

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
READINGTON RECREATION COMMITTEE
June 26, 2024 7:30pm**

A) Chairperson Emmanuel Bola called the meeting to order at 7:31pm.

B) ATTENDANCE:

Emmanuel Bola – present

Stephanie Panico – present

Bill Quinn - present

Alison Quintard - present

Lisa Routel – present

TC Liaison Vincent Panico - present

Recreation Director, Gabrielle Bolarakis - present

C) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – Ms. Routel motioned to accept the meeting minutes of May 22, 2024. Mr. Quinn seconded. All in Favor. Motion passed.

D) COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS & CORRESPONDENCE – Mr. Bola mentioned seeing information about the National Night Out in August and inquired if there was anything left from the Memorial Day Parade that could be donated. Director Bolarakis indicated that supplies from the Memorial Day Parade were used for the Summer Spectacular. She didn't believe there was anything left over for the August event. The Recreation Department has indicated to the Police Department that we are happy to help them with the event if they need it.

E) OLD BUSINESS

i) Spring Program Updates – Director Bolarakis indicated that the spring programs are finished. The USTA Tennis Social was great, generating interest in league play. The USTA appreciated the opportunity and has indicated that would like to come back possibly in the fall. Readington teams were very successful this spring. The 3rd/4th Girls Travel Lacrosse team had a winning season and won the Jersey Girls Challenge Tournament. The 3rd/4th Girls Softball team won the Branchburg League.

ii) Memorial Day Parade – Canceled due to weather. Rental expenses for the event are nonrecoverable, supplies were used for the Summer Spectacular.

iii) Summer Spectacular – Director Bolarakis reported approximately 3,000 people attended the event. She thanked the Recreation Committee for their support. It was a wonderful evening despite the heat. The Recreation Department got a lot of positive feedback from the public.

iii) Cornhuskers Master Plan Update – Director Bolarakis shared the completed wetland survey. The intent is to renovate the developed area of the park to increase usage. The 2019 Public Survey indicated a desire for a splash pad. The well was examined, and it was determined that the water had too much sediment to support a splash pad. The survey indicated a desire for upgraded playgrounds, and a new playground and a ninja course were determined to be a good fit. The number one request from the public survey for parks was access to pavilions and

restrooms. The next step in the masterplan process for Cornhuskers is to determine the size and scope of a three or four season pavilion, that can be used for programming as well as a rental space. Director Bolarakis shared some examples of enclosed pavilions with the committee and recommended that they visit Dunham Park in Basking Ridge to see a good example. Ideally the pavilion should seat 80 to 100 people. The committee discussed various options for the pavilion. Director Bolarakis advised the committee that storage must also be considered.

iv) Park Facilities Update – Director Bolarakis reported that the Township did not receive a ROID grant this year. The Township had received funding the past two years, and it is not surprising that funding went to other towns this year. Since the money used to fund the grant was COVID money, Director Bolarakis indicated that there was a good possibility this grant program might not be funded next year.

v) Fall Program Registration Open – Director Bolarakis announced that registration for 38 fall programs is now open on the web site.

F) NEW BUSINESS

i) Summer Rec Update – Director Bolarakis shared there are currently 159 children attending Summer Rec Camp, with 5 registered for Early Drop off, 20 for Extended Care, and 6 CITs. We have had beautiful weather, and the program is running smoothly.

ii) Fall Brochure – Director Bolarakis informed the Recreation Committee that the digital Fall Brochure is ready for distribution. The Fall Brochure will be mailed to residents in July.

iii) Memorial Tree/Bench Program – Has been approved by the Township Committee. Information about the program is up on the Recreation web site. The Committee viewed information about the program on the web site and reviewed donation options.

iv) Hunterdon County Municipal Park and Recreation Grant – Director Bolarakis shared a new grant opportunity available through the county. The program specifically funds park renovation and development. The minimum project size is \$67,000 (\$50,000 from the county/\$27,000 municipal match). The maximum award is \$150,000 for projects that are \$200,000. Project over \$200,000 receive \$150,000 from the county. Grant applications are due September 20th. This is a fantastic opportunity to get funding to replace the tennis/basketball court lighting in Pickell Park with LED lights. The lights will be player activated, reduce light spillage by 50%, cut energy consumption in half, can be remote control operated, and have a 25-year warranty for parts and labor. The quote for the project is \$227,000-\$242,000. Committee person Panico asked if there are other grant opportunities that could cover the cost of replacing the lights. Director Bolarakis indicated that the Recreation Department is not aware of other grant opportunities for court lighting. She offered to ask the Musco if they were aware of any other grant opportunities. Committee person Panico agreed to bring the grant opportunity information to the Township Committee attention for discussion.

v) Fall Joint Walk - Mr. Bola expressed a desire to have a fall joint walk coordinated by the Recreation Department. Ms. Routel indicated the joint walk last month was well attended. The committee discussed possible dates. The 15th of September and the 20th of October will be scheduled for Open Space walks. The committee settled on October 6th.

vi) Remote Pay Systems – Mr. Bola informed the committee that he called Municipay to see if they have a remote point of sale system. They indicated that they are working on incorporating that into the system, but it is not currently available.

G) COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC –

Jenn Ziemba congratulated the Recreation Department on the Summer Spectacular. It was a great event; they were there from the time it opened until it closed. She did want to bring to the committee's attention it was disappointing that there were people there at the entrance with information about the Solberg campaign. The Recreation Committee was not aware that they were there and appreciated the information.

Sharon Becker indicated that the Summer Spectacular was fantastic. Ms. Becker inquired whether anything had been done about the open spots on the Recreation Committee. Mr. Bola indicated he had not heard anything from the Township Committee. Director Bolarakis indicated she would follow up with the Township Clerk.

Christina Albrecht said she was very happy to hear about the opportunity to update the lighting in Pickell Park to LED. That is something the Environmental Commission has been interested in for years and would be a huge benefit to the committee.

H) COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD – Mr. Bola asked about whether the Sponsorship application was online. Ms. Quintard said she had not received any feedback from the committee. The committee indicated they had no recommended changes. Ms. Quintard indicated she work on updating the sponsorship information.

I) ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Quinn motioned to adjourn at 9:15pm. Ms. Quintard seconded. All in favor.

Next meeting is September 26, 2024 at 7:30pm.