

PRINCETON BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSIONERS

A virtual meeting of the Princeton Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners was held on April 16, 2020.

- Present: Dr. Nosker, Ms. Germaine, Dr. Frawley, Mr. Young, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Koontz, Mr. Burt, & Ms. Rogers
- Also Present: Mr. Stentz, Mr. Moorhead, Ms. Paulucci, Mr. Parker, Ms. Caines, Mr. Uchirin & Mr. Scullion
- Absent: Dr. Cahill

Public Comment

- Public Comment was submitted via email from John Taylor regarding several maintenance requests at Smoyer Park. Mr. Stentz will review request and discuss with PRD Maintenance and Municipal Arborist as necessary.

Activities Report

- In addition to the items in the agenda packet:
- Mr. Parker reported on the following:
 - **Day Camp:** Mr. Parker has been working on a contingency plan for summer day camp that addresses staffing, scheduling, facility concerns and possible scenarios in light of the current health crisis. Mr. Parker received 31 employment applicants (including returning staff) for day camp 2020. The interview process is underway with all interviews taking place virtually. Two internal applicants applied and were interviewed for the Assistant Camp Director position (new position).
- Ms. Paulucci reported on the following:
 - **Travel Camp:** Ms. Paulucci is working on a contingency plan for Travel Camp. She is in constant communication with 44 different vendors re: their status for this summer. She is also working on contingencies for all sports camps which rely heavily on the availability of the public school facilities.

Director's Report

- Mr. Moorhead reported on the following:
 - **Municipal Field Closures:** With the extension of school closures by Governor Murphy thru May 15, all municipal playing fields will continue to stay closed during this period, as well. Mr. Moorhead reached out to all partner youth sports groups to inform them of this extension. In addition, Mr. Moorhead has been in touch with US Sports Institute (USSI) as their spring programming is scheduled to start on 5/17/20 at Grover Park. USSI has indicated they are in the process of revising their schedule and will notify PRD of changes in the coming days.
 - **Municipal Mowing Contract:** The mowing contract was approved by Council on 4/6/20. Mr. Moorhead has provided the contract documents to the mowing contractor and anticipates that the contractor will begin mowing all locations during the week of 4/20/20. Mr. Moorhead reminded Commission that PRD maintenance has been handling all of the mowing in the interim prior to the contract being approved.

- **Unemployment Obligation:** Mr. Moorhead reported that he anticipates an increase in the number of unemployment claims for which the Department will be responsible in the coming months given the current economic climate. Mr. Stentz reminded the Commission that the Recreation Commission is a separate entity from the Municipality in the eyes of the State and Federal Government as it relates to payroll and tax purposes, and as such has financial responsibility as determined by the state for unemployment claims for seasonal employees that previously worked for the Trust. *Discussion was held.*
- Mr. Stentz reported on the following:
 - **Staffing Challenges:** Mr. Stentz detailed many of the challenges being faced by the staff in light of the current health crisis and the necessary adjustments to the normal work environment. He expressed gratitude to the staff for their flexibility, for their ability to stay productive via remote working, and for their willingness to assist other departments in need.
 - **Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund (CERF):** Mr. Stentz, Ms. Caines and Ms. Paulucci are all assisting with the newly formed group comprised of Princeton Human Services Department, Princeton Children’s Fund (PCF), Princeton Community Housing, and Princeton Senior Resource Center. Ms. Caines has been involved as the PRD liaison to this PCF, Ms. Paulucci as part of the Outreach Team (specifically focused on the special needs community), and Mr. Stentz has been providing guidance to the group along with Corner House Executive Director, Gary DeBlasio, both as members of the town’s emergency operations team.
 - **PRD Maintenance:** The Maintenance Team quickly closed over 30 facilities in March as the statewide shutdown was extended to playgrounds, sandboxes, swing sets, basketball courts and tennis courts. During the last few weeks, they have been mowing, doing park clean-up, as well as preliminary work on restroom buildings and irrigation systems. They have also been available and active in delivering food for the Human Services Department. In the near future, PRD may begin picking up prepared foods in North Jersey 1-2 times per week area and bringing it back to the area for distribution as part of PRD’s support of Princeton Human Services Dept. and Send Hunger Packing Princeton (SHUPP).
 - **Seasonal Staff Hiring:** The staff was about half-way thru hiring process when the shutdown happened. Subsequently, all interviewing has been moved online. Mr. Stentz expressed pride in the team for rising to the occasion under difficult circumstances.
 - **Summer 2020:** Registration came to a halt several weeks ago. Contingency plans are being developed and adjusted as we move forward, but also with the understanding that some programs/activities may not happen in 2020. However, we can’t wait to make those plans and have to be prepared for a variety of possibilities with the understanding that there are still many unknown factors. We are currently bound by the Governor’s Executive Order # 107 which also encompasses CP Pool, camps, and other PRD activities. Many of our programs will be impossible to run If current social distancing guidelines remain in place thru the summer. *Discussion was held.*
 - **Safety Precautions/Protocols:** Mr. Williamson inquired as to what safety precautions are being taken by PRD Maintenance Staff while on duty. Mr. Stentz explained PRD’s internal staffing plan for social distancing for both the office and maintenance crews was put into place about one week prior to the Municipality deciding to close offices. For the 7-person maintenance crew this involved splitting into two (2) groups with staggered shifts,

separate common areas and no sharing of vehicles. As guidance shifted, they began wearing face coverings while on duty. All employees have been given clear directive that anyone that feels sick should not come to work and that they must report their symptoms to Mr. Stentz. In addition, both Mr. Moorhead and Mr. Stentz are part of the Municipality's Emergency Operations Committee being led by Police Chief, Nick Sutter and currently meeting 3 times per week via Zoom.

- o **Pre-Season Pool Prep:** Staff has changed the normal sequence of pre-season pool preparation in order to continue to move forward but at the same time not get too far ahead in terms of having to spend money. Filling the pool is very expensive (\$5K) and the electric bill goes up substantially once we turn on and operate the pool filters/motors. At present, we are waiting for a clearer picture on the timeline before proceeding with those tasks.
- o **Departmental Spending:** All departmental expenditures have been halted at this time except for those deemed essential by either Mr. Stentz or Mr. Moorhead. Mr. Stentz has made the decision to delay over \$70,000 worth of Recreation Trust capital improvements until 2021.
- o **Early-Bird Pricing:** This was set to expire on 4/10 and was later extended to 4/24. EB pricing will remain in effect for the time being until more clarity is reached with opening dates.
- o **CP Pool Staffing:** Mr. Uchrin reported on the following:
 - **Lifeguards:** Currently there are 71 guards that plan to return in 2020. This number is roughly a 50/50 split between college/HS age guards. New hires will be challenging this year as no spring Lifeguard certification courses will be able to run during the current shutdown. PRD typically hires about 12 new guards in the spring but that is in jeopardy. Mr. Uchrin anticipates a shortage with new guards. He remains confident overall that he can make it work but it will be a challenge.
 - **Training:** Mr. Uchrin runs three days of required orientation/training prior to the pool opening. As most guards do not lifeguard during the school year, refresher training is essential for the staff. Mr. Uchrin has contingency plans in place for smaller groups, online and dry-land trainings to get the staff up to speed quickly. He needs a minimum of one day in the water for additional training before opening the pool to the public. Lifeguard staffing will be very challenging in late July and August if the college-aged guards leave and we don't have as many new HS staff to fill in the gaps. Mr. Uchrin reports that he has some ideas for trainings sessions and classes once the pool is open.
- o Mr. Stentz stated that PRD will be ready to run programs if we get the go-ahead. Dr. Nosker brought up the safety and financial concerns of running programs in this current environment and the possibility of a limited numbers of participants. *Discussion was held.*

Old Business

- **Hilltop Recommendation:** Mr. Stentz provided background on the Request For Proposals (RFP) for design services for the Hilltop Turf Project. 13 proposals were received. The subcommittee working on this project is comprised of Mr. Stentz, Mr. Moorhead, Ms. Stockton, Dr. Nosker & Mr. Burt. The subcommittee interviewed four (4) prospective design firms via Zoom. The pricing

for those firms ranged from \$64K – \$106K. The consensus of the subcommittee was to recommend Suburban Consulting Engineers, Inc. (SCE) (\$64K) to the Recreation Commission. They are a well-known and experienced firm with dozens of successfully completed turf field projects around the state. *Discussion was held.*

- Mr. Koontz made a motion to recommend SCE, Inc. to Mayor & Council as the design firm for the Hilltop Turf & Lighting Project, seconded by Mr. Burt and unanimously approved.

New Business

- **Pool Concession Contract:**
 - Mr. Koontz suggested amending contract to include language about a possible reduction in pool days for the 2020 season in order to quantify a potential pro-rate of the rental amount (\$8K). Dr. Nosker suggested including language about patronage, as well. Mr. Stentz pointed out that patronage is difficult to quantify for this exercise. Mr. Moorhead suggested adding a component regarding the number of weeks of Day Camp as it relates to the camp lunch program. *Discussion was held.*
 - Item was tabled until the May meeting and staff agreed to amend the contract language, seeking guidance from municipal attorney as needed.
- **Commission Refund Policy due to Covid-19**
 - Mr. Stentz recommends a temporary suspension of the no-refund policy due to current public health circumstances. This would include waiving the no-refund policy and administrative fee. He also recommends pro-rated refunds for programs that were already in progress. *Discussion was held.*
 - Mr. Koontz moved that the no-refund policy and related administrative fees be temporarily waived, seconded by Dr. Nosker and unanimously approved.
- **Authorization for transfer of funds:**
 - Mr. Stentz outlined the current financial situation for the Recreation Trust and detailed that the trust will face significant financial hardship in 2020. If we are not able to run programs, camps or CP Pool, we will refund much of the revenue that we have already collected to date in 2020. Mr. Stentz requested authority to access funds from the Recreation Trust Reserve account as needed to cover any shortfalls in the operating account. *Discussion was held.*
 - Mr. Williamson made a motion to authorize Mr. Stentz, at his discretion, to transfer funds from the Recreation Trust Reserve account to the Recreation Operating Account. These transfers of funds should be \$20,000 per transaction (maximum of 4 transactions) and no more than \$80,000 total., seconded by Mr. Koontz and unanimously approved.

Communications

Communications shared in agenda packet

Approval of Minutes

- Dr. Nosker made a motion to approve the Commission minutes of February 20, 2020 seconded by Ms. Germaine and approved.

Approval of Bills

- *Mr. Koontz made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Dr. Nosker and approved.*

Next Meeting Date

May 14, 2020