



# City of Ansonia

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Ansonia, Connecticut 06401

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## ANSONIA RECREATION COMMISSION

October 1, 2013

Regular Meeting

Present: Al Smith, Chairman  
Steve Kichar  
Tom Lynch  
Jamie Puro

Absent: Michael Cratty  
Steve Sobolisky

Others Present: Jeff Coppola, Recreation Director  
Donna Lindgren, ANC Director  
Sean Rowley, PWD  
Tara Kolakowski, Gov. Liaison Officer

The Regular Meeting of the Ansonia Recreation Commission was called to order by Chairman Smith at 6:03p.m.

All present rose and Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

The secretary called the roll.

There was a quorum present.

### **Deviate from the Agenda.**

Mr. Puro made a motion to deviate from the agenda to hear Donna Lindgren, ANC Director's report. Ms. Lindgren stated she left a meeting to come down to this meeting. Mr. Lynch seconded. All in favor, so carried.

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**Reports: Donna Lindgren, Ansonia Nature Center Director**

Ms. Lindgren is present this evening.

Ms. Lindgren's monthly report was in the monthly packet.

Ms. Lindgren said the Autumn Festival will be held at the Nature Center. She invited everyone to come up and enjoy the day. She said that she did not have any schedules for the fields at the Nature Center. She said that she needs these schedules to plan for events.

Mr. Sheehy said he will get a soccer schedule to Ms. Lindgren.

Mr. Coppola said that he doesn't know anything about Fall Baseball or their schedules.

Mr. Rowley said the High School travel team plays on Fridays.

Chairman Smith said that Recreation should know when all of these teams have games on our fields.

Ms. Lindgren asked about the new Parks Ordinance that the Board of Aldermen are working on.

Ms. Kolakowski said that there was an Ordinance meeting last night and she will let Ms. Lindgren know the status.

Ms. Lindgren said there is a bond referendum and there is funds for the Nature Center on it. She is putting together an exhibit supporting those issues i.e. the parking lot and dredging the pond. She said she would like a letter supporting the funding for the parking lot and dredging the pond.

Mr. Coppola asked if she wants a letter from the Recreation commission.

Mr. Puro said that Mr. Coppola should do a letter and the Recreation Commission can do a letter.

Ms. Lindgren said that she is putting her exhibit together right now.

Mr. Kichar made a motion to accept Ms. Lindgren's report. Mr. Lynch seconded. All in favor, so carried.

**Director Reports**

Football

Mr. Kichar gave his report on the Football Program. He said that his financial report was in the monthly packet. He said that an updated financial report is sent to Rich Bshara every Tuesday so that he has a current updated report.

Mr. Kichar said in the packet there is a list of people who still owe the Football program money for registration fees. He said they have set up payment plans for them and they still have not paid or made an attempt to pay. Their children are in the program and are continuing to play. The numbers are low and the program would not put the children off the team. These are not hardship people. They have refused to pay.

Mr. Coppola said that he set up payment plans with the Treasurer and they have contacted these people every week.

Mr. Kichar said these people receive e-mails from the Executive Board on their past due account. He said they don't know what to do to collect the money.

Chairman Smith suggested that they contact Corporation Counsel Blake to see what can be done.

Mr. Coppola said they will look into that.

There was discussion on the number of children registered to play football and the fact that these children are needed to make the team numbers. The banquet is coming up and there was a suggestion that this may be a way to collect the past due accounts.

Mr. Kichar said that the Football program really needs that money to continue. He said he is beyond knowing what to do.

Chairman Smith asked what the funds consisted of, what makes up their income.

Mr. Kichar said it is Registration money.

Chairman Smith asked who took it.

Mr. Coppola said it is Registration money and they set up payment plans for the parents to pay the Football program what they owe in registration fees for their children.

Mr. Kichar said that page 1 of the report is not the report that Mr. Bshara receives. He said that Mr. Bshara gets the final report on Tuesday so that he can see what clears over the weekend. He reviewed the Financial Report that was submitted and was sent out in the packet. He said there is \$3000 left in the account as of this morning.

Mr. Kichar said that Shelton finally got back to Ansonia and advised us that their League will not allow them to participate. The teams will have to play each other.

Mr. Kichar said he spoke with Oxford on the Flag Team and their coach would like to have the kids play together. Ansonia could be part of his Flag Program next year and they could play with them in their program.

Mr. Puro asked when and where they would play.

Mr. Kichar said he didn't know at this time. Oxford doesn't have a field for Flag Football. He said he will talk to the parents and coaches to see if they can work it out. He said Oxford is not AYF affiliated but they have insurance. He said there were no games scheduled for our team and the third week of August we thought there were teams for them to play. AYF did not communicate to Ansonia that there was no games scheduled for the 7 & 8 year old teams. The 5 & 6 year old teams have played every week. The 7 & 8 year old parents were right. He said he is looking to refund the registration fees for the 7 & 8 year olds because of the program. He said he will try to get them some games before the season ends. There was a lack of communication and the Executive Board assumed someone was taking care of the Flag program.

There was discussion that there was a problem with communication between the League and the local Executive Board on this program. No one let Ansonia know what was happening with the program and the games. The parents were left in the dark on this.

Mr. Coppola said that the parents want a refund of their registration fee. He said that Jon Chryzanowoski is meeting with the parents right now. He said that Jim Benjamin who coached the Flag football team has left us. He said Ansonia Recreation should run the Flag Football program themselves next year and keep it separate from the AYF program.

Mr. Kichar said that the Executive Board is still catching up from a few years ago with regard to the funding. They spent \$40,000 in equipment purchases this year – the helmets are guaranteed for 8 to 10 years. These are the best helmets you could get for safety.

Mr. Kichar said that next year the registration fee for Flag football should be down to \$30.00 including uniforms and insurance. This year Flag registration was \$125. He said the teams could not have uniforms with three (3) colors which is a CIAC rule. They had to purchase all new uniforms to comply with the new regulation. The insurance for the Flag teams is under the City of Ansonia's Recreation policy so there should not be a problem with them playing on other fields in other towns.

There was discussion on the size of the teams that the Ansonia teams are playing. Ansonia has about 17 or 18 kids on a team and the other towns have 25 to 30 kids on a team. Ansonia players get tired out quickly because there is no relief players. They cannot compete and play well when they are exhausted. Mr. Kichar said Ansonia will have to combine our teams next year and do three levels. For example Shelton has 39 boys on a team and Ansonia has 17 boys on a team. He said Ansonia lost 20 boys from August to the start of the games.

Mr. Kichar said the Executive Board in general did everything they could to make this work. There is a Colonial League meeting this week. He said Ansonia should be playing Woodland, Oxford, Shelton, and Monroe. There are three towns left in the Pop Warner League and what is stopping them from joining Colonial league is the game schedule. He said another possibility is to start a NVL Division which is guaranteed to play each other and play a more balanced schedule.

The Commission continued discussion on how the teams would play each other in a different league set up.

Mr. Puro made a motion to accept the Football Report. Mr. Lynch seconded. All in favor, so carried.

### Soccer

Mr. Chris Sheehy is present this evening.

Mr. Sheehy said that his monthly report was sent out in the commission's monthly packet. He said it is the middle of the soccer season. There is nothing big to report. He said he submitted an Invoice to Mr. Coppola for approval and payment. It should be handled the same as the other invoices. He said he received a grant from Dick's Sporting Goods this year. He received 25 coaching kits. Picture Day was last week. This is a fundraiser for the program. They are also selling soccer apparel and the funds from this fund raiser will go to purchase new goals at the Nature Center. The goals at Colony Park are steel collapsible goals. They paid for these goals with the registration fees.

Mr. Kichar made a motion to accept the Soccer Report. Mr. Puro seconded. All in favor, so carried.

### Baseball & Softball

There was no one present from Baseball and Softball. There was no financial report received this month.

### Basketball

Mr. Coppola said the Recreation basketball program is run by the Boys & Girls Club and change would have to go through the Mayor's office.

### **Public Session**

Chairman Smith asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to address the commission.

Sean Rowley, PWD

Mr. Rowley said he wanted to address the e-mail that was sent to Mayor Della Volpe regarding the fields that were being lined and not lined. He said he lined all of the fields that he was asked to line.

Mr. Sheehy said that he was under the impression that they were going to move the bigger field from Colony to ANC. He said they can't play on a bigger field.

Mr. Rowley said he lined the fields at the Nature Center and the small field at Colony. He said that Mr. Coppola called and said they needed the fields at Colony done. He said there is one football field in Ansonia and six soccer fields and twelve baseball/softball fields to take care of. He said there is Nelligan Park and Nolan Little League field that have been used year in and year out. The Prindle Avenue field is the High School field and we re-did that field. He said that if Mr. Sheehy had a problem with this he could have called him. He has his phone number.

Mr. Kichar said there was money spent on the soccer field at the Nature Center.

Mr. Sheehy said that is not a good soccer field.

Mr. Rowley said we put the big field where it levels off. The field at Colony had plugs put in. It was used the end of March and it should have rested half of July and August and then used for Fall and Winter soccer. He said you cannot practice soccer on a game field and then use it for games – this destroys the field.

There was discussion on the use of the fields and the care and maintenance that goes into keeping a field in good condition. The third week of August the boys and girls have three to four games per week which is a lot of wear and tear on the fields.

Mr. Kichar said that \$5000 was spent on the field and it is sloped.

Mr. Rowley said the infield dropped to the outfield. He explained the configuration of the field and how to fit the two fields there. He said they are trying to do the best they can. The field is always lined. He said that Mr. Sheehy was told he could not use the field the first two weeks of April. The High School team is using them at that time.

Mr. Sheehy said they belong to the CJSA league and they have a set season. The games are scheduled for them, they do not have a say in the game schedule.

Mr. Rowley suggested they schedule the games away during that time frame.

Mr. Kichar said that if Mr. Rowley cannot get to the fields and Recreation as a Board says you cannot have games - you cannot have games. Our PWD can't do it. The High School Varsity games take preference over our games. He said there is one facility for football and ten for

baseball and eight for soccer. He said does the Soccer program use the field for the travel team. He said the first two weeks of April the fields are off limits for play.

Mr. Sheehy said give the Soccer program more funds and they will hire someone to do the fields.

Mr. Rowley said it is not a matter of that – the fields need to dry out.

Mr. Kichar said that if Mr. Rowley says you can't use the field you can't use the field. He knows the fields, he works on them.

Mr. Rowley said there is no water at Colony but the geese and horse waste create a problem at Colony.

Mr. Coppola said if you use Colony we might have to purchase new goals for the soccer league. He suggested they look at Pine Lot or Linett Park for use as a practice field and use the other field for games.

Mr. Sheehy asked if they would line these fields.

Mr. Kichar said for practice you could put cones up if the field is not lined.

Mr. Sheehy said the district and league games are scheduled for Ansonia Soccer.

Mr. Coppola suggested he send a letter to them explaining the use of the fields and asking them to schedule around it.

Mr. Sheehy said Colony is used for the youth program and Nature Center is not a problem.

Mr. Rowley said the last three weeks the field at the Nature Center has been beat up. At the Nature Center the goal mouths and kick line are all dug up and there are four more holes on the field. By using little fields inside big fields it is destroying the field. We need one year where you do not use the field so that it can come back.

Chairman Smith asked if they could use the baseball field at the Nature Center for practice.

Mr. Sheehy said that Recreation suggested that and it is not big enough.

Mr. Puro asked if they could practice at the Nature Center or Pine Lot or on the field behind the Middle School (Colburn field).

Mr. Sheehy said he is not opposed to that but the City would have to put up goals at those locations and line the field. He said they could use Linett Park for practice but they would need it cut every week and he is already complaining the fields are not cut and lined and this would add two more fields for them to do. It is not fair for PWD either.

Mr. Sheehy said with regard to the e-mail – if there is a problem they should let the Mayor know about it. The problem is as a taxpayer, the PWD doesn't have the resources to keep the fields up to standards. He said it is not his intent to know whether PWD is doing their job or not. He said he is getting complaints that the field is not lined. He said he can't deal with that so he sent a letter to the Mayor. He said he can't do any more, he asked and asked.

There was discussion on the statement that football gets more attention. Mr. Kichar said that there is only one football field to maintain and there are numerous soccer, baseball, and softball fields to maintain. He said that something has to be done to take the strain off of the other fields so they can rejuvenate and repair themselves.

Mr. Sheehy said there is a meeting of the league in Hamden and he will request no home games in the beginning of the season.

Mr. Coppola said he will put in the budget next year for two soccer goals for the practice fields. He said PWD is doing a fine job of taking care of the fields and lining the fields.

There was discussion on the Boys Youth 19 travel team and the Girls travel team.

Mr. Rowley said someone is using the fields and moving the goals. He said he thought there was an agreement with the Board of Education regarding the use of the fields. He said that Ms. Merlone and Mr. Piccolo told the group they could use the field.

Mr. Coppola said they thought these teams were Recreation sponsored teams. We said it was your High School team and that they should be able to use it.

Mr. Kichar said we are not trying to slight Mr. Sheehy or the soccer program. He said that Mr. Schryver and Mr. Rowley can only do what they can do.

Mr. Kichar made a motion to close the public session. Mr. Puro seconded. All in favor, so carried.

**Reports: Jeffrey Coppola, Recreation Director**

Mr. Coppola is present this evening.

Mr. Puro made a motion to accept Mr. Coppola's report as submitted. Mr. Kichar seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Mr. Coppola said with regard to basketball, Recreation can run leagues in the Armory after the floor is finished. He said there was discussion among the parents that they want Recreation to run a Recreation Basketball program. He said he would love to start the basketball program but

it would have to be discussed through the Mayor's office. Currently the Boys & Girls Club runs basketball for Ansonia. Pat Lynch said he will help with the travel league. He said that the City of Ansonia Recreation will not do anything with a travel run league out of the Armory.

### **Committee Reports**

There are no committee reports this month.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Kichar made a motion to table acceptance of the minutes as he has a correction. Mr. Lynch seconded. All in favor, so carried.

### **Approval of Bills**

Mr. Kichar made a motion to pay the soccer invoice in the amount of \$1353. Mr. Puro seconded. All in favor, so carried.

### **Correspondence**

1. Letter from Kevin Blake, Corp. Counsel re: Silver Hill Road.

Chairman Smith read the letter received from Corp. Counsel Blake.

Mr. Puro made a motion to table. Mr. Lynch seconded.

There was discussion on the whether the Recreation Commission has any use for this property.

Mr. Puro rescinded his motion.

Mr. Lynch rescinded his second.

Mr. Kichar made a motion to send a letter to the Board of Aldermen advising them that they have no use for this land. Mr. Lynch seconded. All in favor, so carried.

### **Any other business to come before the commission**

#### November Meeting Change

Mr. Kichar made a motion to change the November 5, 2013 meeting of the commission to the second Tuesday of the month, November 12, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. because of Election Day. Mr. Puro seconded. All in favor, so carried.

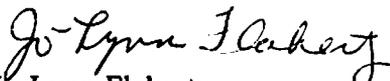
**Executive Session**

None

**Adjourn**

Mr. Puro made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. Mr. Kichar seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jo-Lynn Flaherty  
Secretary