

Board of Recreation Commissioners

Egg Harbor Township, NJ

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, October 9, 2019

7:00pm

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Toni Rispoli, Recreation Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Opening Statement Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act

Rick Audet, Director of Parks and Recreation, read the opening statement.

IV. Roll Call:

Toni Rispoli, Chair - Present	Amy Smith – Present
William Warrell, Vice Chair – Present	Paul Trinkle – Present
Charles Gallagher – Present	Christine Gras, Secretary (Alt. 1) – Present
Paul Weldon – Present	Jonathan Parker (Alt. 2) – Present
Kevin Stetser – Excused	

V. Reading / Acceptance of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting September 11, 2019

Motion	To approve the 9/11/19 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. Motion made by Christine Gras Seconded by Bill Warrell
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

b. Special Meeting September 17, 2019

Motion	To approve the 9/17/19 Special Meeting minutes as presented. Motion made by Bill Warrell Seconded by Amy Smith
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 5-0-2. (Toni Rispoli and Paul Trinkle abstain)

VI. Public Comment

None.

VII. EHT Recognized Youth Sports Groups

Jamie Gillespie, 511 Glenn Ave, is the President of EHT Baseball. Jamie stated that it was brought to his attention recently that one non-resident player in the EHTBA travel program needs to be approved by the Recreation Commission. The player had previously been approved by the Commission. Jamie stated that he mistakenly thought that once approved, it was approved thereafter as well, rather than requiring approval each year. There is one player, last name Teaghan, on a roster. He was an EHT resident and had moved out of the Township recently. Jamie stated that this team is struggling with numbers for their roster and they needed Teaghan on the team. Jamie apologized to the Commission for his oversight. Jamie confirmed that no resident player was cut from this team at tryouts. Toni Rispoli summarized the rules and regulations pertaining to non-resident players.

Motion	To approve the non-resident player on the EHT Baseball travel team roster as presented. Motion made by Christine Gras Seconded by Charlie Gallagher
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

Jamie presented a question to the Commission asking if a player from the recreation program moves out of town can they be grandfathered in and allowed to play on a recreation team as a non-resident. Babe Ruth allows it within their rules and regulations. Toni Rispoli answered at this time that is not allowed. Rick Audet stated that the intent of the rule is for travel teams only and to help a team run that would otherwise have to fold if there were not enough kids to field a team after tryouts. Toni stated that we can further discuss as the Commission, but it's a no at this time.

Kathleen Glick, 1059 Ocean Heights Ave, attended the meeting for EHT Softball and is the president of the organization. Kathleen reviewed the list of travel teams one at a time and discussed the need for a travel player on their rosters. At the 18U level, they fielded a team with 10 players at a tournament recently. Toni Rispoli asked for them to confirm that no EHT kids were cut after tryouts, Kathleen confirmed that is correct. Toni asked the Commissioners if they had any further questions or comments.

Motion	To approve the non-resident players onto the EHT Youth Softball travel team rosters as presented. Motion made by Amy Smith Seconded by Paul Weldon
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

Toni Rispoli reminded the youth groups that all rosters, coach lists, practice and game schedules are due to Parks and Recreation at least two weeks prior to the start of practices.

Jamie Gillespie asked, for future reference, that since tryouts are in July, when do we come to the Commission meeting for approval on non-resident players? Toni Rispoli stated that he should come in immediately. Jamie discussed the condition of field 7 at Veteran's Memorial Park, the baseball board is examining field 7 as its next field for an upgrade. Kathleen Glick stated that softball field 7 has an irrigation issue and field 1 has a hole in the field she would like public works to fix. Kathleen further stated that the trash needs to be picked up. Rose Ivie, 64 Windsor Drive, stated that the dugout bench on

field 1 third base line, has an issue and needs to be addressed by public works also. Rick Audet stated that he would contact public works right away about the bench.

Mark Mensh, 2 Dockside Drive, YO board member provided an update for the Youth Organization. There are three more weeks left in their regular season, followed by playoffs. The fields have been ok this season. Paul Weldon stated that field 4 has had an irrigation issue this season and has been too wet. Toni Rispoli asked Rick Audet to meet with Public Works and address the issue.

VIII. Old Business

a. Complaint Against YO Cheer Coordinator

Toni Rispoli asked Mark Mensh if he wants to address the complaint against the cheer coordinator and summarize how it was handled by the YO board. There have been two recent complaints made by parents against the cheer coordinator that include calling a child directly on her cell phone when she did not attend practice and using a blindfold on a flyer during a drill. Christine Gras stated that at the last YO meeting two subcommittees were formed during the meeting on these two complaints. The members of the subcommittee changed after the meeting, Christine asked why that occurred. Mark Mensh asked what subcommittee members changed. Christine answered that Denise Savastano was not assigned to either subcommittee and she ended up being on one. Bud Brubaker was allegedly called and informed he did not need to be on the committee after the board named him to the committee.

Mark stated that he was not sure why this occurred and that he is in general more informed on football matters rather than cheer and did not have information on this specifically for the Commission. Christine Gras stated that on the complaint made against Jen Shaw on an alleged incident, normally the subcommittee would bring their findings back to the board for a vote. In this case, nothing was brought back to the full board for a decision. Mark Mensh stated that the board agreed to a written warning for Jen Shaw. Toni Rispoli stated that was the third complaint this season about Ms. Shaw. Mark Mensh stated that the board discussed the complaints against her and was unable to determine where the truth lied.

Christine stated that Jen Shaw and Tony Savastano were asked to come in to the Recreation Commission meeting to discuss the complaints made against Ms. Shaw. Christine stated that this issues highlights a fundamental problem with the way the YO board operates. The YO board found the complaint involving a phone call to a cheerleader to be inconclusive. Christine asked how it could be inconclusive when phone records showed three phone calls to the minor's phone from Ms. Shaw. Mark stated that the girl was absent from practice a lot. Jen had left her phone out and explained that a cheerleader must have made the call. Toni Rispoli stated that Jen Shaw knew in advance the cheerleader would not be attending that practice, how and why did three phone calls go to her phone from Jen Shaw's phone. Toni stated you do not call a child directly, you should only ever call the parent.

Bill Warrell stated that Mark is a general board member, why are we throwing all of these questions at him? He is here to discuss field conditions and general operations of YO.

Mark Mensh stated that the subcommittee voted to issue a verbal warning to Jen Shaw, the YO board changed it to a written warning.

Amy Smith stated that she feels bad that Mark has to field all of these questions, however this was not Mark's decision. Amy further stated that field conditions are important, however she is here as a Commissioner for the kids interests. She is not comfortable with how the process unfolded within the

Youth Organization, and other sports organizations have made more stringent penalties for lesser transgressions. She is mostly concerned on the safety aspect of the complaints, especially the cheerleader who was blindfolded during flyer drills. The mom of the daughter who was called by Jen Shaw's phone is new to town and has now quit the organization. This puts Egg Harbor Township in a very bad light. Amy stated that the story seemed to change during the special meeting as the phone call incident was discussed. She feels that this was a breach of their bylaws and other coaches have been suspended and the Recreation Commission is trying to do the right thing.

Mark Mensh stated that his general observation of Jen Shaw as cheer coordinator in recent years is that she does a lot of good for the organization. There are many issues that parents have in youth sports groups. There was a lot of information thrown at the YO board the night of the meeting. He stated that the girl missed 7 of 9 practices. Amy Smith asked if that is relevant. You do not call a child directly or ask someone on the team to call her. You have to use a different approach.

Helen Ginis, 11 Winners Court, is on the executive committee for YO. She stated that Jen Shaw has done a lot over the years for YO. However, there have been many parents who have had an issue with Ms. Shaw this season. There have been different issues, but they all spoke to a consistent problem in that a lot of the girls and parents are intimidated by Ms. Shaw and fear retribution. Amy Smith stated that there is a big difference between respect and fear and that possibly Ms. Shaw needs to step away for a short time and reflect on her operations as coach and coordinator. Mark asked if there had been issues with Jen Shaw brought up before this year.

Bill Warrell stated that he feels that YO has not done a good job in recent years in handling such matters and some aspects of their operations. He continued that YO at times makes decisions in best interest of their own board members and do not want to hold people accountable. Christine Gras stated that as president of EHT Soccer Club, she once suspended a coach for six months after receiving a complaint and investigating the issue. Mark stated that YO is different because it oversees two sports and it is hard to make decisions at times without knowing the sport very well.

Lisa Kaelble, 208 Bayberry Ave, has been a YO board member for the past number of years. She stated that there have been issues with Jen Shaw in the past. The board did not have an official vote when rendering their decision on discipline in the complaint that was made. Jonathan Parker stated that such decisions must be made within their rules and bylaws and the board should not "wing it."

Kathleen Glick, 1059 Ocean Heights Ave, sat on the YO board for years and coached with Jen Shaw. She stated she was not here tonight to discuss this matter, however Kathleen continued that she stopped coaching because of Ms. Shaw. She further stated that during her time with the teams there were multiple complaints against Ms. Shaw. Kathleen also stated that when her daughter dyed her hair blue that Jen told her she can't practice. Kathleen mentioned that she felt Coach Shaw put kids at risk and her daughter broke her finger or hand under Jen's supervision and she did not go and get Kathleen immediately. Kathleen likes Ms. Shaw as a person but had to step away. She stated that varsity team parents had voiced complaints. She further stated that Jen has good intentions but that she needs to be more careful what she says to people. Kathleen stated that the rules that you have to do the preseason camp in order to participate in competitions is insane.

Amy Smith stated that this situation needed to be addressed with more than a written warning. Toni Rispoli stated that the Recreation Commission have all read the information on the two complaints and

that the commission was not comfortable with just a warning. Bill Warrell asked when does the season officially end? There is a cheer camp on November 23 and 24. Toni Rispoli asked the commissioners to go around the room and each share their thoughts and ask any further questions if they had any. Paul Weldon stated that he sees a trend occurring this season with these complaints and stated that the YO board did not do enough. A suspension until the end of the season may be warranted. Amy Smith stated that even a two-week suspension is not fixing the situation. If we allow the cheer coordinator to come back this season we may also invite back everyone's anxiety. Bill Warrell stated that a suspension to the end of the season would send the right message to the YO board and the parents in the organization in that this behavior is not to be tolerated. Paul Trinkle stated that he would be ok with a suspension for the remainder of the season. Jonathan Parker stated that there are too many variables in these complaints and that we should suspend until December. Christine Gras stated that in thinking of both complaints, and ones addressed previously, she believes there is a history and pattern of behavior that she is not comfortable with. She feels a month long suspension would be warranted. Paul Weldon stated that the Recreation Commission should not have had to make this decision. Toni Rispoli asked if there was a motion on the floor. Bill Warrell asked if a suspension would involve just coaching or also board duties. He feels that Elmo Wright had a more harsh punishment for a lesser offense. Toni Rispoli again asked if anyone had a motion.

Motion	A motion was made for the Recreation Commission to suspend Jen Shaw from all volunteer duties within the Youth Organization for the remainder of the calendar year in accordance with our rules and regulations. Motion made by Paul Weldon Seconded by Jonathan Parker
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

Toni Rispoli asked Rick Audet to send a letter to Ms. Shaw informing her of the Commission's decision. Ms. Shaw is to be removed from the Approved Volunteers list of the Township.

Toni Rispoli stated that another complaint had been made about another YO Cheer coach, Niki Franklin. The YO board addressed the complaint. The person who made the complaint was not satisfied with the YO decision and appealed the decision to the Recreation Commission. Toni stated that we need to have a meeting to hear this complaint and we need to provide her due process. She received a two week suspension from the YO board. The complaint alleges that Ms. Franklin grabbed a high-school age volunteer coach by her wrist in response to the volunteer coach using her phone during practice. Toni stated we need to have Ms. Franklin meet with us to address the complaint since the parent filed an appeal with the Recreation Commission. Christine Gras stated that the father of the volunteer coach is still waiting to this day to hear back from YO on his complaint.

Motion	A motion was made for the Recreation Commission to hold a special meeting to address the complaint against YO cheer coach on October 17 at 5:30 p.m. Both the father of the volunteer coach and Ms. Franklin are to attend. Motion made by Paul Weldon Seconded by Jonathan Parker
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

Toni Rispoli asked Rick Audet to send a letter to all parties informing them of the meeting.

b. Six-Year Capital Projects Plan

Rick Audet summarized for the Commission that projects that have been discussed to date for the six year capital plan and the priorities that have been assigned to the projects after discussions with the Commission. One of the projects that have been approved is to fund capital improvements at the Community Center. Toni Rispoli stated that the fitness rooms needs shades, and across the entire front of the building.

IX. Use of Parks Facility Requests

- a. EHT Adult Co-Ed Hockey Veterans Park 10/1/19-10/1/20

Pat Christopher, 123 Woodbury Drive, a member of the EHT Street Hockey Board and representative from EHT Adult Co-Ed Hockey was present to discuss their facility use request. He stated that every dollar left over after expenses goes back to the street hockey board accounts for the benefit of the kids. The Commission discussed the coed program.

Motion	To approve the EHT Adult Co-Ed Hockey use of facilities as presented Motion made by Christine Gras Seconded by Paul Weldon
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

X. Director's Report

None

XI. New Business

None

XII. Correspondence

EHT Youth Group Minutes

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| A. Baseball Association – 9/5/19 | F. Soccer Club – 9/10/19 |
| B. BMX – last received 4/6/19 | G. Street Hockey Association – 7/22/19 |
| C. Youth Organization – 7/10/19 | H. Travel Basketball – 9/12/19 |
| D. Jr. Wrestling – 4/24/19 | I. Youth Softball – 6/9/19 |
| E. Lacrosse – 5/7, 6/13/2019 | |

Handouts

- A. EHT Youth Softball Non-Resident Players Request List
- B. EHT Baseball request for one non-resident player
- C. EHT Baseball 2019 Fall Baseball rosters (on file in office) / 2019 Fall Baseball Coaches List
- D. Letter Regarding U12 Softball Team
- E. EHT Soccer Club Financials 9/30/19 (on file in office)
- F. EHT YO Minutes and Subcommittee Letters Regarding Cheer Coach Complaint
- G. Letter from Niall Bridgeman regarding field use fees
- H. EHT Street Hockey Financials

Toni Rispoli stated to the Commission that the Mayor had received an anonymous letter alleging the use of non-resident players by World Series Champions EHT Youth Softball 12U softball team. Laura Pfrommer stated that in both Planning and Zoning and the Police Department that they have to give credence and/or a response to such letters even when they are anonymous. Toni Rispoli explained that as a district and state commissioner for Babe Ruth she is aware that the roster of this team was vetted and approved by Babe Ruth numerous times at numerous levels of tournament play. This is travel ball, they are allowed to have non-resident players according to Babe Ruth rules and regulations. Toni Rispoli addressed each player named in the anonymous letter and explained that each had attained residency status in both youth softball and Babe Ruth all in accordance with rules and regulations. In Babe Ruth travel play, not all players must live in the same town. Kathleen Glick stated that the teams playing the in same tournament had players from multiple states on their roster. The team is not under any investigation and Babe Ruth is not taking any action in the matter. Kathleen Glick stated that this issue has gone on since March with a small handful of individuals trying to make baseless accusations against this team. Tax records were pulled and all rosters were approved by Babe Ruth. Rick Audet had been asked by the Township Administrator to provide a response to the letter to Township Committee with our findings.

Toni mentioned the complaint on trash left at school grounds after the previous weekend of YO home games. The School District sent a complaint letter to Parks and Recreation that too much trash was left on their grounds. Toni Rispoli asked Rick Audet to send a letter to YO. A letter was sent to their board and discussed at the last board meeting.

The letter from Niall Bridgeman was discussed by the Commission. The letter asked for a reduction in fees for use of baseball fields by non-EHTBA teams. The Commission discussed the letter and decided to keep the fees the same as they are. Rick Audet was asked to send a response letter to Mr. Bridgeman.

XIII. Tabled Matters

XIV. Public Comment

XV. Adjournment

Motion	To adjourn the meeting of the Recreation Commission at 9:32 p.m. Motion made by Charlie Gallagher Seconded by Christine Gras
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

(Minutes as heard by Rick Audet, Director of Parks and Recreation)

Toni Rispoli, Chair

Rick Audet, Director of Parks and Recreation

These minutes were approved at the November 13, 2019 Recreation Commission Meeting.
