

## RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

March 24, 2021

The following committee members were present:

Dave Bond – via Zoom  
Bernie Brotzman  
Ann Davis  
Keith Gargone – via Zoom  
Jim Hanisak – via Zoom  
DJ Kophazy  
Vickie Mendes-Branch – via Zoom  
Matt Scerbo – via Zoom  
Dawn Slifer  
Tim Zagra

Guests: Nicole Timberman and Bill Spencer

Absent:

Bobby Fulper  
Todd Tersigni

The minutes of the January 27, 2021 meeting were approved with a motion from Dawn Slifer and a second from Bernie Brotzman. All were in favor.

DJ Kophazy, Recreation Superintendent, gave his monthly update.

The contract for the pool construction was signed on January 31, 2021. Sitework will be the end of April. At this time, we are looking at a completion date on July 31, 2021. We are hoping to have the pool open for a few weeks before the end of Summer. Fire/EMS personnel will be eligible for free passes to the pool. Although we won't be selling season passes this year due to the limited time the pool will be open, there will still be a pass type system. There is no groundbreaking date scheduled at this point. Once that date is scheduled, DJ will let us know. Lopatcong will not be opening their pool this Summer. There is an issue with a leak.

The DPW is currently working on the fields. The new in-field groomer is a big help! There are discussions about the best way to lay-out the fencing at Hill Street and Bentley fields.

DJ is looking to hire two (2) seasonal laborers, at the Mayor's request. DJ was hoping to hire a clerk to help with scheduling ad permits for usage of recreation areas. However, since the

Mayor is requesting two (2) seasonal laborers instead of one (1) laborer and one (1) clerk like DJ was hoping for, DJ will not be able to hire a clerk.

Matt Scerbo asked about the benches at the fields. Some of them are uneven and sinking into the ground on one side. DJ responded that the DPW will be relocating some of the benches and addressing this.

Dawn Slifer asked about the trees that have been cut down at Walter Park and whether or not they will be replaced. DJ stated that they will be replaced.

DJ will be hiring a Recreation Leader who will basically serve as DJ's assistant and will be overseeing programs. He would like this to be a 10-month position and have them work January-October.

104 children have been registered for baseball and softball. Bernie Brotzman asked what Leagues they will play in. Baseball will participate in the Greater Easton League and Softball will participate in the Phillipsburg Area Girl's Softball League. Bernie also asked if there will be a coach's clinic. DJ reported that there will be a clinic offered to any coach who would like to attend. Dave Bond asked if DJ was able to get enough coaches and DJ stated that he did. Bernie also asked if businesses can sponsor teams. DJ stated that the Town cannot solicit businesses to sponsor a team, however, if a business would like to sponsor a specific team, they can certainly do that.

Under Old Business, Tim Zagra asked if DJ got any information on the abuse law and the 2017 law regarding Safe Sport Training. DJ confirmed this. Dawn Slifer asked if volunteer coaches are still considered "Mandated Reporters of Abuse." DJ confirmed that they are and training under the Little League Law will be offered to all coaches. Tim stated that for \$20.99, coaches can complete and on-line training. The course is approximately 45 minutes long and can be done through Sport Engine. DJ stated that we do offer the Rutgers Safety Training program.

Matt announced that he will be resigning as President of the Firthtown Falcons and the organization will be dissolved. Matt stated that the organization was left in the cold by Mayor Tersigni when he kept flip-flopping on where Firthtown would stand once they went under the Town. He tried to keep the organization afloat for as long as he could. DJ stated that he played for both Firthtown and Steele Hill and he knows how much hard work Matt put in to the kids and the organization. Tim asked if Matt thought Firthtown could be revived in the future. Matt stated that it could be possible, but he has family commitments that won't allow him to be a part of it. Matt also stated that they would have to go through the whole process all over again of applying for the 501c3. Matt stated that they had sign-ups for baseball and softball when the pandemic hit.

Vickie Mendes-Branch announced that she will be taking over the Firthtown program. They will be known at the Phillipsburg Falcons Youth Basketball Association. Vickie will be giving us her status on the committee and become the rep for the basketball program. She and Matt will, essentially, be switching their status. Vickie is currently in the process of obtaining insurance for the program and applying for the 501c3. She stated that she is new to all of this, she is hoping that other "people in the know" will help her. Firthtown alumni want to coach. Vickie will update everyone on the status of the program as she knows information. Dave asked when they will be and running. Vickie responded that she is hoping to be ready to go by May. DJ offered any technical support that he can to Vickie and the program. Keith Gargone also told Vickie if she needs anything to please call him. Tim reminded Vickie that she has his number if she needs any help.

A motion was made by Bernie Brotzman and a second by Tim Zagra to adjourn.