

**TENAFLY RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES – OCTOBER 20, 2008**

ROLL CALL: Chairman Jerry O'Brien, Vice Chairman Naomi McDermott, Tony Favorito, Peter Fidler, Robert Sabatino Tim Roetman, Tom Swift, Rich Rodriguez, Susan Van Poznak, Council Liaison Nadia LaMastra, Board of Education Liaison Mark Aronson.

ABSENT: Alpine Liaison Sapna Jain

MINUTES: Mr. Rodriguez motions to approve the September 8, 2008 minutes. Mrs. Van Poznak seconds the motion and the minutes are approved.

AUDIENCE: Jeff Toonkel, 127 Erledon Road, Co-President of Tenaflly Junior Soccer's Travel program, requesting use of the Municipal Field in the winter on Saturday afternoons from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. to run an open practice/scrimmage for travel soccer players ages 9-14. Ashley's Soccer would be conducting the practices as they have during the fall season. There would be no fee involved. Mr. Favorito points out there may be potential conflicts with travel basketball for 8th grade boys and girls teams. He asks Mr. Toonkel to stress the in-season sport comes first. Mr. Rodriguez motions to approve the request for field space. Mrs. McDermott seconds the motion, all in favor and the motion is carried.

Keith Gold, 32 Winthrop Lane, Co-President of Tenaflly Youth Basketball (TYB) is in attendance along with Ken Clifford. Mr. Favorito informs the Commission under the new Co-Sponsorship Policy, the Youth Basketball group will be required to provide the Commission with a preseason report at the next Commission meeting. Mr. Gold reports there are only a few minor changes to the program. The Alpine Board of Education is now charging \$30.00 per hour for gym usage. This is the first time they are charging for usage. Online registration through Community Pass has been going well. Mr. Clifford projects approximately 650 registrations for the in-town league. Mr. O'Brien asks if TYB is using the Elisabeth Morrow School. Mr. Clifford reports a decreased usage last year. Mr. Favorito will follow up with Andy Escala, Athletic Director at Elisabeth Morrow about gym use.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Email from Peter Fidler regarding travel soccer in Closter is read and acknowledged.
2. Email from Jeff Toonkel to Mayor and Council regarding September 8 Recreation Commission meeting is read and acknowledged.
3. Email from Joe DiGiacomo regarding Mayor and Council's decision to allow non-residents in Tenaflly Soccer travel program is read. Mr. Sabatino questions Councilwoman LaMastra on how the vote went. Councilwoman LaMastra reports the Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the children from out of town to play. Mr. Sabatino asks why Councilwoman LaMastra didn't back up the Commission's vote to decline Soccer's request. Mrs. LaMastra explains she did not believe it was fair to penalize the children when the adults made the

mistake. The representatives from Soccer who attended the Council meeting were very apologetic for their actions. Mr. Rodriguez feels the Commission has been undermined by the Council and questions what the role of the Commission really is if their vote doesn't count. Mrs. McDermott believes making Soccer go through the process has made them aware of their mistake. Mr. Sabatino expresses his disappointment toward Councilwoman LaMastra and the Council for not considering the Commission's point of view more thoroughly. Councilwoman LaMastra repeats the children were being punished for the adults' actions. If anything, she suggests Lori Leskin and Jeff Toonkel should be removed from their positions on the soccer board as an alternative punishment. At this point in time, the Recreation Commission does not have a guideline for punishment in place when rules are broken. Mr. O'Brien explains the Soccer board not only violated the Commission's policy, but their own policy of allowing out-of-town players to participate on the travel teams. The punishment dealt by the Recreation Commission was the removal of the players from the travel program, only to be overturned. Mrs. Van Poznak expresses her displeasure with the situation since the Soccer Board knew the rules and used the children as innocent victims in this situation. The children should never be used as pawns. Mr. O'Brien reads an excerpt from the by-laws of Tenaflly Junior Soccer in which they express the goal of the program is to enhance the athletic capability of the Tenaflly athlete. Mr. O'Brien doesn't think this happens when kids from Tenaflly are on the bench watching kids from out-of-town play. Mr. Rodriguez believes the Council did not act properly in allowing the violation of rules to continue. Mr. Fidler further explains the Commission took a long time to make a decision, and to have it so easily overturned is disempowering to the Commission. Mr. O'Brien agrees and believes the Commission's decisions have not been honored. Councilwoman LaMastra suggests Commission members should go to a Council meeting when their items are up for discussion, or write a letter explaining their decisions. Mr. O'Brien reiterates the Tenaflly kids are losing out in this decision. Mr. Rodriguez asks if anyone has any ideas what can be done to review the powers of the Commission. Councilwoman LaMastra states the ordinance that charters the Commission is in question. The Borough Attorney reviewed how the Commission was established and reported it was not established pursuant to the State of New Jersey's statutes. The Governing Body was supposed to review the charter of the Commission. Councilwoman LaMastra states even if the Commission is an actual Commission, they have not acted like one. Mr. Favorito asks where the information came from that the Commission is not properly established. Mrs. McDermott explains the Commission does not act like one since it does not develop its own budget, control hiring or have oversight of capital planning. Councilwoman LaMastra states a true Commission's employees should only report to the Commission and not the Council. This Commission is somewhere in the middle. Mr. Rodriguez would like the Council to move this topic to the front of their agenda to make a final decision on how the Commission should operate. Mrs. McDermott suggests presenting this issue to the Council. Mr. O'Brien asks Councilwoman LaMastra when Recreation will come up on the Mayor and Council's agenda. Councilwoman LaMastra explains the item will be

- placed on an agenda to be discussed at a work session. Items have to be placed on the Council's agenda with enough time for public notice. Once a month the liaison reports back to the Council during a Committee report. Councilwoman LaMastra asks if any of the Commission members have seen the statute which established the Commission. Mr. O'Brien asks Mr. Roetman to get a copy and forward it to the Commission. Councilwoman LaMastra will bring the Commission's concerns back to the Council.
4. Letter of support has been written to the state in favor of the Green Acres acquisition of the land adjacent to the Tenafly Nature Center. Councilwoman LaMastra asks the Commission if they are ok with spending money from the Open Space Trust Fund to support the land acquisition. There is an opportunity for the Commission to use the money for other recreational uses. Mr. O'Brien explains the purchase is a good purchase for both parties. Mr. Roetman suggests the town needs more active recreation space such as soccer and baseball fields. Mr. Swift suggests a piece of property would have to be a significant size to be suitable for more active purposes.
 5. Letter from Teresa Van Etten requesting a refund for yoga. Mr. Roetman explains Ms. Van Etten attended one class and realized she could not participate further due to a prior back injury and recent surgery. Mr. Swift motions to approve a refund. Mrs. Van Poznak seconds the motion, all in favor and the motion is carried.
 6. Memo from Tim Roetman to Tony Favorito regarding the Cheerleading program and Bike Rodeo is acknowledged. Mr. O'Brien suggests a letter on behalf of the Commission be drafted to thank the Police Department for their support.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Alpine Recreation – No Report
2. Board of Education – No Report
3. Youth Services – No Report
4. Joint Use – No Report

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. Mr. Favorito presents a budget for a new in-town High School Basketball League. The Commissioners agree this is a great idea. Mrs. Van Poznak motions to approve the program and budget. Mr. Swift seconds the motion, all in favor, and the motion is carried.
2. Mr. Favorito presents a permit application from Jim Morrisson, teacher at Tenafly High School for use of the Municipal Field in the winter by the Flag Football club. Mr. Sabatino motions for approval of the permit. Mr. Rodriguez seconds the motion, all in favor and the motion is carried.
3. Mr. Favorito has highlighted a couple areas in the report submitted by Tenafly Junior Soccer at the September meeting he would like reviewed. Mr. O'Brien asks for the TJSL representatives be invited to the Commission meeting in January to resolve these concerns.
4. The Commission is asked to consider a new partition in the McCandless Room. A plan has been submitted by a local architectural firm. Mr. Favorito raises a few

concerns regarding the removal of doors and replacing the folding panel wall. It is recommended the Commission ask for a meeting with the architect to meet with the Recreation Department to discuss a revised plan. Mr. Roetman explains the other difficulties with the current plan. Mrs. McDermott motions to re-open the discussion of the floor plan and meet with the architect. Mr. Swift seconds the motion, all in favor and the motion is carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Concern regarding the field lights going off at 10:00 p.m. on the Municipal Field this Friday is raised by Mr. Favorito. There is a safety concern if the lights go off early before the field is vacated. The request for an extension has been previously declined by the Mayor and Council. Mr. Rodriguez motions to overrule the Council's decision based on the concerns for safety. Mr. Sabatino seconds the motion. Mrs. McDermott states she can not support this motion because it puts Mr. Favorito in an uncomfortable position if the field lights are on late and there is a complaint made to Mayor and Council. She will abstain. All others are in favor of Mr. Rodriguez's motion and it is carried.
2. Mr. Rodriguez asks Councilwoman LaMastra to add to the Mayor and Council's agenda the need to discuss the Commission's status. Councilwoman LaMastra acknowledges Mr. Rodriguez's request.
3. Mr. Favorito asks Councilwoman LaMastra if the revised Co-Sponsorship Policy has been reviewed for final approval by Mayor and Council. Councilwoman LaMastra states it has not been reviewed yet, it is on an upcoming agenda.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Mrs. Van Poznak would like to know more about the money flow between the trust accounts. Mr. Roetman offers to discuss it with Mrs. Van Poznak at her convenience.
2. Mr. Sabatino would like the co-sponsored groups to report back to the Commission a list of ejections if incidents occurred during their seasons. Mr. Favorito would like the co-sponsored groups to continue to respond to the Commission where there is a major incident, but handle the smaller issues within their own boards.
3. Mr. Roetman reports he attended a meeting on background checks earlier this month hosted by NJRPA. The Megan Nicole Kanka Foundation is now offering to fund 100% of the cost of volunteer background checks for towns just beginning the program. Mr. Roetman also reports beyond the initial funding the town still faces a challenge of making payment to the State contracted vendor Sagem Morpho since they do not accept purchase orders. A letter has been sent to the Kanka Foundation from Mr. Favorito requesting to participate in the program.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned, 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Roetman