

Memorandum of Understanding for
March 24, 2009
Park & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting

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Carla A. Pomroy
HEBRON TOWN CLERK

Citizen's Comments:

Basketball Discussion:

Mr. John Russo and Mr. Michael Garcia both spoke. They both have children that played in both the Central League and the Nutmeg League. Mr. Russo felt that the Nutmeg League lived up to expectation this year.

He continued by reporting that the 5th and 6th graders played in the Nutmeg League this year. They played a total of 25 games, losing 8. He thought that their schedule was not even and that some of the other towns were not well matched with Hebron; he thought that we were better. Overall he thought that there was a very strong competitive imbalance between competing towns.

Mr. Russo also felt that the Nutmeg League was not very well set up and organized. They do not have a real governing board. Although they did not track standings throughout the season, they still wanted to have playoffs. If things stay the same (no governing boards, not tracking standings, etc.), he would *not* recommend that Hebron play in the Nutmeg League next year. If Hebron does play, he would recommend having two teams. The 7th grade boys would have to play with the 8th graders.

In regards to the Central League, Mr. Russo commented that the competition is much more balanced even though there are towns like West Hartford, East Hartford, and Windsor that have a higher skill level. Mr. Russo found that the schedule was balanced. The Central League does have a governing board and they do enforce the rules. Mr. Russo thought that it was a good league and would recommend participating in it again next year.

Mr. Garcia said that his son enjoyed playing. He would recommend having three boys travel teams next year. R. Calarco commented that his concern is with the break out of kids. He too thinks that there should be three boys travel teams next year. He recommended forming a co-op board with representation from each participating town. He then reported that RHAM is switching leagues for next year. They are switching from NWC to CCC.

Then Dawn Garcia commented that her son was able to develop his skills greatly from being on the travel team. She would like to see more travel teams so that other kids can have the same great experience.

Brian Sears then spoke. His child played in the Nutmeg League this year. His opinion was that the Central League was tougher because the competition was greater. He noted that J. Salafia did a great job organizing Parks & Recreation Youth Basketball this year.

Next Tom Fenton commented that he felt that it was important to stay with grade based teams so the kids can all have the same opportunities. He added that all kids can compete if they are given that opportunity.

The consensus between the coaches and the Commission was to have three travel boys teams next year- 5th/6th grade, 7th grade and 8th grade. They are also recommending only have two travel girls teams due to lower enrollment.

The discussion then turned to the girls league. It was noted that the girls played in the Nutmeg League this year because they had no other option. There were a total of 24 girls that played.

It was noted that it is very difficult for the recreation coaches when a child plays on both the recreation as well as the travel team for the season. The coaches as that the Commission consider requiring that a child choose between playing on a travel team instead of a recreation team and vice versa. This might be a difficult decision for a child when they want to play on a certain team to be with their friends.

The coaches found that 5-6 girls played on both a travel as well as the recreation team. They found that they seemed to be fully committed to both.

E. Ott commented that he thought the recreation games were well matched. He also thought that the recreation kids got equal playing time as those that also played on the travel team. He continued by noting that every kid had the opportunity to play in a game and no one kid played an entire game. The coaches really tried hard to be equal and balance out the competitiveness.

It was then noted that many towns did not play each other. The coaches found that 10-11 kids on a team worked well.

The Central League will have an organizational meeting on April 1st. Hebron Parks & Recreation will have a representative at that meeting. The Commission can decide what to do after the meeting.

The real issue for boys next year is whether to have three teams. If the Nutmeg League does not offer three boys teams (5/6, 7th and 8th grade), Hebron will not have an option.

Tom Fenton thought that the Central League will do grade based teams next year.

Some of the coaches may be interested in forming a new league. This is something that will be explored next year. A decision will have to be made regarding 6th, 7th and 8th grade boys regarding having grade based teams.

The discussion then turned to the recreation teams. This past season there were 40 teams, up from 37 last year. The Commission is in the process of reviewing each coach. The Commission may require that some coaches meet with them prior to being able to coach

again next year. The Commission noted that it is very important that every coach understand the follow the rules. There were no issues with the travel coaches following the rules.

It was noted that coaches are required to attend mandatory training for 1st-6th grade teams.

If the Commission discovers that a child is playing in the wrong grade level, then they will be moved to the appropriate grade level if there is space. If there is no space, they will not be able to play. If a child plays on both the travel and the recreation team, then there will be an additional fee.

The discussion then turned to recent damage that has occurred at the schools. It was noted that RHAM has a camera system. Hebron is looking into getting a camera system for both schools through a grant. This year there were zero incidents of damage. In fact Parks & Recreation received compliments.

The Commission will make a decision regarding what to do about travel basketball at their next meeting.

Recent Activities:

J. Salafia then reported that planning for the preschool camp is going well. They have two field trips planned that are in conjunction with the other camps. They are looking into buying an inflatable water slide for Camp Hebron.

J. Salafia then reported that Hebron Schools canceled the staff development day scheduled for April 5th. With school now in session on that day, there will be no Parks & Recreation vacation camp offered.

PREP is planning a party at Bolton Ice Palace. They are hoping for a great turnout. The after care PREP program is full for next year.

R. Calarco then reported that the DEP will be supervising fishing at the pond for the East Street Park opening day in August. He then reported that they are planning on having two stations for National Trail Day- one on the Airline Trail at the entrance to Route 85 and one at the entrance to Grayville Park.

R. Calarco then reported that they have a total of 9 baseball teams this spring. <this paragraph on page 3 is too confusing to decipher>

Park Project Status:

R. Calarco reported that things are moving along. All floors will be poured and completed by June. They planning on being before Planning and Zoning in June.

Liaison Reports:

R. Poudrier reported that he and R. Calarco went in front of the BOS to discuss the impact cutting the new park position would have on being able to maintain the parks. R. Poudrier suggested that the new park just be opened for one day and then closed the next because without this position being filled, Parks & Recreation will not be able to maintain this park.

The BOS stated that they would commit to a maintainer, but would prefer it to be a driver maintainer. It was noted that the BOF was upset with the proposal to take the new park maintainer position out of the budget.

It was reported that the BOS has asked all unions to take no raises this year or to give back. This is the only way they can guarantee that no one will be laid off. They are trying to maintain level funding in this year's budget.

R. Calarco noted that it will be a few years before he will have a clear idea of his staffing and equipment needs given this new park.

Friends of the Park:

A. Heneghan reported that Tray Whitiker will set up a link from the Parks & Recreation website. She suggested doing a brick wall as a fundraiser. R. Calarco was not sure about being able to get the manpower to build a wall.

The Commission noted that they need to look at different ways to raise funds for the park. Boy Scouts might be able to do little projects.

The discussion then turned to naming the park. A few names have been suggested: Tri-Centennial Park, the Peters Park and the Freedom Park. The Commission will make a decision on their recommendation at their next meeting.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2009.

This memorandum was approved by the Parks & Recreation Commisison at their June 24, 2009 meeting.