

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting - December 1, 2021 via Zoom (draft)

Attendees: Randi Rabinowitz, Dan Margoshes, Manny Enes, Kristen Vetter, Tina Maresca, Karrie Sergio, Cindy Fasolino, Brittany Ross, Manny Rawlings, Heather Castellani Milboer

Present: Jason Pinto, Jeff Ahne, Nora Lucas

Opening:

Randi opened the meeting. She asked if someone would volunteer to take the minutes. Karrie will take the minutes for this meeting. Randi asked for a motion to approve the November minutes. Kristen made a motion, second by Heather, all approved the November minutes.

Harbormaster:

Jeff LaRusso, Harbormaster, joined us. Season runs from May 1 to November 1. Just started this year doing kayak winter storage, had 13 kayaks this year. In the process of building docks for East and West basins.

Randi asked how many people are employed and what kind of things do they do? Per Jeff, 3 people are employed, himself, Kristen (office manager) and one laborer. With the dock rebuild, Jeff and the laborer are building the docks all winter and summer, Kristen maintains the office, is doing the renewals for 2022 now and preparing to send them out after the new year.

Dan asked how many slips and moorings? Per Jeff, moorings are about 170, plus 30 in Larchmont Harbor, a portion of Larchmont Harbor is in the VOM. Slips for kayaks and boats are around 400. Dan asked how that compares with Rye and New Rochelle? Jeff said New Ro takes bigger boats, they have bigger slips. Harbor is only up to 22' except one dock, S dock is the only dock we can put boats up to 25' on. New Ro and Rye are bigger marinas with bigger boats. Dan said they're also tighter. Jeff said it's a water issue for us, you can't encroach on the channel, monitored by Coast Guard. In Rye, they only have fairways, the Coast Guard doesn't monitor those like they do the channels. Dan asked what's the breakdown between resident and non-resident? Jeff said around 51% resident, 49% non-resident. Mix between Town, Larchmont, New Ro and upstate NY. Dan asked if there was empty space? Jeff said inside, where he can only put smaller boats, no one buys 14' – 15' boats anymore, even 22' are starting to get less. A Dock has 43 vacant, D Dock has 37 vacant, most on the inside where you can't put a 21 or 22' boat because there is not enough water to get out at low tide. He increased in-water kayak for those locations. Slips are 9' when making the docks. Dan asked how those 80 empty spaces compare to prior years? Per Jeff, it's going down. They're starting to build A dock now.

Dan said we have water now, any talk about adding electric? Jeff said, yes, it's possible in the future. Hangars are built inside the dock and the water lines on the new docks are inside the dock underneath. It would be a capital project, don't know where they would have to run the power from. Once the docks are built, he will look into that, right now his main concern is to get the docks safe. Dan asked what kind of premium we could get with electric? Jeff said with power we could probably increase rates 15 – 20 %. 22' boats don't require a lot of power. 40' boats are where the people want shore power where they're going to run ac. With the little boats people are putting solar panels, they're getting so efficient.

Karrie asked a question about fees for people who don't have a permit. Over the summer the sign at the ramp said \$10.00 for kayaks, no mention of paddleboards. A friend who doesn't have a permit went to pay but it was \$20.00 at the booth, the rates went up. She thinks \$20.00 is a lot for a paddleboarder and it drives people over to Bleeker where they can park and launch for free. Per Jeff, as far as he knows Bleeker is now shut down because it is private property so you can't launch from that beach anymore. Karrie said she knows people did all summer but maybe they're going to start enforcing that? More concerned with the \$20 fee, especially for a paddleboarder. Jason said it's a combined fee that includes parking. Last year it was \$12.00 to park and \$10.00 to launch, now it is \$20.00 to park and launch. Karrie said she gets a permit for that reason but it may not be cost effective for everyone to get a permit so feels it's a little steep. Jason said people pay \$12 just to park and go to the playground, so people have to pay \$12 to park anyway and then it's \$8 to launch a paddleboard or kayak, which is pretty inexpensive. Karrie still thinks it's a lot for a one-time fee to just walk down the ramp and drop a paddleboard in the water. Jeff said another option is that when he built the new kayak docks, he made paddleboard spots so they can actually store paddleboards now too. When you rent that spot you get a parking pass included. Karrie said that was great to hear.

Kristen asked about the location and quantity of kayak racks and potentially this new paddleboard rack location. Jeff said the new kayak/paddleboard rack was finished late in August so they kept it in the West Basin for this year, but next year it will be in the East Basin, inside of D Dock, and the other kayak docks they built are in the West Basin next to the other ones that were there. Kristen asked whether existing permit holders get to choose where they want to be and will there be a difference in price? Jeff said the price is all the same and if someone on a rack now wanted to move, he has limited space because they went off the waiting list when new docks were built. There are still a couple so he could move some people around if they wanted to be on a different basin. Just call the office.

Dan asked if we looked into reviving paddleboard or kayak rental? Jeff said to do it we would bring in another contractor because the insurance cost is astronomical, should be an outside source, would be in the same location as it was.

Dan asked how we compare with other launch options in the area, kind of agree with Karrie that \$20 seems like a lot but don't know how that compares. Jeff said the only other two are Rye and Glen Island and we're cheaper than everybody else. There's like no water in Rye anymore at low tide, they're trying to get that dredged and can't. Boaters in Rye can't get out of the harbor at low tide.

Dan wasn't sure if we were aware but somebody arranged a concert on barges floating at the entrance to the Harbor. Might be a fun thing to do in the West Basin and we have a natural amphitheater by the Post Rd, something to think about. Jeff said they could look into that. We live in this waterfront community and so many residents don't take advantage of it. For people that don't want to make a commitment with a boat, if we offered some options that more people could do on a casual basis, renting or chartering, he understands that insurance is probably massive, but just to bring people down to the water more. Jeff said they were going to try and offer access to a couple kayaks if someone wanted to try, like a loaner type thing, waiting to hear back from insurance how that would work.

Randi asked Jeff about plans for future besides the docks. Per Jeff, update the locker rooms, water supply to the docks needs pipe replacement, the sea wall in the West Basin needs to be repaired. It's on the capital list, going back and forth with the DEC, they want rip rap not a wall, for our purposes that wouldn't work. Dan said it's been in the capital budget for a long time, thinks rip rap would be a massive liability issue. Manny asked who's responsible for the wall, per Jeff it's the Village. The County is responsible for the pier which went out for bid. We're responsible for the sea walls in the East and West basins. Per Jeff, he got 140 feet of the sea wall done last year after one of the storms covered under FEMA (cost \$107,000). Section in the West Basin has an issue because the buildings are right behind it with the locker rooms, the Marine unit, and the Coast Guard.

Manny Enes asked if any plans for a walking path as the walls are replaced? Jeff said once the DEC lets us know what we can and can't do then we can start to have those discussions. Rip rap will make it hard to do that because it will be a gentle slope all the way up. Dan asked if any other harbors like ours have rip rap? Jason spoke about a new park being built on the west side in NYC, Gansevoort Park, it's going to have rip rap. Jeff said the County Pier by the beach will be rip rap all around that. Manny asked Jeff if they're doing a gazebo or anything? Jeff said they are doing a path with lights and benches, doesn't know about a gazebo. Manny said it would be nice to copy something like Manor Park with gazebos. Jeff Ahne said at the end of County path will be like eco-paver, and the very tip of the pier will be like an eco-paver kind of board walk. Manny thought it would be nice to take it to the next level and build something really good. Is there someone we could speak with? Jeff will check with Dan Sarnoff.

Sportime:

Randi wanted to mention that the Sportime contract was re-signed for two years. Randi thinks it's positive because in the last fiscal year they contributed about \$275,000 of revenue to the Village for the year, non-tax dollars. Per Tina, that was renewed because of Covid. On the other committee that she's on, they were to review that and come up with other plans but since they weren't able to meet, they renewed Sportime's contract to give the committee more time.

Dog Park Update:

Nora said the dog park sub-committee made the recommendation that the dog park be in Harbor Island Park between the sewage treatment plant and the schoolhouse, which is not an official field and the soccer contingent agreed would be a good place for it. Jerry had done some research, the dog park sub-committee met to talk about the 5 sites that were looked at and create an updated report for the BOT so they can hear why this is the location that is recommended. Dan, Jeff, Jason and Nora will be putting that together, circulate back to the dog park sub-committee and then to the BOT. Karrie asked when this would all be put together and in front of the board? Nora is hoping for the first meeting in January. Then we have to figure out the funding.

Parks & Rec update:

Per Jeff Ahne, they're mulching leaves in parks, hung some holiday decorations on Mamaroneck Avenue and working on the Christmas drive through, which is a big project. They're trying to add a little more jazz this year.

Karrie asked if any volunteer opportunities for high school kids looking for community service hours with any of these projects? Jason said pre-pandemic we took volunteers all the time, since the pandemic they really haven't but if someone wanted to, he could take a few more volunteers to help out. Usually takes volunteers just on event days. Nora asked how old they have to be? Jason said you have to be 16 to be employed by the Village, they've taken volunteers 14 to 15 years old usually, 12, 13, it depends on your child and their level of responsibility.

Per Jason, doing their holiday program and ornament decorating. The tree in front of the pavilion is a Norwegian Spruce, 20' tall. He has 235 ornaments all decorated by kids within the Village, they're acrylic cut outs like stars or presents and snowmen. Starting to get those and Santa letters back. The other thing he's working on is capital work. In the next meetings will discuss Lanza field lights which they have proposals back, red and blue room floor improvements, those are the first two projects they would like to get done in the next capital cycle. The other thing is field revenues from the sports organizations, expenses/maintenance costs and planning for camp.

Tina asked if tree lighting is in person. Per Jason, yes, in person or you can stream it on Dec 11th and right after people can go to the holiday drive through. You have to register for Saturday (residents only) because it's more interactive, but it's free on Sunday. Heather said the ornaments were really awesome. Brittany said they didn't do them because they're Jewish but thinks it's an adorable idea and loves the snowflakes on Mamaroneck Ave., it really makes the Village feel like the holiday season. Jason said they could add dreidels and menorahs next year, he doesn't want to leave anyone out. He and Brittany can brainstorm more for next year. Heather said the ornaments were more snowflakes and snow globes that could hang not necessarily on a Christmas tree but somewhere else, they weren't so Christmassy they were more wintery. Jason said they tried to make it more holiday/winter, not everybody has a Christmas tree, it's ornament decorating and the flyer has a Christmas tree on the front, but we can work on something for sure.

Randi said it looked like the Turkey Trot was an incredible success. Jason said they had 1180+ people, over 400 kids ran. The weather was great, the majority of people were from our area, it's very local. We're one of the only municipal rec depts that does a road race of that scale and he thinks they did well. Randi said she got great feedback, what LMC-TV put out was awesome and all the social media made the Rec and Parks dept shine. Jason said for this event the work between departments is huge, Parks and Rec, DPW, police, EMS, fire dept, so it's a great way to see the Village work together on this one.

Closing:

Randi acknowledged it was her last meeting as well as Dan M. and Manny Enes who are termed out. Jason thanked all for their many years of service and community pride. Dan said he appreciates everything he's learned. Randi praised Jason and Jeff for how tremendously improved the whole operation is and all that they do. Manny said he's really proud the way things are being handled, Jason and Jeff are doing an amazing job. Nora thanked Randi for being the chair for the past few years and for taking the minutes. Jason said minutes are going to have to be on rotation.

Happy holidays and Happy New year!