

**HOPATCONG RECREATION COMMISSION  
MAY 11, 2004**

The meeting of the Hopatcong Recreation Commission was opened by John Young at 8:00 p.m. with a statement that this meeting is held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 et seq., annual notice having been forwarded to The New Jersey Herald, The Daily Record and The News-Leader and posted on the bulletin Board maintained in the Municipal Building for public announcements.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Dave Barnish  
Janet Bunnicant  
Dave Levin  
Joan Reilly  
Dennis Tobin  
John Young

**EXCUSED:** Cindy Klein

Also in attendance were Debbie Armeno, Recreation Coordinator, Laurie Spaziani, Council Liaison and Mayor Richard Hodson.

John Young led the Salute To The Flag. John announced that everyone should have a packet containing information regarding use of Veteran's Field from both Hawk Soccer and Warriors Football as well as all the permit requests for the Fall Season.

**MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Debbie Toropiw is coming in front of the Recreation Commission with a problem that there is no handicapped parking at Veteran's Field. Debbie has been in touch with Chief John Swanson who passed it on to Debbie Armeno, and to date Debbie Toropiw has not received a phone call back from anyone. Debbie commented that she believes that a field as large as Veteran's Field should have handicapped parking, a sign or blue lines, and that nothing has been done about this, and this is unacceptable. Debbie came to the meeting tonight looking for someone to point her in the right direction.

John Young said that he doesn't have the knowledge necessary to answer Debbie Toropiw's question but that he will speak to Chief Swanson.

Debbie Armeno said that for now, she was going to cone off enough spots to accommodate the handicapped people and their program. When the parking lot is paved and the light situation is finished, it was going to be lined and black top from the parking lot up to the field. Debbie said Chief Swanson said the reason you can't paint the blue

lines on the rocks is because the rocks would be moved and the signs can't go up anywhere because you cannot legally enforced it because it is not paved.

John Young asked Debbie if she could get four signs and place one on either side of each opening at the fence.

Debbie Toropiw said anything will do for now, even if it's temporary until the field gets paved.

Laurie Spaziani told Debbie Toropiw that she will bring this matter back to Mayor and Council and get a permanent and long term solution on this matter.

Gary Cooper, the former Vice-President of Hopatcong Hawks Soccer is attending the meeting this evening regarding the fall permits and use of the fields. Gary said there was a mutual agreement between football and soccer that soccer would not touch Jefferson Field during the season and Squire Field would not be touched until September 15<sup>th</sup>. Gary said this agreement was made prior to him coming into the program and in the process, football would not touch Veteran's Field. Now football and soccer put in fall permits because the lights are up. Nothing is in writing, but it was discussed, Gary just wanted this on record.

John Young is disputing what is said because Warriors Football never requested Squire Field past September 15<sup>th</sup> and it was never permitted past September 15<sup>th</sup>. John said he has been the general manager of Warriors Football since 1985 and he didn't know of any agreement not to request any fields in town, nor for soccer to request any fields in town.

Nick Nemeth commented that John DeSilva told him that he did meet with John Young and did have that agreement about the football/soccer permits. Nick read a letter from Dan Cotrau addressed to the Recreation Commission stating that there was a verbal agreement regarding this matter. Nick said Debbie Armeno requested a letter as to how many kids were thought would be using the field for soccer and was told that the letter would be shared with football and was also told that whatever letters football wrote would be shared with soccer. John Young asked Nick who it was that told him that the two letters would be shared by the two organizations. Nick said Debbie Armeno told him about the letters at a soccer meeting. Nick said he was informed that the letters were withdrawn and what the status was on this matter.

John Young said he does not remember making any such statement regarding the fields, and the bottom line is that we have two requests for the same field. We've asked for additional information, and the Commission will make a decision on what field permits they will issue.

Chris Anderson, President of Warriors said the letter was handed to the Recreation Commission last month.

Butch Bunnivant, Vice-President Hopatcong Warriors commented that there was never an agreement with soccer that he knows of.

Trisha Acierno is requesting what training, if any, is applicable for the Hopatcong coaches and what is the protocol. Debbie Armeno said that would have to be discussed with the Hawks Soccer Board.

John Young said that the town has not mandated that all volunteer coaches be Rutgers certified. It is encouraged by the Commission, but not mandated.

Denise Gaccione would like to start a volley ball league for the kids in town. Debbie Armeno told Denise that there's an adult league that plays on Monday night, but the only possible school for kids would be the all-purpose room at Tulsa Trail and maybe we could set something up for the fall.

### **MEETING CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC**

John Young stated that there is a special child for the Summer Recreation Program but the child is going away in only two weeks and John would like to address this to the Board and if the family can pay the appropriate amount for only two weeks of the program. Debbie Armeno said she spoke to the Administrator and he said he has the backing of the municipality but that the Recreation Commission would have to set a price.

Joan Reilly said that this is setting a bad precedent for the future and this can cause losing a lot of money on this program that has to be subsidized by the town's tax dollars.

John Young said that this is a very valid point.

Joan Reilly made a motion to waive the fee for the special needs child for the Recreation Commission. Janet Bunnivant seconded the motion and all were in favor.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Debbie Armeno announced that Jefferson Field has become the new "Modick Park" and the neighbors are complaining about the kids playing on the field and the older boys are hitting the balls into their homes. Debbie said that we need to think about how the Commission is going to handle this matter. The police have no recourse and we cannot lock the field and remove the children, but by the Commission recommending to Mayor and Council that we would like an age restriction.

Dennis Tobin is questioning that if you're sixteen years old and a group of kids want to organize some type of baseball or softball, is there an area in town they can go to other than Jefferson Field. Debbie said there is Veteran's Field. Joan Reilly said that if we bar the kids from going on Jefferson Field, then where are they going to go? Debbie said she is at wits end and what should she do. Joan said that this is a park and she would still rather see the kids hang out there rather than at the shopping plaza or in the streets.

Debbie said she doesn't know what to do and this is why she is bringing this matter to the Recreation Commission.

Janet Bunnivant said that if it's a matter of playing ball, then that's what the field is there for, but if the balls are going over the fence and deliberately hitting the homes than it becomes a police matter.

John Young said that the only thing we might be able to do is put up a sign that says "Batting From Home Plate Only." Dennis Tobin said this is a good starting point.

Debbie said the Grand Opening of the Roller Rink is on Sunday, May 16, 2004, there will be some free clinics in June to get the kids interesting and to go over some skills. Debbie would also like to do a "Movie in the Park" and would like the Commission to think about possibly funding it or would like to do this during Hopatcong Days; also Laser Light Family Bowling; two Broadway shows; open skate park meeting and Debbie asked Joan about the bus quotes for Summer Recreation.

Mayor Hodson said Art Buehrer is working with the Administrator on this matter.

Dennis Tobin made a motion to give the field committee in coordination with Debbie's office authority to make approval for the summer park and field permits. Janet Bunnivant seconded the motion and all were in favor.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 13, 2004 MINUTES**

Joan Reilly made a motion to approve the April 13, 2004 minutes. Dave Levin seconded the motion and all were in favor.

#### **ADJOURN**

Joan Reilly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Janet Bunnivant seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Filoso  
Recording Secretary