Florence Township Recreation Committee Minutes 10/5/26

The Florence Township Recreation Committee held a regular meeting on 9/14/26 at the Florence Township Municipal Building 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting in person.

The meeting was called to order by Recreation Committee President, Tony Pastore at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Mary Pieretti, Don Nemeth, Tom Boracci, Martin Eckert, Cindy Golway, Donna Sadler, Caitlin Motta, Toniann Carroll, TJ Lovenduski, Tom Supey, Councilman Joseph Frappolli, Tony Pastore

Absent: Vince Mancuso

Public: Sarah Cornely, Bill Cornely, Scott Schuler, Risa Schuler

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of August 3, 2026 (Golway; Sadler)

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Sarah and Bill Cornely appeared to address concerns relating to the newly formed competitive cheer program offering, which is an extension of the existing recreation cheer program.

The primary concerns provided were the blending of all recreation age groupings to form the team; explanation of the fee schedule which is in addition to the recreation cheer fee that is required in order to participate with the competition team; fundraising opportunities or sponsorships considered to help to offset cost for participants, and the decision to move forward with the competition team this season, despite reduced anticipated numbers and the need to pair varying age groups together.

Both Sarah and Bill expressed interest in supporting the recreation programs, as they are currently approved coaches and moving forward aiding in the effort to find manageable ways for children/families to participate in recreation, as well as work with leagues and participate in meetings where there is need for feedback or resolution.

Cindy Golway, serves as a recreation committee member and board representative to the cheerleading program and was instrumental in the development of the competitive cheerleading option for the 2026 season. Cindy provided an overview from how the competitive cheer introduction came to be, through the details associated with proposed structure, communication to families, workouts/try-outs, cost comparisons (uniforms, competition fees, etc.), fundraising and how evaluations and final participant numbers arrived the board to determining what they felt was the best step forward to maintaining the offering for its inaugural season.

Members of the committee, Mr. & Mrs. Cornely and Cindy continued dialogue where feedback was provided. It was understood that with the start of something new there are challenges, and participating families and their children may be impacted whether the program continued forward despite the structuring, or if it was withheld until possibly next season. One of the key points was the concern of the wide range between the youngest and oldest participants. This is something that some towns are also

managing due to similar circumstances, and the Florence Cheer program provided that outside of the routine work, the participants are most times situated within their age groups. It was suggested to continue to instill appropriate behavior and language between the groups. As a committee, we appreciate the feedback from the public/families. We appreciate the time and detail put in by the programs to introduce something that aligns Florence Township with what towns in our area are offering to our youth. We are hopeful that in the post-season, there will be gatherings to aid in the growth of competitive cheer, as the recreation committee is supportive of a balanced offering for all to enjoy.

COORDINATORS REPORT

Fall Recreation Programs: Marty provided that all Fall program seasons have begun practices, with many having games. The in-season programs are communicating with field needs, maintenance and coordinating cutting schedules. Tom Boracci specifically highlighted the responsiveness of the public works department in their attention to detail and cutting rotation at the Marter Soccer Complex. As the lower field especially is a large over flow area, personnel are communicating with the program on cutting needs, and the problematic branches along the lower field walking paths are addressed promptly.

Marty noted that last meeting the committee had requested updates on the Fall baseball program and Vince Mancuso was going to provide feedback to the inquiries of the committee. Marty has not received information to date, however has discussed with the off-season programs that have requested field maintenance and cutting that all inquiries must come through the recreation department. Softball has communicated Fall schedules for game sand tournaments, but it remains unknown as to the schedule and which fields are being used for fall baseball. Program Liaison, Mancuso was not in attendance at the September meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Adult Flag Football League: The committee discussed the request submitted to hold an adult flag football league this season on Nyikita Field on Sundays. The group provided Bylaws, insurance and will adhere to cleaning the area post-use, along with the understanding that prior to 2027, they must meet with the recreation committee and take steps to formalize a board and follow the same transition as the cricket association. The committee approved the request under these terms and Marty will type a memo outlining expectations.

FACILITIES

Municipal Facilities

2nd Saturday Events: The committee shared details about the September Event, hosting Country line dancing. It is suggested that the code on the railing be changed, now that the use is more geared towards township sponsored activity.

Cheerleading Facility Use: Marty will confirm with the cheerleading program when interior painting will be scheduled and will report to the cheer program in advance.

Board of Education Facilities

Recreation Basketball registration will be opening soon, which will be followed by facility use requests submitted to the school district. Donna Sadler noted that if there is interest in requesting use of the school district facilities in the winter, there should be follow up with Board of Education. The committee will need to gauge what type of uses will be requested prior to discussing with BOE.

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OLD BUSINESS

Pickleball & Tennis: Clinics have concluded and both were successful. Marty has ordered replacement net straps for tennis and pickleball courts.

Fieldhouse: Marty provided updated progress to the fieldhouse work. Interior painting, heating elements, meeting room, awning, floor and other details are being finalized. A lot of on-site work will take place during the Fall. There was some discussion of use over the winter, but scheduling is premature at this time, but Marty expressed that the building will be monitored during each use. There will be blackout days as the use schedule should be eased in, and most likely blocks of time will be created for program use, along with activities like youth & adult volleyball and municipal dept use. Councilman Frappolli continues to be of great support of the project and Don Nemeth has visited when contractors and vendors have visited for measurements.

Fall Fest: The planning committee met prior to the recreation meeting and provided an overview as to the planning for the event. Donna confirmed the reimbursement process and as the event draws closer there will be discussion as to needs for barricades, cones, etc.

Health & Wellness Programs: Marty shared that the Functional Fitness program has been placed on hiatus. After reviewing attendance, it became a challenge to justify the use. Marty has had dialogue with he instructor and suggested a revamp idea for the program, or future pop-up events that are directed to specific areas of exercise.

Marty noted the success of the Pilates pop-up brought the interest to host a pre-NFL Sunday event which was well attended. There continues to be requests for a standard Pilates program, but due to budget restrictions, at this time hosting a few pop-up events are what has been approved by the township. The committee is going to discuss wellness programs at the close of the year.

NEW BUSINESS

James Pennacchi Memorial Field: Florence Township Council officially approved the renaming of Legion Field to become the James Pennacchi Memorial Field. Thank you to Councilman Frappolli for expressing the recommendation from the Recreation Committee. Donna Sadler and others joined members of the Pennacchi family, along with longtime friend, Gino James, to appear at the council meeting. Donna has served as a liaison for the project and had met with the Pennacchi's to talk about plans to renovate the field and a concept to have the field game ready for the start of the 2027 season, where they would host the Opening Day Ceremonies. The committee agreed that it is a great idea, and that a lot of planning and preparation will need to take place through the fall & winter months to be ready for a spring dedication. There are plans for a beef & beer through the American Legion Post 194, which will be a great kickoff to the fundraising drive.

New Township App: Florence township has created an App to further provide a line of communication to as many residents as possible. Event and activity updates, traffic advisories, meeting notifications and more will be available for posting throughout the month. The township is breaking down the path to scheduling notifications so to not to overwhelm receivers, and recreation events & activities will have the opportunity to be promoted through the app.

PUBLIC COMMENT #2

Florence Township Recreation Committee Minutes 10/5/26

Scott Schuler provided feedback to the Fall recreation baseball program. Scott also talked about topics such as how uniforms orders are structured, costs and other questions that the committee has had, as Scott has been in the sports apparel industry for many years.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Councilman Frappolli – Provided feedback to the September meeting where league fees were discussed. The committee was encouraged to further instill with all leagues that recreation activity that is supported by township budget should allow for lesser fees to be provided to families in order for participation to remain. As leagues have adapted to nicer uniforms and excess expenditures at times, there becomes a question as to what the priorities of recreation sports become. The councilman agreed with the previous meetings direction where leagues will not be approved to launch registration without providing feedback as to structure of the league, fees, uniform vendor agreement and fundraiser, buyout or sponsorship protocol.

Caitlin Motta – Echoed similar sentiments requiring an annual reporting from leagues identifying expenditures. Also it was suggested that all leagues should provide their active vendor list where everyone may share and consider price break opportunities by combining orders or looking for quotes for respective leagues.

Don Nemeth – Shared that the West Jersey Youth Football Weigh-in event was a success. Over 1,400 players plus coaches and families visited town. It was organized and the program and towner were praised by league officials for hosting and coordinating.

Don Nemeth – Followed up on the need for refreshed complex signage identifying recreation fields. The existing street signage is poor.

Don Nemeth – Provided that the football program has an AED and football/cheer reps have been trained by the fire department. (Councilman Frappolli inquired as to the status of AEDS at all fields. Marty provided feedback as to the information provided by the police department and that there is more information to discuss)

Don Nemeth – Expressed that the new fall season is beginning and there needs to be something done to ensure that there is a police presence patrolling the complex periodically during the weekend games and at night during practice. Don provided that he was onsite the previous weekend from noon to after 5pm and did not see any police vehicles driving the complex.

Don Nemeth – Asked if injury reports have been turned in from recent football injuries. Marty responded that to date he has not received reports.

Tom Boracci – Reiterated cutting of fields has been excellent. The PW crew is also adapting to a suggested cutting layout at Lower Marter which is a big help. Tom asked for a status for a portable toilet for Lower Marter and extra cans. Marty shared that it is scheduled for delivery this week. Tom shared that pre-k sessions were great, and the families appreciate the activity.

Tony Pastore – Shared that he will be checking for available dates for the community center to prepare stuffed cabbage for a sale. He will connect with Marty.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Motta, second by Sadler – 9:25 pm