

Florence Township Recreation Committee Minutes 3/4/24

The Florence Township Recreation Committee held a reorganization meeting on 2/5/24 at the Municipal Complex (711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey). Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting in person.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Tony Pastore at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Frank Baldorossi, TJ Lovenduski, Tom Supey, Mary Pieretti, Donna Sadler, Don Nemeth, Cindy Golway, Tony Pastore, Caitlin Motta, Martin Eckert, Tom Boracci, Kim Dembowski

Absent:

Also Attending: Sundiata Abdunafi (“Superman”), Amir Abdunafi, Florence Twp Boy Scouts
Tom Sahol, Township Administrator

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Meeting of January 8, 2024

Motion of Supey, seconded by Golway to approve the minutes as submitted.

COORDINATORS REPORT

- **Recreation Basketball:** Marty reported that the season continues to be running smoothly. In recent weeks there was a situation where a coach has abruptly stepped away from coaching and at the beginning of practices opted not to have an assistant coach. Volunteers did briefly step in to support the team however a long-term solution was affected due to the timing needed to secure a background check and there were no interested individuals available to take on coaching the team. Since only 2 games had taken place, players were divided to the 4 other boys pro division teams and all families were contacted in advance and made aware of the situation. Players received team shirts and continued playing immediately. In the future, all teams will need to secure two coaches to avoid these challenges.

CORRESPONDENCE

- **2024 DCA Local Recreation Improvement Grant:** Marty shared with the committee that the 2024 local recreation improvement grant portal is open and project considerations were discussed. It was important to consider projects that are within the scope of preparing a narrative with supporting documents along with consideration to overall cost as it needs to be manageable for the municipality as the grant runs for one year with an option to extend for a second year. The committee discussed two potential options which have been existing topics over the past few years from the community and discussed by the committee. Currently, a group has been approved to utilize RD Wood Field for purposes of playing cricket. A suggestion to further modify the existing surface to support the growth of the cricket program dragging the field surface, removing the baseball backstop and creating a perimeter fence line.

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Secondly, several residents have inquired with the township as to plans to create pickleball courts. Courts located in a different area than the townships existing tennis courts offer the avoidance of these two differing forms of play (and sound) from one another. Additionally, pickleball is played with different lines, overall surface area and a lowered net than that of tennis. Adding pickleball courts to an area established on the municipal complex grounds is supported by excess sparking, walking paths, water fountain access and close proximity to add lighting.

Committee discussed that some remediation of the existing cricket field may be accessible through in-house work and seeding. Committee agreed and voted unanimously in support of directing the grant application towards the creation of pickleball courts. Marty Eckert will provide a memo to township council with a recommendation from the recreation committee supporting pickleball to be written in for the grant. Councilman and Recreation Liaison Frank Baldorossi will answer any questions and committee chairman, Tony Pastore will try to attend as well.

FACILITIES

- **Municipal Facilities**
- **Softball Field Infield Areas:** Marty will speak with public works and the water department about the amount of material needed to spread across the infield at Muchowski Field and will discuss further with the softball program.
- **Board of Education Facilities:** The committee discussed indoor clinics for the softball program. The Riverfront Apr is currently being used on Sundays from 9am to 2pm. Softball requested the use of the gymnasium as an additional space for clinics. It was not approved due to the overall numbers utilizing the apr did not merit using the additional space and the clean-up required once the program leaves the building would extend from only cleaning the apr and restroom to addressing the hallways, gymnasium and second restroom prior to the end of the staff members shift. It may be a consideration next year to request the gym instead if a larger space is needed.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Florence Twp Fieldhouse:** Marty did not have additional information regarding the building. New Township Administrator, Tom Sahol was in attendance and shared that he is aware that bids were rejected for the building and that he would be reviewing information completed to date and will coordinate updates with Marty.
- **League Operating Agreement:** Tony shared with the committee that the annual recreation program operating agreement was approved by township council. Memo reflecting the approval was forwarded to the recreation department on January 18th.

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NEW BUSINESS

- Community Events: Marty provided that the following events are set to take place in the community over the next several months:
 - a) Annual Egg Hunt sponsored by Boyd's Pharmacy & FTFD (Date Pending)
 - b) Opening Day Recreation Baseball & Softball (Saturday, April 13th)
 - c) Steel Mill Street Fair (Roebing Museum/Chamber of Commerce) (May 18th)
 - d) Roebing Carnival (May 29th thru June 1st)
 - e) Annual Patriotic Celebration (July 6th)

The committee shared that there is interest to explore additional happenings during the patriotic celebration. Consideration of a 5K or Fun Run in the morning similar to what had been held in the past. Prizes for decorated floats and bicycles and other fun incentives encouraging participation. There will be more discussion at the March meeting.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Don Nemeth: Don Nemeth shared the field banners are still hanging at the various baseball/softball and football fields. They are becoming damaged by winds and he is aware that programs were asked to remove them. Don echoed the same the previous meeting and all leagues were notified.

Tony Pastore: Shared information about the upcoming Roebing Museum – Introduction to Engineering “Free Event” being offered on February 19th. It has been shared on social media and Marty will forward to the school district and post as well. Tony asked rec committee members if they would help to spread the word about the opportunity for students and families.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Supey, second by Nemeth – 8:20pm