



City of Ansonia

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Ansonia, Connecticut 06401

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ANSONIA RECREATION COMMISSION

June 2, 2015

Regular Meeting

Present: Al Smith, Chairman
Michael Cratty
Frank DeLibero
Jeff Devine
Steve Sobolisky

Absent: Anne Lynch
Paul Velardi

Others Present: Jeff Coppola, Recreation Director
Richard Kaslaitis, Alderman 4th Ward

The Regular Meeting of the Ansonia Recreation Commission was called to order by Chairman Smith at 6:00 p.m.

All present rose and Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

The secretary called the roll and there was a quorum present.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. DeLibero made a motion to accept as written the minutes of the Regular Meeting May 5, 2015. Mr. Sobolisky seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Rec060215

Public Session

Kim McDermott
171 Wakelee Avenue
Ansonia, CT 06401

Ms. McDermott said she spoke to the Little League Board of Directors and requested information two weeks ago and she hasn't received the information. She asked for their meeting minutes. She said she will be sending out an e-mail to the District Team coaches on this. There was an issue in the Fall where her son was singled out and pulled from a game. She asked for the game stats to see in how many games her son did not play. She said that the coaches need training on how to deal with children and how to handle coaching.

Ms. McDermott discussed the ages of the players on the teams i.e. bringing up 9 & 10 year olds to play with the 12 year olds. She said a 9 year old should not have to play against a 12 year old on another team. She said she donates her time and money and she expects to have all of her questions answered.

Robert DeFelice, President of Little League said he did receive Ms. McDermott's letter and they are in the process of getting the information she requested. He said there are 9 and 10 year olds in the major division and a few 8 year olds. He said Beacon Falls is minimal and Derby is comparable to Ansonia. He said Ms. McDermott mentions "improper language" – he asked if it is the coaches or the players.

Ms. McDermott said the coaches.

Mr. DeFelice said the playing time that is required by the Little League charter is two (2) innings and one (1) at bat. He said he can't speak to it because he hasn't seen the books as to whether her son is getting more or less than minimum. He said he will speak to her son's coach.

Ms. McDermott said her son is being singled out and it is not fair.

Mr. DeFelice said with regard to the All Stars, he mentioned to the coaches that the kids have to play 60% of the games. If they did not meet that, they are not eligible for the All Star team. He said he is looking into the All Star teams.

Mr. DeLiberio asked the number of teams.

Mr. DeFelice said there are three (3) teams in the Majors. All have 8 year olds to 12 year olds on the team. There are 12 or 13 kids on a team and there are 8 year olds to 12 year olds in the league.

Mr. Coppola said they had no choice with the numbers they had. He said it is a good idea to pull the books and look at them. The Minor league is OK. He has to look into the Majors.

Mr. DeFelice discussed the problems in the Major league. He said they have been playing the kids up. He said Fall Ball is different for the players. The kids will not benefit in the Miners in the Fall Ball program.

Mr. Coppola said Fall Ball is different from the Spring program. It is a different league. He said he believes in keeping the kids down a level so they learn and gain confidence before they play against the older kids.

Mr. DeFelice said their teams would not have been any better off by doing that.

Mr. DeLibero discussed the draft process for the players. He said there should be two to three 12 year olds on each team – they should not all be on the same team.

Mr. DeFelice said there is one team with three 12 years olds but they all ride together. He said he doesn't know the breakdown on the other teams.

Mr. DeLibero said you work around the problems – the kids are drafted and split out.

Mr. DeFelice said he doesn't know the breakdown.

Mr. DeLibero said it's the rule – there has to be a competitive balance. All Stars everyone gets a chance.

Mr. DeFelice said there is a 9 & 10 year old All Star team and a 10 & 11 year old All Star team.

Mr. Coppola said your 12 year old All Star team could be an 11 & 12 year old team.

Mr. DeFelice said they are up against other towns that will field 13 year olds. Our 12 year olds are not competitive against them.

Mr. DeLibero said why are we spending money if we aren't having a 12 year old All Star team?

Mr. DeFelice said this year we have a good 9 & 10 year old team. The players don't stay and continue up through. The 12 year olds don't stay. They seem to drop out when they turn 13.

Mr. DeLibero asked you can't find 12 kids for an All Star team?

Mr. DeFelice said they will not be competitive.

The discussion continued on the All Star teams and the players that are playing in the Majors and Miners.

Mr. DeLibero said there is a 9 & 10 year old team and a 10 & 11 year old team.

Mr. DeFelice said this year's All Stars are a 9 & 10 year old team and a 10 & 11 year old team.

There was discussion that the 12 year olds should be represented in the All Stars.

Mr. DeFelice said the teams are:

9 & 10 year old – All Star team

10 & 11 year old – All Star team

11 & 12 year old –Tournament team

Mr. Coppola said they are doing the best they can with the number of players they have.

Mr. Devine said the main complaint is there is no 12 year old All Star Team and they have to play 60% of the time in order to qualify for the All Star team.

Mr. DeLibero said there are eight 12 year olds and 11 year olds to play in the All Stars.

Mr. DeFelice said we are trying to be competitive. The 10 & 11 year old team will be more competitive with the other towns. The same with the 9 & 10 year old team.

Mr. Coppola said the 12 year olds are coming out for the first time.

Mr. DeFelice said the numbers are not there. Other towns have the numbers for their teams.

Mr. DeLibero said he recommends they scrap the Little League. He said you have to get the kids ready to play. We don't have to play Little League. We can get our own teams and league together where the kids will be learning the game and how to play.

Mr. DeFelice said they are looking to be competitive in District 3.

Mr. DeLibero said the Little League Charter is expensive when other leagues are less expensive and may be better for our kids.

Mr. Coppola said if we can get five or six other cities together we can have our own league. You have your own league, you can set your own rules. He said Seymour does this and they also have a travel program.

There was discussion on Seymour baseball and the Mudcats.

Brad Vealor

Director Ansonia Softball

Mr. Vealor discussed the traditional Jr. Team stating they are a core of girls that have been together for a long time. He said regarding All Stars they didn't want to commit due to the Travel Team schedule. He said he has no Jr. All Star team this year.

Rec060215

There was discussion on the Travel Teams and that the parents want the travel teams also. He said Bob Lang, District 3 doesn't schedule any games for league play. It is mandatory to play because the schedule is set.

Mr. Vealor discussed modified coach pitch and that the rules are set by Mr. Lang. He said the 9 & 10 year old All Star team will play in the Majors. It will take two weeks to get the kids ready to play All Star games.

Mr. DeLibero said they had this problem in Babe Ruth. He said we have to find a way to keep the kids interested. He said the travel team will crush Little League.

Mr. DeFelice said Seymour Tradition are required to play Little League.

Mr. Vealor said the Miners are a big division for the girls in Seymour.

Mr. DeFelice said Miner rules are about pitching. Seymour is down this year. All the towns can get better with pitching if we hold some joint clinics, etc. He said he held a pitching clinic and only 5 girls participated.

Mr. Coppola said do we have enough towns to do this. We have to do this ourselves and get it started.

Mr. DeLibero discussed the Recreation baseball and softball programs. He said Recreation should not support travel. He said if we are not going to be competitive, we have to do our own thing. We have to get kids interested in playing the game.

Rich Licursi
Great Hill Road Facility

Mr. Licursi said he runs a 20,000 s.f. facility that brings athletes together to learn the game. He said John Murphy was a first round pick and he is from this area. He is involved with the facility and teaching the kids. He said he will help the kids who want to play. He said every kid deserves to play baseball. He said he has a great facility in Seymour and Recreation programs are welcome to come up and use it and they will help them.

Mr. Licursi discussed the different programs and services his facility has to offer all recreation sport programs. He said he would like to help and have Tournament Teams and games and possibly start his own league. He said it is a problem for the players who need help with the skills. He said there are Mudcat players who are coming to his facility for help.

Mr. Licursi said he is putting a league together for the winter months. He started a Friday night Fun House for \$5.00. He said they can help and prepare your All Star Teams. He said put a 12 year old team together and he'll train them. He would love to help.

Mr. Devine said short term he doesn't think we can have a 12 year old team ready at this time. He asked Mr. DeFelice if there are any players who want to play.

Rec060215

Mr. DeFelice said he is sure there are but the program wants to be competitive.

Ms. McDermott said she is not the only parent who says – just let them play.

Mr. Coppola said we have to let them succeed in the Miners. It would help if we kept them in the Miners longer.

Mr. DeFelice said it would help the Miners not the Majors.

Chairman Smith asked the status of the baseball program right now.

Mr. Coppola said it starts with the child and the parent. We get the kids at 8 & 9 years old. We had 60 eight (8) year olds and four years later we have eight (8) 12 year olds left. How do we keep them involved in the program? The travel teams are the parents and the Travel Teams are taking the better players. He said the Little League coaches are the Dad's.

Mr. Licursi suggested they use his facility to train the kids. It is a constant thing all year long. They just keep playing ball, they are intense. How many are going to play at the college level or professional. The training is affordable – \$1700 to play the Spring season. He said they offer scholarships.

Mr. DeFelice said there are good 9 – 10 – 11 year olds players this year and they are a good core to build on. He said softball was disappointing – the Jr. Team could not compete because the Travel Team took the players.

Mr. DeLibero said there is nothing Recreation can do this year but we can work on it for next year.

Mr. Coppola agreed. He said Recreation can take a look and try to fix it for next year. Travel Teams are here to stay and Recreation will have to work with them. He said we can't have members and coaches missing Little League games for the Travel Teams.

Discussion continued on the number of innings a player must play in a game. Mr. DeLibero said they may have to make a decision as to whether they want to play Recreation or Travel. Mr. Vealor said the Recreation games go for four innings.

Discussion on the Travel Teams vs. the Recreation Teams. Mr. Coppola stated the Seymour programs work. Mr. DeLibero asked if they have 12 year olds that play Little League. Mr. DeFelice said Seymour has 12 year olds. Mr. Coppola said they play both – Little League and Travel.

Chairman Smith said Little League is concerned with teaching the kids how to play baseball. He said we have to go back to the basics. Little League games were played against each other in the same town. He said there is a big responsibility taking kids outside of Ansonia.

Mr. Devine said you have to build the joy of the game in the kids.

Juan Carlos

Mr. Carlos said he is requesting the use of the soccer field twice a week for practice and for five (5) home games.

Mr. Devine said they had the Youth 23 team last year.

Mr. Carlos said this is the third year they are playing.

Mr. Devine said the parking lot at the Nature Center will be paved around that time.

Mr. Coppola said Recreation can't vote until they speak with PWD.

Mr. Carlos said he just wants 5 home games.

Mr. Coppola said the soccer fields are all beat up from use at the Nature Center. He said Mr. Carlos should work out a schedule with the Board of Ed for use of their soccer field. He said the soccer fields are in bad shape and it will take a year to get them in better shape.

Mr. DeLibero suggested Mr. Carlos speak with the Board of Ed on use of their field.

Mr. Coppola said as long as the PWD will line the field, the Board of Ed should be OK.

Mr. Carlos said he coaches the 19 year old team also and would like some time for them on the field but whatever Recreation decides he will follow. He said he needs a home field for the 5 games.

Mr. Coppola said he will talk to the Board of Ed for Mr. Carlos.

Mr. DeLibero said Mr. Carlos should send a letter to the Board of Ed and the PWD.

Mr. Carlos said the PWD did a good job lining the field in the past.

Mr. Devine asked if this will interfere with the Recreation soccer program.

Mr. Chris Sheehy said he would prefer the Nature Center not be used for soccer this year. He is trying to get the field fixed.

Mr. Coppola said he will go to the Board of Ed and PWD on behalf of Mr. Carlos. He said the commission can vote on this and he will work together with Mr. Carlos and Mr. Sheehy and the Board of Ed/PWD.

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

Director Reports

Soccer

Chris Sheehy was present. He gave everyone a copy of their Financial Report.

Mr. Sheehy said there are no new issues, soccer is running smoothly. He said he and Mr. Coppola are concerned with the wear and tear on the soccer fields especially for practice. They would like to reduce this so the fields can regenerate themselves.

Mr. Sheehy said he is working with Mr. Coppola on the use of the soccer field. There is two weeks left – June 14th is the end of season. The girls U14 Rec Travel A team took first place. The U14 boys Rec Travel Team is doing well. They lost to Prospect this Friday. Registration for Fall soccer will begin through the school system and on line. The fees will remain the same.

Mr. Sheehy said there is a copy of the budget and full financial report in the information given to the commissioners. There is a two day tournament beginning Father's Day June 21st. The Travel Team was invited to the Conte Tournament in Cheshire.

Chairman Smith asked Mr. Sheehy to clarify the balances in the financial report.

Mr. Sheehy said the 1st column figure is the Ansonia Program account. The 2nd column is the City of Ansonia Recreation budget funds. The 3rd column is the total of both.

Mr. Sobolisky made a motion to accept the Soccer report as presented. Mr. Cratty seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Baseball & Softball

Mr. Robert DeFelice was present. He gave everyone a copy of their Financial Report.

Mr. DeFelice said the baseball season ends June 14th. T-ball one week later and the All Star games begin 6/14/15. The teams will be announced. There will be Little League tournaments as a secondary event. All Stars begin July 2nd to the end of July.

Chairman Smith said Little League and Softball is more about Travel than teaching and playing ball.

Mr. DeFelice said not on our end.

Chairman Smith said you have to set up the teams and the coaches have to teach the kids how to play ball. Our program baseball/softball is basically teaching how to be a sportsman and play the game and how to play other programs. He said there used to be 10 to 15 teams. The concentration was on how to teach kids how to play the game. They played each other's teams.

Ms. McDermott said the League sent out a questionnaire – has the Recreation Commission seen them?

Mr. DeFelice said in the last few years there were only 10 responses.

Mr. DeLibero said they have to begin to develop the kids at eight (8) years old.

Mr. Coppola said the parents have to be on board with the program.

Mr. DeFelice said the parents have to be into the program – be on time for games, etc. It is not a two hour babysitting service – the parents have to be involved.

Chairman Smith said the basic essence of baseball is teaching the kids to play ball. They should play against each other. All we hear is travel and nothing else about how to play ball.

Mr. DeFelice said when he was young Shelton had six teams in each three groups. They don't get the participation anymore either. They would play against each other also. He said we try to do that with practices and clinics.

Mr. Coppola said times have changed and the numbers aren't there. The kids that are there we have to try to keep them. He said with the Travel Team, Recreation has to work with them so the kids can play in both Recreation and Travel.

Mr. Vealor said there is one softball Miner All Star Team. He said they can't announce the team until June 15th. There are 12 girls on the team and it goes through July.

Mr. DeLibero made a motion to accept the Baseball & Softball reports as presented. Mr. Cratty seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Basketball

Mr. Coppola said there is nothing to report this month.

Football

Brad Vealor, Vice-President of Football was present. He said that Mr. Williams couldn't make the meeting this evening and Alicia Buff had a family emergency.

Mr. Vealor said there are 70 Cheerleaders and 98 football players. He gave the following report for the football program:

D10 – 5th graders – 17 players
D10 – 8 & 9 yr. olds – 24 players
D14 – 19 players
D8 – 10 players non-compete
10 U – 11 players
79er's – 14 players
Flag Football – 17 players
9 U – 9 players
11 U – 12 players
12 U – 12 players
14 U – 23 players

The Football financial report was received this evening.

Mr. DeLibero made a motion to accept the football monthly report and financial report. Mr. Sobolisky seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Mr. Coppola said Mr. Maynard is working on the list of people who haven't returned their equipment.

Mr. Vealor said his company will build a trophy case in the Armory for the Cheer and Football trophies when they get them back. He said the parents want to keep the trophies but they belong to the City. He said it will not cost the City anything for the trophy case, his company will build it. He is asking Recreation if they agree the trophies should be displayed for everyone to enjoy.

Mr. Sobolisky asked what trophies will be displayed.

Amy Butler said they want to put all of the Cheer trophies that were won by the Cheer teams on display. She said the trophies should stay with the program. She said the parents gave the trophies to them for the Memorial Day Parade and now they want them back. She said they belong to the Cheer program.

Reports: Alison Rublemann, ANC Director

Alison Rublemann was not present.

The Commissioners received her monthly report.

Mr. DeLibero made a motion to accept Ms. Rublemann's monthly report. Mr. Devine seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Rec060215

Reports: Jeff Coppola, Recreation Director

Mr. Coppola was present.

Mr. Coppola said there is a Mets/Cubs trip planned for July 2, 2015.

Mr. Coppola said that Mr. Maynard asked for a few weeks to work on the list of unreturned equipment which is city property. He said Mr. Maynard is calling these parents again before he releases their names to Corp. Counsel Marini. Corp. Counsel Marini will send letters out to the people who have not returned their equipment.

Mr. Coppola said the summer program will begin on July 8, 2015 and run for five (5) weeks and three (3) days. The time is 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Prendergast School. Mr. Coppola said he will get an approval from Supt. Carol Merlone for use of Prendergast School. The Flyers will be sent out this week through the schools and they will be on the Ansonia website.

Mr. Coppola said we do not have enough soccer fields for our own soccer programs. He said he met with PWD Sean Rowley, Paul Velardi and Chris Sheehy on the field conditions. Mr. Rowley will meet with everyone on the problems and what to do. He said that the fields at the Nature Center and Colony Park are in bad shape. He said they have to take the "traffic" off of the fields so they can recover.

Mr. Coppola said PWD is planning a Dog Park and a Volleyball Court at Colony Park where the old tennis court was located. He said he advised them that they should come to the Recreation Commission.

Mr. Sobolisky asked about the Ordinance regarding dogs at city owned parks.

Mr. Coppola said the signs say "no dogs on fields" so you could not have a dog on the field but you could have one on the track. He said any ordinance has to go through the Ordinance Committee of the Board of Aldermen. He said Recreation can recommend to the Board of Aldermen what they would like the ordinance to say or we can write something and bring it to the Ordinance Committee. Chief Hale requested that the Ordinance # is put on the signs so the Police can act on any violation that is cited. It has to go to the Ordinance Committee and then voted on (adopted) by the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Sobolisky made a motion to accept Mr. Coppola's report. Mr. Cratty seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Committee Reports

This will be removed from the agenda for next month's meeting

Approval of Bills

Mr. Coppola said there are two bills for the Soccer Officials:

1. Adrien Solis: \$675
2. Arturo Solis: \$675

Mr. DeLibero made a motion to pay the soccer official invoices as stated. Mr. Sobolisky seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Correspondence

None

Any other business to come before the commission

None

Executive Session

None needed.

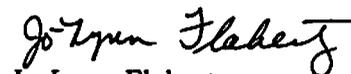
July Meeting

The July meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 7, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Mr. DeLibero made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45p.m. Mr. Cratty seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Respectfully submitted,


Jo-Lynn Flaherty
Secretary