

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting - November 2, 2022, 7:00 PM

Village Courtroom 169 Mount Pleasant Ave, Mamaroneck, NY 10543

Attendees: Tina Maresca, Kristen Vetter, Brittany Ross, Tim O'Connor, Carlo Reca, Karrie Sergio, Manny Rawlings

Absent: Heather Castellani Milboer, Cindy Fasolino, Nora Lucas

Present: Jason Pinto, Jeff Ahne

Opening:

Tina made a motion to open the meeting, Kristen seconded.

Code Enforcement/Quality of Life Issues in Village Parks - Discussion w/ Lt. Gatta of the VMPD:

The Commission expressed their concerns to Lt. Gatta about lack of patrolling/enforcement to prevent crime i.e., garbage, glass bottles, smoking, drugs, graffiti, etc., by the Park Rangers, who don't get out of the car to patrol on foot or have any real authority. It was recommended by the Commission that it would be helpful if the Park Ranger cars could be equipped with a spotlight and a speaker/PA system (similar to police cars). Everyone felt this may be a good start at improving the safety and patrolling of the parks. The ability to shine a light into the park would be helpful to the Park Ranger to see if anyone is in the park and may also scare off anyone that is trespassing in the park. There is one constable with more authority at the Harbor 8-4pm on the weekends in season, and there are two Park Rangers that currently work 7-11pm (only one ranger per night), 7 days/week from May-November. After 11pm and after the Park Ranger season comes to an end, the police patrol the parks with assigned grounds checks on a rotating basis. Other suggestions included extending the hours of the Park Rangers to midnight, and also extending their season to begin April 1 rather than May. That would come down to a budget allocation for personnel. Cameras would be helpful as a deterrent so it was asked where the Village was with installation and if they were going to cover all the parks. We were told that is the goal. E-bikes were also suggested but cost would be a factor. The Commission acknowledged that it would be pure luck to be at the right place at the right time to catch someone in the act. In addition, it was asked if the department has data of how many viable calls were made by the Park Rangers to the police department when they encountered a problem and needed assistance. This would be helpful to know so the Commission can help assess whether this is the most efficient enforcement moving forward. If we are able to obtain that information, we would like to have another conversation. Tina to send an email.

Approval of Minutes:

Tina made a motion to approve the October 2022 minutes, Brittany seconded, all approved.

Inclusive Programming for Children with Special Needs – discussion with Mia Enes:

Mia introduced herself as a lifelong resident as well as her husband who is a Rye Neck Alumni, VOM police officer and owner of Robert's dept store. She has two kids, one who is 4 and minimally verbal autistic. She wanted to suggest some ways to make the Parks & Recreation programming a little more inclusive. There are a lot of kids that have CPSE services in this community that would sign up, separate from South

East, if there was programming available for them. It was said that kids are able to participate in rec sports but you need the right coach and they are not specially trained. Mia said New Rochelle and Eastchester have some programming they call special recreation but she thinks adaptive recreation would be more appropriate and inclusive. She just wants us as a community to think about her child and how they can be integrated into the community. A lot of other municipalities are running special recreation in their space. We also do not have enough space. Mia suggested having a little group that meets and plays a different sport a week. We do not even have that for anyone right now. Tina mentioned Backyard Sports, an organization that runs sports programs out of SUNY Purchase and could easily bring a program here. Mia mentioned Claudine Gebhard who runs I Build 4 Life, she is a special ed teacher who knows her stuff. Jason said we could set ourselves up to have an adaptive recreation budget line and try out programs. Jeff suggested we could have them build scarecrows and pumpkins and do arts and crafts stuff. Mia suggested we could add sensory friendly hours to things in a setting that is safe. Maybe with meet Santa it could open 30 minutes early because her child absolutely cannot wait on line. We would have to make accommodations, but we need indoor space, to hire someone specially trained, and commit resources. In the meantime, we can do a bunch of little things but we would not be able to have a full slate of programming like South East Consortium at this time. Tina suggested that a couple of us work with Jason and Mia to come up with something to present to the Board. Tina and Brittany said they would like to be a part of it. Mia also asked about making the parks more adaptive too with more sensory components, which we have been doing as we update the parks.

Parks and Recreation Revenue Discussion: Carlo started the conversation with how the trust account was started years ago and is basically wiped out with Jefferson Ave Park. At some point we are going to be doing HIP which is going to cost somewhere between three quarters of a million to a million dollars. So how do we fund this? Money needs to be allocated for the parks for whatever it is i.e., the spray ground, a basketball court, a volleyball court, expanding the pavilion, etc. Jason went over what we adopted, where we are currently at, variance to the adoption, and what's projected out, because our budget is June-June, so we have an idea of how much we bring in and how much things cost. If we want to change our bottom line we have to invest and spend money to make money and we need to somehow refund the trust account with certain monies coming in being allocated to the parks, so we need to know legally what we can do. Jason will make an inquiry with the Clerk-Treasurer.

Recreation Website Subcommittee Meeting Update:

Brittany, Cindy Nora, Robert and Jason met, they were tasked with looking at other similar municipal websites to see how they're built and who they're powered by, because our website is customized to our needs. Brittany and Cindy offered their services and are looking into what our options are but if we just want to do just the Parks Dept or do we do the entire Village website. The entire Village website is not ours. Karrie mentioned we were just looking for a brochure to be available so residents could see all the programs the Village offers throughout the seasons at any time, that seems to have been expanded. The website is a whole other issue and it should be done.

Commission Update:

Tina wanted to remind us that Cindy, Carlo, and Karrie's terms are up in December and we need to reply to Sally's email by the 11th if we want to stay on.

Parks Update:

Jeff said they're planting 234 bare root trees, the field that they closed is looking wonderful and green, they did the fall decorations, mums, plantings, and Christmas is coming up, every year they do a little more. Karrie asked if the trees could not be planted under the wires because then they just have to have maintenance out to cut the tree which just doesn't make sense. Jeff said they're getting there; they went to put in a tree and it was already hitting the wires so they didn't plant it.

Recreation Update:

Jason said the Board discussed the fee schedule and they haven't voted yet but they agreed to go with our recommendations. The Turkey Trot is coming up, they did a whole bunch of stuff for the fall, decorations and scarecrows, and they working on Christmas. Brittany asked if recreation had anything to do with the Chabad menorah lighting because she feels like there is a whole to do about Christmas and we don't do anything for Hanukkah. Tina asked about putting a menorah next to the Christmas tree at the Harbor and Jason said we would need to buy a one. Brittany also mentioned Kwanzaa has a lighting too. Tina mentioned the Town has a menorah on the corner of Weaver and Palmer. Karrie suggested the triangle by where Ralph's was, Jeff said there is no power there. Carlo suggested by the Post Office, again no power. Jeff said when all the bridge construction is done, they'd like to do something festive at the top of the Harbor entrance and there is power there already. Brittany said we don't need two events but suggested maybe we could partner with the Chabad.

Dog Park Update:

The Dog Park Committee is meeting tomorrow just to catch everybody up. Brittany said re: the dog park, around the west basin two nights of the last week she drove by and there were three or four cars illegally parked in the access driveway (where we suggested some parking for a dog park on Rushmore) with their dogs in that field. Karrie said that is a perfect example of her whole point in suggesting the west basin for a dog park.

Closing: Tina made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Kristen seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting is December 7th.