to Premiere Productions who run a Movies under the stars program. The cost is \$1200 and about \$450 for the DVD license fee. The movie has to be one that is out on DVD and not in theatres. That is for an event that is free. If the Recreation Commission charge then the fee goes up to \$500-600. The event would start at 8:20 and the film would be shown between 8:45 and 9:00. The company will provide a technician who would set up, run the movie and break down. They will include 1 rain date and they are fully insured.

If the event is held at the Soldier Hill Golf Club it will have to be open to all county residents. It may be possible to circumvent this by renting the parking lot for a nominal fee. Willie will look into this and let Bob and Paul know the outcome. There was a concern that if the Recreation Commission had to open this up to the county Emerson residents may not be able to attend. Paul will reach out to the Board of Ed about the possibility of using the parking lot next to Grad field if this is the case. The meeting agreed that holding an event like this was a good idea.

For the event to be safe and successful, a lot of volunteers will be needed to line out the parking lot and then situate the cars at the event. It may be somewhat complicated.

The suggested dates for the event were July 6, 7, 13, 14 and 18<sup>th</sup>. They are booking up very quickly. There was a question as to whether this would be a one-off event or a series. The meeting agreed to see how the first one went and then make a decision.

There was a discussion about whether food truck companies should be contacted to attend the event. The consensus was that this was a good idea and that the trucks should be charged a fee to attend. Willie will provide some contacts.

#### Face masks for high school seniors and police officers

Paul had spoken with staff at the high school who said the students thought receiving face masks as part of whatever graduation ceremony happens is a great idea. He also reached out to Lieutenant Savino who was going to speak to the Police Chief about masks for the police department. Mike did not think there was any protocol associated with the masks.

The suggestion is that the Emerson High School students are given red face masks with ‘Emerson Class of 2020’ on them and the police department black face masks with EPD on. Paul and Eilish have reached out to the vendors that they know. Bauer Sports gave the best price at \$4.50 a mask for 100 and \$6 per mask for 50. Both Emerson High School and the Police Department will be given 100 masks. The total cost will be \$900 which will be paid for out of the trust. Eilish suggested adding a thin blue line and this will be costed out.

A motion to order 100 masks for Emerson High School Seniors and 100 masks for the Emerson police department was made by Mike Graham and seconded by Anthony Gismondi. Willie suggested an American flag mask instead of the black one that had been suggested for the police. There was some discussion and further motions were made.

A motion to order 100 red masks with the words ‘Emerson Class of 2020’ was made by Paul Coombes and seconded by Willie Ortiz.

Paul Coombes	Yes
Willie Ortiz	Yes
Anthony Gismondi	Yes
Mike Graham	Yes
Joe Vigna	Yes
Phil Gianatasio	Yes

A motion to order 100 black masks with the EDP logo and possibly a blue line was made by Paul Coombes and seconded by Mike Graham. Willie Ortiz made a motion to amend this motion to the American flag. The motion did not receive a second so the original motion was voted on.

A clarified motion to order 100 black masks with the EDP logo and a blue line was made by Paul Coombes and seconded by Mike Graham.

Paul Coombes	Yes
Willie Ortiz	No with explanation that he would prefer the American flag but at this moment that was not appropriate
Anthony Gismondi	Yes
Mike Graham	Yes
Joe Vigna	Yes
Phil Gianatasio	Yes

Paul and Eilish will look into production of the masks and keep the Commission updated.

## **VII. New Business**

Fundraising – Anthony Gismondi Nothing to report

Events – Paul Coombes Nothing more to report

Field Scheduling – Bob Quinones/Eilish Viggiani Nothing to report

Communications –Mike Graham/Liz Morris Nothing to report

**VIII. Open Public Comment**

Motion to open the meeting to public comment made by Willie Ortiz and seconded by Anthony Gismondi. All were in favor.

There being no further comment by the public a motion to close the meeting to public comment made by Paul Coombes and seconded by Willie Ortiz. All were in favor.

**IX. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Willie Ortiz, seconded by Joe Vigna. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Morris  
Recreation Secretary