

**NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2006 7:00 P.M.**

**BOARD OF RECREATION  
RIDGEFIELD PARK, NEW JERSEY  
March 16, 2006**

President Diane Maglione called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., it having been duly noted that this meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of which was sent to The Record on the 16th day of December, 2005, and to the Star-Ledger on the 16th day of December, 2005. Roll call was taken. Commission members present were: Gil Bell, Hal Bomzer, Rich DePena, Lloyd Domke, Tom Essig, Mercedes Haines, Mary Koegel, Diane Maglione and Leigh Rivera. Frank Zaccherio was excused. Commissioner Hugo Poli was also present.

A motion was made by Hal Bomzer and seconded by Rich DePena approving the minutes of the February 16, 2006, meeting.

**Correspondence:** A letter was received regarding Veteran's Park advising that any person or organization that uses any park after 10:00 p.m. that the police must take their name and forward it to the DPW. If the lights are on, the DPW must be notified to come and close the lights. Commissioner Poli explained that the PSE&G bills are out of control and the Village is trying to cut costs. This is especially true in Veteran's Park because all of the lights are turned on even when only one team is using a field. The Village is looking to put a timer on the lights.

Other letter was also received regarding basketball and softball, which were discussed when reports were given on those activities.

**Hearing of Citizens:** None present.

Activity reports were as follows:

**Bowling** – The program is running now. Flyers were dropped off to St. Francis.

**Wrestling** – Diane Maglione had a conversation with Tony Gonzalez because she found two vouchers in her mailbox at work with no fees. She doesn't know how many tournaments they have wrestled in. Tony Gonzalez called her back and told her there should be four vouchers. She doesn't know what fees are being charged. She did not get the other vouchers from him yet. As far as the problem with Emerson and the voucher not being submitted on time (the bill is three years old), the Village cannot pay it and the Board looks bad. Diane informed Tony that she would have to take the money for the outstanding bill that Mr. Raimondi never submitted from this year's registration fees. Tony Gonzalez said he would like to order new uniforms but he will have to wait to see what is

left over after the Emerson bill is paid. Diane has not received anything from Tony Gonzalez so she will not be taking any action on this program at this time.

**T-Ball** – There are about 24 players (6 are boys). He will gear the boys more toward baseball and work with a softball with the girls. This will help because then next year, he can have four softball teams. It will take about two years to have an older team ready for a league. Lloyd Domke ordered shirts and hats for the players. Rich DePena said he has leftover soft baseballs for Lloyd.

**Girls' Softball** – Lloyd Domke said he had a meeting last week in Bogota. All of the teams playing within that group are talking about putting together a league. This is good news because Ridgefield Park would be in on the ground floor of forming this league. The person from Bogota is looking into field availability, how many teams are available and will be putting a schedule together. The field permits have been distributed. There are about 30 girls signed up for two teams, a 9/10 team and an 11/12 team. As this point, the rosters are closed. If more girls want to play, Lloyd will take teams and if enough are interested to form a third team, he will arrange for that. Lloyd ordered four dozen softballs. He is using 11 inch and 12 inch softballs. The smaller balls will be easier for the younger girls to use. Lloyd ordered uniforms and they will be ready before the first game. The starting date is around April 22. He ordered two button red shirts, red visors, socks and grey pants. The logo will be Ridgefield Park Recreation in script on the shirts. Golf shirts were ordered for the coaches. Lloyd checked out the equipment at the DPW. He is in good shape with bats and helmets. He just needs to check on shin guards. Lloyd is going to check on bases to see if he needs to get new ones. The DPW did the infield on Chestnut. Lloyd said the DPW has been very cooperative. Diane gave Lloyd some info from The Record and possible sponsorship of a team. Lloyd will check into this.

Lloyd asked about umpires and if he should be using a service. Diane said that women's softball uses a service. We don't pay what other organizations might pay. Diane said it is called the BCASU and gave Lloyd info on this organization. They charged \$50 per game for the adults, with one umpire per game. Diane doesn't know what they charge or what they use for kids. Frank was not present to ask any questions about this organization. Lloyd said he spoke to Ray Borkowski to see if he would be interested in umpiring any games. He said the fee is usually \$35 per game and two umpires are used. He said it is \$50 if he umpires by himself. Lloyd said it would be 20 games for 11/12 and 14 games for 9/10 division. This would mean about half of them would be home games requiring umpires. Lloyd said he is going to ask the DPW to extend his permit a half-hour in case his games start late due to a high school game.

**Summer Sandlot Baseball Program** – Carlos Carames was waiting on the insurance certificate from GJEM. GJEM is trying to find out which name to put on the certificate because the program is run in Hackensack but Ridgefield Park kids are participating. They are working this out.

**Women's Softball** – Frank Zaccherio did not hand in a field request yet. Barbara DeLuca left him a message that he needed to turn in dates and times in order to get a permit. The Board does not know if Frank ever had his end-of-year party, as he did not contact anyone.

**Fourth of July** – No activity at this time. Nominations are being accepted for Grand Marshal.

**Easter Egg Hunt** – The poster contest took place on March 16, 2006, meeting and the Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 15, 2006. Mary Koegel did ask for another box of eggs. Mary will dye the eggs with the Ambulance Corps. Mary will pick up the candy and any necessary supplies. Diane will submit a voucher for the expenses once Mary has all the bills. She will get prizes for the poster contest and distribute the prizes to the schools. Members should meet at 7:45 a.m. at Veteran's Park. Mary told the Ambulance Corps. to bring the eggs at 8:00. Commissioner Poli will ask the DPW to check the hills for glass and debris on Friday to make it safer for the younger children to go in the hills. Diane will have community service kids with her at the hunt. The hunt begins at 10:00 a.m. There will be breakfast at the ambulance corps. after the hunt. High school games will not begin until 12:00 p.m.

**Holiday Display Contest** – Frank Zaccherio was not present to give a report. Commissioner Poli said not many people showed up at the meeting to get their prize. Frank needs to submit bills for this activity.

**Wish Tree** – No activity at this time. Kallie Maglione will be handling this activity next year.

**Tree Lighting** – No activity at this time.

**Rag-A-Muffin** – No activity at this time.

**Adult Trips/Activities** – Frank Zaccherio has nothing planned at this time.

**Basketball** – The program is over. There were some problems that occurred during the year. A letter was sent to the Commissioners from Rose Scheideler. Diane said she has heard from some parents that they are unhappy about problems that occurred last year. She said she has heard about people complaining about officiating.

Hal Bomzer said he would give a full report, division by division. Hal said he was the official at 97 of 193 games. Rich DePena was the ref at about 75-80 games. The chances are one of them was at more games than most people. Hal would like to give his observations.

3/4/5 girls – there was one incident early in the season involving rough play. The situation was addressed and the coaches were set straight at that game. As far as Hal is aware, the rest of the season went well.

3/4 boys – one major incident involving the black team (Bill Gerken, Division Leader) was present at the meeting). A parent ran onto the court. Hal happened to be refing that game. The woman was escorted off the court. Parents were spoken to and advised to stay off the court. For the playoffs, Bill asked the janitor to add another row of chairs to keep parents off the courts. A speech was given before every game to instruct players, fans and coaches to remind everyone of appropriate behavior. A speech was given before every playoff game to remind everyone what they were there for and to bring everyone down a notch as they were “hyped” up.

Leigh Rivera said that next year rotations must be posted and that needs to be enforced next year. This is supposed to happen but it does not always happen. There have been some complaints about the rotation. This really needs to be enforced at every game to alleviate any problems. Bill Gerken said that sometimes people don't know everything that is happening – it could be because of an injury, absence, sickness, etc. Sometimes it is a mistake but it should be between the coaches. Bill said that sometimes the problem is that the fans don't know all the rules or it is never explained to the fans. When lack of knowledge is explained to the parents, it does help out in most cases. Bill Gerken said that he made copies of the rotation and stapled them on a big piece of cardboard that was torn off at each game. This really helped. Hal said he would use this for all divisions next year.

Clinic – there were about 40 kids participating in the clinic. Mercedes Haines said that Lloyd Domke was a big help with the clinic. She felt that everyone, players and coaches, learned a lot from the clinic. There were no problems. Adjustments were made as needed. The kids were disappointed when the clinic ended. This year there were many more girls than last year. This will be a big help to the program next year.

7/8 Boys – there was one incident early in the year that ended up more of a personal issue between Rich DePena and John Toomey/Carlos Carames than it was a basketball issue. The problem was settled with one of the coaches involved. There was a problem again after the next game with the assistant coach, Carlos. This incident was personal and should not involve basketball. A meeting was held with the parties involved and was agreed the Board cannot get involved in personal issues. Rich DePena was reminded that he cannot let personal issues get involved in Board activities and hopefully, this is now worked out. Hal Bomzer and Leigh Rivera said they have been at subsequent games and they have not personally witnessed any other incidents. The remainder of the season seemed to go fine and the playoffs went well. Hal said that a speech was given before every playoff game to remind the players what their

responsibility was – to play and have fun and that if they wanted to play just to win they should go elsewhere. If they want to play with their friends to learn, this was the place to be and that they were playing against their friends and this was their last chance to play in this type of atmosphere. He also told the coaches that they were to coach the kids and not worry about the calls or technicals would be issued. Hal said that he did issue more technicals than he normally would during the playoffs to avoid problems and call a tighter game. Leigh ended up co-chairing this division with Guido Acosta because there no longer was a  $\frac{3}{4}$  girls division and Leigh still wanted to help and Guido needed help with the organization. It worked out because Leigh knew the procedures and not the players and Guido knew the players but not the procedures. Next year, Leigh will now know the players.

6/7/8 girls – this was the absolute worst division quality wise in many years. The girls were playing demolition basketball. The games were out of control because the girls were coached to run after the ball and get to it at all costs. They were reaching, jumping over people for rebounds. Any time there was a loose ball, it was ripe for disaster. There was no regard for anyone on the court. Three out of the five teams were especially guilty of this. Hal said that anytime he was not present, there seemed to be an incident. The coaches were getting on the refs, the girls being too rough, coaches complaining refs aren't making calls, refs complaining coaches aren't doing things right. It was not possible for Hal to attend every Friday to keep things under control. Bob Sinclair and Guido Acosta had many problems in this division. One coach, in particular, was especially tough in this division. Gil Bell had some parents on this coach's own team that said things were too rough and didn't want their daughters to play if things didn't straighten out. At this point, Gil and Hal called a meeting with the coaches and refs and that if things did not improve immediately, he would suspend the playoffs for this division.

At this meeting, the coaches said that they wanted the refs to keep things under control. At one game, there were 43 fouls called, 32 in one half alone. Hal said that a foul was called every 13 seconds and that it is the coach's job to teach the girls how to play and keep things under control. They need to be taught how to play. The meeting lasted a half hour and things seemed to improve after that. The very next game had only five fouls in the first half. Diane said that she needs to be made aware of these happenings as they occur not once the problem is out of hand. Hal said that it was only at the last Board meeting when he mentioned that the meeting with coaches would take place-- that he felt things were getting out of control and that he needed to rein things in. Hal said that there were only one or two games in December. In January the problems began to escalate and Diane did get an email from Gil about the problems. Gil informed her at this time that things were under control and Diane was surprised to hear in February that things were out of control. She would like to be kept informed on a timely basis before things escalate. Hal said that when he is present, there are no incidents in this division. He also said that when he couldn't do a few games,

things got out of control again. Frank Quinones did admit that he “lost it” a few times but he felt that the problem was more in the officiating than with the coaches. Hal explained that it was the coach’s responsibility to teach the girls to play correctly. Hal said that during playoffs especially, he warned the coaches that the games would be called tighter to avoid any problems. Tom Essig said that many of the problems might be because the lines are not drawn early enough. Part of the problem is that a coach tries to get away with whatever they can until they get their wrist slapped and perhaps tightening the rules early in the season might avoid some problems.

Hal thinks that the major problem was the type of playing that the girls were doing. Lloyd said he does not feel that adding the sixth grade girls were the problem this year. The problem is with the type of coaching. The lack of ability forced more “street ball” type playing. The girls need to learn more basic skills. Last night, some playoff games were played and the games were great. If you didn’t know of all the problems in this division, you wouldn’t have seen it last night.

5/6 Boys – most of the coaches are a little bit tougher than in other divisions. Some of the major incidents involved some inexperienced refs that were being taken advantage of by an overly aggressive coach. These referees were trying to help out at the last minute and they were young and some of the coaches did not treat them with the respect they would give to an older adult. On the same day, Hal had a problem with an assistant coach. The problem is that there were problems several years ago with Angelo Guercio and Commissioner Anlian ruled that he could never ref Board of Recreation activities due to inappropriate behavior and abusive language to a player. Unfortunately, Hal was unaware of this ruling. Hal said that Angelo got on him and he warned him. Angelo continued and Hal gave him a technical. A few minutes, Angelo got on him again and Hal issued another technical he informed the other referee to ask him to leave the gym as procedures called for him to leave the gym. Angelo said he was not leaving. At this time, Hal called over Tony Dataram and informed him that if Angelo did not leave the gym, the game is over. Angelo did leave.

At the next game, Angelo was in the stand, yelling, etc. Hal is used to this and ignored it. Hal said that in hindsight he probably should have addressed it at this time but he is used to high school games and ignoring heckling but in a recreation game, he probably should have addressed this. Another problem was with Andy Scheideler being too rough on the officials and this is probably due to lack of full understanding of the rules. Leigh Rivera said she did not appreciate that Andy would not shake her son’s hand after he officiated a game. At one point, Andy did quit but reconsidered and returned. Andy is one of the most organized people there is and the draft was extremely fair and spread well. His one problem is that Andy made too many comments as the division head against the referees instead of backing the referees. This caused the other coaches to then also begin abusing the officials.

Hal informed Angelo that he could no longer be an assistant. Hal said that he saw Angelo before a game and tried to shake his hand. Angelo refused and told Hal that it was time to give up the idea of running a program with 400 kids and trying to just teach them to have fun and that he “sucked” as a ref. Diane informed Hal that in the past, the Board has had to actually send a written letter to parents in the softball program to advise them that due to inappropriate and disruptive behavior that they were banned from even coming to the field to watch their child play. If needed, the Board can do this again to maintain the integrity of the program.

At the next playoff game, Hal informed Tony that if Angelo behaved inappropriately that he would be issued a technical and if he received two technicals, then the other team would be declared the winner. Tony spoke to Angelo and there was no problem. Hal said in the future, this is how these types of situations should be handled in the future. If a parent is disruptive and is informed that he will hurt the team, maybe their behavior will change.

The next major incident happened during a play close to Angelo and Andy and Rich was the official. Hal was present and removed Rich from the play. He does not know what was said but was told that obscenities were used.

Diane read a letter from Rose Scheideler to the Board of Commissioners with a copy to Diane Maglione. (Commissioner Poli will respond to this letter since it was addressed to him rather than the Board.) Rose Scheideler said that Rich DePena and Andy Scheideler got into a heated discussion after a call and felt that Rich DePena used an obscenity in front of children that should not have been heard. She felt that when Hal came over to diffuse the situation, all he did was ask another parent to leave. The Division Leader (Andy Scheideler) then began to give out the trophies. Rose felt that the problems were between adults and not children and the children should not have penalized.

Hal wanted to clear up a few inaccuracies in the letter. Hal did say that the game was over because he had enough of this bad behavior and there was about 57 seconds lefts in the game. The coaches came over and said it is not fair; the game is close and let's not punish the kids. Rich DePena agreed and the game continued. There was a four-point lead at this time. A hard foul was given and now the lead was 6 points. A few seconds passed and another hard foul was given and now there's only 29 second left. Hal now felt that two hard fouls were given and in certain situations the referee has the authority to speed up the game (and he has done this in the past), that he will run the clock for safety of the players. This game was a six-point lead and since there were only 29 seconds left, he signaled to keep the clock running. The player hit the first shot and now it was a 7-point lead. By the time the player missed the second shot, the game was over. Running the clock had nothing to do with the final score of the game. Hal felt that after two hard fouls and a six-point lead with little time left, the game

was over. As far as things getting out of control, that should never have happened. Rich felt that with Angelo sitting there riding him and Andy on the stage continuing to ride him, things got escalated. Mary Koegel said she realizes that refing is an extremely hard job and she doesn't know how anyone does it, but she feels that a ref should never use foul language and should always rise above poor behavior. Rich said he does not ref for the money and things just got out of hand.

Hal wanted everyone to know that despite the incidents during the season, the playoffs went very well in all divisions despite the one problem in 5/6 Boys division during the first playoff game. In fact the 5/6 Boys was probably the best—after that incident.

Diane said her main concern is how to deal with rowdy and unruly fans. She feels that a ref can never lose their temper during a game and it is not good for the ref, the Board, the kids or the programs. Diane feels refs need to use their whistle to control a situation and can never use foul language in front of the players. Diane said that the reason Commissioner Anlian banned Angelo Guercio is over cursing at kids along with inappropriate behavior and she wants to make sure all our refs understand that the Board expects appropriate behavior at all times.

Hal feels that the refs are not there just for monetary compensation. They are not paid what an official ref is paid. The program needs the highest quality ref available to maintain order. The refs he uses the most have a stake in the children in this town and that is their main interest. For the playoffs, Hal did try to use more experienced refs for the playoffs. Diane said that maybe the Board should tell refs they need to be stronger. With Com Poli's approval, Rich will be refereeing in the program next year, but is on probation and advised that he must control his temper no matter the situation.

The Board came up with a complaint process. Each parent will be given a printed form at the beginning of basketball. If they have a complaint about anything, they have to put it in writing and sign it. These written records of their complaints will be brought to the division heads, who will handle it ASAP if it needs to be, and then forwarded to the Basketball Committee, and then to the whole Board. The Board will all know what the complaint was and how it was handled and by whom, or if it wasn't taken care of and why, or if the Board itself has to handle it.

Another copy of a letter from Mr. Gaetani to the Board of Commissioners was read. Mr. Gaetani got up to speak at the Commissioner's meeting to complain and was informed this was not the proper forum. This issue really has nothing to do with the Board of Recreation and involves personal issues his family has with Mercedes Haines. Mr. Gaetani complained that Mrs. Haines instructed her daughter not to shake hands with his daughter after a basketball game. Mercedes informed the Board that there is a legal agreement reached between



Mercedes and the wife about having "no contact" with each others' families (and would present it to anyone interested). Mercedes was in essence "damned if she did, and damned if she didn't" as was her daughter. Board members who were at the game said that the Gaetanis over exaggerated the incident.

**Tennis** – Barry Rubach (568-3946) runs this program and the Board has no information as to when the program will resume.

**Treasurer's Report** - Frank Zaccherio did turn his books into the Board. Tom Essig was named the new Treasurer. A report will be given next month.

**New Business** – None at this time.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 20, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara DeLuca

cc: Commissioner Hugo Poli