

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

COUNTY OF HUDSON

IN RE: NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION, GREEN ACRES DIVERSION PRE-APPLICATION FOR
NORTH BERGEN PRE-K PROGRAM

CERTIFICATION OF MICHAEL ASCOLESE

I, MICHAEL ASCOLESE, hereby declare as follows:

1. I make this statement in support of the Township of North Bergen and County of Hudson's reply to the Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program's Pre-Application Completeness Review issued on October 5, 2021.
2. I am the Division Chief, County Parks & Recreation, for Hudson County and am authorized to make this statement which I make upon my own personal knowledge.
3. James J. Braddock Park ("Braddock Park") is located in North Bergen, New Jersey.
4. During the 1990's the North Bergen High School softball team played and practiced on their own field which was not located in Braddock Park.
5. During the 1990's, the High School softball team was renovating its field and requested to use the park while those renovations were being completed.
6. A small, vacant and unimproved area of the park was converted into a softball infield for use as a practice field for the High School.
7. The construction of the infield was funded by the Township of North Bergen.
8. Because of its location next to the running track, the practice field was an infield only, with no outfield, and was not of a regulation size that would allow its use for actual softball games.
9. To my knowledge, no softball games were ever held on this field.
10. Because of this, the junior varsity team used the field for practice only while the varsity team utilized another location, not in Braddock Park, for its practices and games.
11. Junior varsity also utilized a separate location for playing actual games.

12. Even though the infield was only used for practice, there were numerous complaints received from runners and from the team that the practice field itself was not very useful because of its location right next to the running track.
13. Runners and players would have to avoid each other when softballs were hit or thrown past the infield and the danger of collision was a concern.
14. Once its own fields, located outside of Braddock Park, were renovated the softball teams no longer utilized that practice field.
15. Attached hereto is a copy of the James J. Braddock Park Activity Map.
16. Identified on the map are field one (1) through five (5) as well as the Durotest Little League Field and the Guttenberg Little League Field.
17. Over the last 10 years Fields three (3) through five (5) as well as the Durotest Field have been renovated from unimproved dirt fields to fully a regulation baseball and two softball fields, as well as two soccer fields. These fields have been updated to include dug-outs, batting cages, scoreboards, state of the art LED Sports Lighting and a full-sized year-round bathroom.
18. Field one (1) and two (2) have also been renovated and are now fully regulation synthetic turf and grass fields. Field #1 is used by the North Bergen JV and Freshman Baseball Teams. Field #2 is used by the Memorial JV and Freshman Teams. These fields are also used by North Bergen and Union City Recreation for both youth baseball and softball.
19. Upgrades to these fields have allowed us to now accommodate varsity high school level play for soccer, softball and baseball that had not been sanctioned previously.
20. Currently these fields are permitted for use by the North Bergen Varsity Baseball on Field #4, Memorial Varsity and JV Softball Field #3, and North Bergen JV Softball Field #5. The soccer fields in the fall are used by North Bergen boys and girls sub-varsity and youth programs.

I certify that the information contained in this statement is true and accurate.



Michael Ascolese

Date: 4-4-22