



City of Ansonia

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Ansonia, Connecticut 06401

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ANSONIA RECREATION COMMISSION

September 13, 2016

Special Meeting

Present: Al Smith, Chairman
Jeff Devine
Anne Lynch
Timothy O'Reilly
Steve Sobolisky
Paul Velardi

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

The Special Meeting of the Ansonia Recreation Commission was called to order by Chairman Smith at 8:07 p.m.

All present rose and Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

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

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Chairman Smith read the agenda.

Corp. Counsel Marini stated Recreation Commission cannot hold an Executive Session or Take Action as stated on the agenda. Corp. Counsel stated that the Executive Session subject is not appropriate for an Executive Session because it is not one of the five allowed reasons for an Executive Session. He said you cannot add or deviate from the agenda. There can be a discussion on the topic listed and Recreation can hear from public present – this is allowed as it is not a deviation from the agenda, it's a discretionary decision.

Mr. Velardi made a motion to remove Executive Session from the proposed agenda and continue with the discussion topic as listed. Ms. Lynch seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Mr. Velardi stated he would like to understand the violation before Recreation moves forward. He said after Recreation has answered their questions the meeting can be opened to the public.

There was discussion on the separation of the football program and the cheer program. Mr. O'Reilly said that when they separated and football went to Pop Warner and cheer stayed with AYF it was agreed the 7, 8 and 9 year olds would remain in the program. Pop Warner would have 5, 6 and 7 year olds non-compete, AYF would get the 8 year olds and above. He said Mr. Maynard said the only way Pop Warner would come to Ansonia was if they had a Cheer program.

Discussion on the identifying name of the organization that is responsible for overseeing these groups. Pop Warner Football & Cheer would be Ansonia Coppens and AYF Cheer will be AYC.

Mr. Velardi said the reason why we asked Ansonia Copper Cheer to participate at 5, 6 and 7 was so we didn't create a conflict with the AYC Cheer because they would have the 8 and 9 year olds in their program.

Mr. Sobolisky said Pop Warner football wasn't doing Cheer but conceded to the 5, 6 and 7 year olds non-compete in the program because of the Pop Warner rule.

Discussion on the April 2016 minutes and the e-mails that went back and forth to clarify this issue continued. Mr. O'Reilly said that Mr. Coppola discussed this in the May 2016 minutes and they were aware of this. He said we have 8 and 9 year

olds in a program and they have been there for two games and they are not following the rules.

Mr. Velardi said does everyone agree Pop Warner has the 5, 6 and 7 year olds.

Discussion to clarify the e-mails continued. Mr. Coppola stated he miss-spoke in the e-mail dated 4/8/16 stating he was good with ages. He re-sent the e-mail on 4/9/16 correcting the information and stated 8's are Mighty Mite and the youngest group Tiny Mites are 5,6 and 7 years old. Mr. Coppola said Mr. Sobolisky responded Tiny Mites \$50 looks OK. The Flyers went out with 5, 6 and 7 year olds to the parents to register their children. (copy of e-mail is attached)

Mr. O'Reilly said the first Flyer had the ages on it and the second Flyer didn't have the ages on it.

Mr. Velardi said do you acknowledge Ansonia Coppers will register ages 5, 6 and 7 year olds and any older Cheer girls will go with AYC and cheer with that organization and that was agreed to by Ansonia Coppers. Ask the football program why the deviation.

Mr. Velardi asked Mr. Maynard: "do you agree that was established?"

Mr. Maynard said the whole thing was a misunderstanding. The Rule Book states Mighty Mites are 7, 8 and 9 years old and Tiny Mites are 5, 6 and 7 years old. He said the whole thing is a mess and basing off the e-mails we could have Mighty Mites, the first e-mail.

Mr. Coppola stated it was a mistake and it was corrected in the second e-mail.

Mr. Velardi said follow the e-mails, it occurred the next day.

Mr. Coppola stated yes on 4/9/16.

Mr. Velardi said to Mr. O'Reilly: "did you think we are clear?"

Mr. O'Reilly said he understood it was 5, 6 and 7 year olds and anything said outside of that is a mistake.

Ms. Lynch said it is separate groups and it clearly states 5, 6 and 7 year olds. She said she believes there has been so much communication going back and forth that it is confusing. She said Mr. Coppola clarified himself and originally we said 5, 6 and 7 year olds. There has been a lot of back and forth.

Mr. Coppola said he thinks they understood what age groups.

Mr. Sobolisky said not to hold up football, we agreed. At the meeting with the Pop Warner people they said all we had to do was offer cheer. We said we will offer the lowest level 5, 6 and 7 maybe 8's but it was cleared up.

Mr. Velardi said is Recreation clear – only 5, 6 and 7 year olds would participate.

Mr. Sobolisky said yes, he believes that.

Mr. Devine said he was not directly involved and not totally clear - the April 2016 minutes and then the Pop Warner Rules – there is a gray area for him. The original e-mails that were forwarded to him later – he said he is not totally clear on this.

Chairman Smith said to take the 5, 6 and 7 year olds and get started with them to straighten it out. He suggested they go with the Rule Book. April minutes said 5, 6, 7 and 8 and the May minutes said 5, 6 and 7.

Mr. Maynard said with all of the commotion, the communications back and forth, e-mails that were changed it has been a nightmare. He said we are talking about five (5) girls that want to cheer. These girls do not want to compete.

Mr. O'Reilly said we need a waiver from AYF and Pop Warner to join the other programs.

Mr. Velardi said it's immaterial, we have established expectations between Recreation and Football program that would occur. If there is a deviation it should have come back to the Recreation Commission.

Mr. Velardi asked is there anyone on Recreation proposing to ask these kids not to cheer for Pop Warner.

Mr. O'Reilly said something has to be done, Recreation has to set this up with AYF and Pop Warner so that it all works. Our Rules say two girls are cheering,

they are non-registered and not sanctioned to play. Someone set them up to participate and they knew what the rule was on this.

Mr. Sobolisky said he doesn't want to ask these kids not to cheer.

Ms. Lynch said it is not her intention to ask these kids not to cheer.

Mr. Devine said he doesn't want to ask them not to cheer.

Chairman Smith agreed.

Mr. Velardi said the expectation is set for 5, 6 and 7 year olds to cheer for Ansonia Coppers Football and anyone over the age of 7 will be free to cheer with AYC. He said #1- Recreation believes they are clear in their expectations; #2- Recreation has no intention to ask these kids not to cheer and #3- Ansonia Copper Football was not clear about what these expectations were with regard to cheer agreement when they registered.

Mr. Velardi said every month there is a discrepancy in football and cheer or cheer and football and he would like to see it end. He said based on conversations we've had in August meeting we acknowledge our Oversight Rules that we are developing and that will be used to set expectations with Sports Program and when these are not met Recreation will use corrective powers to bring about change and encourage Programs to comply with our Regulations to the extent if we have Recreation Programs that are not in compliance with our rules action can be taken as noted in our conversations with Mr. Bshara and Corp. Counsel Marini including funding and use of the fields.

Chairman Smith said we are here for the kids. We have to get it straightened out and go from there. He said he doesn't want to see one kid hurt because of this, we all have to work with the program.

Ms. Lynch made a motion to open the meeting to the public. Mr. Velardi seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Ed Pagano
89 Garden St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

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Mr. Pagano is concerned that his granddaughter is 8 years old and in the Cheer group and now may not be able to cheer with Ansonia Coppers. She has worked very hard cheering, running laps and practicing and it is not fair for these girls.

Sarah Flores
6 Alcott St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

Ms. Flores has a son and daughter both in the Pop Warner program. Her son is in the 8U and her daughter is 8 years old. It was a positive thing for her children to enroll in the program. She wanted something positive to teach her daughter to be a respectful human being and she could cheer for her brother. Both of them are together and it is not fair to her daughter to say she cannot be in the Pop Warner cheer group.

Tim Lester
20 Hull St.
Seymour, CT 06483

Mr. Lester explained that AYC and Ansonia Copper Cheer are two separate entities. He didn't want competitive cheer for his daughter. AYC is a lot of time and expense. This all happened with the split of cheer from the football program. He said Recreation should have thought about this at that time. Recreation should not make decisions for parents with regard to where their children will cheer. The AYC Cheer group split and remained with AYF. If a parent wants to go with AYC and not with Ansonia Coppers then they should go there and cheer. If they want to stay with Ansonia Coppers they should stay. There is too much of this fighting going on and it is embarrassing for the program and the town.

Tatiana Holmes
321 Beaver Street
Ansonia, CT 06401

Ms. Holmes said the problem appears that Pop Warner divides the ages as 5, 6 and 7 for one group and 7, 8, and 9 for the other group. This is clearly a problem of

overlap for the ages. They opened registration to 5, 6 and 7 and there is a subcategory for 7, 8 and 9. So there is 7 year old in both groups. Do we discriminate? It's a problem. We can have 7 but what about 8 and 9. Parents wanted to go to AYC but their registration closed in July. Do we take them? The Tiny Mites are 5, 6 and 7 and they overlap at the Mighty Mite level.

Jennifer Lester
20 Hull St.
Seymour, CT 06483

Ms. Lester said to clarify, she paid for her daughter. Recreation doesn't pay for her child. In the long run this will hurt Ansonia. It should be at the parent's discretion where their child cheers. Some are not ready for competition, some just want to cheer at games and do not want to compete.

Sakini DePina
29 Lester St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

Ms. DePina stated there should not be an option. She said her name and her daughter's name were mentioned last month. Her daughter was gone all summer and wasn't here. AYC registration closed in July. She spoke to Mr. Coppola's niece on AYC registration. AYC says that you cannot be committed to any other sport activity. Her daughter is not committed to another sport. Pop Warner made an exception. They are non-compete. It is about the kids so be about the kids. We are not crossing lines with AYF.

Mr. Keith Maynard
8 Cook St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

Mr. Maynard stated it was an oversight in communications that were going back and forth. This all happened at the height of the Football conversations. It is clearly totally an oversight. He discussed the special meetings and stated that he held registration and didn't see anyone from the Board. No one came to say "how

are you doing” except Steve and Anne and sometimes Tim. The girls are doing a tremendous job. There are five girls that will not be participating in AYC and are with Ansonia Coppers. These girls have been coming to practice sessions since August 1st. He said “is it because Pop Warner will not allow the AYC girls to cheer at the games” that this incident came up. He said the meeting notice is stamped in at 3:00 p.m. and he heard about the meeting at 8:00 p.m. He said he should have been notified about the meeting when it was stamped in.

Lillian Esquilin
53 Meadow St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

Ms. Esquilin noted that a lot has been said and she is concerned that the girls will be taken off the team. She said how can she tell her daughter that she cannot cheer. She said Recreation says they won’t take them off the team. She said she is tired of the nit-picking. She was here last week for her son. She said she would like to go to the practices and go to the games and have Football play and have Cheer cheer.

Tim Lester
20 Hull St.
Seymour, CT 06483

Mr. Lester suggested they give an option to the girls who are AYC that if they want to compete and do AYC let them and if they want to cheer and do Pop Warner let them. He discussed the AYC compete cheer program stating it is above and beyond what kids should do. If you want to be a part of Pop Warner and pay the \$50 and be non-compete you should do that.

Brian Piccirillo
9 Alan Drive
Ansonia, CT 06401

Mr. Piccirillo said he has been to countless meetings since the end of November. E-mails back and forth, staff meetings – it is a lot. Something got misunderstood or misconstrued. We talk as a group. There are a lot of e-mails – he gets them at

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work and glances at them and may misread them. It isn't hard to misinterpret something. Football started registration late and probably it got mistaken with the age group. He said one age group up and these girls will not be doing anything if they are not participating in Cheer. We want to keep the kids occupied and make them better in the future. The kids should not be punished. The kids will not be doing anything if we don't have them here at the field. They are not home doing nothing – they are here making new friends, exercising and doing sports.

Evan Gonzalez – Pop Warner Cheer Coordinator
321 Beaver St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

Ms. Gonzales said she was able to allow the Mighty Mites because she went to the Rule Book that states 7, 8 and 9 year olds. She accepted 7, 8 and 9 year olds that were that age as of July 31st of the current year and she is following the Rule Book. She had 13 girls that never cheered. This was the first time for them to cheer. If she has any questions, she goes to the Rule Book. She said everyone says it is about the kids – her daughter was in AYC and it is a lot. She said how can Recreation tell parents they have to join AYC. It is bickering between adults so don't bring the kids into it. She asked Tim and he said Recreation was going to remove them.

Mr. O'Reilly said he has no intention of removing the kids. What he said was someone allowed them to cheer outside of the age group. Why didn't someone ask first? He said he was involved in the football program.

Sarah Flores
6 Alcott St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

Ms. Flores said there are already two different cheer programs. She wants her daughter in Pop Warner cheer not AYC.

Tatiana Holmes
321 Beaver St.
Ansonia, CT 06401

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Ms. Holmes said she was in AYC. She has a good parent to guide her. If a child or parent is comfortable in one environment why be forced to change. Let the parents choose. Stop going back and digging up more things – do yourselves a favor and move on.

Ms. Lynch stated the rule is there and no one is removing a child from any team. Recreation will revisit this next year.

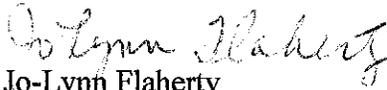
Richard Kaslaitis 4th Ward Alderman

Alderman Kaslaitis said there is a lot of pointing fingers and blame going back and forth here instead of finding solutions. He said Recreation could not resolve much today but he is asking for better planning next year.

Chairman Smith asked three (3) times if there was anyone else from the public who wished to address the commission. There being no one, he closed the public session.

Mr. Sobolisky made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m. Ms. Lynch seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Respectfully submitted,


Jo-Lynn Flaherty
Secretary

Outlook Mail

keith

New | Reply | Delete

Undo

Search results

In folders

All folders

Inbox

Sent Items

Drafts

Deleted Items

From

jeffrey coppola
jeffcoppola@hotmail.com

Keith Maynard
keithmaynard66@yahoo.

Brad Zealor
zealor23@comcast.net

S. DePina
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Anne Lynch
annelynh0401@yahoo.c

To

Anne Lynch
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Keith Maynard
keithmaynard66@yahoo.

jeffrey coppola
jeffcoppola@hotmail.com

S. DePina
skiwil823@gmail.com

Steve Sobilinsky
stephen@directadvantag

Options

With attachments

Date

All

This week

Last week

This month

Select range

From

Mon 9/12/2016

To

Mon 9/12/2016

Re: Flier

SS Steve Sobolisky
Sun 4/10, 12:23 PM
You

Reply |

You forwarded this message on 9/6/2016 8:09 PM

Tiny mites 50 looks OK to me

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

jeffrey coppola <jeffcoppola@hotmail.com> wrote:

I'm good with tiny mites.and \$50 . Anne and Sob all good?

From: Maynard <keithmaynard66@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 9, 2016 11:33:08 AM
To: jeffrey coppola
Cc: Steve Sobilinsky; Brian; Anne Lynch
Subject: Re: Flier

So are we good

Sent from my iPhone

> On Apr 9, 2016, at 1:57 PM, jeffrey coppola <jeffcoppola@hotmail.com> wrote:
>
>
>
>
> From: jeffrey coppola <jeffcoppola@hotmail.com>
> Sent: Saturday, April 9, 2016 7:59 AM
> To: Keith Maynard
> Cc: Steve Sobilinsky; Anne Lynch
> Subject: Re: Flier

> I read it wrong, 8's are mitey mites its 7,8and 9's
> the youngest group is called tiny-mite thats the 5,6 and 7's

> From: Keith Maynard <keithmaynard66@yahoo.com>
> Sent: Friday, April 8, 2016 7:01 PM
> To: jeffrey coppola
> Cc: Steve Sobilinsky; Anne Lynch
> Subject: Re: Flier

> We will charge \$50. 8 year olds in Pop Warner are Mighty Mites.
>
> Sent from my iPhone

>> On Apr 8, 2016, at 7:54 PM, jeffrey coppola <jeffcoppola@hotmail.com> wrote:
>>
>> I'm good with the football part.
>> As far as cheer part goes
>> If the 8's are part of mighty mites im good with ages , I just see 5,6 and 7 on