

HILLSDALE RECREATION COMMISSION
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HILLSDALE RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF October 29th 2018

Attendance: Dewey Burluson, Ann Cron, Rob Ricco, John Corring, Deb Szabo

Councilman: Anthony DeRosa, Abby Lundy

Mayor : John Ruocco

Rec Director: Patty Hughes

Guests in attendance:

Scott Perlman – Soccer

Drew Metz – Soccer

Brendan McNamara - Soccer

Melissa Newell- Soccer/ Softball

John Stanbury – Baseball

Greg Staub – Baseball/football

Gary Borges – Football

Devin Flanagan - Football

Chris Kirby- Baseball/Hoops

Rob Harris – Baseball

Mike Laughlin – Lacrosse

Nicole Lass- Softball

Michael Fox

Kevin Cortolano – Constituent

Dewey called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm

This meeting was called to review and hopefully create a priority list for field improvement.

Anthony had a presentation prepared for this meeting and the deck is attached. The deck was reviewed throughout the meeting. The rest was an open forum where residents and members of the various sports associations were able to express themselves.

Devin starts off by asking about the activity scheduled used to PV, and can it be used to show who is on the fields and when they are being used. Anthony said he is aware of this app and will look into it. Patty says we have community pass that will hopefully be able to include a module like that. Right now we are using it to track coaches and what certificates they have.

The issue of fingerprinting was brought up and that the Paramus office was now closed. Anthony says it's a certain type of fingerprint that is require and can only be done at Garfield and different then a firearm fingerprint. Greg Staub brought up that they are working on finding a method for this and will report back soon.

Dewey suggest we stick to the issues that brought us here, the condition of the fields.

Scott Perlman begins the conversation, he says a lot of his season was not played due to weather, landscapers and keep up. He agrees a field management system is needed, that will list who is on what field. He was very disappointed with the field review process, it was never an issue and mid-season it became one. There was no communication to the soccer association about this change where the association will no longer be making the calls as to if the fields are playable.

Devin takes the floor next and starts with asking why are we here and Anthony responds saying it is due to the fact that we never invested in the fields in years past. Devin compares what we are trying to do now putting a band aid on a bullet wound. He too disagrees with the new policy of the DPW walking the field and deciding if they are playable.

Chris says this policy doesn't make any sense, people are saying the fields aren't playable at 730am for a 430pm game, when they were playable by that time. He says there is no consistency, fields have been opened when there are puddle and closed when they are dry. There are last minute emails about fields that effect travel teams and the communication is lacking. Other towns have played when the Hillsdale fields have been closed.

Mike agrees that there needs to be better communication about who is playing on what field, it is such a simple fix and he doesn't know why nothing has been done.

Ann speaks on behalf of the seniors and what they want. She says that they have no space for themselves and they are lugging their items from meeting to meeting in different churches that they rent. They would like a recreation center so they have a place to meet and store their goods. Anthony adds that's other towns have senior centers. Dewey says that half the rec budget goes to senior activities, however no numbers are provided. Devin asks how many seniors there are versus children in the town and how is that money being spent proportionately. Patty says rec budget is 9500 and seniors have their own budget. The parks budget is through the DPW.

Anthony says a separate budget for field capital improvements is needed

Devin says she is tired of parents yelling at him regarding this situation and Anthony says to tell them we are starting to fix the problem now. Dewey says he has been fighting for a budget and for improvements. Patty says she has been doing this for over 20 years and in the past there was time in between seasons for the fields to recover however now sports seasons overlap. In order to fix the fields certain sports will lose a season, as things do not move fast on the government level. There has been talk about a dome over the pool at stonybrook for multiple years already. Patty mentions she is inputting all of the coaching certificates into community pass so people will be aware of what is missing. She is it's a large manual task, Melissa asks if the parents can help.

Dewey says he did not agree to the BA's policy of who makes the call on when the fields are open. He said the BA had a meeting and no one was invited, he respects the people in attendance at this meeting and wants everyone to work together as one vote.

Per Anthony, the Cora field seems much after the work done to it, while Knick is now unplayable at times. There are pools of water in the dugouts. DPW raised the padding to help, this was never approved by the rec committee. The town engineer will need to look at the damage.

Nicole says someone needs to take ownership of maintaining the fields. Anthony agrees and would like a member of the sports association to make the call if the fields are open, the rec committee will help work on this policy.

There also needs to be a written document stating who has ownerships of the school fields, the town or the BOE. It is brought up that the Smith field is not being used due to the litigation with the farm. Devin asked if it can be used for football, he is answered no. There is a lot of anger over this and Scott just wants everyone to figure it out.

Dewey asks that people just champion what they know and leave the rest up to the experts.

Mike discusses his experience with the stonybrook field, he says most of the time ½ is dry and the other ½ is wet. He thinks turf would be an option for this field. He says the water runs across Piermont ave onto the field. The DPW marks the field closer to cedar, maybe they can mark it where it is drier.

There is mention of the macadam growing on the beechwood field somehow, no one understands how the DPW hasn't seen it/ done anything given the fact that they line the field right by it.

There are complaints about the fact that the sprinklers do not shut off on the fields while it's raining, that the fields are just not level or safe to play on. There is mention of the fact that Hillsdale fields are never chosen for World Series or travel games.

Michael Fox says there is not a strategic plan to work with the mayor and council. He doesn't understand why we are starting this process now. This talk should have been had 10 years ago.

Dewey believes that memorial should be the field that people concentrate on.

Devin mentions the town of New Milford was able to get their fields fixed when they bonded together. Dewey says this rec committee and council are a lot more receptive to the idea of fixing the fields.

Devin suggests reaching out to the neighboring towns to find out how they maintain their fields, Patty has already started this process by finding out who makes the calls on if the fields are playable.

John says the town find the money to hire lawyers to deal with the waste management fight while they should be using that money on the fields. Instead of fighting them, we should welcome them and ask for help and money. Scott asks John if he has presented this idea to the council. He says not yet and then John reads a quote from Councilman Pizella talking about young families moving in sports is a top priority. Anthony argues that if we do allow them in town, will it really bring in revenue? Johns says he grew up in this town and the fields are the same as they were in the 80's.

At this point people in town are very angry with this situation and have begun to post items on social media. This isn't good as new people with young families should be moving into town.

The idea of using centennial for a senior/rec center was brought up or enhancing what is available at memorial.

Dewey says the before this time the rec committee was not as empowered and the politics were different.

Greg wants to know the councils actual commitment to the children of this town. A lot of the fields are hazardous for the kids and he believe that if there was something wrong/ dangerous with the foundation of borough hall it would be taken care of right away unlike the fields.

Gary wants to know if someone tells the DPW to do the things they do, there was a large mound of dirt placed on the field in the middle of the season right before it rained and it all turned into mud. He says there should be a guideline of what the DPW can do. Per Devin this was done to fix the grubs but there was a scheduling issue. Dewey says there are not enough resources. He suggests going forward to send an email to the DPW with Patty on it.

John Corring says we need to give the mayor and council a chance to change things and stop complaining. This should end tonight and be revisiting in a couple of months to see where we are and if any changes have been made.

The rec committee will begin to hammer out the priorities and perhaps hire a consultant to help decide where the money should go.

Nicole questions who they should go to going forward with issues/questions about the fields, Dewey says to contact the association heads but also include Patty and the DPW.

The finance committee is looking into a 6 year plan and the rec committee will present it to the finance committee.

Devin expresses his frustration that he presented his plan a few years ago and nothing happened. Dewey responds by saying that he never showed up to any further meetings. They have applied for a grant and waiting for an answer.

The rec committee did bring a capital plan to the BA which was never then presented to the finance committee.

Meeting closed at 9:07

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Anides

Next meeting, November 1st 2018, 7:00pm