

## **RED BANK PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes August 25, 2026 - Borough Hall Courtroom

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

Attending: John LeFever, Oscar Salinas, Joe Simon, Dana Ian Farley, Kristen Fal, Michael Lennon, Pat Richter, Melissa Moore, Councilman Ben Forest, and Councilwoman Nancy Facey-Blackwood.

The minutes from the July meeting were approved unanimously via email.

### **Item 1:**

#### **Update of current Parks and Recs activities and events**

**Summer camp** was completed on August 21<sup>st</sup> and it was a highly successful 6-week program with positive parent feedback. Just a couple of minor incidents occurred, typical for a camp season. The program was at capacity, with financial aid provided for about half of campers. There were lots of field trips! For the 5 days of rain, the summer camp used the Charter School, but it was crowded. Alternate locations are needed for next season. On the last day of camp 15 pizzas were donated by a Latino Men's Baseball team from Red Bank and supported by an Eatontown Pizzeria Bellos.

For the grant-funded **Buddy Program**, the participants enjoyed the inclusive trips to the Keansburg water park.

**Count Basie and Eastside parks** are continuing with repairs and updates. At Count Basie Fields the turf replacement is done, a new sliding gate making it easier to bring equipment in and out is completed, and the baseball bases will be replaced. The basketball courts will be resurfaced and have new hoops installed in the fall. Fencing continues to be a challenge, with holes cut in various places. At Eastside, sod is being installed with regular automatic sprinklers making sure the sod gets a good start, with the fencing remaining in place for protection for another 3 to 4 weeks.

**The Community Garden** will benefit from an Eagle Scout project, creating raised beds, pending a presentation and approval by the Environmental Committee.

**The Green Acres Grant** will be dedicated to improvements at Jonnie Jazz Park, including landscaping, a better stage, lighting, and some permanent chess/checker boards.

**Riverside Gardens Park** needs a landscaping upgrade. Two Garden Tour winners invested considerable time suggesting some pollinator/native plantings for the entryway. One pointed out the poor condition of rose bushes, invasive vines, and overall neglect of the rest of the park area. Their ideas will be shared with the Environmental Committee. There may be a memorial installed at the park.

**Summer community offerings** included movies (two were rained out), YMCA Zumba (30 people usually attending), a circus arts presentation at Marine Park, and regular jazz concerts. The Committee reviewed and added notes to thank you letters to sponsors.

### **Item 2:**

## Upcoming activities and events

**Fall sports** are off to a strong start with 35 preschoolers registered for soccer. The kindergarten to age 2 group has 56 registered. There will be 75 kids participating in teams, one of which will be co-ed.

Adult basketball on Tuesdays and Thursdays will begin in early September.

There is a free STEM program with 4 sessions, twenty kids are registered. Last year the program was too expensive and was cancelled.

**Hispanic Heritage Celebration** will be September 13 with several bands and excellent food. The Capulli dancers from Count Basie will be performing. There were some suggestions that the event include traditions of other countries in addition to Mexico.

**Porchfest** will be the first Saturday in October. There will not be bike lanes set up this year. There are sponsors for the event, but it is not a benefit for HabCore like in years past.

There will be a **9/11 Memorial** at 9:30 am at Riverside Gardens Park.

**A Peace Pole** will be installed at Marine Park on a October date. TBD

The Boro has a Visual Arts Committee, and a **large sculpture promoting soccer** may be installed somewhere in the Boro.

**The Halloween Movie** will be The Adams Family. There was considerable discussion about the Boro Halloween Parade (October 18) – the route, the timing, and the floats. The Boro has committed to upgrading the White Street ending of the parade with a petting zoo, a DJ for music, stilt walkers, and improving the judging and prize awarding process. We are hoping the YMCA might participate in the parade.

## Item 3:

### New Business

**Program registration** – there has been feedback from people, especially seniors, who try and register for non-sports events, that the process is hard to understand. Oscar explained that the system is a software product purchased by the Boro, so the procedures to sign-up are set-up by the vendor.

**Letters to Santa** – Volunteers answering letters to Santa have been frustrated with missing return addresses. A sample letter template was shared with the Committee, to be provided on the Parks and Recreation Website and on the sides of the special Santa mailboxes in town. There will be an addition to encourage children to draw pictures for Santa on the back of their letter.

**Using AI for minutes** – The Committee continues to experiment with various AI products to make it easier to draft the minutes. There is no permanent solution yet.

**Count Basie Playground** – there were concerns by Committee members that with all the attention going to Marine Park, that perhaps Count Basie playground is being neglected. Maybe there are some things the Boro could do to spruce it up, such as replacing the wood chips annually. The bathrooms continue to be a problem due to heavy use and inadequate cleaning.

**Create an APP** – there was a suggestion for the Boro to create an app that would make community engagement much easier.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM with a motion by Kristin seconded by Joe.

**Next meeting is September 22, 2026, at 7:00 pm at Boro Hall.**