

Westport Soccer Association
Meeting Minutes, November 6th 2008

The monthly meeting of the Westport Soccer Association was held on November, 6h, 2008 in Room 201 at the Westport Town Hall commencing at 7:30 pm. Please see the attached list of attendees.

Alex Anvari, Loren Benjamin, Larry Berman, Michael Byrne, Robert Casey, Alan Doran, Tracy Fincher, Mark Gudis, George Kindel, Mark Koenig, MJ Liu, Megan Loffredo, Wes Malowitz, Stuart McCarthy, Jane Orlin, Stephen Rowland, Jeff Boley

Mickey Kydes, Bill Wittaker

Mercedes Arensberg, Tom Beusse, Tara Brownlee, Rich Chappo, Keith Evans, Doreen Fiolek, Carlos Garcia, Marianne Goodell, Ned Hickok, Larry Hoy, Elaine Marino, Jan Mello, Eve Pensak, Deborah Slocum Root, Marshal Root, Paul & Marguirite Rossi, Chloe Rosenfield, Robert Rosenfield, George Thompson, Andrea Vebell, Mary Walsh Rich Zeldes

1. The minutes from the October 14th meeting and the September meeting were approved.
2. Interim President's Report – Wes Malowitz highlighted the meeting format for the night and highlighted the issues for the meeting.
 - MKSE coach leave of absence due to illness, outpouring of support from WSA families
 - 8 teams in SWD playoffs, Boys and girls U-12 State Cup success
 - Congratulate Staples boys FCAIC title and pursuit of State Tournament continues tomorrow
 - Congratulate Staples girls FCIA participation and two winning State Tournament rounds
 - We are hosting SWD U-13 this weekend. We need field marshals and trying to get ball girls. We are trying to get a tent to use. Robby to coordinate with Paul Rossi. Stuart assured that fields are in top shape. Larry Berman to double check flags. Weather policy is on SWD home page, schedule is posted on our site as well.
 - An unsigned anonymous petition was submitted to the executive WSA board. The method this petition was submitted, rather than asking for time at the monthly meeting, was irresponsible. None the less, these issues will be addressed after a board discussion at the end of tonight's meeting. There are many more attendees at the meeting tonight than usual and involvement by all WSA members is encouraged.

3. 3a. Mike Byrne reports current payments to all refs, coaches completed. We hired a new accountant, and a book keeper. She will create a detailed electronic record for us to break things down more specifically. Our fiscal year ends June 30th. We have filed an extension for tax return but we are confident we may finish the work needed to be done prior to Dec. 31st.
3b. Alex Anvari reports an extremely good league season. The roster size of 5-6 boys needs to be addressed for Spring. A draft survey has been submitted to WSA board to distribute. Robby Casey and others suggested splitting up 3/4 boys and girls teams to individual grade levels and see if they want to play rec plus. We suggested we add a specific question about this in the survey. We looked at numbers and we could make fields situation accommodate this increase. We will discuss how this will effect Spring season if necessary. Robby noted that Rowayton only does rec plus for one season so there is history. Continue to make sure young refs have our support in all field conflicts. Communicate this to rec parents.
3c. Mickey asked if all board members had seen Gabe's report on his rec observations. Overall good. Some issues to discuss, CMS back safety/ fire lane parking....Stuart McCarthy will help us staff the parking lot to get people in good habits. WSA to follow up. Travel practices were moved up for darkness. Friday practice will be the last one and end at 5 b/c of darkness. Winter practices are up on website. Winter high school tryouts are up as well. We really want to get 2 girls teams. WSA to inquire if Cheryl has capability to identify girls in high school age groups to send a specific message to. Ask coach Woog and coach Scott to promote when their seasons are over. MK will guarantee finding coaches for this HS winter season. MKSE has meeting set up with travel directors to discuss season. Mid-season coaches evaluations will be reviewed at that time. We will have supplemental try outs for travel teams based on the team numbers. This will not be done until January and will be posted on the website.
3d. Jane Orlin reported that the travel season is primarily over. We did have a U-9/10 coach with a serious health issue. There was a large outpouring of support from WSA parents to him. Discussion about communication concerning health issue will happen later. Winter practices are up on website. Success of all girls teams making SWD playoffs highlighted.
3e. Mark Koenig and Robby Casey wanted to give SPECIAL THANKS to MJ for her tremendous coordination of refs and fields. We need to do more ref recruiting in high school. Ref. training dates going out soon. We have successful program need to continue to support our young refs. Robby and Mark to do more mentoring in the Spring.
3f. Mary Jane reported a successful season almost done.
3g. Larry Berman reported that the Burr sandbags were taken care of. No other major issues. Dan DeVito offered storage space for winter goals. He will order or has ordered two new 8v8 goals. Will post on website when Clean up Day will be for fields. ALL WSA families are invited to participate.
3h. Steve Rowland said we had one incident of "bullying" on a travel team. We are considering adopting the schools policy with regard to the issue. It is interesting to note that for a bulling complaint to be lodged, it has to be recurring.

We need to empower younger refs and make sure they know how to deal with an issue at all levels. WSA will consider developing a discipline committee. Mark Koenig suggested a referee should be a part of group. Stuart suggested that the rec league commissioners interact and touch base with referees on game days at fields.

3i. Megan Loffredo reported that 35 girls and 40 boys participated in the ball/girl/boy program. We can use more volunteers for this weekend when we host U13 playoff games. We are ALWAYS looking for volunteers is the message.

3j. Registrar report was given by Wes. Discussion about Blue Sombrero web design/site. Numbers of kids registered in Ct is 84,500! Wes will discuss with Robby the ref page/communication on Blue Sombrero

4. WIN – Robby Casey submitted paperwork and we will soon be officially approved. Then he will contact other towns, trying a personal approach to WIN. He wants more girls participation. He noted that the tryouts in other towns are difficult to roster players by our tournament. MK to check into a temporary Rec roster. Possible to make out door games longer to be discussed. Invite premier clubs. Health net is questionable but if they do it, they want exclusive title sponsor. Mark Gudis has potential sponsor to solicit.
5. Wes reported on WSA action concerning coach, volunteer, player health issues. WSA knew MKSE coach did not have a contagious disease so made decision for privacy reasons to report to WSA that coach was on a medical leave of absence. Larry Berman would like us to have a policy. Larry and Stuart McCarthy and WSA exec board to meet with Westport Health officer, Monica Wheeler to discuss a policy further.
6. Kid-s-U and Soccer Extreme want us to promote their program on our website. Decision was made that we cannot promote it on our site because our members would assume we had thoroughly checked /vetted the program. Other winter programs are in competition with our winter indoor clinics. We are going to let this issue “marinate” for the month. We want our rec commissioners to promote our indoor rec clinics.
7. Mike and Mark reported on plans for a January 2009 special election. Bruce Mitnick will act as nomination chair. We will post info on Website that the election will be for three positions to fill the remainder term. It will not be a general election. It is NOT limited to current board. A nominee needs to be a WSA member in good standing (attended two board meetings in last calendar year) and have a child in the program. The next board meeting will be on December 8th. Time and location to be announced by Tracy Fincher. Tracy to post Bruce’s info on website.
Time 9:05 pm
8. Discussion among board of the unsigned anonymous petition. Wes Malowitz- It is our policy and that of other town organizations not to respond to anonymous

complaints. We have 2300 kids in program and we cannot tell if petition is from 2 or 1000. None the less the petition was circulated among board for us to discuss what is perceived and what factual inaccuracies are out there. WSA is trying to satisfy many and WSA board are volunteers doing a lot to make the organization run. The method the petition was delivered was hurtful and offensive to many board members. The tone of the language was unfortunate and there was no fact checking done regarding the field issues prior to discussing issues on the sidelines. The petition communicated inaccuracies and now we need to communicate the facts.

The three items of concern on petition are 1) questions about the vendor/buyer relationship for coaching contract and possible conflict of interest. 2) Limiting "Beachside " parents to avoid conflict of interest 3) field allocation and "free" use of fields by Beachside that is not available to other premier clubs with Westport kids on their rosters.

The fact is that 4/17 members have Beachside kids. No decision gets made by just the exec. committee. You could say any parent/ board member with a travel or rec. player could have a conflict of interest. The members of the board are giving many hours of Volunteer time for the benefit of all the kids. Wes pointed out that Mickey is not a board member and he is required to attend out board meetings per his contract. He does not attend if we are discussing his contract. Beachside has ONLY one boys team and ONE girls team practice on our fields.

Stuart McCarthy, Director of Parks and rec reported that NO organization or group pays for our fields.

Wes told of the soccer landscape meeting last spring to show our attempt at educating the members. MKSE was asked not to participate. Wes has looked at ways to improve communications.

Mary Walsh comments

George Thompson comments provoked discussion on actual Beachside numbers. In 08-09 and prompted discussion of 6 U-12 girls going to beachside and their travel coach went too. Though the coach was not part of tryouts, Mickey said this coach moving situation will not happen again.

Attendees remarks

Carlos Garcia remarks

Mercedes Arensberg remarks

Eve Pensak remarks

Jan Mellel remarks

Larry Hoy remarks

Elaine Marino remarks

Mary Ann Gudeau remarks

Ned Hickock remarks

Tom Gusie remarks

Richard Chappo remarks

Keith ? remarks

Marshal Root remarks

Deb Slocum remarks

Tara Brownlee remarks

George Kindel remarks included history of WSA and MKSE relationship. We have a quality program. BALANCE and vision for the future. ALL are WELCOME to GET INVOLVED.

Wes closing remarks.

10:58 adjourn