

**Town of Westfield  
Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
March 1, 2021, 7:30pm**

- **OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT STATEMENT: Bogardus**

Pursuant to the rules of the Recreation Commission, a meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM on Monday, March 1, 2021. The meeting was held via Zoom, with all members and public attending virtually. The statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act was read.

- **ROLL CALL**

Present:

Monica Bergin, Amy Berman, Liz Chacko, Ron Feldman, Jennifer Gilman, Jonathan Glacken, Russell Howell, Paul Monusky, Jeffrey Perrella, Brad Rothenberg, Tony Stewart, Scott Katz (Town Council Liaison), Robert Garrison (BOE Liaison)

Also Present:

Don Bogardus – Director of Recreation  
Lauren Harmer - Recreation Events Specialist  
Linda Johnson - Program Coordinator  
Heather Re-Ferratti - Assistant Director of Recreation

Absent: None

- **FLAG SALUTE: Gilman**

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the February 1, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved on a motion by Amy Berman, seconded by Ron Feldman.

- **PUBLIC PORTION OF THE MEETING**

The public was invited to make comments to the commission. No comments were offered.

- **TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT: Katz**

Councilman Katz provided an update on the Bicycle Advisory Board which is currently accepting applications through March 12. The purpose of the board is to further the goals of the town's bike and pedestrian plan which will develop bike infrastructure and promote bike safety. Applications can be submitted at [www.westfieldnj.gov/bicycleadvisoryvolunteer](http://www.westfieldnj.gov/bicycleadvisoryvolunteer).

Councilman Katz informed the commission that an FAQ for the Houlihan/Sid Fay cell tower project has been published on the town's website at [www.westfieldnj.gov/houlihan\\_sidfay\\_proposal](http://www.westfieldnj.gov/houlihan_sidfay_proposal). The document details the proposal from AT&T for a new tower to be erected alongside the railroad tracks adjacent to the field and the town's demand that field improvements would be furnished by AT&T at no cost to the taxpayers should an agreement be made.

A town budget presentation will be made at the next town council meeting on March 9.

- **BOARD of EDUCATION LIAISON REPORT: Garrison**

Mr. Garrison updated the commission on the Board of Education's budget process which is ongoing. There will be a presentation at the next BOE meeting updating the situation regarding funding from the state followed by another budget meeting next week. Budget completion is expected at the end of March followed by submission to the County Superintendent for approval before being sent to the state.

Expansion of in-person classroom learning for grades K through 2 will commence on March 15 with students returning to school five days per week. Roll out of grades 3 through 5 in-person, five-day learning will be March 22.

The next BOE meeting is Tuesday, March 2 during which a presentation on the recently announced next phase of vaccination eligibility, which will include teachers among other public sector employees, will be given.

- **DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Bogardus**

Mr. Bogardus announced that the artificial turf fields have been opened for soccer and lacrosse starting this week with natural turf fields expected to be available on April 1, weather permitting.

The latest executive order from Governor Murphy will allow for an increase in attendance for indoor sports to include spectators. A limit of 25 spectators will be enforced above the inclusion of athletes, game officials, coaches and two spectators per player.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- **POOL: Re-Ferratti**

Packets for 2021 pool registrations were mailed last Thursday. Thus far, 1,000 members have renewed. A reservation system will be in place again this season with the option for adding member guests up to fourteen days in advance. All guests must be registered to comply with contact tracing.

Health guidance from the CDC, state and local health officials will continue to be followed and any changes to the pool operating procedures as a result will be communicated to its members.

- **PARKS & FIELDS: Rothenberg**

The Edison park plan steering committee, BOE, and Recreation Commission will meet on Tuesday, March 2 to finalize the design and plan next steps.

The Houlihan/Sid Fay cell tower proposal from AT&T was addressed at the town council meeting last week. Following the parks plan recommendations, any deal with the company would prioritize additional parking for the site with all costs being absorbed by AT&T.

The town is still awaiting DEP reports for Brightwood and Tamaques parks.

Sunday, February 28 was the final day for the Westfield Rink at Gumbert Park. The dismantling of the rink began today.

➤ **FINANCE: Berman**

Trust Accounts A & B have been merged into one account marked “A.” Trust Account C houses user fees and helps fund park studies and small park improvements. The collection of user fees for the spring season is starting now. We are working on a way to educate commissioners on trust account usage guidelines with the town administrator and CFO.

The 2020 revenue report is expected to be provided soon.

➤ **PROGRAMS: Perrella**

Senior program offerings this spring will include mahjong, craft classes, origami, Zumba, virtual webinars on Medicare and grieving (in partnership with Lifelong Westfield).

Some pre-COVID programming will return with new guidelines in accordance with recommendations from health officials. For instance, fewer drop-ins will be permitted to allow for contact tracing.

Teen sports registration opened last Monday. Go to [www.westfieldnj.gov/recreation](http://www.westfieldnj.gov/recreation) for signups.

There is a possibility playground camp will be moved to Memorial and Tamaques to accommodate social distancing and based on location availability through the Board of Education. Outdoor facilities (handwashing stations, portable restrooms, tents, etc.) will need to be rented and will result in higher camper fees.

New program suggestions and ideas can be sent to [recreation@westfieldnj.gov](mailto:recreation@westfieldnj.gov).

➤ **MEDIA RELATIONS: Howell**

The inaugural subcommittee meeting was held on February 24. The subcommittee will communicate with Kim Forde, the town’s Public Information Officer, on public communication through various channels. The town’s main tool is the use of its Facebook page which currently lists over 5,000 followers with the Recreation page having over 2,300. It is the town’s policy not to engage residents on various Westfield-related groups that have been created on Facebook opting to communicate only through the town’s official pages. The recreation commissioners will continue to engage with the public by cross-posting Town of Westfield content to WF-related groups to keep the community abreast of town news and updates.

The town will make use of the annual postage paid mailers for the conservation center and include promotional material for the pool and recreation programs.

Mayor Brindle, Town Administrator Gildea, and PIO Forde will lead all comms on the Edison park project with the advice of the Recreation Commission.

➤ **OLD BUSINESS:**

None

➤ **NEW BUSINESS:**

Talie Schaible of Girl Scout Troop 40452 Silver Award – Tamaques Park

Talie Schaible of Girl Scout Troop 40452 presented her Silver Award project for Tamaques Park. The plan would entail constructing a fairy trail in the backwoods of the park, behind the creek, building small forts and other structures for the public to enjoy in a COVID safe environment. A path would need to be cleared for the trail which would use woodchips from the conservation center. Fairy path markers would be installed on trees in addition to other signage pending an on-site review by Director Bogardus. The installation is envisioned as semi-permanent with future Girl Scout troops maintaining the site to earn a fairy trail badge.

A request by Ms. Schiabile was made to use the Tamaques pavilion on May 16 for a staging area to allow for a scout building day to start the project. The timeline for completion is June.

Upon approval by the commission, the next step would be meeting with Don Bogardus and Town Administrator Jim Gildea to move forward with town council approval.

A motion to move forward with the request from Brad Rothenberg was unanimously approved and seconded by Russ Howell.

Jessica Currie of Girl Scout Gold Award - Sycamore Field

Jessica's mother Beth Currie offered a presentation of the project which will construct a labyrinth and walking path for small children adjacent to the playground, between the playground and Sycamore Street. The project was designed with input from the DiFalco family and is meant to act as a bookend for the memorial that will be created for Theresa DiFalco at the opposite end of the playground. The labyrinth will use 600 to 700 individually painted rocks which will be sealed with a UV-resistant silicone sealant and glued together in groups of six to eight to prevent theft. A walking path will line the labyrinth and be made of mulch which could be replenished annually by the town. Upon approval by the commission, the project would need to go before the town council.

A motion to move forward with the request by Jeffery Perrella was unanimously approved and seconded by Monica Bergin.

James Leitner Mission Clean Water 24-Hour Race in Tamaques Park

James Leitner was not in attendance for the meeting. After a review of his correspondence by Mr. Bogardus, the commission tabled the request until more information on expected participation and other details could be obtained.

Girls Softball League of Westfield Storage Container at Memorial Park

Robert Zerafa, President of the Girls Softball League of Westfield, requested an additional 20 ft. x 8 ft. x 8 ft. storage container be placed next to the three existing containers at the park. The added equipment needed to accommodate social distancing coupled with the popularity of the program, with over 500 players per season, has necessitated additional storage.

A motion to approve the request was voted unanimously in favor and seconded by Amy Berman.

➤ **CORRESPONDENCE:**

All Correspondences were e-mailed to the Commission Members

*Next Scheduled Commission Meeting – Monday, April 5, 2021 at 7:30pm*

Perrella motion to adjourn. Berman second. Unanimous close.