

BOROUGH OF MOUNTAIN LAKES RECREATION COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting Minutes – Quick Notes
Minutes for September 17, 2024 at 7:30 PM - Zoom

1. Call to Order

A monthly meeting of Borough of Mountain Lakes Recreation Commission was held on September 17, 2024 on Zoom teleconference. It began at 7:30 PM and was presided over by chairperson David Keyt, with Derek Jackson as secretary.

2. Attendees

Voting Members in attendance: James Aitken, Derek Jackson, David Keyt, Shaun Lehrer, Mark Odenwelder, Tish Scarola, Rob Wianecki

Non-voting Members in attendance: Laurie Stepper (Recreation Director), Melissa Muilenburg (Council Liaison)

Guests in attendance: None

Members not in attendance: Phyllis Deering, Heather Hornyak, Sara Forman (Board of Education Liaison)

3. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on August 20, 2024 was made by David Key and seconded by Derek Jackson.

4. Report of the Recreation Director

Report was prepared and presented by Laurie Stepper.

- HUB Lakes Awards Night is Friday, September 20 at Indian Lake Clubhouse. James Aitken and David Keyt will be attending as resident members of the recreation commission.
- Cornhole was offered the 4 Sundays in August and did not have any interest.
 - Action / Question: Possibly offering a tournament in the afternoon or evening will be better received
- Laker 55+ Club interest survey was created and included in the July 26 Borough blast, as well as posted to the website. As of September 12, there were 58 responses to the survey. We plan to offer the first meeting in the Fall.
- Thursday, August 15th at 7pm - Brother Wisdom - Rockin' the Ages played at Island Beach. About 40 people attended.
- Mon, August 19 – Movie Night at Island Beach was well attended with over 90 people. The LED jumbotron was a big hit and allowed us to start the movie, Encanto, earlier than usual at 7:30pm. Next year the movie will start at 7pm, to make the movie time even more family friendly.
- Installed Wi-Fi at Island Beach and Birchwood Lake with seasonal access April through November. Guest password will be posted soon.
- New pavilion light timers were installed at Island Beach and Birchwood Lake.

- Met with David Schlett and Matt Stanzione regarding Jr. Laker Wrestling program to revamp and improve for this coming wrestling season. Created new flier to promote the program.
- Met with Izzi Lee and Jodi Vitolo regarding Jr. Laker Volleyball program for middle school aged students to establish projected expenses and participant fee. Program will open for registration in December.
- Found two staff members to re-establish the High School Ski Club. Also, booked buses for Briarcliff and HS Ski Clubs. Registration is expected to open in November.
- Working on New Resident Welcome Kit, including getting quotes on a logoed mug, pen, small writing pad, and/or drawstring bag. Also connecting with local real estate agents, ML Town Club, and others to get the word out.
- Recruiting Fall Fest volunteers and working on event logistics and activities. Promoted volunteer opportunity with HS students, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Confirmation Candidates at St. Catherine's of Sienna Church, as well as within the community. Storybook Trails will be participating in Fall Fest, as well.

Upcoming Events

- Sun, Oct 13 - Fall Fest from 1-3pm at Birchwood Lake
- October - Halloween Porch/Door Decorating Contest
- December – Holiday Porch/Door Decorating Contest
- Fri-Sun, Dec 6-8 - Gingerbread Wonderland at Mountain Lakes Library
- Sun, Dec 8 – Tree Lighting 5pm at Kauffmann Park
- Sun, Dec 29 – Menorah Lighting 5pm at Kauffmann Park

Monthly Meetings

- Recreation Commission
- HUB Lakes
- DPW Subcommittee
- Quarterly Safety Committee Meeting – Sept 12

Ongoing tasks

- Manage facility requests from residents and organizations.
- Oversee and support sports programs with school facility requests and supply purchases, if needed.
- Weekly eblast.
- Social Media posts.
- Update the Borough website.
- Borough Hall electronic sign.
- Manage Borough Hall room reservation calendar for conference rooms and Chambers.
- Submit payroll 2x per month.
- Bi-weekly facility report
- Manage Rack and Ring requests
- Monthly finance report

5. Old Business

- Racks and Rings
- Occupant Policy – This was a previously tabled conversation. Based on learnings from the full season using the racks and rings there are a few ideas and suggestions for the future. The demand may increase given that the club may not be available in 2025.
 - Full year usage
 - Use it or lose it
 - Occupy Policy – Renters will be notified on Memorial Day. Vacancies will be communicated via email to resident owners. In the absence of a response and/or the spot being occupied, the space will be reassigned (barring extenuating circumstances). New occupants will be notified of offer to rent with 1 week notice. After accepting the rental agreement, the renter has 2 weeks to occupy the space.
 - Renewals open in March
 - New Rentals open in April
- Extended Use Policy
 - There are a small number of residents that would like extended use. This needs to be balanced against maintenance needs and the desire to avoid the racks being a storage graveyard. There will be a communication that says “if you are interested in extending your season, please reach out to the recreation director”. Laurie would like to offer usage and storage from Island Beach through January 30.
- Rules for Halloween Porch/Door Contest
 - Photos will be submitted to the recreation director
 - Top 3 homes will be voted by the recreation commission
 - Winners receive a sign and Hapgoods gift card
 - Must be viewable from street, no professional installations, no blocking sidewalks, walkways or fire hydrants
- Gingerbread Wonderland Details
 - Will coincide with the tree lighting weekend
 - In partnership with the ML Library using the Community Room
 - No categories for the first year
 - Dimensions limited to 24” x 24” with no height limitation
 - Construction with gingerbread is recommended. Boxes and cardboard must be resurfaced with gingerbread
 - Open to all families, schools, scouts, groups etc
- HUB Lakes
 - The sub-committee met (Mark, Dave and James)
 - The goal and commitment is to get participation in every event category
 - With the club closing, we are losing the facilities for ping pong, horseshoe etc.
 - Discussion of creating horseshoes at Birchwood, Midvale and Taft
 - If recreation pays the material costs, James offered to build the pit with the help of other volunteers

6. New Business

- Council Presentation
 - Laurie will present to council to talk about her year 1 achievements and highlights
 - Summarize camps and activities (summer, sports etc)
 - Highlights will include new events, Fallfest, Gingerbread, Halloween, Photo contest, summer family beach races
 - Changed registration and rental processes
 - Increased accessibility at beach pavilions with light timers
 - Revitalized various groups, including over 55
 - There will be suggestions to amend program fee schedules to a broader range to provide more flexibility in the types of programs
 - Financial assistance and sponsorship programs
 - Change fireworks date to be more aligned with weekends
 - Other responsibilities (administrative, safety etc)
- Event Sponsorship Program
 - Allow businesses (or individuals) to sponsor events. This would provide acknowledgement and advertising for the sponsor. It would provide additional revenue to offset the costs. Ideally the sponsorships would fully offset costs so the programs do not have to pay with tax dollars.
 - Potential events could include
 - Egg Hunt
 - Family Swim and Boat Races
 - Fireworks
 - Laker 55+ Club events/speaker series
 - Movie Night
 - Summer Concert Series
 - Trout Derby
- There was a request for a safety net at Midvale to prevent lacrosse balls from getting lost. The feedback was that it is probably not necessary.

7. Announcements

Next meeting October 15, 2024

8. Adjournment

David Keyt moved that the meeting be adjourned. Derek Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed at 9:00 PM.