BOROUGH OF MOUNTAIN LAKES RECREATION COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting Minutes – Quick Notes
Minutes for March 17, 2026, at 7:30 PM via Zoom

Call to Order
A monthly meeting of the Borough of Mountain Lakes Recreation Commission was held on March 17, 2026, at 7:30 PM via Zoom teleconference. The meeting was presided over by David Keyt, with Heather Hornyak serving as secretary.

Attendance
- **Voting Members**: David Keyt, Heather Hornyak, Shaun Lehrer, James Aitken, Derek Jackson, Ilaxi Rana, Rob Wianecki
- **Non-voting Members**: Laurie Stepper (recreation director), Arian Nanda (junior member)
- **Members not in attendance**: Julia McVeigh, Mark Odenwelder
- **Guests in attendance**: none

Approval of Minutes
The minutes of the previous meeting on January 20, 2026, were approved as submitted.

Recreation Director's Report (Laurie Stepper)

Summer Programs and Registration:
- Recreation, Sailing, and Teen Adventure camps opened for registration on March 2.
- **Rising kindergarten**: Dye to a significant increase in enrollment, an additional rising kindergarten group has been added.
- **Capacity**: Currently, there is no waitlist for Recreation Camp as capacity has been proactively increased.
- **Waitlists (as of March 11)**:
  - Week 1 Teen Adventure: 4 people.
  - Week 2 Teen Adventure: 13 people. (Note: 3 buses are reserved this for this week.)
  - Week 3 Teen Adventure: 13 people.
- **Planning**: Ongoing logistics include facility reservations, vendor bookings, budget management, and staffing.

Event Planning & Logistics:
- **Trout Derby**: Coordinating with the Trout Derby Committee on fish orders, marketing updates, and volunteer recruitment.
- **Egg Hunt**: Finalizing supply purchases and volunteer coordination.
- **Summer Concert Series**: Currently booking bands for the summer season.
- **250th Anniversary**: Continuing logistics development for the US Semiquincentennial events.

Community Programs:
- **Jr. Laker Wrestling:** A Spring Clinic is being offered to maintain athlete engagement.
- **Snowman Building Contest:** Received 12 entries. The Commission voted on the top three winners, who received snowball-making kits or clay snowman craft kits.
- **Youth Golf:** Exploring the feasibility of a new youth golf program for the Fall.

Professional Development & Training:
- **NJRPA Conference:** Attended the NJ Recreation and Parks Association Conference in Atlantic City (Feb 22–24).
- **MSI Leadership Academy:** Attended a JIF webinar on *Harassment in the Workplace for Elected Officials, Managers & Supervisors*. This marks the final requirement for the completion of the MSI Leadership Academy program.

Upcoming Events & Important Dates:

March 2026
- Sat, March 28: Astronomy Event at Halsey Field.
- Sun, March 29: Annual Egg Hunt at Haswell Park.

April 2026
- April 7: New rack and ring application opens.
- Thurs, April 16: Laker 55+ Book Club (Community Room, ML Library).
- Fri, April 17: Trout stocking at Birchwood Lake.
- Sat, April 18: 63rd Annual Trout Derby at Birchwood Lake.
- April 21: Mobile Motor Vehicle Commission Event at Borough Hall.

July 2026 (250th Anniversary Events)
- Wed, July 1: Movie Night at Island Beach.
- Thurs, July 2: Community BBQ and band at Island Beach.
- Fri, July 3: Fireworks over Mountain Lake (Rain date: July 5).
- July 9: Livingston Leo at Island Beach.
- July 23: The Blocked Toms at Island Beach.
- July 30: Peach Project at Island Beach.

August 2026
- August 6: Alex Laurenzi and Quartet at Island Beach.
- August 19: Family Movie Night at Island Beach.
- August 27: Tourne at Island Beach.

October 2026
- October 11: Fall Fest at Birchwood Lake.

Old Business

1. Volunteer Verification & Background Checks (no update)

- **Objective:** Establish a formal policy/procedure for all volunteers working with youth, mirroring the established processes of Junior Laker lacrosse, basketball, and Tri-Town Little League.
- **Compliance Agreement:** Laurie is drafting a formal agreement for all partner (quasi) entities (quasi-entities). This document will mandate that organizations conduct background checks for all their volunteers.
- **Tracking & Verification:** The commission is developing a system to monitor fingerprinting status and background check results, include the maintenance of a master “state list” to verify compliant individuals.
- **Program Oversight:** The commission is evaluating whether the Mountain Lakes Rec Dept requires additional info from quasi-entities that manage their own programs.
- **Action Items:** *Option A:* Volunteers email a verification form directly to the Recreation Department. *Option B:* Sport coordinators submit a consolidated list of volunteers accompanied by a signed compliance agreement.

2. Facility Rental Process & Policy Update (no update)

- **Current Status:** The current rental form is limited in scope, covering only basic logistics (date/time/location) and insurance minimums ($500k for homeowners; $1M for public entities). The current policy is insufficient for the increasing number of unique or complex rental requests.
- **Objectives for Policy Revision:** Comprehensive Agreement: Develop a more comprehensive rental agreement similar to neighboring municipalities to better mitigate risk for the Borough.
  - **Permitted Use Guidelines:** Define "Allowed vs. Prohibited" activities on Borough property.

  - **Commercial Activity:** Establish clear rules regarding the sale of goods and merchandise on public property.
  - **Logistics & Requirements:** Formalize standards for live entertainment, facility access (including restrooms), and adjusted insurance thresholds.
- **Facility Rental Subcommittee:** The group is vetting policies from other communities to adapt them to meet the needs of Mountain Lakes. Members: Derek Jackson, James Aitken, Julia McVeigh, Ilaxi Rana, and Arian Nanda.

New Business

1. Summer Camp Registration Review

- **Engagement Levels:** Summer camp registration saw exceptional demand, with **1,800 confirmations** processed immediately upon opening.
- **System Optimization:** To address system performance and prevent future technical issues during peak registration windows, a staggered opening schedule will be implemented next season.
  - *Example:* 9:00 AM for Sailing and Recreation Camp; 10:00 AM for Teen Adventure Camp.

2. 2026 Holiday Season Planning

- **Save the Dates:** The schedule for the upcoming winter holiday celebrations:
  - **Christmas Tree Lighting:** Sat, December 5, 2026.
  - **Menorah Lighting:** Sun, December 6, 2026.

Announcements

Next meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2026.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.