

Somerville Recreation Committee

Somerville, New Jersey

October 4, 2023

October 4, 2023 at the Somerville BOE Conference Room, 51 West Cliff Street, Somerville, New Jersey.

Meeting came to order at 6:03pm.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Chairman Tom Scherr, Vice Chair Ashley Rau, Eric Allena, Mallory Burgan, Tori Cesario, Jason Kraska, AJ Smith, (Council Liaison) Theresa Bonner, and (Recreation Director) Kathy Gerndt

ABSENT: Karen Monetti and Chris Peake

Chairman Tom Scherr opened the meeting and stated, *"The meeting will please come to order. Adequate notice of this meeting as required by the Open Meeting Act has been provided in that on January 4, 2023, a copy of a notice specifying the time, location and date was (1) posted upon the bulletin board outside of Borough Hall, and (2) given to the Clerk Administrator (3) advertises in the Courier News. If any member of this body believes this meeting is being held in violation of the Open Meeting Act, please state your views at this time."* Hearing none, we moved to the next item on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: J. Kraska made a motion to approve the August 2 minutes. T. Cesario seconded the motion which was approved 4-0-3 (Allena, Scher and Smith abstained)

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: None

COMMUNICATION: None

RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES:

Resolution 23-0918-284 Authorizing Spooktacular event to be held on Tuesday, October 31, 2023, and waiving parking fees in lots 1, 2, & 4 from 3-6pm.

Resolution 23-0918-285 Authorizing the 8th annual Somerville 5K Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 2023.

HANDOUTS:

Basketball League Flyer (Grades 3-8)
Basketball DST Basketball Clinic (Grades 1& 2)
Pre-season Wrestling Clinic (Grades K-8)
Revised Committee List

REPORTS:

DIRECTOR- K. Gerndt reported the following:

1. I'd like to welcome Theresa Bonner to our committee. We met briefly this afternoon and chatted mainly about the importance of two-way communication.
2. Michael Lepp Pool closed on August 27. 597 families (2142 individuals) registered for the pool, although most of the badges were never picked up. 3628 visits were logged at the pool over an 8-week period compared to 2406 at Walck in 2022. That equates to 65 visitors per day between the hours of 12-6pm. Refer to the handout for additional info and historical comparisons. The contractor put the cover on the pool last weekend and is completing a final punch list.
3. The spray parks closed on September 17, and will be winterized.
4. Fall soccer is underway despite it being a wet September. We have ten teams competing in the Bridgewater league. The season concludes on Nov 4th.
5. Other programs are ongoing – soccer clinics, tennis clinics, and adult pickleball. The men's Fall Ball Softball Championship is tonight.

6. Basketball and wrestling registration are open. Additional coaches will be needed. The clinic will be held on Friday nights instead of Saturday mornings to eliminate custodial fees and to hopefully boost attendance.
7. The same towns will be participating in the RIB league – Bedminster, Bound Brook, Branchburg, Hillsborough, Manville, Middlesex, Somerset Hills (Bernardsville/Peapack-Gladstone), South Bound Brook, and Somerville.
8. PSEG will be relocating and upgrading the lighting at the Michael Lepp basketball court to allow for a regulation sized court to be built in the near future.
9. Security cameras will be installed at the park.
10. Water fountains are being installed at several locations – pickleball courts, Walck, Carol Pager, and basketball courts at Mercer St.
11. Spooktacular will be held on Halloween from 3-6pm. It will be held on the actual holiday except when it falls on Sat/Sun/Mon.
12. Preliminary budgets are due Oct 24. New capital requests will not be accepted.
13. Registrations are up for the Turkey Trot – currently at 465 versus 225 at this time last year. Sponsorships are also on the rise. Refer to the P&L handout for details.
14. A job opening has been posted for a Basketball Gym Supervisor. Part-time hourly position Jan/Feb on Friday evenings and Saturdays.
15. I'd like to acknowledge and thank the following community partners for helping to keep our parks clean – the YMCA and the Somerville HS MAPS program under the supervision of the Somerville PD. Many thanks to the Somerville Civic League who recently dedicated a third memorial bench at Van Fleet Gardens.
16. Lastly, as a reminder, committee members whose terms will be expiring (Tom, Karen, & AJ) should communicate whether they'd like to be considered for reappointment.

COUNCIL LIAISON – Councilwoman Bonner introduced herself and stated that she looks forward to working with the committee. Stressed importance of two-way communication.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1) Programming/Events –

- a) Halloween: T. Cesario discussed the plans for the Spooktacular and the House Decorating Contest.
- b) Turkey Trot: J. Kraska will set up a sub-committee meeting to finalize details.

2) Grants – J. Kraska announced that we received both grants to move ahead with plans to expand two playgrounds (Carol Pager and Walck) to include all-inclusive annex areas.

3) Outreach- no updates

OLD BUSINESS: T. Scherr read the historical information that was provided about the parks. He is appreciative of the efforts, and stated the need to condense the material and complete the report.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. A. Rau made a motion to spend up to fifty thousand dollars as needed to complete the all-inclusive playground areas. Motion was seconded by T. Scherr. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0. (Smith not present).
2. J. Kraska informed members that a Skateboard Group will be attending the Oct 16th Council meeting.
3. J. Kraska reported that the Farmers Market will be returning to Somerville in 2024 (May -Nov, Sundays from 10am-1pm) at the Middle School. The committee is seeking a Rec Liaison. Burgan/Cesario are considering.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMENTS: T. Scherr thanked M. Burgan for her assistance with the sponsorship letters/material.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, J. Kraska made a motion to adjourn. T. Cesario seconded the motion, which was approved 6-0. Meeting adjourned 7:03pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 6 at 6pm.

Kathy Gerndt
Acting as Secretary