

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD**  
**Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**December 18, 2013**  
MINUTES

**Call to Order**

6:30pm: J. Shute called the meeting to order

**Present:** Jack Hutchinson, Ernie Robert and Melissa Robertson Members

**Also Present:** Joe Manzi, Parks & Recreation Director

**Review & Solicit Input – Coaches Code of Conduct, Parent, Family and Friends Guidelines, Corrective Procedures & Process**

J. Hutchinson opened discussion by speaking to the purpose behind the drafting of the Code of Conduct, Guidelines and Corrective Procedures documents. He indicated there have been some recent items brought to the attention of the Commission, for example an overemphasis on winning, and they want to use these documents to refocus participants. He reminded everyone that the child is more important than the athlete. The goal is to keep and support the culture that focuses on the importance of educating the kids and has adults serving as good role models. The Commission wants to be clear in its communication of that expectation and to have an open line of communication that clearly defines the role of the Parks & Recreation Program participants.

One individual asked whether the coaches in the programs are subjected to background checks. Mr. Manzi answered that the Little League coaches are run through a system, though they do not have fingerprints. Due to the overlap between seasons, many coaches have had a check run, but not everyone.

It was asked what happens if someone is in violation of the Code of Conduct? J. Hutchins referenced the Volunteer Remediation document, and answered that the first step is to have a one on one conversation with that individual. If the problem were chronic or persistent, the Commission would look to the Parks & Recreation director do develop a plan of corrective action. E. Robert paraphrased the process for the benefit of all in attendance. He stressed the importance of having communication done in person, and avoiding the use of email. If, after the Program Director has developed a plan of action, if someone still feels the issue has not been adequately resolved, the Parks & Recreation Commission would then become involved. J. Hutchinson spoke that the drafted documents have been pulled together using several online resources as well as materials from Seacoast United, the Bow Indoor Soccer Program and from the NH Parks & Recreation Commission. They will look to integrate suggestions from coaches and other participants on refining the drafts.

J. Hutchinson spoke that one specific example of a practice that will not be tolerated by the Commission is the strategic changing of the position of players based on the person at bat during a baseball game. He feels this is unacceptable and sends a negative message of not valuing the person. Mike Devine noted that each of the respective leagues, for example Little League, has rules and policies that are being followed, and asked why the Department is developing its own. J. Shute responded that these will be in addition to the basic rules of each league. J. Hutchinson expressed that it is not necessarily the intent of Recreation League sports to prepare a player for the High School level of play, but rather to foster grit, character and grace. He would ask Mr. Devine to take a look and point out if there are places where the Code of Conduct drafted conflicts with the rules of the league and they will address such instances. J. Manzi spoke that many times the rules of the league do not address the larger character culture that Parks & Recreation stands for, for example the Basketball rules do not prohibit a player getting down on all fours and barking like a dog to distract the opponent during an inbound pass, yet it isn't something he would ever want to see a Coach teaching.

With regards to the language on equal playing time, one attendee asked whether, philosophically, it might be better to have a child on a team, specifically a travel team, who may not play as much, but is benefiting from the experience and being exposed to a higher level of play. J. Shute responded that he had been involved through his children at all levels of play and it is his opinion that if a child is good enough to make a team, then they should be good enough to play. There was discussion around the travel basketball teams and that the roster size may want to

be looked at more closely if the goal is to give equal playing time to all participants. M. Robertson spoke of the need to trust coaches to make decisions. She suggested they may need to reevaluate how the travel basketball evaluations are done to find the appropriate balance between participation rates (not cutting) and equal playing time. J. Manzi noted that the numbers for the travel teams are not overwhelming. Traditionally Deerfield does not overinflate its rosters, but keeps the teams manageable so that everyone can be engaged. J. Hutchinson added that 99% of the time the Programs are working as intended and running smoothly, the goal with these materials is to get the loose ends cleaned up for that 1% of the time. He spoke that if the Recreation level of play is done well, everyone will be made to feel welcome and a part of the game.

The Commission encouraged anyone interested to mark up the documents and make suggestions for any changes they wish to see. J. Hutchinson noted the document will always be open to interpretation and will be a living document, always changing, but that the Commission felt it was important to get something in place. They closed by thanking the participants for their time and feedback.

### **Adjournment**

**Meeting Adjourns at 7:30pm**

**Next Meeting Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00pm**

*The Minutes were Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katherine A. Libby, Recording Secretary.  
Pending Approval by the Parks & Recreation Commission*