

PALMER TOWNSHIP RECREATION BOARD
MARCH 18, 2014 7:30 PM.

The regular monthly meeting of the Palmer Township Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. with the following in attendance: Chairman Bill Webb, Vice Chairperson Cheryl Nielsen, members Tom Lee, Jeff Vincent and Liam Brohan. Also present was Parks & Recreation Director Dan McKinney and Supervisor Liaison Bob Smith. Webb called the meeting to order and asked for public comment.

Victor Scomillio was present along with his wife Molly and son Lucca as well as other parents and sons for an AA/LaCrosse issue. Scomillio was the spokesperson for the group and was requesting the Recreation Board to approve the release of five players from the Palmer LaCrosse program so they could join the Easton program. He stated they informed the Athletic Association in January that they wanted this release. There have been problems last year with the commissioner throughout the sport season and all the parents were going to go to the AA meeting to discuss this but was told prior to that meeting that the AA had already made their decision of not allowing this release. The parents feel they were not able to give their side of the issue and that there was no discussion with them. Scomillio stated once they were made aware of this one family was able to sign up their son for the Palmer program but another family was told registrations were closed and they were not taking any more players. City of Easton has open registration.. There is no competition between Palmer and Easton even if there would be any play-offs so Palmer would not be playing Easton at any time. Scomillio stated all these families have been involved in Palmer sports and will continue to do so with other sports but would like to move to a better suited program for their children for LaCrosse. Webb stated the rules by the League clearly states there cannot be a release given to go to another municipality and noted as in the past Palmer has not issued releases. This is not an issue for this Board, it is an Athletic Association issue and we need to and do support the Athletic Association decision. Scomillio stated he knows there have been releases approved for other sports. Recreation Board is not aware of this.

Brohan – reiterated – there was a family that was denied registration? Scomillio stated yes, one family.

Lee asked if anyone from the AA asked what the issues were and Scomillio responded they didn't have their time to discuss this at the AA meeting so no, no one asked what the problems were so no one knows.

Smith introduced himself and stated obviously there is a problem with LaCrosse commissioner, these families and the league rules. Palmer coaches and commissioners and always try to installed the rules and Palmer pride into the players. He is very concerned if we open the door for this it will be opened for every sport. Where do we draw the line? Scomillio stated the situation between himself, these families, the players and the commissioner got so personal that they needed to seek this release. Smith stated this definitely needs to be checked into. He also stated that the township needs a person like Victor in our coaching program.

Mark Wells – stated there were accusations made directly to players and feels as a parent this is a decision that they must make, what is best for their child. Their son plays other sports for Palmer and loves it. Regardless of what the rules are what are the best interest of the players. He feels parents reserve the right to choose who they want to coach their child.

Mike Phillips – has coached sports throughout the Palmer program. He informed the Board that the present football commissioner has stated that he would grant a release to anyone seeking one. Why can you in one sport and not another. Smith stated he didn't know if this every being done and if this was a request it would have to go through the proper channels like this request. Phillips stated there were players that went to Easton. Smith stated there could be certain circumstances that approved this and Phillips stated there are here too. Smith felt this Board and the AA should get together to find out what the issues were and why the AA made the decision that they did without having a discussion with the people involved.

Nielsen asked why they didn't come and voice concerns last year when this was going on. Scmillio noted he did not voice his concerns with commissioner since it was against him and the players.

Webb asked if they researched into any other place for them to play. One parent stated other places are very expensive.

Stephanie Shupp stated they have been involved in Palmer sports and will continue to do so but asked why they were being held back, why being denied this release. We are all in the same school district.

Webb informed all that the Recreation Board will speak with AA for informational purposes only, not to make any other decision as this Board does not have any power to do so.

McKinney asked if there was any formal grievance procedures and Brohan stated yes there is a section in the AA By-Laws that covers this.

Dave DiSoro asked why the parents, Recreation Board and AA can't get together and discuss this. Like an open forum.

Webb stated that was a good idea but the next Recreation Board meeting isn't for a month.

Vincent asked if the reason the players wanted to leave was solely due to the commissioner, and he was leaving, why did you still want leave. There is another commissioner being sought at this time. Scmillio stated the present commissioner was still on board for this season, the new commissioner wouldn't be involved until next year.

Board members stated their children may have to suffer for one year by not playing until there is a new commissioner. This board cannot do anything with a release.

Throughout discussion tonight it was stated that there are players from outside of Palmer Township that are playing in some of our sporting programs. This will be addressed immediately.

Board thanked everyone for their comments and concerns and will follow up with the AA on this issue but reiterated there will not be a change in the decision by the AA that this Board does not have any power over the AA on these decisions and that we have a sporting program for Palmer residents.

Ordinance – McKinney stated he did not receive any feedback from any Board members on the proposed ordinance that he distributed last month. He is recommending that this be approved and forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for final approval. On motion by Vincent, seconded by Lee, and agreed by all, the Board recommended final approval of the new Parks and Recreation Ordinance by the Board of Supervisors.

Field requests – McKinney wants to make sure there are no conflicts with the AA sports when reserving any of the township fields.

Bethel Memorial Church is requesting two or three nights at LaBarre Park. Unfortunately the township is now using this field since girls' T-Ball is now at Old Orchard Park. The teams that used Old Orchard are now using LaBarre. McKinney will check Keystone fields for them.

Atlantic States – Phillipsburg team is asking to use Keystone Field. Board felt representatives of these two leagues should get together and figure out if there are any open times and there should be some type of compensation to the Veterans League since they maintain this field.

Senior Baseball League – McKinney had a request from an adult baseball league that would like to use one of our fields. Through discussion it was decided that we don't have any room for this league.

Tour of park – McKinney felt this tour was very productive but warned it is a very preliminary step as to where we want to be. We have to be to the final step by

August to get the list to the Board of Supervisors for budget. He felt there should be a sub-committee to go over list and prioritize it and report back to this Board. The big question is what do we actually have as far as fields and courts and who uses what. There are multi-purpose fields that are needed as well as soccer fields. We have many basketball and tennis courts that new ones are not needed. One item that is definitely needed in Palmer is a dog park. There is a great spot for one at Riverview Park between the two bike paths. The only necessity would be water and the lines are right at the park and could be extended to this area.

Smith showed a sketch of a new field house and discussed all the possibilities it can be used for. Will get this to everyone to mark up and give comments. This is long overdue but everyone knows the cost will be very high.

Nielsen stated the leveling of the ground between the community center and football field needs to be put on list and we need to get the multi-purpose fields to grade.

Webb discussed who wanted to be on the Sub-committee – Vincent, Lee, and Brohan along with McKinney and Bob Smith.

Webb felt the field house should be on top of the list. This would get all sports equipment in one place. Also there may be grant money for a dog park and also for the list would be to purchase mat racks which have been needed for years.

Field signs for lighting revenue – Webb asked that this be sent to the Board of Supervisors as a recommendation that this be allowed. He has figured out that signs on the fields could bring in \$22,500 of revenue. This would be for each field. The advertising signs would be put up only during the season, not year-round. He recommends this money be earmarked for lighting of fields and any maintenance that would be over and above what the budgets are used for. Someone needs to find out who will be responsible for getting advertisers. On motion by Webb, seconded by Brohan and agreed by all, the Board recommended approval by the Board of Supervisors of signage being allowed on township fields for review for field improvements and lighting with an annual fee to be determined and that the signs will only be displayed during the sports season.

AA Report – Vincent stated the spring season ready to start.

Egg Hunt – Nielsen reported that the candy has been ordered and they are in the process of stuffing the plastic eggs. The event is scheduled for Friday, April 18th at 10 a.m. at Palmer School. Please be there by 8:30 to start the process.

Football/multi purpose field – There was discussion on who is allowed to use the multi-purpose field at the Palmer Complex and if it is to be by permit only. The township needs to watch the wear and tear on this field. It definitely needs to be used and played on but not for adult organized teams. Board has no problem with a group of kids wanted to play on it but with it being fenced in it could deter people playing on it. Board further discussed if it should be posted “use by permit only” and if an out-of-town- group showed up to play would this sign deter them from playing and tearing up the field. Smith noted that there is a sprinkler system that goes on periodically and no one can be on it during that time and for a time period afterwards due to the wet ground. After discussion it was motion by Brohan, seconded by Nielsen, and agreed by all, the recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the township approve certain fields in Palmer be posted that usage is by permit only as designated by the Parks and Recreation Department. This will then give the police department something to go by if a group is playing on a field without permission and is asked to leave

Director’s report –

Miracle League - May 3rd is opening day from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A flyer was sent out to all Palmer residents with Palmer Pool and Palmer Camp information sine we have not had a newsletter and this is a critical time for these two events.

Pool snack bar – McKinney informed the Board that the snack bar will be rented out for a separate company to run this year. He has received proposals for this and will make a recommendation shortly to the Board of Supervisors.

Development of Community Center – McKinney informed the Board that there is some opposition for the development of the outside areas of the community center which was reviewed at the last meeting. These residents will be at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday night if anyone is interested in attending.

September meeting minutes – On motion by Nielsen, seconded by Brohan and agreed by all, the minutes of the September meeting were approved. Please note that the members on the 2014 Board were not on the Board for 2013 so these minutes were approved with members of the new Board.

February meeting minutes – On motion by Nielsen, seconded by Lee, and agreed by all, the minutes of the February meeting were approved as written.

On motion by Nielsen, seconded by Lee, and agreed by all, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Diane Grube, Corr. Sec.