

Mendham Borough Recreation Committee Minutes: January 16, 2025

In attendance: Dianne Ackerman (Chair), Rob D'Urso, Kristin Ackerman (Sr. Student Representative), Joe Carangelo (Student Representative), Nick Niemczyk, Matt Bruin (Councilmember, Parks and Recreation committee)

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Minutes from November 21st and January 9th meetings approved.
2. Summer Day Camp 2025 feedback from 2 previous campers.
 - a. Suggestion to incorporate more activities outside of Borough Park.
 - i. Includes going on nature walks near the Mudhole and Patriots Path to play in the stream and do more water activities.
 - ii. Suggestion of bringing back field trips to pools/lakes in the area. Would need to increase fees for buses and entry.
 - b. Suggestion to change Color Wars from girls vs boys to the grades competing against each other.
 - c. Positive feedback about the arts and crafts activities.
 - d. Ideas for special events/activities
 - i. Adding more scavenger hunts throughout the camp, more challenges and games with counselors (ex: Kickball, zombie tag, sardines).
 - ii. Updates on equipment: Slip-n-slide down the hill, fixing tetherball.
 - iii. The kids enjoy the special events with animals/ petting zoo.
 - iv. The campers expressed a dislike for the banning of Pokémon cards. They said they were hoping the older kids would get the chance to play with them again. They got banned in the past due to stealing issues and causing conflicts. Suggestion of incorporating a Pokémon themed event or game at camp.
 - v. Recommendation of Day Camp After Dark/ Drive-In Movie having more games and activities at the event.
 - e. Positive feedback about bringing back the Fire Truck each week.
 - i. Councilmember Matt Bruin met with the Fire Chief who committed to bringing it back to some capacity for the 2025 season. Dependent of volunteer availability.
 - f. Suggestion of making merchandise for the campers and counselors: t-shirts, water bottles.
 - g. Bringing back snacks was discussed. Since COVID, campers bring their own snacks every day. Providing snacks will increase the budget and it does not seem to be an issue for parents to provide. Instead, bringing back Friday ice pops may be a better solution for costs and dietary restrictions.
 - h. Bringing back the talent show was another recommendation.
 - i. Has been difficult to get counselors and campers involved and excited to participate in the past.

Next Meeting: 7:30 pm, Thursday, February 20th at the Garabrant Center

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- ii. Idea of letting campers and counselors choose their own groups depending on which category they want to participate in to increase motivation (comedy skit, dance performance, etc.)
 - i. Issue of counselor participation with the campers. The campers feel like the counselors are not as involved or motivated to participate in games with the campers.
 - i. Suggestion of incorporating a quote of the week to motivate everyone to participate. Prizes for campers and counselors who exemplify the quote of the week.
 - ii. Suggestion of bringing back counselor of the week to motivate counselors.
 - iii. Suggestion of introducing Counselors in Training to get counselors better experienced and engaged over time.
 - j. Rain day location feedback: more board games and card games to play, newer movies.
 - k. Favorite themed weeks: countries/cultures, sports
 - l. Advertising these changes in the camp will attract more registration.
 - i. Aubrey should go to the elementary school for an assembly to get kids excited about new activities/changes.
 - ii. Posting online and in newspapers suggested.
- 3. Rotary Discussion
 - a. Rotary is looking for a project to get involved with in the Borough. They are open to contribution to funding efforts, volunteering, etc.
 - b. Matt Bruin suggested working with Rotary on basketball court upgrades at Borough Park.
 - c. Dianne suggested the idea of creating pickleball courts near Pastime Field.
- 4. Aubrey is continuing to work on the Recreation Booklet.
- 5. Summer Concert Series
 - a. Joe suggested getting a student band from the high school to perform at a town event. Aubrey recommended MendhamFest would be a good opportunity.

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