

Metuchen Recreation Meeting Minutes

02.05.2025

Attendance:

- ❖ Members: Alicia Killean, Donnie Wallace, Matt Moore, Matt Owens
- ❖ Alternates: Jerred Cook, Jennifer Blevins
- ❖ Council Liaison: Joel Branch; Recreation Director: Brianne Ludlow-Molnar; Senior Center: Wendi Richards

<u>Agenda</u>

Old Business:

- ❖ Approval of January Minutes: The committee reviewed and approved minutes from the January 2025 meeting. A. Killean will share a digital copy with B. Ludlow-Molnar to be posted to the borough website.
- ❖ Committee Training: J. Branch highlighted components of committee training (keep liaison in the loop, reminder of ethics and how you represent the borough) He will share a copy of the slide deck to the members of the commission.

New Business:

- ❖ Upcoming Events:

- March

- Sweetheart Dance Update: Current registration 445 people.
 - Favors: B. Ludlow-Molnar shared that a few parents had reached out with concerns regarding the champagne flutes as favors, citing they were inappropriate for children. As a result, she was looking into other items. She suggested pop-it key chains, light up bracelets, and a reusable cup with straw. The committee encouraged further investigation into purchasing vases. B. Ludlow-Molnar shared that the only vendors that can be used are Oriental Trading and For Imprints, and that the borough administrator is not comfortable with paying more than was spent on the flutes. This limits what can be purchased, despite raising the cost of the event this year. The commission suggested asking local businesses if they would be able to order vases to be used as favors, as they may have access to additional vendors.
 - Flowers: B. Ludlow-Molnar will be reaching out to the flower vendor on 2/6/2025 to secure the order for the table centerpieces.
 - 8th Grade Shirts: B. Ludlow-Molnar shared that we may not be able to use the same vendor as usual because of the cost of the shirts and the cap on how much the borough can be billed by a single vendor. The commission would prefer to support the local business, but understands that it may be necessary to utilize a different company that is part of one of the co-ops that the borough is a member of.
 - DJ and Photographer are booked.

- April

- Egg Hunt: Location may have to be moved this year if the high school football field is not accessible due to construction. The commission recommends Edgar field as a backup. B. Ludlow-Molnar shared that the borough administrator did not favor Edgar field because of the risk of damage to the field. The recreation commission shared that parking has been an issue when using Myrtle for that event in the past. J. Branch said that he would speak to the borough administrator to see if Edgar could be used.
 - Bowling Buddies: B. Ludlow-Molnar is waiting to hear back from Majestic Lanes regarding date availability.

- May

- Fishing Derby: Commission is working on a date in late May - this is dependent on the availability of the fishing trailer.

- Dorothy Obrupta Award: The commission's request to have the event renamed Dorothy Obrupta's honor was denied. Dorothy is a community member who had a significant influence in the formation of the event. She volunteered each year and delighted in teaching community children how to fish. Her enthusiasm and genuine love of the sport was transferred to many children in Metuchen. Moving forward, in an effort to honor Ms. Obrupta's volunteerism, passion, and contribution to the fishing derby, an award is being established to recognize a participant who embodies the spirit of the event through demonstrating good sportsmanship, cooperation, and a passion for fishing. The commission will order a plaque which can be given to the awardee.
- Bike Rodeo: B. Ludlow-Molnar has a meeting scheduled for February 12th with Middlesex County RIDE to work on the details for the bike rodeo. The commission noted that a new location will need to be explored once the Arts District project begins, as the Halsey Lot will no longer be available for the event.
- Mayor's Bike Tour: No report
- Memorial Day Parade: Once the date of the bike rodeo is established the commission can work to link parade participation to the Bike Rodeo. Discussed having kids decorate bikes red/white/blue and then riding in the parade with the recreation commission.

❖ Metuchen Arts District/Forum Theater Update:

- A. Killeen shared a brief overview of what was presented at the Forum Theater presentation hosted by the borough. The commission is interested in advocating for a recreation run youth residency program in the new theater. The commission will be composing a letter to be presented to the town council regarding this.

❖ Downtown Party for Metuchen's 125th Anniversary: J. Branch shared that there will be an outdoor party on May 17th from 12-3pm organized by the MDA to honor Metuchen's 125th anniversary. All town committees/commissions are invited to host a booth (New Street will be closed for the booths). The recreation commission will consider ideas and discuss further at March meeting and submit booth activity by April Recreation Meeting.

- J. Branch encouraged the commission to continue to 'think outside the box' for new ideas and events that the recreation commission may be interested in bringing to the town. The commission shared that last year, the borough communicated to the commission that the addition of new events was not going to be allowed because of limited police and DPW resources and that new events have been suggested by the recreation commission before (father's day wiffle-ball/cornhole tournament, movie night in the parks, etc) and denied because of scarcity of resources. J. Branch clarified that the recreation commission should look to 'replace' events they currently sponsor and not add any new events. The commission pointed out that the recreation commission only runs 3 events in town that utilize police/DPW resources. J. Branch recommended replacing the Bike Rodeo with an alternate event related to Wellness. The commission had a brief discussion about possibilities for a Community Wellness Day, along with the potential for a Community Environmental Day (Park Cleanup). Discussion will continue in future meetings.

Camp Update: No Update

❖ Camp locations

➤ Park Programs

- Given J. Branch's comments regarding 'thinking outside the box' the commission is requesting that the borough re-consider their stance on not utilizing the town parks for summer programming given that the school spaces will not be available due to construction.

❖ Evening Programming: No update - see above notes regarding movies in the park events.

Rec Sports/Field Update :

❖ Sports

➤ Field Hockey

- Status of 501c3 process, registration partnership: B. Ludlow-Molnar shared that she has been in touch with field hockey organizers who feel that they are in good positioning for the upcoming year, and will be able to establish a 501c3 if necessary. The commission is willing to offer any support necessary to ensure that the K-8 program is able to continue to offer their program next year just as they have in the past.

➤ Field & Equipment Condition:

- FieldTurf is coming out this month to evaluate the pitching mound.
- Edgar field suffered damage by community members who used a metal shovel to shovel snow off the turf in a recent snowstorm. B. Ludlow-Molnar has arranged for signage to be posted prohibiting the behavior. Security cameras captured the individuals shoveling the field. That footage has been turned over to the Metuchen Police Department

❖ Playground updates/equipment: No update

Next Meeting: March 5, 7pm

2025 Meeting Dates/Times

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 7:00pm	Wednesday, August 6, 2025 7:00pm
Wednesday, April 2, 2025 7:00pm	Wednesday, September 3, 2025 7:00pm
Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 7:00pm	Wednesday October 1, 2025 7:00pm
Wednesday, June 4, 2025 7:00pm	Wednesday November 12, 2025 7:00pm
Wednesday July 2, 2025 7:00pm <i>IF NEEDED</i>	Wednesday, December 3, 2025 7:00pm