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TOWN OF NEWTOWN

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

These minutes are subject to the approval of the Parks and Recreation Commission

The Parks and Recreation Commission met Tuesday October 11th, at the Newtown Community Center, 8 Simpson Street, Newtown, CT 06470.

Present: Clinton Depaolo, Aaron Britton, David Payne, Warren Spencer, Vincent Yanni

Absent: Rance Thompson, Jim Parker

Staff: Amy Mangold, Carol Samuelson, and Rose Ann Reggiano

Mr. Depaolo called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Public: George Conklin – Address Unknown

Chris Reuther – 19 Canterbury Lane

Nicholas Strong – 11 Cross Brook Road

TJ Garvin - Address Unknown

Matt Luczak- 4 Baldwin Road

David Stott, Trevor Stott, Ryan Stott and Sheri Stott– 3 River Run Road

Jeffrey Pacuk – 56 Jeremiah Road

Glenn Boyle – 23 Park Lane

Charles Zukowski – 4 Cornfield Ridge Road

Joe Esposito- 30 Mountain Manor Road

Michael Coleman – 42 Currituck Road

Keith Kohlasch – 11 Farmfield Ridge Road

Chris Evans – 12 Diamond Drive

Public Participation:

- Mr. David Stott expressed concerns with Newtown Baseball, see the letter attached.
- Mr. Trevor and Ryan Stott handed in letters about Newtown Baseball for the record, see attached.
- Mr. Glenn Boyle thanked the commission for their support of the bike & trail committee and the work they've put into the Bicycle Park. Mr. Boyle had questions about the extension of the rail trail.
- Mr. Chris Reuther explained that the new Newtown Baseball rule that doesn't allow kids to play AAU in the same season as travel is for the children's safety.

- Mr. George Conklin agreed with Mr. Reuther's sentiments. He said Newtown Baseball is all about the children.
- Mr. Matt Luczak spoke in favor of Newtown Baseball.
- Mr. Keith Kohlasch said he feels the choice for children to play both AAU and Newtown Baseball was taken away from them.
- Mr. Chris Evans spoke in favor of Newtown Baseball.
- Mr. Joe Esposito said playing in both leagues puts the health of the child's arm at risk.
- Ms. Mangold handed a letter in support of Newtown Baseball she received from Mr. Steve Platt for the record. See Attached.
- Ms. Mangold shared the comments of Bronwin and Evan Albert. She said they spoke with Chris Reuther, the new Newtown Baseball President, and have an understanding of the AAU rule but they hope a waiver for players to play in other towns would be considered if they cannot participate in Newtown due to AAU commitments.

Acceptance of Minutes: Mr. Yanni moved to accept the minutes of September 13, 2022. Mr. Spencer 2nd- approved.

Old Business:

Volleyball: Mr. Samuelson shared he is looking into a new, single-poled netting system. He requested to table the discussion until he has received quotes for the new netting.

Bicycle Playground: Ms. Mangold shared that the ARPA committee voted to fund the majority of the playground at \$70,000. She said the other \$10,000 is expected to be fundraised. Ms. Mangold said the Board of Selectman voted in favor of the playground and it now has to go before The Board of Finance and The Legislative Council. Mr. Samuelson suggested revisiting the estimate of the playground to ensure correct funding. Mr. Depaolo agreed.

Dickinson Pavilion Repairs: Mr. Samuelson presented his pavilion cost update, see attached. ARPA is funding \$200,600 in repairs. Mr. Samuelson presented options for \$15,000 more of repairs that would be taken from commission surcharge. He placed emphasis on replacing the pavilion lights and installation of low voltage conduit pull boxes for future wifi/camera installation. There was discussion on what color to make the pavilion and roof. Mr. Samuelson said he will bring color samples to the next meeting.

- Mr. David Payne made a motion to appropriate the amount of \$15,000 from surcharge to purchase new pavilion lighting and the installation of low voltage conduit pull boxes. Mr. Britton seconded. All voted in favor.

Teen Center Repairs: Mr. Samuelson said there is around \$50,000 in the teen center fund but around \$75,000 worth of repairs to the building. There was discussion on the future of the teen

center. Mr. Britton suggested a rebranding as it is often used as a program center. The Commission agreed to continue having the conversation on the teen center's future and purpose.

Updated on CIP: Ms. Mangold handed out a copy of the First Selectman Recommended CIP, see attached. The Parks & Recreation CIP included

- Treadwell Park Playground Replacement 25/26 - \$500,000
- Lake Lillinonah Park Improvements 25/26 - \$500,000
- Rail Trail – Batchelder Park 25/26 - \$1,400,000
- Treadwell Artificial Turf & Lighting 26/27 - \$1,050,000
- Maintenance Yard Improvements 26/27 - \$350,000
- Fairfield Hills Trail Improvement 27/28 - \$350,000

New Business:

Young Life Basketball: Mr. Michael Coleman represented his new business, Young Life Basketball Academy, an AAU basketball league. Mr. Coleman encouraged the commission to visit his website, YLBAhoops.com, to learn about the league. Mr. Yanni asked if he has received a 501-(c) (3) and Mr. Coleman said he is working on it. Mr. Yanni asked if he has staff. Mr. Coleman said he is currently looking for coaches and is willing to help anyone that wants to coach. Mr. Yanni asked how many kids he has signed up for the league. Mr. Coleman said his goal is to launch in the spring of 2023 with 10 players on each team. Mr. Britton asked where the players will play and Mr. Coleman said either NYA or Edmond Town Hall. Mr. Britton asked what age group the league is intended for and Mr. Coleman said 14-18 with the possibility of expanding to middle school down the road. Mr. Depaolo questioned if there are any other AAU affiliates in Newtown and Ms. Mangold said no. Ms. Reggiano shared that finding gym space will be the main issue and that is why she connected Mr. Coleman to NYA. Ms. Mangold suggested running a summer basketball league under Park & Recreation to get his name out, she mentioned they used to have one in the past that was very successful. Mr. Coleman said he will stay in touch and looks forward to having Park & Recreation support.

Eichler's Bathhouse: Mr. Samuelson shared that he met with United Concrete, a company that specializes in pre-cast bathrooms and he was very impressed. Mr. Samuelson said he will have estimates next month but it's looking to be closer to the original \$350,000 quote. Mr. Samuelson explained the bathrooms will utilize a commercial composter because a traditional septic system would limit future improvement plans.

Disc Golf: Ms. Mangold shared that Mr. Rosenthal visited the open space area behind the permanent memorial where they proposed to put a disc golf course and he liked the space. Mr. Sibley confirmed that the space could be used for such recreational purposes. Mr. Rosenthal requested that Ms. Mangold share the idea with the permanent memorial committee to make sure they are comfortable with the proximity. Ms. Mangold said she will reach out after the opening

of the permanent memorial. Ms. Mangold said she wants to keep the topic moving forward to get a commitment for funding.

Correspondence: Ms. Mangold shared a letter from Charles Zukowski that notified her of a fallen tree on Oak View Trail, see attached. She thanked him for his dedication to the bike & trail committee. Ms. Mangold invited the commission and public to the Housatonic Trail Extension Design Concept Presentation that will be held Monday, November 7th at 5:30 pm in the Council Chambers. See the flyer attached. Ms. Mangold read a letter she received from a boy about allowing water guns at Treadwell Pool, see attached.

Chairman's Report: Mr. Depaolo thanked the commission for carrying the September meeting without him.

Director's Report: Ms. Mangold shared the 3rd Annual Scarecrow Contest is going on now through October 24. The Spooktacular Family Fun Event will be on Wednesday, October 26 and the Howl-o-Ween Dog Party will be Sunday, October 29. Ms. Mangold said she had a meeting regarding the tree lighting. Ms. Mangold spoke about putting a granite bench in the cemetery in honor of Diana Johnson, Mr. Samuelson will look into the timeline and Ms. Mangold will talk to the Cemetery Association to confirm if they are permitted to do so. Ms. Mangold said she and Mr. Samuelson are working to merge the cleaning contracts throughout town. Ms. Mangold shared they are looking for 2 part-time front desk assistants.

Assistant Director's Report: Mr. Samuelson shared a tree and plaque was planted in honor of Dan Crusson, the Town's first and only Historian, paid for by the Historic Commission. Mr. Samuelson said Treadwell Pool is covered for the season and he also shared that the recent storm broke a piece of the Eichler's Cove Dock that needs to be replaced for next season.

Adjournment: Mr. Yanni motioned to adjourn. Mr. Warren seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Dear Parks & Rec Commission, Chair Mr. DiPaolo, Director Ms. Mangold, and Director Samuelson!

Thank you Mr. DiPaolo, for the invitation to speak here tonight after I recently reached out to Ms. Mangold to inform her of what I'm hear tonight to speak on. As you might know from my outreach, I am very concerned with the direction recently announced by the Newtown Baseball Club with regard to the Travel Baseball Team selection process and procedures, as announced in their letter of October 5, 2022, delivered to the membership the morning of October 6th. I am prepared tonight to outline my concerns with NBR's.

First, I would like to share my experience with the NBC. My family - wife and 3 children - all moved to Newtown in the summer of 2016, and our first experience with NB was the spring of 2017 when signed up my then 5 year old son Trevor to play his first ever season of rec baseball. At the same time, I volunteered and was chosen to be his rec coach. Over the subsequent years, I've continued to serve as a volunteer coach teaching the game to Trevor and his peers in both the spring and summer seasons. At the same time, I began to regularly attend NBC board meetings, first held in the basement of Edmond Town Hall, when Andy Via was the president. It was during these meetings that I began to learn the inner workings of the baseball program - and the differences between recreation and travel baseball here in town. My consistent meeting attendance soon qualified me as a member in good standing, giving me the right to vote in league issues. When I first became a MIG, there were maybe 13-15 people who had earned MIG status. The balance of power within NB was and currently is tightly controlled by a certain faction of MIGs.

As my son continued to demonstrate aptitude, ability, passion, and a desire to play the game of baseball, I matched his desire with my own level of commitment to developing him and his peers - through asking questions of NB club leadership, and observing decisions and through my own experience with our town program. I also began to learn about how baseball is offered to children in other towns, and through private baseball clubs. My understanding and experience grew the more I asked and researched.

As my son grew older and his abilities advanced, I soon began to realize the recreation program was not providing him with the experience and level of competitiveness he desired. As a result, I asked a representative of the league about travel baseball - where presumably - I'd find a more competitive, higher skilled version of the game than we were getting at the rec level. The representative of the league informed me then that travel baseball was for kids "8 and older" and that "Trevor would need to wait till he was 8." Fast forward to the next season, when at picture day for the league, I first hand saw that kids most of whom were younger than Trevor, and certainly in my opinion possessed less baseball skill and aptitude than my son, were uniformed and in line for their travel team pictures. This lead to a discussion and lots of questions where ultimately it was explained to me that the reason Trevor was not 'chosen' to play travel was because simply "sometimes life is not fair." That was the reason I was given that day as to why other kids younger were on a travel team and not my son. So began my dogged determination to get further involved in understanding how this program operated because clearly it was not based on ability or merits - it seemed to be based simply on who you knew.

Since then, as Ms. Mangold and others who know me can attest, I have made it my mission to ask hard questions of the leaders of NBR, to get ample explanation on the who and the how decisions that are made. I have been the frequent target of disparaging comments by league leaders who become uncomfortable or unwilling to offer reasonable explanations when i have questions. All along, I've continued to volunteer my time as a head or assistant coach to the kids who join and play each spring and fall.

Eventually, my son tried out and was selected to the travel team for his appropriate age group - an age group coached by Coach Jeff Pacuk. My son's first year of travel ball - spring/summer 2020 - was as much of the world was, decimated by the pandemic. That said, Coach Jeff, parents, and league leaders worked hard to

offer as best an experience as was possible, and we had what I'd largely consider a successful season of baseball. During that season, my son's baseball ability and interest expanded, and he expressed an interest in playing and learning more baseball beyond what the town program offered. It led us to explore other options, and so we visited Superior Sports Training complex here in Newtown where we first learned about the opportunities available to us from private, for profit baseball clubs. My son tried out, and was invited to join the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) - affiliated team housed at SST. He would begin training with staff and coaches of SST beginning January 2021. By this time, Trevor once again tried out and was invited to play for his age appropriate NBR travel team, once again coached by Pacuk. As a courtesy to Coach Jeff, I phoned him to advise him of our intentions to train privately, and play competitively, and I inquired at that time if we should be aware of any impact that playing AAU might have on his ability to play for Newtown. Jeff shared the only requirement was that he commit to playing in the rec baseball program in addition to the travel program, and that he play in 50% of his rec games. This expectation that travel players play rec is to preserve and uphold the quality of the recreation baseball program for all kids in town, and it's a standard rule I generally support. Trevor trained and competed with his AAU team, he signed up and practiced and played 100% of his games with his rec team, and he went on to practice and play for Coach Pacuk in all the required practices and games for the Newtown travel team - - all without issue or any concerns being expressed.

It is important to note, however, that our season came to a disappointing end after 4 families demonstrated a lack of commitment to the team by choosing vacation over the team during the all important and pinnacle event for Newtown Travel . . the Cal Ripken District and State Tournament. The travel team and its players are selected for the sole purpose of competing in this event. The decision by 4 families to choose vacation over team meant that the team was left with only 8 available players to play in a scheduled tournament game, resulting in a forfeit, and the end of the teams run in that state tournament. This conclusion was immensely disappointing to my son, who, alongside all of his teammates, saw their tournament run come to an end so unexpectedly. Despite the disappointment, the team continued on and continued playing the rest of their remaining games during the summer season.

My son continued to choose baseball over alternative sporting opportunities like football, basketball, golf, or soccer - despite ample interest and skill. However, In addition to baseball, my son has pursued competitive competition in BMX bike racing, as well as skiing during the winter seasons. We are very aware of the risks of injury associated with other sports, as my son actually experienced a broken arm from an accident during a BMX bike race.

Last fall, during Oct 2021, my son once again tried out for the Newtown travel baseball team for his age, and he was once again selected and invited to play on the team. However, this time, he chose not to accept that invitation. The rationale for his decision was the following:

1. The better opportunities for development offered by other programs;
2. Our families plan to go on a family vacation over the July 4th holiday - which is the timing of the CR tournament I previously mentioned; and
3. A general dissatisfaction and feeling about fair play, adequate meaningful player skill development, and leadership concerns with the head coach of the team.

Instead, my son continued to play and train with his AAU program, and additionally, I and others created and started a team of players from other towns for the sole purpose of playing competitive summer baseball - which we did, successfully.

Which brings to the current issue before us now:

I was delighted to hear the election of a new president for NBR in Chris Reuther. I was, and continue to be, eager to meet him and learn more about his planned intentions for our program. I was especially impressed

and delighted by the words he used that baseball in Newtown would be about the kids - not coaches, parents, the board, etc - because this is most definitely exactly what is needed for the program based on my perceived lack of that focus under past league leadership. This perception stems from countless hours of attending leading meetings and hearing the discussions and how the focus was on coaches of travel teams and their planned intentions for the season. It was NEVER lost on me that all the discussion was from men who assumed it was their right to choose and decide the baseball hopes and dreams of kids all over town.

My delight over our new president quickly turned to foul, however, upon reading the recently updated procedures and rules for the upcoming 2023 Newtown Travel baseball program. In a nutshell, this document and it's included policies takes EVERYTHING away from the kids wanting to play baseball for the town and puts EVERYTHING into the hands of travel coaches and other league 'insiders', also known as travel team assistant coaches. This document (and the policies and procedures contained therein) was developed and implemented in secret - without any public or stakeholder discussion, essentially written, approved and distributed behind a set of closed doors by a secret, and biased group of individuals who hold presumably hold 100% of the power and control over the operations, policies, and procedures of the program. This document was delivered to the programs participants WITHOUT mention during the public meeting held 36 hours prior to it's distribution, and it was crafted after I personally requested an answer of league leadership during the June meeting as to whether such rules included in this letter were being considered. I was told emphatically the answer was NO, by individuals who signed the letter. No further discussion was held with me, or any other known stakeholder, about the contents of this document and the rule changes proposed prior to its distribution, and certainly not during the public meeting held two nights prior.

Please allow me to put forth more facts . . .

1. During the June 2022 monthly meeting, when the opportunity arose for questions to be presented from the floor, I asked league leaders a very specific and direct question . . . that questions was "is NBR considering the implementation of a rule essentially barring a child who plays AAU baseball from trying out and playing Newtown travel baseball?" The answer from league representatives that day was an emphatic and clear "NO", particularly from one of the now named Co Directors of Travel Program. By the mere asking of the question, league officials were informed of my interest and concern over this issue, and that if ever that the leagues position changed, it would be of great interest to me.
2. The July, August, and September NBR monthly meetings were not attended by myself. The meeting minutes from those meetings do not reflect that there was any further discussion about this issue, and other acquaintances who might have attended did not make mention to me of any further discussion.
3. The October meeting agenda was sent at 750pm on Tuesday October 6th, a mere 40 minutes prior to the start of the actual meeting. On the agenda that evening was a simple and basic mention of a committee report on "Travel TryOuts". During the meeting, there was a basic and standard update provided by one of the two named Co-Directors of Travel Program with regard to the dates, times, locations of upcoming tryouts, and the usual call for volunteer helpers with the process. No mention or discussion of new rules or procedures for "travel team selection process." Additionally, in the meeting, the new board of directors were 'elected and appointed' their positions, notable for the fact that Mr. Chris Reuther would be assuming the league's highest position as league president, replacing George Conklin.
4. The following morning, October 5th at 930am, new president Reuther distributed a letter to program participants introducing himself. Notable in the letter is his point that "this league from 4U to 18U is about the kids. Every decision we make is for each of our 400+ kids that play recreation or travel baseball. It's not about the parents, grandparents, coaches, board." I found his comments refreshing, and filled with optimism, and I personally responded with my congratulations, and invitation for Chris and I to meet in the days or weeks to meet and 'share ideas, thoughts, etc' for the betterment of the program. We even scheduled a time and place which was to have been at this very time, but a much different place. I'll further mention that at no time did Chris mention the action and decision that was to follow . . .

5. On the morning of October 6th at 912am, league members and participants received an email with the subject "NBR Travel Update for Parents and Coaches", distributed by the league secretary - a copy of that letter is attached. This letter is dated October 5th 2022, and it goes to outline how NBR - in preparation for next years' spring and summer baseball season - wanted to explain how families in Newtown can experience the baseball program thru the rec and travel options - but it generally spoke entirely on the process for travel team selection. Basically, the letter outlined how kids would be chosen for participation on the travel team, and how adult parents could be considered for being appointed to coach a travel team.
6. The letter goes on to outline the "3 key tenants for travel team (player) selection":
 - a. **#1 - You must register and physically tryout - Tryouts are 1/3 of the review process [Players are evaluated on a) Throwing ability b) Catching ability c) Hitting ability d) Hustle & Attitude].**
 - b. **#2 - Previous playing experience and performance as a teammate.**
 - c. **#3 - Coaches decisions, not just travel coaches, but we will be getting input from all rec coaches that have seen the travel player play and have coached that player.**
7. As one could easily surmise from these 3 key tenants, these decision criteria are all subjective and stand to be interpreted by the coaches. No evaluation of these points are made by external parties - and they certainly have the possibility to be influenced through any number of various biases by people involved in the process. Essentially, NBR is crafting a policy that gives ANY reason they want to justify inclusion or exclusion of a child for the team.
8. The letter does not stop there, however, as essentially two more additional points are highlighted under the heading "Player Tip #1 and Player Tip #2":
 - a. **Player Tip #1: If a player is unable to perform physically (i.e., injured) but wants to be considered for tryouts the parents must reach out to the Co-Directors of the Travel Program directly to discuss the situation.**
 - b. **✓ Player Tip #2: If your child is selected for Newtown Travel Baseball then they are not allowed to play AAU concurrently in the spring or summer season. Concurrent AAU play would be allowed in the fall when we don't have Newtown travel teams and its typically only recreation baseball.**
9. Regarding Player Tip #1 - Here's where things get personal, interesting enough. During the league meeting on Tuesday evening, during the discussion of "travel tryouts" I asked a question of the league about players trying out who are currently injured? Interesting that a special clause was included, with absolutely know direction on how the league would handle the issue. It's also interesting in that this issue is not a new issue before the board. My child is not the first child to be injured during fall sports (Football, Soccer) and therefore physically unable to try out, yet, as witnessed in the past, said injury had no effect on the child's ultimate inclusion in the team. As of Monday October 10th, the league has still not issued guidance on how to handle a child who is injured when it comes to tryouts - leaving us in the dark.
10. Regarding Play Tip #2 - Here's where it gets even more personal. There are probably over 2 dozen children of Newtown currently affiliated with a baseball team considered AAU or otherwise. Every one of those children - if this policy is allowed to stand - will be essentially barred from playing alongside their friends and/or peers for the right to represent their town. Newtown baseball has absolutely no right to tell a parent where and for whom their child can play baseball. This action is punitive, and is being enacted out of resentment that children and parents are seeking better coaching, and a better experience than the one being provided to them by NBR. This action is detrimental to the children of our town, and is exclusionary by definition. Children should not be penalized for pursuing alternative development opportunities whether that be in education, music, arts, dance or athletics or ANYTHING that enables a child to develop and grow themselves.

The exclusion of "AAU baseball" is a horrible decision for Newtown baseball. If allowed to exist, you are forcing kids that love the game to choose a side. This policy is a solution that is seeking a problem, because in reality, it likely only affects a few kids, but one of those kids is my son. The idea of passing this off as a 'safety' issue is so far from reality. President Reuther's only explanation to me was that this was a matter of safety, and implementing such a rule in the interest of player safety - but this rationale was not explained in the letter as you can clearly see. I am certain there are other reasons under consideration by the coach or coaches who put forth this letter . . . namely, the coaches' disinterest in communicating openly with the player and the player's parent, or the collaborating with the other coaches for whom the player might play for. I'd love to know the facts: actual number of families who participate in both, but NBR would have no real reason to know this information, because frankly, is it really any NBR's business where and when my kid plays baseball or any other activity he might participate in. I can tell you that when my child played AAU baseball and Newtown Travel, there were absolutely NO issues or conflicts, and anyone who says differently is simply making stories to justify the narrative of the story they want to tell. I know my kid, his abilities, his schedule, and we are perfectly capable of making decisions with him and for him. This rule is wrong in so many ways.

If Newtown Baseball is concerned about Newtown Baseball, they would be embracing the kids who want to enhance their development through private, outside coaching and training opportunities. Kids who play AAU baseball do so because they love baseball and want to improve, and they are fortunate to have a family that can enable that opportunity. More fielding, more hitting, more coaching from very highly qualified individuals is a great thing for developing players. These coaches are real coaches, not dad's pretending to be coaches. Better players are better for Newtown Baseball – this elevates our level of play at both the Rec and Travel levels. If we are truly concerned about safety and pitch count, which I agree with entirely, we should just say that we at Newtown Baseball will abide by the PitchSmart Guidelines, or some variation, and that this metric includes ALL pitching for ANY team. We would need to put some trust in the parents here and have a dialogue with the area AAU programs, but this would solve everything. We can certainly ask players to prioritize Newtown Travel for pitching if their coaches plan to pitch them in games. I don't think you'd have any resistance here. I'm sure the AAU coaches would love to work with our program for the benefit of all, and I'm certain that they do not want to hurt these children by overthrowing them. Instead, they want to develop them. That includes watching out for their safety. I would argue that more skilled players, around the field, are much safer than unskilled. These players playing AAU ball are generally more skilled, and can better react to balls – skill will reduce injuries. Many neighboring towns embrace AAU ball as a way to enhance their programs. See Fairfield Little League, among others, for a good example. We should have an open dialogue with our local AAU programs to discuss, before implementing this policy which is detrimental to baseball in the area. How far should we go here if this is truly about safety? Should we exclude all baseball activity outside of sanctioned Newtown teams? What about the kid who throws 50 pitches at home with his dad every day? Should we ban that? Is it OK that our son plays competitive BMX bike racing, or skis during the winter/spring ski season? What if he breaks his arm while BMX racing or skiing. . . should he be banned from doing those things? Should he stop Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts? As the Cubmaster of Pack 270, I can tell you with certainty and fact that sometimes we participate in age appropriate activities that can be dangerous, like campfires and smores which require sharp and pointy sticks. Will NBR require that travel baseball players choose between scouts and travel baseball? Should we exclude the kids from playing lacrosse at the same time as baseball? A shot on goal on the Lacrosse field uses a similar motion as a pitch. Maybe we should stop kids from playing multiple sports in general and put them in a bubble during baseball season? As you can see these examples are all crazy. No, we should not be governing what activities a kid can participate in. That is up to the family to decide. These examples are no crazier than keeping a kid who loves baseball from practicing and playing more baseball and improving. But why this rule, and why now, from NBR? Because NBR has no interest in barring children who engage in any of those other social or athletic activities . . . instead, they are interested in barring kids ONLY the activity that is their direct and most feared predator . . . the private, club baseball programs most often governed by AAU. Why is that? Because NBR wants full and total control of which

kids they can choose to play on their teams. At the end of the day, this is ALL about the adults who coach and serve on the board and run the program, and it is an act that has the full intention of penalizing and preventing kids from playing with their friends and peers for their town. That is what this issue is about.

NBR must NOT be permitted to go forth with implementing this rule, and instead, NBR should be working with their customers to discuss ways to improve the program as a whole. Let's start by having Travel Coaches actually count and maintain pitch counts for pitchers, something the past president noted in his departing comments IS NOT ACTUALLY happening in league travel games. How do i know this to be true? Because I am a travel coach, and after coaching over 20 travel games this past summer, not a single opposing coach could confirm the count of their pitcher or mine. We can get better at this to protect the health and arms of kids. But also let's not forget, that the Pitcher position is just one of 9 fielding positions in the game of baseball. The answer here lies with having more open dialogue between travel team coaches, parents, players and with our AAU programs and come to an understanding on the need to find and strike the balance of our Newtown program for the kids. Let's do better. If travel coaches had the ability and willingness to develop their players' abilities around pitching, there wouldn't be an issue b/c you'd have plenty of pitchers to choose from. But, let's get rid of and block the kids who are actually working hard at improving their baseball skills . . . that is most certainly not the right answer to this problem. . . that does not exist.

Thank you for hearing me. I know this is a lot of information, and the issue before you is complex. But this can be solved, much like towns all over CT have found ways to balance the needs and wants of kids, the prevalence of AAU baseball programs, and the preservation of the sanctity, tradition, and pride of town baseball.

I very much regret my being here tonight. I would much rather be out playing catch or wiffle ball with my boys, out for a walk, but instead I am here, advocating for the right for my boys - and frankly all kids in Newtown - now and in the future - to keep their right to play baseball where they want. My ask of the Parks and Rec commission, Ms. Mangold, and Mr. Samuelson is to condemn these recent actions of Newtown Baseball Club, and to prevent their procedures from being implemented immediately so that in the end, every child in Newtown has ample, equal opportunity to play baseball and represent their town without any type of punitive and repugnant interference from these adults who are working so hard to take, keep, and maintain ALL the power and control over the program that oversees a game meant to be played by kids - just like President Reuther suggested should be the case in his recent welcome letter.

Thank you,
David Stott
Newtown, CT

Hello, my name is Ryan Stott. I am 7 years old, and will be able to play 7u baseball next year for Newtown. I've been watching my brother Trevor's baseball games for as long as I can remember, and he and I play baseball at home all the time. He teaches me what he knows about pitching and hitting and catching. Now, I love baseball too. I have been on Coach Aaron Carlson's team for the past two seasons, and before that Coach Diaspro. I love my coaches because we have fun when we practice and learn about baseball, and especially when I play games on the weekend. I also like baseball in Newtown because I get to play with my friends and other kids who I know from school and from scouts and other places around town. I think I'm pretty good at baseball, but I know I can get better. My brother plays baseball for Rage, and he also has played for Newtown. I think I want to play at Rage AND Newtown because I love baseball, and kids at Rage look really good because they practice hard and play games with real good coaches like Coach Nick and Coach Manny. Sometimes they let me practice with them and even sometimes I get to be bat boy at their games.

When I am older, I would love to play travel baseball for Newtown and play against other towns with my friends. I think I also might want to play for Rage because they have great coaches who can teach me to hit better, throw better, and pitch better. I want to make that decision with my mom and dad, and not have NBR force me choose.

Please don't make rules to be made where I can't play baseball wherever I want. Baseball is a game for kids. Kids should play where they want without having adults who don't know me or my family force me to choose between getting really good and playing for places like Rage, or playing with my friends and classmates for Newtown. This rule is not fair to me or my friends who love baseball and want to play more baseball when we are older.

Thank you,
Ryan Stott

Received 10.11.22 HF

Hello and Good evening,

My name is Trevor Stott. I am 11 years old, and I love baseball. Next year, I am eligible to play 11u baseball for Newtown in the rec and travel program, and I'm here tonight to fight for the right to do just that because I recently learned that NBR is trying to take that right away from me, and kids like me.

I began playing baseball for Newtown in 2017 when I was just 5 years old. My dad was my coach, and I got to make new friends which was important because we had just moved to town. Over the years, I have made many friendships while playing baseball. It's fun to play with and against friends I go to school with. I love practicing and playing baseball, which I do pretty much year round at home, and I love seeing my skills get better every year and every season that I play.

After a few years, my dad and I agreed that it wasn't a great idea for him to be my coach because he would say that he needed to coach all the kids, even the ones who might not have been as good as me. But I still wanted to get better, and I wanted to practice baseball even when the season was over and that's when my dad took me to SST and introduced me to the coaches at Rage Baseball - which is one mile from my house here in Newtown.

At Rage, I was able to practice baseball all winter long - working on my hitting, catching, and throwing skills. I would practice for two hours each weekend all winter working on my skills and learning situational baseball from my coaches. Then, once fields were ready in spring, I'd continue to practice and play games with my Rage team. All this baseball practice made me a better player. I also played Newtown rec baseball with my friends and the dad coaches. I also made the travel team when I was 8. I always wanted to play travel baseball b/c it was real baseball, and better than what we played in rec. In rec, dads would pitch. There would be no umpires and we wouldn't keep score. When I would hit a bomb, I would usually only be able to go to first base, even though I probably could have got a home run. I really didn't like playing rec because I wanted to play real baseball, but I had to if I wanted to play travel. When I played for my Rage team, I never missed a practice for my Newtown rec team, and I never missed a practice or game for the travel team. This is because I am dedicated to my team, and my parents are dedicated to helping me juggle all of my responsibilities in addition to baseball. Baseball is the only sport I play competitively even though I think I could play basketball or football if I wanted to.

I think it's unfair that Newtown baseball is suggesting rules where boys who play for AAU teams like Rage can't then play for Newtown travel. This forces me to make a decision. I would have to decide whether I want to practice and play at a higher level of competition at Rage, or play with my friends and classmates from Newtown in the rec and travel program.

I have a lot of pride playing for Newtown, and I was proud to represent our town in the district and state tournament. I was very sad and disappointed when my team had to forfeit during our state tournament because some families went on vacation and we did not have enough players to play our game. Even though our team forfeited, my dad and I continued to go to the games and watch the teams from other towns play against each other. But I wanted to be out there, because it was my goal to be a baseball state champion for Newtown.

11 year old kids should not be forced to make a choice between practicing with professional coaches to get better, and earning a spot to represent our town and play alongside my friends and classmates. I want the option and choice to play with my friends for Newtown AND play and learn with my teammates and coaches at Rage. I know that I've become a better baseball player because of all the time I've spent practicing and playing with Rage. I believe I demonstrated to Coach Jeff when I was on his travel team that I was a better pitcher and player because I got excellent coaching and skill development at Rage. When I was on Newtown Baseball, my volunteer coaches did their best at coaching all of us kids because they were all dads with kids on the team...but none of them were professionals, and that includes my dad! And never during my time on Newtown baseball, did I learn as much from the coaches as I've learned from the coaches at Rage. I go to Rage to get better and learn - just like kids who take lessons in music, or dance, or art, or ANY other kid who plays a sport and practices hard outside of their regular team.

I do not want to see NBR put this rule in place. I want the opportunity and choice to choose which teams I play and when. Please do not allow NBR to make this rule - it is unfair to me, and all the other kids from Newtown who play AAU baseball, whether it's with Rage, Technique Tigers, All Star, Clubhouse, Grind, CT Gators, Wolfpack or all the other great AAU programs who are teaching kids how to play baseball at a high level. In fact, some of my teammates at Rage were on the Fairfield Little League that almost made it to the LL World Series. That team was so good BECAUSE of how much they practice and play at Rage baseball, and I want to have that same opportunity for myself and for all my friends who love baseball as much as me and are dedicated to learning and getting better at the game.

Please do not allow NBR to make this rule.

Thank you for hearing me,
Trevor Stott



Amy Mangold <amy.mangold@newtown-ct.gov>

[Newtown CT] Newtown Babe Ruth Baseball (Sent by Steve Platt, steveplatt@att.net)

1 message

Contact form at Newtown CT <cmsmailer@civicplus.com>

Sun, Oct 9, 2022 at 10:11 PM

Reply-To: steveplatt@att.net

To: amangold <amy.mangold@newtown-ct.gov>

Hello amangold,

Steve Platt (steveplatt@att.net) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.newtown-ct.gov/user/473/contact>) at Newtown CT.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.newtown-ct.gov/user/473/edit>.

Message:

To Whom it May Concern,

This email is in response to NBR's new rule limiting outside baseball activities when participating on a travel team. I am wholeheartedly for this change and will explain my stance while including examples as to why this change is welcomed.

There has been a lot of noise on Facebook, mostly by one particular party, who is saying this new rule is unfair to children and parents who choose to gain "additional training and higher competition". There is literally no restrictions to obtain additional training in the form of private lessons and in fact I would say anyone within NBR would encourage that. The travel baseball team is not intended to provide one on one instruction to a player, it is meant to compete at the highest possible level with players within an age range. If they choose to get additional instruction to be a better player no one would ever deny that.

The issue comes when they are playing for another organization. As much as people will claim there will not be conflicts and it can always be worked out as AAU knows and understands the town comes first, this simply is not easy to monitor and know is factual. I can provide a perfect example where a child on a travel team played in an AAU doubleheader on an extremely hot day, then arrived to a travel game after and we were told he still had pitches left to give us. Not only was this child exhausted and not able to compete at his highest level, how are we as coaches supposed to take the word of a parent as to the status of this player? There are no checks and balances as to when and how much they have played in a given time. I understand a parent can say that this is their decision, but ultimately NBR needs to put the child first and not leave this up to the parents discretion.

These are 8-12 year olds, playing on a District team is about experiences with your peers and playing with pride for your town. If these things aren't enough for you, then maybe the program isn't meant for you. I think if anyone had a private conversation with a child about this without parents opinions being introduced to them, they would take that experience over "additional training and better competition".

I implore you to support NBR's stance and understand this stance is also with the majority of those who have children in the travel program.

Thank you.

YLBA

Received 10.11.22 HF

Meeting -

MAINTENANCE
OPERATIONS FACILITY
2 TRADES LANE
NEWTOWN, CT 06470
TEL. (203) 270-4340
FAX (203) 270-4333



CARL SAMUELSON
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PARKS

TOWN OF NEWTOWN

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT PAVILION COST UPDATE

1. Renovate existing 1961 wood structure including new standing seam metal roof, plywood roof decking, and 16 4"x6" support columns. Work to include all disposal of all demo and construction related materials. \$152,000
2. Replace rotted ridge beam. \$ 2,600
3. Install new 100 Amp subpanel and associated outlets throughout structure including transformer and grounding.. \$16,000
4. Paint entire wood structure. \$ 9,000
5. Construct or place pre-fab utility/electrical closet adjacent to pavilion. \$ 6,000
6. Bathroom Roof repair: Repair existing bathroom roof, eliminating sky lights and repairing deck rot. Color match pavilion roof (12 yr warrantee) \$15,000

TOTAL FOR ARPA FUNDING: \$200,600

Options: Funding through surcharge or future budget consideration.

Lights: Replace existing failing lights with vandal proof high bay led fixtures. \$ 9,000

Installation of low voltage conduit/pull boxes for future wifi/camera installation \$ 6,000

Fans: Add \$12,000 For large area vandal resistant fans. \$12,000

Wifi: Add \$8000 for low voltage wiring and equipment. \$ 8000

15,000
from
commission
surcharge

Cost derived from professional estimates and quotes. The bulk of work/cost estimate is from Tremco. Tremco is part of a recognized bidding consortium who has done prior work in Town.

9/18/2022

TOWN OF NEWTOWN
FIRST SELECTMAN RECOMMENDED CIP - (2023 - 2024 TO 2027 - 2028)

2023 - 2024 (YEAR ONE)			Proposed Funding			
	Dept.	Amount Requested	Bonding	Grants	General Fund	Other
Capital Road Program	PW	3,050,000			3,050,000	
Bridge Replacement Program	PW	600,000	600,000			
Multi-Purpose Building Electrical/Mechanical/HVAC	PW	200,000	200,000			
Municipal Center - Roof Remediation & Replacement	PW	1,550,000	1,550,000			
Replacement of Fire Apparatus	FIRE	1,085,000	600,000			485,000
Town Match - Grants (contingency)	ECON DEV	200,000				200,000
Library HVAC	LIB	800,000	800,000			
TOTALS	>>>>>>>	7,485,000	3,750,000	-	3,050,000	685,000
2024 - 2025 (YEAR TWO)			Proposed Funding			
	Dept.	Amount Requested	Bonding	Grants	General Fund	Other
Capital Road Program	PW	3,100,000			3,100,000	
Town Match - Grants (contingency)	ECON DEV	200,000				200,000
TOTALS	>>>>>>>	3,300,000		-	3,100,000	200,000
2025 - 2026 (YEAR THREE)			Proposed Funding			
	Dept.	Amount Requested	Bonding	Grants	General Fund	Other
Capital Road Program	PW	3,150,000			3,150,000	
Bridge Replacement Program	PW	600,000	600,000			
Truck Washing Station (design)	PW	50,000				50,000
PW Site & Salt Storage Improvements (1 OF 2)	PW	50,000				50,000
Replacement of Fire Apparatus	FIRE	825,000	825,000			
Building Remediation / Demo / Campus Infrastructure	FHA	2,000,000	2,000,000			
Town Match - Grants (contingency)	ECON DEV	200,000				200,000
Sidewalk Program	ECON DEV	500,000				500,000
Edmond Town Hall Building Renovations	ETH	530,000	530,000			
Library Parking Lot / Sidewalks	LIB	600,000	600,000			
Treadwell Park Playground Replacement	P & R	500,000	500,000			
Lake Lillinonah Park Improvements	P & R	500,000				500,000
Rail Trail - Batchelder Park	P & R	1,400,000		1,400,000		
TOTALS	>>>>>>>	10,905,000	5,055,000	1,400,000	3,150,000	1,300,000
2026 - 2027 (YEAR FOUR)			Proposed Funding			
	Dept.	Amount Requested	Bonding	Grants	General Fund	Other
Capital Road Program	PW	3,200,000			3,200,000	
Bridge Replacement Program	PW	600,000	600,000			
PW Site & Salt Storage Improvements (2 OF 2)	PW	800,000	600,000			
Truck Washing Station	PW	550,000	550,000			
Replacement of Fire Apparatus	FIRE	845,000	845,000			
Treadwell Artificial Turf & Lighting	P & R	1,050,000	250,000			800,000
Maintenance Yard Improvements	P & R	350,000	350,000			
Building Remediation / Demo / Campus Infrastructure	FHA	2,000,000	2,000,000			
Town Match - Grants (contingency)	ECON DEV	200,000				200,000
TOTALS	>>>>>>>	9,395,000	5,195,000	-	3,200,000	1,000,000
2027 - 2028 (YEAR FIVE)			Proposed Funding			
	Dept.	Amount Requested	Bonding	Grants	General Fund	Other
Capital Road Program	PW	3,250,000			3,250,000	
Bridge Replacement Program	PW	600,000	600,000			
Replacement of Fire Apparatus	FIRE	865,000	865,000			
Fairfield Hills Trail Improvement	P & R	350,000	250,000	100,000		
Building Remediation / Demo / Campus Infrastructure	FHA	3,000,000	3,000,000			
Edmond Town Hall Building Renovations	ETH	425,000	425,000			
Town Match - Grants (contingency)	ECON DEV	200,000				200,000
TOTALS	>>>>>>>	8,690,000	5,140,000	100,000	3,250,000	200,000
Appropriated						
GRAND TOTALS		39,775,000	19,140,000	1,500,000	15,750,000	3,385,000



Amy Mangold <amy.mangold@newtown-ct.gov>

FYI - New Fallen Tree on Oakview Trail, Oct. 8, 2022

1 message

Charles A. Zukowski <caz@columbia.edu>

Sun, Oct 9, 2022 at 7:36 PM

To: Amy Mangold <amy.mangold@newtown-ct.gov>

Cc: Charles Foster <chaz57@icloud.com>, Glenn Boyle <gbmicrosoft1@gmail.com>

Hi Amy,

I'm not sure who to send this to, but I wanted to report that a fairly large tree recently fell across the Oakview Trail (see attached photo and map with a red X at the location, about 1400 feet from the entrance kiosk). The Oakview Trail is the one that starts across the street from the back entrance of the High School. Hikers can walk over and under the fallen tree, but it looks a bit precarious, and is likely beyond what us bike & trail committee volunteers can safely remove or stabilize with our limited tools and expertise. Feel free to forward this along to anyone who might be able to help.

Thanks!

Charles (Z)

P.S. The Bike and Trails Committee is looking forward to seeing that presentation from Streetplans about the Housatonic Rail Trail Extension. Rob Sibley said recently at an AI's Trail meeting that that might be happening soon.

On Fri, Sep 16, 2022 at 10:13 AM Amy Mangold <amy.mangold@newtown-ct.gov> wrote:

Thank you both and thank you for attending the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

I wanted to answer your question on the name of the company working on the Rail Trail extension plan grant: they are Streetplans and the project is called Housatonic Rail Trail Extension

I will be sure to let you know when they are ready for their presentation to The Town. ;)))))

Best wishes with the trail clean up.

Amy

On Fri, Sep 16, 2022 at 10:08 AM Charles A. Zukowski <caz@columbia.edu> wrote:

Yes, thanks! I still have quite a few old copies of that form left over, and I can bring those as backup. - Charles

On Fri, Sep 16, 2022 at 9:50 AM Charles Foster <chaz57@icloud.com> wrote:

Thank you Glenn!

Chaz

Sent from my iPhone

> On Sep 16, 2022, at 9:42 AM, Glenn Boyle <gbmicrosoft1@gmail.com> wrote:

>

>

> Using the forms you provided, I created this word document for use at our Saturday event.

>

> Please let me know if you have any issues with it. I plan to bring a dozen and a half copies with me at 10am this Saturday morning, to the Old Farm Rd Kiosk (aka Deep Brook Kiosk), unless we find out waivers are no longer needed, or our expected participation exceeds 18.

>

> Glenn

>

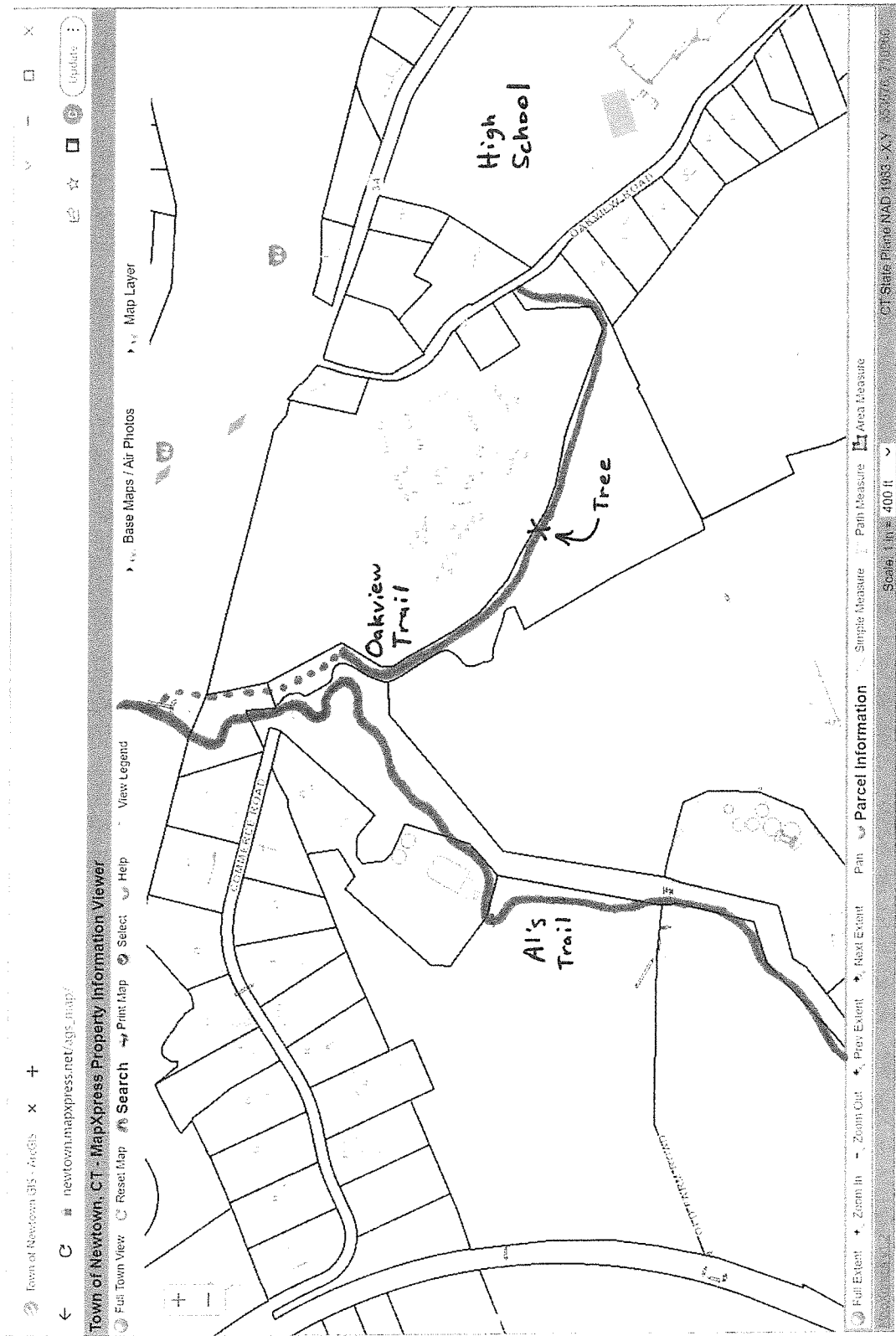
> By the way, the Community Center (CC) meeting room is now reserved for us every third Wednesday night of the month at 7pm for our Committee meetings, starting with September 21, 2022, next Wednesday. The meeting room is in the southeast wing, so when walking in the main entrance to the CC, turn left. The room is about halfway down the hallway.

>

>

> <Waiver of Town Liability Bike & Trails Committee 2022.docx>





Housatonic Trail Extension

Active Transportation Project
Design Concept Presentation

Hosted by
Newtown Parks and Recreation
and Land Use Agencies

Presented by Streetplans
STREETPLANS

Monday, November 7th
530 PM

**Newtown Municipal Center,
Council Chambers**

*Enter on Simpson Street, Newtown, CT
for more information call 203-270-4340*



Dear Newtown Parks and Rec,

I am here to say this: water guns aren't considered rough-housing.

To start, rough-housing includes the following: wrestling, tackling, and harmful play. Water guns aren't harmful. In reality, the worst thing that can happen is if the water gets in someone's eye. But, most of the pool wears goggles anyway.

Also, everyone's gonna get wet at the pool. So water guns aren't really gonna do much.

Oh, and water guns are found everywhere, so if one place doesn't allow them, people will go somewhere where they are okay. That's really not good for business.

So in the grand scheme of things, water guns should be allowed at the pool.

Sincerely,

Ben