

Warren Township Recreation Advisory Committee
Minutes of June 2, 2020 Meeting

The meeting of the Warren Township Recreation Advisory Committee convened at 7:07 pm on Tuesday, June 2, 2020, virtually via Zoom due to the pandemic and keeping consistent with the social distance order.

In attendance were: Joe Filo, Linda Bosco-Devine, David Cole, Aparna Virmani, Recreation Director Joe Passaro and Township Committee Person Jolanta Maziarz.

Open Public Meeting Statement - Adequate notice of this meeting was given by posting a copy on the Township Bulletin Board and sending a copy to the Township Clerk, Courier News, and Echoes Sentinel as required by the Open Public Meeting Act.

Dave Cole motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes from October 2, 2019 and Joe Filo 2nd.

Linda Bosco-Devine motioned to approve the regular meeting minutes from November 6, 2019 and Joe Filo 2nd.

Recreation Advisory Committee Secretary, Amanda Altavilla stated since there has not been a meeting this year the Committee would need to nominate and vote for a chair. Dave Cole nominated Linda Bosco-Devine as Chair, and Aparna Virmani 2nd, with all others in favor.

DIRECTORS REPORT- Joe Passaro reviewed key points from the Directors Report.

- See attached

DISCUSSION

Recreation Director, Joe Passaro discussed the difficulties that the department has faced during COVID-19 and the waiting on the guidelines for camp and activities from the Governor after the Executive Order was announced that camps can begin on July 6. He stated that we could not move forward without the guidelines since it would dictate how the camps would need to operate. A short survey was sent out to residents and past campers to gauge the interest for camp and as of today, there were 106 responses. Joe stated that 20 surrounding towns have cancelled camp and he believes that the guidelines will be tough just after seeing the CDC guidelines. Joe Filo asked if there were guidelines if a camper became sick during camp and Joe Passaro answered by saying that temperatures would have to be taken in the morning and a separate area would need to be set up for sick campers; if someone became sick camp would be shut down for a period of time. Joe Passaro stated that we do not need the liability or give Warren a "black eye" if someone where to get sick. Jolanta emphasized that the Township Committee wants to protect campers and that she does not see a live camp happening this summer since the Governor sat for too long to make an announcement and that an application in order to run camp needs to be submitted to the state by June 15. She also talked about camp counselors being concerned with working and Joe Passaro added by saying that interviews were conducted but counselors did say that they were concerned. Joe said that the Township Administrator is pressing for a recommendation to be given to the Township Committee regarding camp and he said after the conversation with the Advisory Committee that he would send a recommendation soon instead of waiting for the guidelines from the Department of Health.

Joe Passaro stated that a virtual camp is ready to go and explained the different activities that would occur. Amanda stated that 20% of the responses of the survey showed interest in a virtual camp and she shared her screen virtually to show the interactive slideshow that was created by current camp directors, Franco Caruso and Jess Castaño. Jolanta stated that there

might be a problem with children on computers all day since they may be burnt out due to virtual school and she wants to make sure we will have enough to pay our coordinators to make the program worth it.

Dave Cole asked if summer concerts would be tougher to pull together than camp. Joe Passaro explained the possibilities of what we could do such as utilize the Municipal Field and create pods to encourage social distancing. Dave suggested residents could register ahead of the time for the concert or have a Zoom concert. Aparna suggested having a drive in concert. Joe Passaro stated that the Lions Club would be doing a drive in movie since they cannot have the Expo this year. He also went on to explain that everything is lined up and ready to go for the concerts such as stage and bands but we are just waiting on guidance from the State to see if it is allowed.

Joe Passaro discussed the pavilion project that it is in the final stages and there will soon be a preliminary cost given to us by the architect. He also mentioned that recreation will receive a portion of Lisa Barnett's trust but her estates have not been quantified yet and this donation could go towards the project. Jolanta stated that she wants the committees input on the pavilion before she goes back to the Township Committee. She stated that she wants feedback on functionality and look. Jolanta stated the importance that we need to make sure that the pavilion functions the way we envisioned it and she stated that the Township Committee already took a position that the fireplace is not necessary. Dave asked if the existing structure would be removed or extended. Joe stated that after surveys and studies of the existing structure it would be cheaper to take down the existing building and start from scratch. He will be sending the updated renderings and details next week to the committee for feedback.

Joe Filo asked about the status of the Dealaman Pond Dredging project and it is on track to be done. Dave asked about the status of the trails and Joe stated that the Adopt-A-Trail program is on hold due to COVID and there were four sponsors committed to the program.

Jolanta discussed that she would like the Library Advisory Board and the Recreation Advisory Committee to collaborate on certain projects for residents such as a book club. She also stated that the Township Committee will also be holding a special meeting tomorrow to approve outdoor dining, merchandising and fitness classes to start on June 15 and permits will need to be submitted to the Recreation Office.

Aparna spoke that Warren has many cultures in town and Recreation should hold events a few times a year to celebrate different cultural events like the Light Celebration Indian Festival and Chinese New Year. Joe stated that last year we had a woman who wanted to coordinate a Holi event but it fell through. He told Aparna to come in the office and sit down to discuss the different ideas that she had for cultural events.

ADJOURNMENT 8:10 PM Next meeting, Wednesday, August 5, 7 pm - Warren Town Hall Springdale Conference Room

Submitted by: Amanda Altavilla, Recreation Advisory Committee Secretary

Director's Report 2019 -2020:

It has been a difficult stretch for Warren Recreation as well the Advisory Committee. The COVID -19 crisis has clearly been a detriment to our programs and events. As far as the Committee is has been very difficult to find members and get them appointed. Given that we press on, below you will find an update on Capital projects, programs and events as they are in real time. Please, as usual, have any ideas and concerns ready for our ZOOM meeting on Jun. 2nd . There will be an honest attempt to keep it to 1hour, thanks.

Projects:

Expansion of the Pavilion:

*Final Details of the structure to be discussed with the architect shortly and then it will go for estimates. A new design has been approved by the TC, from the first architects rendering. There have been changes to size and configuration that will provide more efficient use as well as lower costs.

*New playground on M5...due to complaints from the closure of Playgrounds during Summer camps. As part of a larger plan to include 2 new basketball courts in the future I proposed a new playground to be placed in the infield of M5, obviously doing away with a little used baseball/softball field. It would give residents another option for children in the summer when camps close the main playground. Proper fencing is part of the project to provide security for Campers and staff.

*Working with DPW, Tennis and Basketball courts are due to be resurfaced. At this point, I do not have the timeline.

PROGRAMS:

*Most are canceled for the Summer or postponed waiting for guidance from State and local government.

Warren Recreation Canceled:

-Adopt A Trail

-Chair Yoga- went virtual on Cable channel

-Meditation- went virtual on Cable channel

-Spring Tennis Instruction

-Field Hockey Clinic

-Summer Tennis Instruction - ?

-Camps-

Teen, Lego/Robotics, Little Kids, Theater are canceled.

Playground camp-?

Summer Concerts-?

Fishing Derby- canceled

Youth Summer sports canceled until further notice.

FACILITIES:

CLOSED – SPORTS FIELDS, PLAYGROUNDS, PAVILION, BASKETBALL COURTS

TENNIS COURTS –reopened on May 9th, with guidelines

TRAILS – OPEN

*If there is no physical Playground camp this summer, we have put together a Virtual summer camp for residents.

To include:

Educational programs

Virtual tours

Puzzles of local Schools and buildings

Yoga

Workout videos with a Trainer
Art classes
Reading sessions
ETC.