



**Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
March 14, 2013 7:00 p.m. Town Hall Council Chambers**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kevin Adams, Wanda Holloway, Ray Riordan, Jennifer Jones, Marty Buckwald, Linda Hunt-Williams, Stephane Daniel, Kari McCloud

**ABSENT MEMBERS:** Peter Koutroumpis, Winston Shade

**STAFF PRESENT:** Julia Meder, Len Bradley, Kristen Denton, Landon Carroll

**CALL TO ORDER:** Kevin called the meeting to order

**APPROVAL OF 2/14/13 MINUTES:** Minutes approved.

**FOOTBALL/CHEER CHANGES/PRESENTATION BY BOOSTER CLUB/ PRESENTATION BY STAFF:**

The Parks and Recreation department presented to the Town Council for approval a list of changes to be made to the existing football and cheer program. On March 5, a number of booster club members and parents spoke at the Town Council meeting against the changes.

Susan Borges spoke on behalf of the booster club. Susan shared that the Power Point presentation she had planned had been created before she knew of the information to be shared by the Parks and Recreation department. She chose not to present this information as she felt that it would be repetitive of the Parks and Recreation department's presentation.

Susan stated that the booster club shares many of the same concerns the Town has regarding the football and cheer programs. Susan stated that the booster club does not believe that the EWFL is the best solution for the program but that the boosters feel that parents did not have enough time to find a solution for the program after leaving EWFL. The boosters have applied to Pop Warner as an alternative. Boosters are concerned with the future of the program as Susan shared that the boosters had planned and set numerous goals for the next season. The boosters felt that the survey that was sent out to all accounts in the Parks and Recreation database was misleading. Questions regarding traveling vs. not traveling and paying admission vs. not paying admission were asked on the survey. Susan shared that the boosters felt that these questions in particular were misleading. The booster club conducted their own survey and shared that they received many positive responses.

A point Susan raised was that by participating in the EWFL, other teams travel to Holly Springs, creating an economic impact. Other points raised by Susan were concerns regarding the number of players, lower number of practices, and increased risk of injuries. Susan asked that the boosters be provided more time to investigate other alternatives to the EWFL and time to evaluate options.

Kevin asked Susan to expand on the relationship between the Town and the Booster club. Susan said that the Town and the Booster club are two separate entities. The Booster club has offered support in the way of fundraising over the past years. Kevin clarified that the Booster club offers fundraising support but that the Town provides, manages and supervises the program. Susan stated that the EWFL was not the perfect solution for the program and that complaints about the program had been received. Ray asked Susan why if there were complaints in the past, leaving the EWFL was not addressed at the time. Susan stated that at the time the booster club looked at the option of the booster club leaving to being their own program but due to financial constraints and lack of playing fields, were unable to do so.

Landon Carroll and Kristen Denton from the athletics division of Parks and Recreation provided a power point presentation regarding the proposed changes. Changes were prompted by the complaints received and problems encountered in previous years. Kristen stated that HSP&R is the only municipality

participating in the EWFL. Cheerleaders cheer at games and in a competition at the end of the season. Kristen continued that the EWFL does not adhere to the same recreational goals as the HSP&R. EWFL has no bylaws, is not sanctioned, sees high turnover in management, constant change is proposed creating confusion and requires a high level of travel. EWFL has no guidelines for team organization, requires weight limits, no maximum practices guidelines which creates a problem as teams practice three times per week while other teams can practice more often. The department is proposing eight man teams for football while cheer squads will cheer at all games and provide a performance at the end of the season similar to the City of Raleigh. The age and weight requirements would stay the same as the EWFL. Football players would learn basic football skills and safety while learning in a fun, recreational environment. Teams would practice twice weekly and play games on Saturdays in Holly Springs. A minimum playing time requirement would be implemented. Cheerleaders would learn the basic fundamentals of cheering/stunting/tumbling/dance. Squads would practice twice weekly for 1.5 hours. Travel would not be required. Players would receive more one-on-one time with coaches to enhance skill building opportunities. A list of all surrounding cities and towns and how they manage football and cheer was provided. Testimonials from citizens, former coaches, staff from other Parks and Recreation departments in the area in support of the Town's proposed changes were provided. Landon showed a video of eight man football being played at a high school in Oklahoma to give an example of how the game is played.

Kevin asked Landon if any other HSP&R athletic programs participate in travel. Landon responded that only Football participates in travel. Jennifer asked if the Town looked into other programs like Pop Warner and Len answered that yes, the Town looked into other programs in 2001.

Kevin asked Len if he would like to speak on the issues. Len shared that not all of the Town's time with EWFL has been bad. In previous years, Holly Springs had a very successful run in the EWFL and participation levels were very high. Because of those participation levels, parents stressed that the Town needed two football teams and upon Council approval, two teams were created. After the two teams were created, success levels and the number of wins dropped. Participation levels began to drop. The department has asked EWFL to change rules to allow the department's teams to be more competitive within the league and these requests were denied. Len stated that he believes that with these changes the department will see more players return to the program and this is based on comments received in the survey.

Kevin asked Susan Borgesi to return to the podium to answer several questions. Kevin provided a scenario to ask the difference between players playing against players in-house vs. playing against players from another town. Susan responded that by traveling outside of Holly Springs players experience a stronger sense of pride and teamwork when playing outside of Holly Springs against other teams. Susan stated that by taking out the travel and competition of the program, the program would then become watered-down and players would lack the athleticism needed to compete on middle and high school teams.

Kari stated that she believes in competition but does not feel that competition is necessary in a recreational league. Susan stated that her point was that for thirteen years the program has been successfully run up until now and that she is not opposed to splitting the program and that the boosters are asking for time to evaluate options.

Jennifer asked Susan to clarify the request for time and what the booster club means by this. Susan responded that the EWFL has given the booster club a grace period for registration and that Pop Warner has not responded to the club's application yet. The boosters are asking for a year because they do not feel that they have enough time to find an alternative yet. Jennifer asked if the boosters were requesting for the Town to financially support the yellow jackets for the next year. Susan stated that the boosters were offering to fund raise and assist in supporting the program for the next year.

Vinnie D'Agastino, a football parent stood to spoke. Vinnie stated that he felt that the travel time was not excessive and that he felt strongly that the participants were happy playing as currently organized.

John Akins stood to speak. John stated that he has coached since 2005. John spoke in favor of the proposed changes and shared stories and examples of how in his opinion, the changes would help the program.

Kevin asked Landon and Kristen to stand at the podium to answer questions. Kevin asked if in the baseball, basketball, and soccer program, coaches teach the players the basics and skills of the game. Kevin asked that if these changes take place if coaches will have guidelines for the football program. Landon responded that yes, guidelines will be enforced. Kevin stated that in all other athletic programs the department provides recreational play with basic skills education and coaching and that when players reach a certain level, move on to competitive play in other leagues.

Kari stated that while she enjoys competition she still feels that the Town's league needs to be recreational. She also stated that she believes that having a competitive program rather than recreational may deter some players from participating. Kristen agreed and shared that the department has received feedback to support this concern.

Wanda stated that if the program changes, there will still be a competitive nature within the play of the game.

Several parents from the audience stated concerns over the players who may leave.

Kevin made a motion to make a recommendation to the Town Council based on the information heard at tonight's meeting to make a recommendation to Council to approve the proposed changes to the program. Jennifer second the motion. All in favor.

**OTHER ITEMS:** Ray thanked Len for presenting information to the Oak Hall HOA with regards to the possible impacts of the North Main Athletic Complex.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further items for discussion the meeting was adjourned.