

Somers Parks & Recreation Board

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Kevin Westerman
Chairman



MEETING MINUTES

June 24, 2020

Chairman Westerman opened the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

The members present were: Jim Boniello, Stephen Krug, Chris McCormack, John Papalia, Don Penzine, Michele Sanz, Michele Werney, and Kevin Westerman.

John Zattola was absent.

Somers Men's Softball Board member, Andy DelPozzo, SYSO Treasurer Michael Fink, SYSO board member Jeff Hopper, Men's Softball Board League Supervisor Jim Magrone, SYSO President Kevin Marcus, Somers Men's Softball Board as well as SYSO board member Chris Radding, and Somers Men's Softball Board member, Al Tiso, were also present.

The meeting was held via Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment was covered under New Business.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mrs. Sanz to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2020 meeting. Mr. Papalia seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MR. RALSTON'S REPORT

Mr. Westerman asked if the Reis Park Concession Stand was opening on July 6th and Mr. Ralston expects that it will but, if not, it would open soon thereafter. They are still in the process of getting the required paperwork with the Health Department in order.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion with Kevin Marcus, SYSO President – Return to Play – Somers Youth Sports Organization (SYSO) President, Kevin Marcus, met with the Board to discuss offering sports beginning on July 6th. Some sports are still considered high-risk by the State, but as moderate risks, baseball, soccer and softball will be permitted under the New York State Reopening Plan Guidelines, as long as the required safety protocols are met. Even though SYSO is its own entity, it has to comply with the rules set-forth by the State and will work in conjunction with those of the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Ralston suggested that the Greater

Hudson Valley Baseball League plan be used as a guideline, as it is comprehensive, applying stricter standards than does the State. It should also address many of the questions that some Board members have. In addition, the document from the Governor's office has been shared with Mr. Marcus. SYSO has been working on a plan and are using FC Soccer's comprehensive plan for try outs as a starting point. SYSO will be responsible for everything but signage and maintenance of the restrooms. It is critical that ownership and responsibility for compliance with the rules and regulations be disseminated from the top down. Social distancing and the wearing of masks will be enforced, but all agreed that some of the rules are up to interpretation, and these rules need to be clarified before the plan is signed off on. Everyone's assistance is needed in enforcement. The Parks and Recreation Department does not want to be in a position of having to stop teams from playing or revoking the SYSO field permit because the rules were violated. There is concern over tracking if it is determined that a player or coach has been exposed to or has the corona virus. SYSO does not want to be held liable for sharing confidential information. The knowledge of a diagnosis must be reported to the State, which will give further instructions as to how the situation will be handled. Another issue to manage will be the number of people that can attend a game, as there has to be room to social distance. Before a permit can be issued for play to begin, Mr. Ralston needs SYSO's plan, their family tree for communication and a permit application which will include a COVID waiver. Since next week is a short working week because of the July 4th holiday, Mr. Ralston will need all required paperwork as quickly as possible so that he and Mr. Westerman can review it and then share it with the Parks and Recreation Board for a final email approval.

Discussion with Men's Softball Board – Return to Play – Somers Men's Softball Board League Supervisor, Jim Magrone met with the Board. Their situation is much different than SYSO, as they are under the direct auspices of the Parks and Recreation Department. With youth sports, SYSO is the responsible party tasked with managing many of the restrictions. With Men's Softball, however, it is the Parks and Recreation Department's responsibility to ensure that all of the guidelines will be followed 100% of the time. If not, when violations are reported, the league may have to be temporarily shut down or cancelled. Mr. Ralston sees enforcement of these social distancing requirements as being the biggest obstacle, which will not be an easy task in a public park.

Although each player is limited to two spectators, the League always has the option of requesting that players don't bring spectators to the games. Some people questioned the how enforcement of such a rule could be accomplished at a public park. The state guidelines assert that an employee will be tasked to enforce the rules and that the only employees attending Men's Softball games are the umpires. Some feel that is a big responsibility to place on the umpires and it was questioned how an umpire can focus on the game and at the same time enforce the social distancing rules. Mr. Magrone is an umpire and he has no issue with the added responsibilities but is not sure how the others will feel. Some of the umpires are also elderly and a question arose as to whether they should even be with that many people at one time. It was suggested that, perhaps, field monitors be hired to handle enforcement. Although a good idea, it would require a nightly commitment and would add extra expenditures to the program. The umpires are getting paid and are already there. Ultimately, it was posited that the umpire should report any social distancing issue to the coach who will handle the situation. Everyone must be on the same page regarding enforcement. Up front, coaches and umpires must understand and accept their roles and additional responsibilities in connection with enforcing social distancing.

Some Board members offered that, for the good of the game, the players will police themselves, so they don't lose the privilege to play this season. Mr. Ralston added that, before every game, the umpires must email the Parks and Recreation Department before they close at 3:30 p.m. A required COVID questionnaire with a temperature check which must be verified by Mr. Ralston or Mr. Johnson before the umpire can report to work that evening. CDC required signage will be posted at entries or places of congregation throughout the park. If necessary, areas by the baseball fields can also be chalked off to reinforce social distancing.

The Men's Softball Board would like to resume play as early as July 20th although that might not be attainable because the Return to Play plan is not yet complete and all of the players have to re-register and sign a COVID waiver. Once registration is completed, Mr. Ralston and Mr. Johnson, the only two remaining administrative staff left in the department, have to validate the rosters. Both Mr. Krug and Mr. Penzine offered their assistance with this task. A comprehensive plan needs to be submitted to Mr. Ralston and will be reviewed by Mr. Krug, Mr. McCormack and Mr. Westerman. Then it will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Board via email for their approval. If for some reason it ends up that the league cannot resume play this year, next season will start with the 2019 rosters as the current rosters.

OLD BUSINESS

Parks Reopening Guidelines and Restrictions Update – Starting July 6th the restrooms will be open, tennis courts will available for doubles play, and the concession stand and the playgrounds will be open. A daily sanitizing plan is in place that adheres to CDC guidelines. Three backpack sprayers have been ordered. The sanitizing process is quite involved and includes all restrooms, garbage can lids, handles, access to gates, and playground equipment. It takes one employee more than ½ the day to complete this task.

Summer Programs Update – Mr. Johnson is working on scheduling summer programs that will meet Monday through Thursday, from either 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Some programs are on-line and others in-person at Reis Park. Although these programs cannot accommodate the schedules of working parents, they still afford an opportunity for the youths to be involved in activities over the summer. Some will be totally self-supporting and others profit making. Minimum participants will be between 8 and 10 children, but the density maximum can't be exceeded. It was noted that the Somers Central School District is offering something similar, but all of the programs will be virtual.

Parks Master Plan Review Update – Late this afternoon Mr. Ralston received an updated proposal from Mary Ann Rivera of Landscape Concepts for improvements in Bailey Park. Mr. Ralston will share it with the Board members tomorrow and this item will be placed on the agenda of the August meeting. Mr. Penzine was thanked for reaching out to Mrs. Rivera in an effort to get an updated proposal.

MR. RALSTON'S COMMENTS

Mr. Ralston didn't have any additional comments.

BOARD COMMENTS

There were no Board comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. and the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 22nd at 6:30 p.m. in the Recreation Center in Van Tassell Park.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Parks & Recreation Board

cc: Parks & Recreation Board
Superintendent of Parks & Recreation
Town Board
Town Clerk