BOROUGH OF MOUNTAIN LAKES RECREATION COMMISSION

Monthly Meeting Minutes – Quick Notes

Minutes for November 18, 2025, at 7:30 PM via Zoom

Call to Order

A monthly meeting of the Borough of Mountain Lakes Recreation Commission was held on November 18, 2025, at 7:30 PM via Zoom teleconference. The meeting was presided over by David Keyt, with Heather Hornyak serving as secretary.

Attendance

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

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on September 22, 2025, were approved as submitted.

Recreation Director's Report (Laurie Stepper)

Events & Program Recaps

- **Halloween Decorating Contest:** 12 entries were received. Winners at 2 Scarborough Rd, 5 Grove Place, and 111 Briarcliff Rd each received a $50 local restaurant gift card and a lawn sign.
- **Fall Fest & Workshops:** Postponed to Oct 19th due to weather; successfully hosted over 350 attendees. A pumpkin etching class was held immediately following the fest with six participants.
- **New Programming:** The first "Intro to Pyrography" session (wood burning) was launched on November 3 with 13 participants creating ornaments and decorative plaques.
- **Professional Development:** Laurie attended JIF webinars on event management, playground safety, and disaster management, as well as an in-person MSI Leadership Academy session.

Upcoming Events

- Holiday Decorating Contest: Submissions open Nov 14 – Dec 15.
- Gingerbread Wonderland: Dec 6-7 at the ML Library.
- Tree & Menorah Lightings: Tree Lighting scheduled for Dec 7; Menorah Lighting for Dec 14.
- Laker 55+ Trip: Dec 9 to Rutherfurd Hall.

Commission & Subcommittee Updates

- **Ongoing Tasks:** Facility requests, sports program support (school facilities/supplies), and weekly communications (e-blast, social media, and website) remain on schedule.
- **Administrative:** Payroll, facility reports, and new resident welcome kits are being managed bi-weekly/monthly. Rack and Ring requests and facility inspections are ongoing.

New Business & Commission Discussion

- **Volunteer assignments for upcoming events**
  - Gingerbread Wonderland (Dec 6-7): Assignments confirmed for setup/hosting at the library
  - Annual Tree Lighting (Dec 7) & Menorah Lighting (Dec 14): Roles assigned for crowd management and hospitality.

- **Fourth of July Preliminary Planning (America's 250th Birthday)**
  - July 1: Proposed "Movie Night" featuring National Treasure.
  - July 2: American BBQ featuring a performance by the Tourne Band.
  - July 3: Scheduled fireworks display (Rain date: July 5).

- **Facility Usage & Improvements**
  - **Pocket Parks:** Discussion regarding capital improvement requests for Kauffman Park and the Esplanade. The goal is to optimize usage and refresh these smaller recreational spaces.
  - **Facility Management:** Ongoing oversight of rack/ring requests and winter facility inspections.

- **Polar Plunge Reinstatement**
  - Seeking a local fundraiser opportunity or community partner to help bring back the Polar Plunge event.

- **Announcements**
  - Next meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2025.

- **Adjournment**
  - The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.