

Spoke February 23, 2021

Presiding: Lisa Wisotsky

Recorder: Steve Wiessner

Guests: Guest Speaker, James Koth, Director of Bergen County Parks and Recreation and Councilman Charles Cobb

Visiting Rotarians: None Noted

Lisa welcomed everyone and introduced Walter Young who led the flag salute a little after 6:05 pm, and Lisa then introduced Jacqueline Guttman, who gave today's message of inspiration about the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule is shared in concept with both eastern and western religions. The Rule as stated by religion is: Do unto others, what you would have them do to you. Jackie also noted that it's important to understand that what's equally or more important about the Rule is "What Not to Do" when interacting with people. She also noted that the Rule is consistent with Rotary principles, connecting it to Bonnie Sirower's message last week regarding Rotary's Four Way Test.

Program:

Lisa introduced today's presenter, James Koth who is the Director of Bergen County Parks and Recreation. Jim was Englewood's Director of the Department of Public Works for a few years leaving his post in Englewood in 2015 to take his current position at Bergen County. His presentation tonight involved the Bergen County Parks Master Plan, and the importance of open space in the Covid era.

Mr. Koth led the charge to investigate current and future needs of the Parks Department, and commissioned a master plan for parks and open space throughout Bergen County. He is currently directing and overseeing the initiative, the first in its kind in the over 70 year history of the Parks Department. Director Koth also is passionate about increasing access to recreational and educational programming in the parks, upgrading existing infrastructure and facilities, identifying need for new parkland for preservation, and protection of Bergen County's environmental resources. Lisa also noted how Jim helped with getting the John T. Wright Arena reopened while serving as Englewood's DPW Director.

Jim started his presentation stating the Bergen County Parks has 9400 acres of parkland, 39 properties and the 1st accredited zoo in the state and an environmental center at Van Saun Park in Paramus, a ski facility in Campgaw and six golf courses. The Master Plan process started in 2016, and was approved by County commissioners/freeholders in 2019. The Master Plan

focused on waterways and flooding and collaboration with Bergen County communities. The most popular activities from respondents to a survey were walking and running. Jim noted that Bergen County, and Englewood in particular are underserved with available open spaces for their communities. 11 public meetings and meetings with stakeholders provided value to the Master Plan process. The study identifies that there needs to be a good balance between sports activities and natural spaces.

He also was mentioned the interest at Bergen County parks about the Northern Valley Greenway project which plans to create a trail from New York state to Tenafly, near Englewood Hospital. Restroom facilities was the number one complaint from users in surveys, followed by problems identified with geese. The Parks Department has been reduced from 300 full-time to 112 full-time staff, and Jim noted that Bergen County is trying to do more with less. Bergen County Parks have been heavily used in the COVID era, and the value of parks during the pandemic are greater than ever.

Main Goals of the Master Plan:

1. Preserve and Balance Open Space
2. Improve Access and Connectivity
3. Steward Our Environmental Resources
4. Provide Diverse Golf and Recreation
5. Improve Amenities and Infrastructure
6. Program Park Spaces and Events
7. Increase Public Access to Information
8. Operate and Maintain Sustainable Parks
9. Develop a Sustainable Business Model

More information about the Master Plan and the videos he wasn't able to show the club are available at <https://cues.rutgers.edu/bergen-park-system/>

Memorial for George Milne

Lisa then introduced Mitch Schonfeld who gave an update on the club's plan for a memorial for George Milne. A small committee of people who knew George well was formed with the main purpose of deciding on a meaningful memorial for him. The committee decided that due to George and Carolyn's love of the water and mariner life in general, that a bench in his memory at Palisades Interstate Park at the Englewood Boat Basin by the Hudson River would be most appropriate to honor him.

A plaque will be put on the memorial bench noting our club's support, along with our logo likely. The cost of the bench is about \$1,300, and Mitch was happy to announce that all funds for the bench have already been raised by members of

the committee. If additional funds are received, we'll use the money to honor George as appropriate. To those who have made pledges or others that wish to support George's memorial bench, please send payments to Treasurer Kathy Silberstein as noted below after Happy Dollars. Mitch expects the bench to be installed sometime in April or May and we will do some sort of announcement in spring. Lisa thanked Mitch and the committee for their work to get the memorial for George organized. Mitch asked that I share the names of all members of the committee which are Eddie Hadden, Joe Klyde, Florence Marchi, Scott Reddin, Mitch Schonfeld, Janet Sharma, Kathy Silberstein, Steve Wiessner, Lisa Wisotsky and Walter Young

Announcements:

Today is World Rotary Day, and Lisa note that it is a great day for our club to honor George Milne.

The Hot Wheels Program is off this week due to a COVID issue at Bergen Family Center, Mitch hopes that BFC will reopen next week and volunteer opportunities for our members will recommence.

Scott announced that our coat drive from the holidays was a big success. Half of the coats were donated around the holidays, and the other half will be going to the Bergen County Prosecutors office who took the balance recently. Scott noted that he collected at the Southeast Senior Center for Independent Living (SESCIL) 65 coats, 120 pairs of gloves, and 50 scarves that have now all been donated to those in need.

Happy Dollars:

Lisa then introduced Joyce Grossbard who led Happy Dollars. Many Happy Dollars were from members to Jim Koth for his excellent presentation and in memory of George and in recognition of his memorial.

Send Happy Dollar contributions/checks to:

Kathy Silberstein
20 Hidden Ledge Road
Englewood, NJ 07631

or to the PO Box:

Rotary Club of Englewood
PO Box 412
Englewood, NJ 07631

Kathy prefers that people make their donations via check as opposed to online, but you can also pay online through the website.

Checks to be made out to: Rotary Club of Englewood

Upcoming meetings/deadlines/events:

Monday, March 1- Deadline to submit 2 names to honor as an Englewood Champion of Peace. Submit names to Charlotte Bennett Schoen at Charlotte3377@gmail.com

Tuesday, March 2 at Noon- *Juticalpa-Roatan Island, Honduras Community Water Project, A Rotary Project*, District Governor Nominee Designate John Cosgrove and Rotarian Beverly Herman-Rivera, chair of this project.

Tuesday, March 9 at 11:00 AM- Board Meeting with DG Carl Hassett

Tuesday, March 9 at Noon- District Governor Carl Hassett official visit with our club

Tuesday, March 16 at Noon- *Clubrunner Tutorial*, Rick Salterelli, Past President of Rotary Club of Secaucus and past Assistant Governor, along with Donovan Rodriques Co-chair of technology for Rotary Club of Englewood

Tuesday, March 23 at 6 PM- *The Words We Shouldn't Call Women!*, Lizzie Skurnick, Editor of *Pretty Bitches*

Tuesday March 30- No Meeting. Please consider volunteering for one hour this week. A list of suggestions is being compiled by the Service Projects Committee. **#PeopleOfAction**

About 20 members and 2 guests were on the Zoom meeting
Respectfully submitted, Steve Wiessner