

**WYCKOFF DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD**  
**June 23, 2020**

Doug Arone opened the Recreation Board Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on a Zoom Video Conference call with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act. “This Regular meeting of the Wyckoff Department of Parks and Recreation Board is now in session. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting has been posted on the bulletin board in the Memorial Town Hall and the Recreation Office; a copy has been filed with the Township Clerk, *The Ridgewood News*, *The Record*, and *The North Jersey Herald and News*, all papers with general circulation throughout the Township of Wyckoff.” At least 48 hours prior to this meeting the agenda was similarly posted, filed and mailed to said newspapers.

Members Present: Doug Arone, John Giovacco, Rich Sica, Sue Buchanan, Chris Beane, Jeff Eischen, Jen Saxton, Moe Ismael, Tom Valente, Chris Perneti

Members Absent: Mike Ferrara, Jeff Eischen

Staff Present: Recreation Director, Andy Wingfield

The minutes of the February 10, 2020 meeting were discussed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rich Sica and seconded by John Giovacco. The motion was carried.

**Recreation Director Report:**

**New Board Member Welcome:**

The Director welcomed new Member, Chris Perneti, to the Board. Chris was described as a lifelong resident who has volunteer coached for several teams over the past 5 years. Chris was welcomed by the Board.

**Russell Farms Community Park Update**

The Director advised the Board that the first phase of the 2020 improvements at Russell Farms, thanks in part to a Bergen County Open Space Grant, have been completed. Four new, wheelchair accessible, concrete picnic benches that will also serve as chess/checkers tables were installed along the walking path. An irrigation system was installed which will water the entire facility. Finally, an ADA accessible sensory garden was constructed at the site which consists of several plants that trigger many senses (i.e. touch, smell, sight). The Director reiterated from the last meeting in February that future plans for the park include a new playground for children ages 2-5 and a security camera system along with a new flexible walking surface that will take the place of the current surface. The Board was pleased that half of the funds for this very beneficial project came via the Bergen County Open Space Grant and was excited to see the progress there this year.

**8u Travel Baseball Tryouts Were Completed in February:**

The Director updated the Board that the 2020 8u travel baseball tryout dates February at the NJ Sports House in Oakland with the same independent baseball training facility running the tryouts for us that we have utilized over the past several years. Almost 50 children initially registered for the tryouts. The Director also told the Board that he continues to meet with the parents of the

tryout participants at each tryout to explain the tryout process, lay out expectations for the season, and go over the program's rules, philosophies, and policies. 24 boys were selected to the team and the Director met with the two head coaches in February to divide up the two teams evenly.

**Status of Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic:**

Following up on an email that was sent in April, the Director gave a summary of the spring Recreation programs and their individual statuses. He explained that Recreation Baseball & Softball, boys and girls Lacrosse, and the spring training portion of Travel Baseball & Softball had been officially canceled during the pandemic. Credits were issued to most Community Pass accounts for those residents that had been registered for softball, baseball, and lacrosse with just a few refunds having to be issued. Several residents offered for the Recreation Department to not credit their accounts, thereby donating the registration fees to the Township. This gesture saved the Township almost \$10,000 in future lost revenue and each person that offered this was sent an email with the Recreation Department's thanks.

The Director went on to advise the Board that the Summer Day Camp program would be running this year. The Wyckoff YMCA, who won the bid to run our day camps for the next two summers, has reviewed the COVID-19 protocols and determined that they would safely be able to run camp this summer. The YMCA placed a maximum attendees in place of 80 children due to staffing and protocol restrictions and the program filled up to 80 plus a wait list within hours of registration opening. The Director and the YMCA have been in constant contact over the past several weeks to ensure that the appropriate safety protocols were being received by the YMCA and are met during the camp experience.

The Director then advised that the program listing of summer clinics has been shortened this summer. With most of our clinics typically being run by college students, the Director felt that it would be more appropriate for adults to be running these clinics during this time when strict social distancing rules are in effect. After a lengthy attempt at recruiting adults to run the baseball, basketball, and soccer clinics, the Director decided it best to cancel those clinics for this summer and the Board agreed that this was the right decision. The Girls Volleyball and Cheer clinics do have adult employees running them so those two clinics started this week. Both clinics, just like Summer Camp, filled up extremely fast with almost 40 girls in each clinic. Strict protocols were put in place and the Head Instructors of both clinics were managing them well in the first two days.

The US Sports Institute, who runs our younger children sports clinics, was also forced to cancel most of their summer sessions due to their staff not being able to travel from England to the US. They will, however, be running a weekend clinic starting in mid-July until the end of August.

In June, Governor Murphy approved the startup of Youth Sports Practices on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. With that Executive Order, the Director, with guidance and advice from the Township Committee, implemented a plan to begin Travel Baseball and Softball practices. The Director purchased thermometers and hand sanitizer for each team and met with each Head Coach on a Zoom conference call to discuss parameters, rules, protocols, schedules, etc. The coaches were given a list of strict rules to abide by and they were extremely excited to be able to give the players their

first athletic experience with their teams since early March. Additionally, Torpedoes Soccer and the YMCA sports programs organized their startup for June 22<sup>nd</sup> and submitted not only their standard paperwork for permission to use the fields, but also their plans of action to follow COVID-19 protocols. The Director was at the fields during the first evening and it was great to see our coaches and players taking the protocols seriously and following them. On July 6<sup>th</sup>, teams are permitted to start games and the leagues that we participate in will have schedules out prior to then.

### **Status of Facilities:**

Prior to June 22<sup>nd</sup>, all fields, courts, playgrounds, and facilities were closed. By Executive Order, no organized team activities were permitted. On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, when youth practices were allowed to begin, all of our fields including Community Park baseball field, the main field at Memorial, Pulis Field were all reopened to team activities. Memorial Field adjacent to the Library, our basketball courts, roller hockey rink, and tennis courts were still closed due to the new turf field construction at Memorial and continue to be closed as of this writing. Playgrounds were also still closed by Executive Order.

Progress on the construction at Memorial Field is outstanding. The base of the field had been leveled, gravel had been brought in and flattened, and the perimeter fencing was being installed as of June 23. The anticipated completion date is somewhere around the week of July 13 and, once complete, we will be able to reopen our roller hockey rink and basketball courts.

Our Tennis Courts are also scheduled to be resurfaced in early July and should be completed sometime around the week of July 20<sup>th</sup>. The courts will remain closed until the resurfacing is complete. It appears that the Dept will have to move the Tennis Camp from the week of July 13 to the week of July 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Facility Use/Rental Applications Review:**

Chairman Arone requested the Board review the following field use applications, based on the Township's procedure of involving the Recreation Board in the approval process for field rental after a review of the paperwork by the Recreation Director and Township Administrator. Two applications were discussed by the Board and approved for use/rental. The applications at this meeting included the following:

1. Wladyka Baseball – a local club baseball training facility is requesting the use of Wyckoff Memorial Field Baseball Facility, 340 Franklin Avenue for the purpose of holding their summer practices and games. The estimated revenue from this facility rental would be \$1500.
2. Power 5 Baseball – another local club baseball training organization is requesting the use of Wyckoff Memorial Field Baseball Facility, 340 Franklin Avenue for the purpose of holding their summer practices and games. The estimated revenue from this facility rental would be \$1000.
- 3.

The Director advised the Board that that his review of the applications, Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreements, and Certificates of Insurance for these requests determined the applications to be in order.

Finding the application in order and discussing the history of successful use by both programs, the Recreation Board unanimously approved all of the above applications after a motion to approve them was made by Tom Valente and seconded by Sue Buchanan.

**New Waiver Developed for Wyckoff Recreation Programs:**

To account for the current situation with sports and programs starting back up during the pandemic, Recreation Directors across the country are developing or altering the participation waivers and hold harmless agreements in an effort to protect their municipalities from lawsuits from participants who could potentially be infected during this time. The new waivers indicate an assumption of risk on the participant's part and holds the municipalities harmless in the event of infection. The Director has updated the Township's waivers to include not only injury risks, but also risk of being infected with illness or disease. All participants going forward will be required to sign the new waivers in order to participate in the program.

**Men's Softball:**

The Director advised that with the Governor's latest Order that allows competition to occur on July 6<sup>th</sup>, the decision has been made to have an abbreviated Men's Softball season with the season starting on July 7<sup>th</sup> instead of mid-May and still ending in mid-August. The same protocols being utilized by Travel Baseball and Softball will be mandated in this program and these protocols will be discussed directly with the captains and shared with the entire program.

**Fall Sports:**

The Director advised that fall sports such as Football, Soccer, and Girls Volleyball are still all up in the air in terms of whether or not those seasons will be held. There is optimism and pessimism every day from different sources so there is no way of knowing what will happen. It is likely that youth leagues would follow what the high schools do so all eyes are on the NJSIAA to decide on whether or not these sports will take place in the fall. In the meantime, we are taking registrations for all 3 sports in preparation for the possibility of playing.

The Board adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Wingfield  
Director, Wyckoff Parks & Recreation