

Approved 7/8/08

HAMPDEN PARKS & RECREATION
Meeting Minutes June 19, 2008
Special Meeting
Town Hall

Meeting called to order at 8:02pm.

Members Present: Larry Forrest, Bob White, Mark Goossens and Rick Kapinos

Absent: Huck House

Also Present: Jay Ray, Michael and Ginny D'Agostino, Michael and Bill Forrest, Lou Saso, George Flanagan and Laurie Sullivan, John Flynn.

Baseball Incident: Jay Ray, baseball coordinator, received a complaint from Mr. and Mrs. Michael D'Agostino regarding inappropriate physical conduct towards their son by Coach George Flanagan at the June 11th game in Hampden. Jay spoke to the family on the phone and went to their home the next day to discuss this and also contacted the assistant coach, Rick Willis for his input. Jay went to Coach Flanagan's home on June 13th to discuss the incident with him. On Saturday, June 14th Coach Flanagan called the D'Agostino home but did not reach Mr. and Mrs. D'Agostino. He did speak with their son and apologized and sent an email of apology to the parents. Jay reached out to the families of the entire team for any comments with regard to this specific incident. He received several emails and letters back and presented all of his information to the Parks & Recreation Board members for their review.

Mr. and Mrs. D'Agostino came in to the meeting to elaborate on their situation. They had been out for the evening and had not been able to attend the game in question and were quite concerned when they learned from their son of the incident that had taken place. They commended Jay and Mark Goossens for stepping up and trying to get to the bottom of this. Jay noted that when he went to visit the family, Mrs. D'Agostino really questioned her son to make sure they had the correct story.

Michael Forrest, Bill Forrest and Lou Saso came in to the meeting to comment on Coach Flanagan's behavior towards the kids as they see it. They all agreed that he is very good with the kids and said "he does yell and is not a quiet guy" but they never felt that they needed to step in anytime.

Coach Flanagan and Laurie Sullivan came in to the meeting to discuss the incident. Coach Flanagan said that he did confront his player when he came in from the field. He said that he did not push him but that his arm was out to corral him and try to talk to him. He noted that he had his scorebook in one hand and pen in the other. He also stated that he did call the D'Agostino family, the parents were out but he was able to speak to their son and apologized for being rough and overreacting. Mrs. Sullivan added that Coach Flanagan volunteers at Green Meadows School and that the teachers were upset that anyone would think that he could be inappropriate with children. She presented a list of teachers' signatures in support. After reviewing all of the information sent in to Jay and listening to everyone's comments and input, the Board summarized the situation. Three different words have been used: pushed, corralled, and shoved. There were approximately 30 people around at the time, there were no witnesses to this, conflicting stories as to where confrontation took place, one report of hearing yelling near dugouts. There were many positive comments received and two different stories to figure out. The Board recognizes that "something" happened and is concerned enough to take action. Facts are not conclusive and the two assistant coaches did not know that anything happened. The Coaches Code of Conduct was also referred to as the basis for this decision.

- Recommendation from the baseball coordinator: Feels there was a degree of inappropriateness, 1-2 game suspension warranted.
- Recommendations from Board Members:
 - Rick – Conflicting stories received, 1-2 game suspension, continue to evaluate all coaches.
 - Mark – Something occurred, conflicting stories, 1 game suspension.
 - Bob – Something happened, too many inconsistencies, not comfortable with a 1 game suspension.
 - Larry – Believes there was contact, 2 game suspension.

The Board made a finding that there was a violation of the Coaches Code of Conduct by Coach George Flanagan on Wednesday, June 11, 2008 at Memorial Park field. Mark made a motion to accept the finding. Rick seconded. All in favor 4-0.

Rick made a motion to suspend Coach George Flanagan for 2 games based on his violation of the Coaches Code of Conduct. Mark seconded. Three in favor, Bob abstained. Bob would like the record to show that he is in favor of a longer suspension.

A statement with the decision made by the Board and a copy of the Coaches Code of Conduct will be mailed to the D'Agostino Family and Coach George Flanagan. Larry called each of the parties after the meeting and read the decision over the phone to them. Jay will email the parents of the team with the decision.

Mark made a motion to adjourn the meeting for 24 hours at 12:20am. Bob seconded. All in favor and so voted 4-0.

Submitted by Deborah House, Clerk