

**HILLSDALE RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**380 HILLSDALE AVENUE**  
**HILLSDALE, NJ 07**  
**201-666-4800 X1560**

**HILLSDALE RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES OF 12/2/2024**

**Councilman:** Clemente Osso

**Rec Director:** Dan Conte

**Attendance:** John, Ed, Greg, Rhonda, Ann, Sara, Dewey

**Council Member** – John Ruocco

**BA** –Mike Ghassali

**Public** – Multiple members of the community, including sports association heads.

Ed called meeting to order at 6:31

Pledge of allegiance

Minutes approved by John and seconded by Dewey

Mike addresses the public

- Thanks the community for their continued feedback
- Explains the number of meetings left regarding the fields – fields committee meeting (closed) council meeting (open) if council moves forward, it will take 2 additional open meetings for fund approval
- States this is the last chance for the recreation committee as a whole to speak

Concept Feedback

Ed introduces a power point that discuss the concept feedback from the previous townhall meeting along with recommendations from the meeting.

- Surrounding Streets – residents nervous about parking, speeding and dangers associated with that
  - Relocate parking lot, move the entrance to Washington ave
- Lighting – residents concerned about light pollution and noise being disruptive.
  - Include a buffer zone, specific operating hours
- Amenities – noise issues from new amenities, including pickleball
  - Eliminate or relocate the amenities
- Turf – health and safety issues, warmer than natural grass. High cost, end of life disposal, need for replacement within 10 years.

- Include irrigation system to reduce heat in the summer
- Environmental Impact – will trees be removed? Will turf withstand storms? Drainage concerns.
- Sports Impact – residents here support the project for the impacts on sports
  - Football anticipates a shift to 120 yard
  - HBSA – enthusiastic about reduced weather disruptions, extended field times due to lights

Open to the Public per motion from Dewey and Sara

There were many residents who came up to speak about the current proposal. There were roughly 10 residents who came up to speak negatively about this proposal.

Negative comments came from members of the public who mostly live by Hopper and Washington. They all expressed concerns over lighting, parking, traffic, expense, noise, how often the field will be used and the usage of turf. Many asked if other locations were considered for this. Others expressed that yes, a new field is needed but not one like this.

The residents were worried about the

light pollution - its effects on young children trying to sleep and its disruptive nature

parking – there is not enough parking for the type of audience the new field will attract? Will this type of parking lot allow for an ambulance to get on the field or to a residents house if needed

expense – how is all of this being paid for?

Noise – children will be playing on these fields till late at night. It will cause extra noise that will effect the residents

Field usage – the amount of time people will be playing on the field will increase. According to the borough they mentioned around 70 hours a week, which was questioned.

Turf – is turf the right choice? Is it safe?

There were multiple residents who came up in support of the new field. Several sports association heads spoke and explained that this was needed

The positive comments were in favor of adding value to the town, allowing each sport a place to play, allowing for field usage even during poor weather conditions. The children are looking forward to having a field of their own, as they don't have a place to call home. Currently the sports associations are paying money to rent other fields, in this case we can have our own field and profit off renting it out.

Through out these comments, Dewey mentioned concerns over finances and addressing other fields.

After the comments from the public were closed, the engineers and BA had another chance to speak

Greg asks the engineers if this plan allows for any movement of items to address concerns. The engineers state that what we have is a concept plan, essentially a first draft.

Ed asks if we move certain things around is adding additional parking possible? He also thinks the pickleball court should be moved somewhere else.

Dewey states that all the plans will need to go through the planning board. They will address all of the concerns around ambulance and other parking issues. Dewey suggests keeping the basketball courts as they are used often. He would also like to see a better sketch of the field as the one provided is too conceptual.

Mike suggests taking a survey of the rec committee about their feeling on lights versus no lights. The committee is not ready to make that decision just yet and push back. They also need to understand how the lights work. The engineer states that they are LED lights, leading to a lot less light pollution.

Sara's input is wanting to keep two basketball courts to fit the need of the children.

Rhonda says a lot of these discussion go back and forth. She contributes this to never getting line by line expenses. No one can tell how much things cost.

Mike doesn't want to go back and forth regarding feedback. He will meet with the field committee and engineer and come up with a new plan in a few weeks

If the council gives the OK to this project by March, breaking ground can possibly take place in August.

#### Dan's recreation notes

- The winter recreation brochure went out. Dewey suggests printing it for the seniors.
- Basketball and wrestling numbers have steady registration numbers.
- Fall festival date was decided for 9/13. People prefer a Saturday versus a Sunday.
- Dan hands out the fee list, he does not think fees should be raised. This is based on raised taxes and other projects. He does want to increase the fee to rent the fields though.
- Dan suggests a 10-dollar fee increase for nonresidents for our programs. This money will go back into the program. This increase will start with the spring brochure.
- Dan and Patty will be going to Van Saun to decorate the tree as done every year
- 12/9 is the holiday lighting ceremony. Hillsdale helping Hillsdale is offering to help work the lighting ceremony Hillsdale helping Hillsdale is looking for gift card donations, they will communicate their needs themselves.
- Camp is the biggest money maker. Dan has a meeting scheduled to figure out what school the campers will be in due to the GW renovations.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47