

Recreation Committee Annual Report

August 28, 2017

Prepared by Mark LeMire, Chairman, Tabernacle Recreation Committee

TAA information compiled by Lynne Hedden

The following report has been prepared to communicate the state of the programs in Tabernacle currently overseen by the Tabernacle Recreation Committee for the reporting period of June 30, 2016 through July 1, 2017.

The Committee Structure:

The committee currently consists of Mark LeMire, Lynne Hedden, Jenn Noor and Delores Rubin and Tim Galvin. This committee consists entirely of volunteers. Our intention is to add additional volunteers to the committee to assist in existing activities, and potentially additional events.

It should also be noted that we benefit greatly from the efforts of others that are over and above their normal job responsibilities. These include: Doug Cramer, Township Administrator, Colonel Lowe, Director of Tabernacle CERT, Natalie Lewis, Deputy Township Clerk, the Fire and EMS Volunteers, and of course the support of Mayor Lee and the entire Township Committee and Staff.

In addition, there are numerous volunteers and volunteer organizations that support all these efforts as well. All work tirelessly to make all the recreation activities in the township the best they can be, and further the objective of making Tabernacle Township a desirable place to live.

Current Events and Activities:

The activities and events currently being overseen by the committee include:

- Tabernacle Senior Dinner
- Tabernacle Senior Bus Trip(s)
- Tabernacle Memorial Day Parade
- Tabernacle Holiday Tree Lighting
- Tabernacle Athletic Association - Field Coordination Only

Highlights for the reporting period:

The Recreation activities in the township ran very well throughout the reporting period. We had no significant problems or issues reported. The highlight, however, is that we saw record turnout out the newly created Tree Lighting event last December, and look to build on this again in December 2017. Additionally, the TAA Organization continues to provide an excellent service to the community, even in the face of changing demographics.

The Goal of the Recreation Committee:

As stated in last year's report, the goal of the Recreation Committee is to promote and coordinate Activities and Events within the township to foster the spirit of community and add to the fabric that makes Tabernacle a desirable community in which to live. Within the limits of our resources and volunteers, we will look to provide ALL residents with the opportunity to participate in these activities. The committee seeks to be as inclusive as possible, and all residents are encouraged to participate.

Quantifying the success of community programs can be a challenge since many factors impact the participation by residents, and there are inevitable cycles driven by demographics, population turnover, and external influences, such as the economy and social changes and attitudes in general.

One need not look far, geographically and socially, to see and hear of the challenges facing many other communities. The reasons for this are many, but in the end, a community is only as stable, peaceful and harmonious as the residents want it to be. I believe people choose to move to Tabernacle or choose to stay because it provides a great balance between proximity to all the amenities of a Major Metropolitan Suburb coupled to the serenity of farms and forest. Given the geographic size of our community, with no definitive commercial hub, getting people to participate or even be aware of community activities can be a challenge. This is an area that we hope to continue to improve as we move forward.

How are we doing?

This is probably not a question best answered here, since the residents are the final arbiters. However we continue to strive to improve the events listed above and will look for opportunities to bring new ones in as appropriate. As evidenced by the participation in the Annual Tree Lighting, people will come out for the right events and we will continue to look to foster new activities and opportunities.

One area that appears to be working, without qualification, is the TAA. The Recreation Association provides no money to this organization, yet the number of participants, the community involvement, and the benefits to our township youth is quite high.

Recreation Budget:

The Recreation Committee stayed under our allowed budget for the 2016 calendar year. Expenditures were \$4,653 dollars for all the events listed above, with the majority of the expenditures used in support of Senior Events. These included the Annual Senior Dinner, and Bus Trips.

We do see the need for some potential expenditures and will make recommendations for the following budget cycle. Our community volunteers have done a wonderful job working with the tools they have, but there are areas that need to be addressed to ensure that planned events provide the best experience for the residents. A well-known example of this is our township sound equipment. It is aged and in dire need of an upgrade.

Senior Events:

It goes without saying that we all value the seniors in our community and owe much of what Tabernacle is today to their hard work and efforts throughout the decades. It is only fitting that we continue the traditions of providing activities to enrich their lives, even in some small way. Currently we have an Annual Senior Dinner, held at the Fire House and Scheduled Casino Bus Trips, leaving from the Township building. Both events are very well attended. Delores Rubin does an excellent job at coordinating these events. The Tabernacle Fire Company also does an excellent job at ensuring that the dinner is a special and memorable event, including providing meals for those that can't make it to the firehouse. We are looking for ways to make sure that more of our seniors know about these events. However, as the population ages, we may need to visit the logistics and find ways to ensure we can accommodate all that are deserving and interested.

Memorial Day Parade:

We had a very good turnout for our Memorial Day Parade and were blessed with fine weather. The Memorial nature of this event means that its success is not to be judged by solely by turnout, but by the commitment our community has to continuing to remember and honor those who died in uniform to protect our country. We are grateful that our community is committed to this remembrance. We hope to bring the sacrifices of the fallen from our community to the forefront in future events.

The Holiday Tree Lighting Event:

Our third year saw another record crowd and highlighted that there are still new opportunities to bring members of our community together. Started by the Women's Club and Historical society, we have folded this event under the TRC for consistency. However, these groups, along with the PTA and CERT continue to be actively engaged in all aspects and are really making an effort to make this a lasting event. If our current trend continues, this will be another great opportunity to our residents to gather in the spirit of community for years to come. Of course, with any new venture, there are some challenges and opportunities. The time of year, with the next one scheduled for Friday, December 1, 2017 means we are always at the mercy of Mother Nature. Last year, we dealt with some blustery conditions, but we still had a happy and contented crowd. We will continue to apply lessons learned and we are looking to rent a tent this year to provide for a more centralized area for the performers and allow for a more robust sound system and lighting. Hopefully this will help overcome all but the worst weather scenarios. This does highlight, however, that a permanent structure, or community center should be in the township thinking for the future, and would surely add to the continuity of these community events.

The Tabernacle Athletic Association:

As mentioned above, and based on anecdotal evidence it does appear that the TAA is emerging as the strongest athletics program of our adjacent neighboring towns. This is attributable to the professionalism and commitment and tireless work of Lynne Hedden, the coaches, the board members and the TAA volunteers. I have had the opportunity to attend a number of their monthly meetings and the commitment to making the athletic experience the best it can be for the children of our residents, is evident in every action and decision.

The Tabernacle Athletic Association (TAA) is managed by President Lynne Hedden and operates as an independent non-profit organization. The relationship between the Township and TAA is long standing and their Charter is to promote Athletics in the Township. Providing this service has, by any measure, been a great success. Under Lynne's guidance (and unlimited passion), the athletics in Tabernacle have developed into a structure with a level of participation that is impressive for a community of our size. The athletic opportunities TAA provides to our town, using volunteers, and a minimal amount of Township resources, rivals larger towns, with dedicated paid staffs. The collective time that the coaches put into their respective sports is measured in many thousands of volunteer hours. There is zero compensation provided for this work.

This time is spent in ensuring our children are exposed to organized, selfless role models and fosters the transference of a deep community spirit to the next generation. Preparations for

these events entail many hours of field maintenance, and setup. This translates into pride in our township, and instills values that benefit the entire community. Most remarkably, many of the volunteers continue this selfless activity, even after their children have aged out of the TAA programs and moved on to High School and College activities. Of course, the TAA is actively looking for younger volunteers and parents of younger children to join and carry this on for future generations.

So, by any standard, we are very fortunate to have such an active group of dedicated volunteers that add so much to this community. If the goal of the Recreation Committee is to enrich the lives of our residents, instill pride in our community and to make Tabernacle a desirable place to live and raise a family, then TAA takes the gold.

The Snack Stand:

The TAA Volunteers have been successfully operating the new Patty Bowker snack stand this entire season and it has become a point of pride as residents from our town and others come to participate in tournaments and games. It has been a very helpful venue for fundraising and provides a safe and clean facility for our children and residents. However, it must be stated again, that the dedication of the entire group of TAA volunteers is what makes a simple building into a centerpiece to showcase the pride we have in our community.

I would also like to pass on the TAA's sincere thanks to the dedicated employees in Public Works Department. Although the TAA does all the event specific work, they are grateful for the pride that the Public Works takes in maintaining the grounds and helping to make all these events as safe and enjoyable as possible for the residents.

Sports Complex Field Use:

The township maintains a log of the use in the Tabernacle facilities known as Patty Bowker and Prickets Mill Sport Complexes. Of course, this is only the log of users, including TAA, that have made specific application to use the fields. The fields are, by ordinance, open to ALL Tabernacle residents to use when they have not been specifically reserved. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the sport complexes need to be maintained for the general public use and not only for TAA. The fact that the TAA puts in countless volunteer hours to maintain the safe conditions of the fields, should be considered a net benefit to the township. Aside from Safety, I believe all would agree that even those that only use the jogging trails, playgrounds and courts all benefit from the hard work the TAA volunteers put into the maintenance and aesthetics of the fields. In a township as widely dispersed as Tabernacle, these few public spaces can and should be points of community unity and pride, and we should all be grateful for their efforts.

The Following is a listing of the TAA Scheduled activities for this calendar year:

TAA - January 2017 - November 2017, the last Tuesday of every month except December and July, 7-9 pm in Town Hall for monthly organizational meetings.

TAA Baseball and Softball - 3/1/20017-6/30/20017 - Patty Bowker Fields and Snack Stand and Prickett's Mill Softball Fields - Rodney Haines and Lynne Hedden for TAA Recreational Baseball & Softball

TAA Soccer - 3/20/17 through 6/30/17 from 5-8 pm, Pricketts Mill Soccer Fields, Dave Curtis for TAA Spring Soccer

Blue Chip Softball - 6/2-4/2017 - Patty Bowker Fields and Snack Stand - Lou Bishop for Toys for Tots College Showcase - Softball Tournament

Nightmare Softball - 7/15-16/2017 - Patty Bowker Fields and Snack Stand - Dave Wheeler, Nightmare Classic Softball Tournament

TAA Soccer - 8/1/2017-11/19/2017 - Pricketts Mill Soccer Fields - Dave Curtis, TAA Recreational Soccer Program

TAA Softball 9/1/17-11/15/17 - Patty Bowker Fields and Pricketts Mill SB Fields - Lynne Hedden, Fall Softball

Blue Chip Softball - October 13-15, 2017, Patty Bowker Fields and Snack Stand - Lou Bishop, Toys for Tots College Showcase SB Tournament

Nightmare Softball - October 20-22, 2017 Patty Bowker Fields and Snack Stand - Dave Wheeler, Nightmare Classic Softball Showcase

Please note that all non-Tabernacle applicants for field use need to provide proof of their own insurance in order to reserve any fields in the Sports Complexes. It should also be noted that soccer continues to grow in popularity and the field use is high. The TAA would like to find a way to bring the irrigation system back into working order. There have been ongoing discussions, but no significant action has been taken. We would like to put this on the list of items that the Township Committee considers in future budgets. As usual, the TAA volunteers are always willing to pitch in where possible in order to continue their efforts to provide the best experience for our residents and children.

TAA Participation:

Program	Number of Teams in the Program	Number of Coaches in the Program	Number of Athletes in the program	Tabernacle residents	No-Tabernacle residents
Basketball	16	16	128	128	0
Soccer	23	46	241	215	26
Track & Field	1	5	31	23	8
Baseball	11	33	115	112	3
Baseball Fall 2016	0	0	0	0	0

Wrestling	1	8	72	19	53
Softball Spring 2017	8	25	80	68	12
Softball Fall 2016	1	4	13	4	9
Volleyball	2	8	33	17	16

The table above shows the participation of 145 Coaches and 713 Children Athletes. 82% of the Athletes were Tabernacle Residents. The TAA reimbursed the Township \$10 per non-Resident Athlete, for a total of \$1,270 to offset their insurance costs for the TAA programs. Total insurance for General Liability and Accident and Health Insurance paid by the township is \$8619. It should be noted that the TAA calendar is aligned with the programs vs. the Township's calendar year, so some data may need to be calculated across multiple years. However, the averages should be similar for the purpose of this general report.

Summary:

On behalf of the entire Tabernacle Recreation Committee, I would like to thank the Township committee and our residents for funding the activities of our Committee. I would also like to thank the countless volunteers and residents that support these activities. We hope to expand our committee and to continue to improve our service to the community. We welcome any comments, questions or recommendations, and look forward to successful upcoming events.

Sincerely,

Mark LeMire

Chairmaan, Tabernacle Recreation Committee