

**THE CITY OF WHITE PLAINS  
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & PARKS  
RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 20, 2021**

**Present**

Honorable Jennifer Puja, Chairwoman

Commissioner Wayne Bass	Deputy Commissioner Fran Croughan
Dr. Randy Stein	Evelyn Santiago
Darren Valdes	Kevin Scully
Michele Schoenfeld	Leonard Gruenfeld

**Absent**

Frank Williams	
Charles Morgan	Caroline Furry
Dr. Richard Sanchez	Jonathan Schere

Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Puja.

**Staff Program Report**

Darren Valdes, Recreation Supervisor introduced himself to the committee. The following are Darren's responsibilities: Management of Ebersole Ice Rink, Gille Tennis Courts, Summer and Winter Basketball, Gardella Park and the Jack Harrington Greenway.

**Ebersole Ice Rink Year-end Report** The rink operated according to COVID guidelines: limiting the number of participants per session to under 100, social distancing and mask were required for every participants at all sessions. The year-end financial report, considering COVID guidelines and restrictions, was good; over 40,000 people came through the doors of the facility. The WP Plainsmen Hockey Teams and Public Session participants were the major producers of revenue. The addition of ice helpers were a big success with the children and contributed largely to increased revenue; free skating was also offered to WP residents on Mondays and Wednesdays. Question by Mr. Gruenfeld: comparison of attendance to cost to previous years? Deputy Commissioner Croughan stated compared to 2019, last time the rink was opened, current year dollars exceed our projections because although we had restricted attendance limits there were few other recreation options available to the public as a result we were sold out of all of our sessions. Deputy Croughan stated Darren and staff did a great job and the rink was not closed during the season.

**Tennis** Courts opened as of May 8. The United States Tennis Association provided grants for lower income family and other diverse youth populations to encourage participation in the sport of tennis. The City will be offering free classes to those who qualify over 10 weeks this Spring and Summer.

**Basketball** The hoops are back up at the parks. The hoops went up as of April 11. Also Gardella Park will have a new score board donated by White Plains Hospital which will be installed by June. The High School and Adult Basketball leagues each will have eight teams. Gardella Community Day is scheduled for August 15.

Chairwoman Puja and Commissioner Bass thanked Darren for his report. Commissioner Bass also acknowledged Darren for his admirable management of the major cost facilities, Ebersole Ice Rink and Gillie Park Tennis Courts.

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### **Old Business**

Famers Market- Opened April 21-slow beginning but increased publicity has greatly improved business and Vendor's are happy.

**Battle of White Plains Playground**-Commissioner reported that a meeting is scheduled with Battle Hill Association President, Peter Wilcox and they will review the plans to replace the playground at Battle Of White Plains Park. The park would be closed at the end of August and the ground breaking would be shortly thereafter. It would be scheduled to be completed by early November..

### **Delfino Park Plaza Replacement**

Commissioner Bass stated the project is completed. Commissioner and Mr. Scully agreed looks great, big improvement.

### **Solar Panels at Gillie Park**

Commissioner Bass reported project has begun. Parking spaces are limited at Gillie Park. The basketball area is being used to create additional parking.

### **Summer Camp**

Commissioner Bass reported the camps are at full capacity. However, counselors are needed. Deputy Commissioner Croughan stated, there are many new changes and operating a camp this summer is challenging.

### **New Business**

#### **New York Rangers Ball Hockey**

Commissioner Bass reported a program is being offered at Ebersole on Fridays, July 9 thru mid Sept for ages 5-10 years, minimum of 40-50 participants.

#### **JazzFest**

Will be held September 8-12. Performances at various locations throughout the city. The main event will be held on Court Street. Programs and performances will require ticket reservation.

#### **USTA Grant**

Commissioner Bass reported United States Tennis Associate (USTA) has funded 24 weeks of tennis classes which will be held under the supervision of Tennis Innovators at Delfino Park this fall/winter. The Recreation Dept will reach out to target groups as required by the grant to find participants.

#### **Sandlot Baseball Clinic**

Commissioner Bass reported the Recreation Department will hold a four weeks baseball clinic in conjunction with White Plains Little League for 6-12 yr olds at Gardella Park for 4 weeks in July on Wednesday evenings. The Rec Dept was able to receive a donation of 75 Baseball gloves to be given to the participants from the NY Mets, Mr. Donovan Mitchell, Diversity Officer for the organization. Mr. Mitchell will also be participating in the clinic. We are currently having conversations with the Jackie Robinson Foundation who is also excited to support this clinic. White Plains Little League will be providing coaches and equipment. Also community volunteers have been invited to help out.

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### **Basketball at Gardella Park**

Events Sponsorship package for companies are available; package will be presented at next meeting.

Chairwoman Puja questions mask wearing still required. Deputy Commissioner Croughan stated Recreation is continuing mask guideline under the direction of guidance provided by the Westchester County Dept of Health with regards to camps and pools.

### **Upcoming Events**

Outdoor Movie-WPHS – June 5 and 25

Memorial Day. May 31 at Delfino Park

WP Outdoor Arts Festival, Saturday, June 5 and Sunday June 6

Juneteenth Celebration, Saturday, June 12, Wayne Bass, Grand Marshal

Free Kayaking June 12, 13, 19 and 20-reservation required, starting June 1st

Pools open June 19

Father's Day Concert, Sunday, June 20

Summer Soltice Yoga, Monday, June 21

Puerto Rico Flag Raising, June 26, online version the following week

Dance Recital

Noon Day Concerts begin July 1

Meeting in July will be in person at Renaissance Plaza on Court St. in July

Motion to accept March 21<sup>st</sup> minutes by Mr. Kent seconded by Randy Stein.

Next meeting Thursday, July 15th.

### **Minutes from March 2021**

Motion to accept: Leonard Gruenfeld

Seconded: Evelyn Santaigo

Motion carried to approve minutes of March 2021

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Stein, seconded by Mr. Kent.

**Meeting adjourned.**