

Florence Township Recreation Committee Minutes 4/1/24

The Florence Township Recreation Committee held a reorganization meeting on 3/4/24 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: TJ Lovenduski, Tom Supey, Mary Pieretti, Donna Sadler, Don Nemeth, Cindy Golway, Tony Pastore, Tom Boracci, Martin Eckert, Tom Boracci, Kim Dembowski

Absent: Frank Baldorossi, Caitlin Motta

Also Attending: No members of public present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Meeting of February 5, 2024

Motion of Sadler, seconded by Dembowski to approve the minutes as submitted.

COORDINATORS REPORT

- **Recreation Basketball:** Marty reported that the regular season wraps up this week and practices and playoff games remain. Playoff games will be played in both Burlington Township and in Florence concluding with championship games played at the Burlington Township Middle School. The leagues associated with the girls pro division are working on a playoff format, which has yet to be determined. The girls division enjoyed the inclusion of Northern Burlington, Westampton and New Egypt teams this season. Westampton runs a modified schedule so games were few with the group but we are hopeful that they will be a full participant in the future. Marty will coordinate a post-season meeting with the league to review the season and to discuss any proposed adjustments and solidifying a board for 2024-2025.

CORRESPONDENCE

- **2024 Florence Township Cricket Association:** Chairman, Tony Pastore and Marty provided details associated with the renewal of RD Wood Field to be used for the purposes of adult cricket. In 2023 the local group that had been granted use of the field made improvements to create a clay surface “pitch” and participated in a Burlington County Cricket League playing with other teams from the area. After the season had concluded, the group shared that they had decided to exclude themselves from the Burlington County League and to participate by creating a league based on teams of similar skillset and to allow for players of all ages to participate. Tony Pastore expressed that the townships goals for the program are to begin to develop a board and create bylaws to establish as an organization where clinics for youth and adults may be established and the program grows over time to become a mainstay similar to that of existing sponsored recreation programs.

Florence Township Recreation Committee Minutes 4/1/24

Marty shared with the committee that over the past month a second team had visited the township expressing that they were involved with playing on the RD Wood Field last season playing games. They are based out of Burlington and were interested in submitting for consideration to utilize field space as well. Their team was explained as part of the Burlington County League. Marty asked the committee if it would be appropriate to consider two teams using the field space. The group expressed that they used the field as a home field last season as well and stated that they contributed to the field maintenance establishing the pitch.

The committee discussed that as the Florence team has already gone through the process over the past year of requesting the use of the field and communicating with the township throughout the season that they should be provided the ability to move forward with managing a league and continuing to develop the cricket program in town. If the future holds opportunity to grow the program to include clinics and allow for use by residents then the next steps will be managed by the program with input by the recreation department and recreation committee. Since there was no knowledge over the past year by the second team from Burlington using the field and there was no interaction or information provided to the township, the committee does not feel that at this time it is appropriate to move towards adding a second team. The recreation committee took to a vote based on a motion by the recreation committee chairman to approve the Florence Cricket Association to use the RD Wood Field to conduct the 2024 Cricket season. The vote was unanimously approved by all present recreation committee members.

Once the 2024 cricket season has concluded a post season meeting will be held where members appear at the recreation committee meeting. Date to be determined.

FACILITIES

- **Municipal Facilities**
- **Tennis Courts:** Marty shared that after the playground construction has been completed that more information as to the date of the tennis court resurfacing will be available as to the start date for that effort.

Playground Construction: Marty shared with the committee that the playground construction has begun and the area will be sectioned off until the project is complete. There were questions about future playground improvements and Marty shared that playground work is quite costly and unlike this project which was financed in its entirety minus the donation by the Florence Girl Scouts that projects such as these should be supported by grants in an effort to offset cost and reduce the burden to residents. Marty confirmed that he expressed that playgrounds located in other areas of town were in need of improvement, however the municipal location on W 6th Street was earmarked as the first to be improved. Moving forward recreation will have a role in identifying the areas of improvement and will apply for grants to support such improvements.

- **Pickleball:** Marty worked on a grant for consideration to place pickleball courts on the municipal complex. Initial design work has been considered and more information will follow upon notification of the grant application status.

Florence Township Recreation Committee Minutes 4/1/24

- **Board of Education Facilities:** Recreation Basketball will be concluding in the coming weeks. And Recreation Softball Indoor Clinics have shifted to Saturdays due to scheduling challenges with the school facilities department being shorthanded. Once the weather begins to shift, players will be moving outdoors to the recreation fields in preparation for the 2024 season.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Florence Twp Fieldhouse:** Marty did not have additional information regarding the building. Marty will be meeting with the township administrator to review further.
- **Community Events:** The committee discussed that with the annual township sponsored events and activities, there may be unique additions supported and encouraged by the recreation committee to add to the enjoyment of the activities. It was suggested to form a subcommittee of members where ideas such as developing a 5K, creating a house/yard decorating contest along the parade route, enhance the decorated bicycles and stroller participation or to have awards for various categories during the carnival would be great to consider. The sub-committee will meet to further review ideas and will share at the April meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Community Center Events & Activities:** Marty and Tony discussed with the committee the initiative to further evolve the use of the community center, shifting away from the rental facility model and focusing more on activities for the benefit of the community. Currently exercise classes are provided during the week. The goal will be to develop an events calendar where music nights, comedy nights, craft or painting opportunities or other township sponsored activity may fill time slots and be promoted by the township. More information to follow as members are encouraged to think of ideas or refer to resources from other townships that currently manage a community center.

Tony confirmed that attendance for the gentle fitness class remains solid. The committee will begin to gauge attendance by other classes and understands that numbers may reflect weather or time of year, but the goal will remain where the building is set for effective usage.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Don Nemeth/Cindy Golway: Provided that elections for the officers for the 2024 season will be held on March 11th. The program has goal post pads ordered and new helmets which are anticipated to arrive at the township soon. Don shared that he will discuss with the program the banners left at the field at the next meeting. Don provided that once the weather improves, the goal post painting should be completed in advance of the next season on the game field.

Tony Pastore: Shared that the league operating agreement will need to be forwarded to leagues so that they begin to prepare for upcoming seasons and are in compliance with the items provided within the agreements.

Florence Township Recreation Committee Minutes 4/1/24

Municipal Alliance: Marty shared that he and Mayor Kristan Marter were invited to participate in learning about local government at Riverbank Charter School. As part of the visit, Marty provided materials for children to take home for parents which provides a booklet from the New Jersey Prevention Network sharing tips to managing safe use of the internet and social media by children. This information along with other literature is provided to school resource officers to maintain in the schools. Marty also received workbooks sponsored by PSEG geared for 3rd graders offering prevention to avoidance of substances.

Marty Eckert: After discussing the completion of William Krzykalski's Eagle Scout Project, Marty sponsored a letter of support for William's project to be considered for the Garden State Council's Eagle Scout Project of the Year. Marty was informed that William's project was selected and he is awaiting information as to when he will be honored. Tom Supey shared that William will also have his Eagle Scout Court of Honor in the near future and a date will be provided.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Pastore, second by Dembowski – 8:18pm