

BOROUGH OF MOUNTAIN LAKES RECREATION COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting Minutes – Quick Notes
Minutes for January 21, 2025 at 7:30 PM - Zoom

1. Call to Order

A monthly meeting of Borough of Mountain Lakes Recreation Commission was held on January 21, 2025 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, Rob Wianecki

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

Guests in attendance: None

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

3. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on November 19, 2024 was made by Derek Jackson and seconded by Mark Odenwelder.

4. Report of the Recreation Director

Report was prepared and presented by Laurie Stepper.

- Saturday, November 16 – Laker 55+ Brooklyn Bridge and Lower Manhattan Tour had 6 people attend. The group enjoyed learning historical facts while walking across the Brooklyn Bridge to Manhattan, after they walked to various historical points of interest – City Hall, African Burial Grounds, 911 Memorial, Trinity Church, and Wall Street – to name a few.
- Conducting facility and park inspections, while compiling a list of assets with replacement/improvement timelines for Capital Improvement projections.
- Inspected Racks for routine maintenance. Repairs scheduled to be complete by March.
- Annual Tree Lighting on Dec 8th had over 250 people attend. Everyone enjoyed the cookies, hot chocolate, roasting marshmallows, and a visit from the MLVFD Santa.
- Annual Menorah Lighting on Dec 29th had over 60 people attend. Music, latkes, donuts, roasting marshmallows, and gelt drop were enjoyed by all.
- The annual Holiday Decorating Contest had 11 entries. The top three winners are: 150 Morris Ave, 2 Scarborough Rd, and 52 Briarcliff Rd
- First annual Gingerbread Wonderland had 14 entries and over 200 people come to see the displays.
- Completed the New Resident Welcome Kit and started distributing in January
- Coordinated the logistics for the Recreation Ski & Snowboard Club and ensuring the Program Directors are prepared. Briarcliff has 73 kids registered; MLHS has 21 kids registered. Two years ago, there was low enrollment at the high school. Last year there was no program because there was no chaperone. This year the high school club is running at a loss, and is basically funded by the middle school program.
- Jr Laker Volleyball registration opened and closed with a full program of 34 kids, with a waitlist of 3 kids as of 1/15/25.

- Ordered apparel for Jr Laker Wrestling participants and set-up an online apparel store for parents to purchase merchandise.
- Managed Rack and Ring watercraft removal with gentle email reminders and phone calls to residents. Two SUPs were impounded.
- Coordinating ongoing Laker 55+ Club events.

Upcoming Events

- Wed, Jan 29 at 11am – Rutherford Hall Private Museum Tour for Laker 55+ Club
- Thurs, Feb 13 at 11am – Norwescap presentation of NJ Save Program for Seniors at Borough Hall

5. New Business

- Kaufmann Park tree – The tree is relatively old and in reasonable health for its age. However, in prior years it has been in poor health. There is no definitive way to know how long the tree will last. There was discussion about whether to plant a new tree in the park or elsewhere, or find another location. The Kaufmann Park location at the boulevard is not ideal from a safety perspective. Island Beach and the lake were enjoyed by everyone, but it was not very visible to the general public. People will look around for and think about other potential locations.
- HUB Lakes – The coach roster has past due. A few hub lake clubs lost their Mountain Lakes Club host. There may be a sub-committee created to help promote and recruit people for the teams and events. Chairs are needed for bowling, junior and senior track and horseshoes. We still need a location for horseshoes. In 2025, there may be a 1-day pickleball event.
- Mountain Lakes Club – With the demise of the ML Club, there are questions as to whether the Recreation Commission recommends that the borough buys the club property and facility. There were conversations that it would create opportunities for additional programs. However, there were concerns expressed about the operational overhead. If the borough were to take over the property, the club as many residents know it would cease in favor of the facility becoming a community center. It might be useful to survey residents for feedback. James Aitken made a motion that the Recreation Commission make a formal request to the council that they explore and share options for keeping the Mountain Lakes Club property and building in the community. (4 in favor, 1 opposed)
- 2025 goals discussion – Laurie is looking for ideas and goals from the community that could be opportunities to improve the community. She is currently looking at new programs like Fly Fishing and Astronomy.
- Thus far a single new applicant was received from the public. David and Laurie will be interviewing the candidate.

6. Announcements

Next meeting February 18, 2025

7. Adjournment

Derek Jackson moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mark Odenwelder seconded the motion. The motion passed at 830 PM.