

Egg Harbor Township Board of Recreation Commissioners Meeting
Egg Harbor Township, NJ

REGULAR MEETING - MINUTES
Wednesday, June 10, 2020 7:00pm

I. Call to Order

Recreation Commission Chairperson Toni Rispoli called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Opening Statement Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act

Parks and Recreation Director Rick Audet 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 (Alt. 1) – Present
Paul Weldon – Present (7:03) Jonathan Parker (Alt. 2) – Present
Kevin Stetser - Present

V. Reading / Acceptance of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting March 11, 2020

Motion	To approve the 3/11/20 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. Motion made by Bill Warrell Seconded by Charlie Gallagher
Vote	Motion carried 7-0 (C. Gras abstained)

b. Special Meeting May 20, 2020

Motion	To approve the 5/20/20 Special Meeting minutes as presented. Motion made by Christine Gras Seconded by Paul Trinkle
Vote	Motion carried 6-0-1 (P. Weldon abstained)

VI. Public Comment

Steve Adams, President of EHT BMX. Attending meeting tonight to discuss his organization's Covid-19 Operations Plan. Plan was emailed to Parks and Recreation Director. The plan details how BMX activities will be conducted in compliance with new state guidelines. Mr. Adams stated that EHTBMX hopes to hold the first race in NJ since the closure. They are hoping to race on or around July 4. Parks and Recreation Director Rick Audet stated that it is a very good start by his board. The state guidelines on resuming sports activities if forthcoming. The EHT BMX plan will need to be compared to state guidelines and additional info to be added as necessary.

Mr. Adams stated EHT BMX has put in an application to host a 2021 Nationals Race in Egg Harbor Township. The race plans include involving AC Sports Commission as a supporting agency of the event. The dates for 2021 being targeted are October 2, 3, and 4. Sponsored groups who use Veteran's Park are being informed of this potential event. The event would require no use of the park by any other group on those dates. Mr. Adams stated that EHT Baseball, Street Hockey and YO will be offered a chance to control the parking each day. They will be compensated for helping with parking.

Alison Hornikel, 621 Zion Road, is the program coordinator for EHT Women's Ball Hockey League. Ms. Hornikel is attending to discuss when and how her program will be allowed to resume operations. She is seeking guidance on what they must do for procedures to follow when they restart. Rick Audet stated that he will be in touch with her with information as soon as the state puts out their Sports Activities guidelines.

Jamie Gillespie, 511 Glenn Ave, is the President of EHT Baseball Association. Mr. Gillespie provide the commission with an update on EHTBA plans for the summer. They intend to offer a summer league for rec and travel teams when permission to do so is granted by the state. EHTBA sent out a survey to families, 220 responded that they wish to have baseball this summer. Jamie needs the guidelines from the state so he knows what his operations need to entail. EHTBA plans to start games in early July and end

second week of August. Mr. Gillespie stated that all families who do not wish to participate in summer baseball will be given a refund less a \$5 administrative fee. Christine Gras asked Mr. Gillespie what would happen if a family does not participate and does not issue a refund back. How will EHTBA handle it in their financials? Mr. Gillespie replied that the money will be held in their account and they will document it as a credit for the family for next season.

Mr. Gillespie stated that he emailed the Director a few days ago on use of 60/90 baseball fields in the Township. EHTBA has seen a steady decline in the level of participation in league for ages 13 and up. In the past two years, EHTBA has not fielded a single rec or travel team at these age levels. Mr. Gillespie contends that travel baseball has changed a lot in recent years. Seemingly, all of the players wish to play for travel teams where they feel they will receive better coaching and competition. Mr. Gillespie stated that no outside groups are using the 60/90 baseball fields either because our field fees are too high.

Mr. Gillespie stated the Recreation Commission did revise and lower their field use fees recently, but it did not go far enough. He shared an example of how Galloway charges field use fees for travel teams. Their model is based on charging non-resident rostered players a season fee and not charging resident players. Mr. Gillespie further stated that fields are not being maintained well enough because they are not getting any use. He wants the Recreation Commission to consider a proposal that he and Niall Bridgeman are making for a new fee structure for travel baseball teams on these fields. Mr. Gillespie stated that he and Mr. Bridgeman are willing to help manage the field use process for Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Gillespie used the example of two travel teams applying for field space from the Township last year. Both travel teams declined use of the field due to the fees being too high. The travel teams are most frequently comprised of a majority of EHT residents with a smaller amount of non-residents. Mr. Gillespie stated that the game has changed for travel baseball and he would like to Commission to consider his request. Paul Trinkle informed the Commission on how travel team fees work, and the split between paying to play in the leagues and tournaments versus field use fees paid to Towns.

Toni Rispoli stated that the Recreation Commission could consider this proposal. Should it move forward, it would be required to be approved by Township Committee and adopt changes to our parks ordinance.

Mr. Gillespie presented his next topic to the Commission. EHTBA is fortunate to have GL and sports accident insurance that the Township purchases on behalf of its sponsored youth groups. Babe Ruth has changed their guidelines on sexual molestation coverage in GL policies. Babe Ruth will not approve their charter without this insurance. There can be a cost of up to \$4000 for this coverage. EHTBA received a waiver last year in not having the coverage. Mr. Gillespie would like the Township to add this type of coverage to the GL policy. Toni Rispoli indicated that she would contact Bob Connor, the head of Babe Ruth, to ascertain what is necessary coverage for molestation.

Dominic Branca, 23 Evergreen, stated that he is here to speak to the Commission. He is not representing any youth group, only himself. He stated that his name came up at a recent Commission meeting. It was about his relationship with Bill Warrell. The allegations at a previous meeting indicated that Mr. Warrell would provide information to Mr. Branca when he was the YO president. Mr. Branca stated that Mr. Warrell did a great job as liaison to YO. He never broke professional protocol. Toni Rispoli stated that it was brought up at the last meeting. Kevin Stetser stated that he wanted to discuss an issue with Mr. Warrell. It was a heated conversation and people may have misheard what he was trying to say. Mr. Branca provided a copy of an email about Mr. Warrell. This was presented to the Commission for their records.

Recreation Chairperson Toni Rispoli closed public comment at 7:45 p.m.

VII. EHT Recognized Youth Sports Groups

None.

VIII. Old Business

a. Discussion of YO / Letter to YO

The Commission discussed the letter that had been drafted pertaining to YO. A special meeting was held in May to discuss the issue. The discussion regarding YO included concerns that had been brought to the Commission's attention by parents in their organization. The Commission in March passed a vote of No Confidence in the YO board. The Commission stated that there are issues in YO operations that need to be taken care of. Toni Rispoli explained that YO must be given due notice and a chance to resolve their issues. This is similar to when an employee has a performance issue at work. The employee is put on a

work performance plan and given a chance to improve. The Recreation Commission will work with YO in a similar manner and assist them in improving certain concerns in their operations.

Toni Rispoli read the draft of the letter to the commission. Ms. Rispoli asked if anyone has any thoughts, changes, or anything to add to the letter.

Dorothy Madamba, president of EHTYO, stated she did not receive any letter. The Director had not sent it to her yet. She stated she felt that she is being bombarded with issues tonight that she was not prepared for. Adult age children of board members was discussed. Toni Rispoli stated that this was not be thrown at her tonight. The Commission was planning to discuss it and called upon Dorothy since she was in attendance. Ms. Madamba stated that YO continually gets the short end of the stick. Ms. Rispoli stated that the Commission wants YO to succeed and believes one team at each level will help the organization in many ways.

Christine Gras stated to Ms. Madamba that most of these issues and problems predate her presidency.

Kevin Stetser discussed the program fees for cheer, how routines are taught, and how cheer camp works. There was discussion on cheer, travel cheer, how cheer works. Bill Warrell related how cheer and color guard worked in the past. Ms. Madamba stated that no one in the Township knows how to coach drill team. We need to find drill team coaches.

The numbers needed in a cheer program were discussed.

Amy Smith stated that the vote of no confidence and the letter were to address ethical and safety issues.

The delay in the letter being sent out was discussed. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic shut down, the Commission had not met, the letter needed to be reviewed prior to sending it out.

Christine Gras stated that we will turn this around and help the YO board improve their program.

Achilleas Ginis stated that he is here as a resident, not representing YO. He wanted to clarify cheer camp. Cheer camp is not mandatory. The coaches and coordinators must teach the cheer routines to all the girls regardless of whether they attend camp or not. Toni Rispoli stated that she received numerous emails last year about cheer problems while she was on vacation. The issue of cheer camp from last year and complaints brought forth by cheer parents was discussed. Toni Rispoli stated that she did not think cheer camp should be mandatory this year; many families are facing economic challenges.

Toni Rispoli stated that it is not fair to charge the same amount for cape and Atlantic cheer camp and not get the same product.

Albert Cicchino stated that he is in attendance tonight as a resident and assistant coach. He stated every concern on YO discussed tonight is just the tip of the iceberg. He has been trying to get on the YO board for past two years. The problems in YO are systemic. All concerns discussed tonight are 100% true. There is an inside clique within the board that promotes favoritism according to Mr. Ciccino. Mr. Cicchino stated that the board treats parents disrespectfully. Ms. Rispoli noted that no football player parents attended the Recreation Commission meeting tonight.

Helen Ginis stated that she is the YO board secretary. Ms. Ginis states the allegations in the Commission's YO letter are true and a there is lot more that is not right. We need a plan to help make things right. We need to make it right for the kids. Ms. Ginis stated that when she attends YO meetings she feels as if she is going to have a panic attack. The Commission is still not aware of much that goes on. She has concerns on safety in the program. Parents have to attend practices to make sure their kids are safe. There are coaches coaching who shouldn't be coaching. There are kids who do not want to come back and be a part of YO even as eighth graders.

Amy Smith stated that the issues we have heard and discussed tonight are how we got to the place of a no confidence vote in their board.

Christine Gras stated that the YO meeting room is not conducive to a professional atmosphere. People do not feel welcome and comfortable at the meetings. Some board members sit with their back to the public attending. She stated that parents might be more willing to attend board meeting if they were held at the community center. Ms. Gras has heard from parents that they do not come because they know things won't change.

Bill Warrell stated that part of the issue is the fact that YO needs to clean up their image. Christine Gras stated she was flabbergasted to see board members sit with their backs turned to the public. A discussion on how YO meetings are conducted continued. Dorothy Madamba stated that head coaches do not come to the meetings.

Kevin Stetser stated that there is another team, another option for youth football that now exists in our area. He has been a parent in the program for four years. It has been four years of an unfortunate experience for his son. Something has to change. Al Cicchino has been denied every opportunity by the YO board. Mr. Stetser further stated that many good players are gone. They do not want to be part of YO. Their misconduct has been egregious and it is egregious that it was allowed to continue.

Toni Rispoli stated that in addition to the letter the Commission has been discussing how YO bylaws would have to change if there is a move to one league. Only nine board members will be necessary.

Kevin Stetser stated that the letter should also state what the next steps are. He would like to make a motion for a coaching selection committee comprised of himself, Christine Gras, Jonathan Parker, and two YO board members. He suggested Denise Savastano and Bud Brubaker. This should help alleviate the nepotism that has occurred in coaching selections. Mr. Stetser stated that board members are already writing letters for coaches. Mr. Stetser stated that he could add a lot in the effort to help the coaches. On his football team he coached last year, things were done the right way. Mr. Stetser stated that he would like to help with coaches' development.

Christine Gras asked if our actions had Township Committee support. She stated that she would have conversations with Dorothy. She does not want to undermine Dorothy. The original conversation the Commission had in March was not right. Ms. Gras stated that she was able to help the soccer club become a successful organization without knowing much about soccer. Ms. Gras wants it to be how it was with the Orioles again. Ms. Gras stated that she supports the motion and our discussion. She continued that she would love to see a woman succeed as YO president and that she will always be on the side of the kids.

Bill Warrell stated that we should fade this initiative out after 2-3 years.

Dorothy Madamba stated that there is a whole host of issues within YO. She is 50/50 on this proposed motion. She is tired of the two sides of the board. She would like her board's opinion on this matter as well. Favoritism across the board does exist. She would love to see things get turned around and headed in the right direction.

Jonathan Parker stated that much of what he heard tonight is disturbing. There needs to be a better structure in place for youth football in order to become successful high school football. He feels there was nepotism as discussed. We need leaders who have the community's best interests in mind. We need to get good people with the right knowledge involved in the program and given the opportunity to do so. He looks forward to the day when we can all come together. Our oversight is a step in the right direction.

Paul Trinkle stated that he likes the motion. He stated he was the one person who voted against the vote of no confidence. We need to get this going in the right direction for the kids.

Amy Smith stated that something needs to change. If this is done the right way, it will in the end be good for the kids, which is what we are all here for.

Charlie Gallagher stated we are here for the kids. That is our focus. He supports the motion.

Paul Weldon stated that he supports the oversight aspect of the motion. He stated his youngest son should be playing football in YO but he has not been comfortable doing so in the past few years. He attended the YO meeting in January, as a parent, and left with many concerns. The decision remains the same that his son will continue to not play in YO. Consolidating to one team at a level will help the program.

Toni Rispoli stated that she agrees wholeheartedly with the motion. She was disappointed at the actions of, she witnessed at YO meetings. There are often two factions fighting against each other. She has a huge problem with board members sitting with their back to the public. It is disrespectful. She was appalled at the conduct she witnessed. Ms. Rispoli stated that she does not have a dog in the fight, she is just here for

the kids. The backstabbing will ruin their organization. She is willing to help in any way she can and hopes the conduct will improve.

Laura Pfrommer spoke on how it is always an issue with adults in the organization and not the kids. EHT YO was the pride of EHT in the past. We need to bring that pride back. She feels that Township Committee supports the actions of the Recreation Commission. She is hearing a lot of hurt and frustration tonight and supports the Commission helping. Ms. Pfrommer stated that YO meetings should be held in the community center.

Frank Balles stated that he has been around since coaching with Charlie Gallagher 25 years ago. He wishes they had a Recreation Commission back then. The hardest part in a youth organization is dealing with the parents most often. He supports the motion being made. Mr. Balles suggest the Commission put in a sunset on their oversight to expire in 2 or 3 seasons. He is confident that these actions will make the YO board stronger in the end. He further stated that the motion should be for the Commission to have a voice at YO meetings but not be implied to be a de facto board member. We need to do the right thing for the youth of this Township. The Recreation Commission should be commended for their efforts.

Bill Warrell stated that he feels two years is too short a time and should make it three. Christine Gras stated that two seasons may suffice and we will back out or shadow in the third year. We should be able to do the job within two seasons.

Amy Smith stated that we should start these efforts this year even if there is no football/cheer season due to Covid-19.

Helen Ginis asked how it will work if the YO board is cut down from 15 to nine members. Dorothy Madamba stated that the executive committee should stay intact. There was discussion on the board seats that currently exist. It was discussed how it would work to contract the board. Certain volunteer roles do not necessarily need to be a board seat. Frank Balles stated to keep the executive board and you can make some alternates positions.

Motion	To require YO to field one team at every level of play unless sufficient registration numbers are reached for a second team. To create a coaching selection subcommittee consisting of Christine Gras, Jonathan Park, Kevin Stetser, Denise Savastano, and Bud Brubaker. Motion made by Kevin Stetser Seconded by Christine Gras
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

b. 2020 Capital Projects

Parks and Recreation Director informed the Commission that all 2020 capital projects were tabled, including the proposed expansion of Tony Canale Park. This was due to budget issues as a result of the pandemic and reduction in revenues.

IX. Use of Parks Facility Requests

South Jersey Hammerheads Baseball Veteran’s Park 7/11/20 & 7/18/20

Motion	To approve the Park use request as presented by South Jersey Hammerheads Baseball. Motion made by Christine Gras Seconded by Kevin Stetser
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

The field use fees will be reviewed by the Commission. At this time, there is no change in our field use fees for this permit.

D9 Events Softball Tournaments Veteran’s & Childs-Kirk Parks 7/30-8/2 & 8/6-8/9

Motion	To table the consideration of this park use application. It is requested that the Director obtain more information from the applicant on the proposed activity. Motion made by Amy Smith Seconded by Bill Warrell
Vote	All voted in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

X. Director's Report

- A. Outline of Summer Camp Plan in accordance with Department of Health Guidelines
Parks and Recreation Director Rick Audet outlined the Recreation Department's plans for summer camp. A discussion of Department of Health Guidelines was held.
- B. Meeting with tennis court contractor at Bargaintown and Canale Parks
Director of Parks and Recreation Rick Audet informed the commission of concerns on the tennis court surfaces at both Canale and Bargaintown Parks. The courts are approximately 22 years old. Asphalt tennis courts have a life expectancy of 20-25 years at best. Mr. Audet stated that a tennis court capital improvement project needs to be on the Commission's radar in the next year or two. He will use Operating Budget Funds this year to fix cracks and issues to keep courts safe and playable.
- C. Summer 2020 Parks and Recreation program plans
Parks and Recreation Director Rick Audet provided a general outline to the Commission on the Department's program plans for the summer. Many changes are being implemented in order to be compliant with new state guidelines.

XI. New Business

The illegal use of Bargaintown Park baseball field recently was discussed. Two teams scheduled games on the field without a permit. Parks and Recreation Director Rick Audet wrote a letter to the organizer of the game, Baseball Performance Center. Paul Trinkle questioned the use of the field when he became aware of its use.

XII. Correspondence

EHT Youth Group Minutes

- A. Baseball Association – 9/5/19
- B. BMX – 1/13/20
- C. Youth Organization – 2/4/20, 3/5/20
- D. Jr. Wrestling – 12/17/19, 1/28/20
- E. Lacrosse – 6/13/2019
- F. Soccer Club – 2/4/20
- G. Street Hockey Association – 12/16/19, 1/6/20
- H. Travel Basketball – 1/9/20
- I. Youth Softball – 10/6/19

Handouts

- A. EHT Street Hockey Coaches List
- B. EHT Street Hockey First Quarter Financials
- C. EHT Soccer Club Financials 2/29/20
- D. EHT Soccer Club Coaches List
- E. EHT Soccer Club 2020 rosters rec and travel, game schedules, practice schedules

XIII. Tabled Matters

None.

XIV. Public Comment

None.

XV. Adjournment

Motion	To adjourn the June 11, 2020 meeting of the Recreation Commission meeting at 9:45 p.m. Motion made by Christine Gras Seconded by Kevin Stetser
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 July 8, 2020 Recreation Commission Meeting.