

PRINCETON BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSIONERS

A meeting of the Princeton Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners was held on February 24, 2022 remotely via Zoom.

- Present: Dr. Nosker, Ms. Germaine, Mr. Burt, Ms. Rogers, Dr. Cahill, Mr. Young & Ms. Pirone Lambros
- Also Present: Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Marroli & Ms. Paulucci
- Absent: Dr. Frawley, Mr. Koontz & Mr. Petrucelli

Public Comment

No Public Comment

Corner House Student Board

No Corner House Student Board Report

Activities Report

In addition to the activities in the agenda packet, Ms. Paulucci reported on the following:

- Staff is continuing to work on our winter and spring menu, including US Sports Institute, Adaptive Programming and Adaptive Dances (in-person). Ms. Paulucci complimented Mr. Petrucelli on pulling the winter youth basketball league together despite multiple challenges brought on by covid-19 and facility availability. Mr. Moorhead echoed Ms. Paulucci's statements with regards to the winter basketball league and the efforts by our programming staff. Mr. Moorhead offered his thanks to the Hun School for allowing us to use their facilities without which the league would not have been able to return to playing on Saturday mornings as has been the tradition for the league for the past 50 years. Mr. Young requested a copy of the playoff schedule.

In addition to the activities in the agenda packet, Mr. Marroli reported on the following:

- Fifty-One of Ninety-Three lifeguards from '21 have indicated thus far that they would like to return to work at CP Pool this summer. Mr. Moorhead reminded the Commission how valuable our Aquatics Director, Mike Uchrin, is to our operation. Mr. Uchrin handles the hiring, training and scheduling of those lifeguards, which is a tremendous responsibility. He starts in February every year with the re-hiring process.

Director's Report

Mr. Moorhead reported on the following:

- Debbie Green: Long-time seasonal staffer, Debbie Green passed away at the end of January after a recent illness. Ms. Green worked for the department in a variety of roles over the past two decades including pool customer service, Mary Moss Playground supervisor and Dillon Practice Supervisor. Ms. Green was born and raised in Princeton and her contributions to the community and the Recreation Department were tremendous. Staff would like to recognize Ms. Green in some tangible way and will be exploring ideas to present to the Commission at a future meeting.

- **Personnel Update:** Staff recently offered the open laborer position to their preferred candidate. That candidate initially accepted but then backed out due to personal reasons. Only four applications were received for this position and Human Resources indicated that is a trend they are seeing with other similar positions, as well. Staff will look to repost the job opening. With our busy season approaching, Mr. Moorhead would like to fill our vacancy soon.
- **Ice Skating Update** – Despite being close on several occasions, we never reached the point of being able to open any of the three locations since we did not reach the required 5” thickness in the entire skating area. Dr. Nosker asked if staff were to define a smaller area for skating at the lake what that might be and how parking factors into the equation. *Discussion was held.*
- **Athletic Field Scheduling:** This process has been transitioned to Mr. Marrolli for the spring season. As it stands now, the athletic fields will open the first weekend in April, however it is completely weather dependent and the fields need to dry before groups are allowed to use them.
- **Project Updates:**
 - Farmview Lower Baseball Field: A warning track has been installed in the outfield and the infield has been regraded in an effort to improve the way the water runs off that field after it rains. This project is happening in partnership with Princeton Little League and is another example of PLL being willing to help pay for field repair projects. This project will have a 60/40 cost share with the municipality paying 60%.
 - CP South Fence Repair: A section of the fence that was damaged last fall when it was hit by a motor vehicle has been repaired.
 - Grover Park Retaining Walls – Sections of retaining wall at Grover Park baseball fields 2 & 3 will be repaired soon. Those walls have deteriorated over time and need to be repaired prior to the start of the little league season.
 - Storage Shed Removal: Two dilapidated storage sheds at CP South will be taken down soon with the help of our Department of Public Works.
 - Dr. Nosker inquired about the retaining wall at Quarry Park. Mr. Moorhead stated that we have received quotes for repair and it will be expensive. Mr. Moorhead suggested that this project may need to go out to bid based on the cost. Further discussion at the staff level is needed before we know when and how this project might move forward.
- **Maintenance Staff:** Staff has been working on park clean up projects at various locations. This includes: removal of branches, pruning of vegetation and leaf pick-up. Staff is also assessing park restroom plumbing in anticipation of having those facilities open and ready to go in early April.
- **Seasonal Employment:** We are currently taking applications for seasonal maintenance. The Lifeguard and Pool customer service posting will open on March 1.
- **Pool Registration:** Registration for pool memberships, as well as our aquatic programming will open in early March. Staff will send an email to patrons in the near future with an update. Staff anticipates that the pool will function on a normal schedule this summer, opening Memorial Day weekend for weekends only through mid-June and then transitioning to daily operation about the time that the public schools get out for the summer. Mr. Moorhead reminded the Commission that we were not able to open pool registration last year until May due to the uncertainty surrounding Covid-19.
- **Mowing and Turf Management Bids:** The Municipal Mowing and Turf Management Bids went live on 2/8/22 with a deadline of 3/3/22. After all bids are received, staff will review and put together a resolution/memo and get it to council for approval in March. Dr. Nosker asked about requirements regarding equipment and noise. *Discussion was held.*

- **Pool Concession RFP:** The RFP for the pool concession went live earlier this month and the deadline for submittals is March 11. The legal notice was posted in three different newspapers. Staff plans to have a recommendation to bring to the Commission at our March meeting.
- **Facility Meeting:** Staff took part in a meeting with various reps from the Princeton Public Schools Facilities Department, Finance Department and Athletic Department, as well as administration from PMS and PHS via zoom on 2/14/22. With so many new faces in both organizations, particularly at the public schools, Mr. Moorhead felt it would be beneficial for the groups to meet and provide them some historical context/information regarding shared facility usage. In particular, Recreation Staff inquired about the schools plans to install a new roof at Community Park Elementary School this summer following the approval of the recent school referendum. PPS staff indicated that they plan to move that project forward this summer and that the building will be offline during that time.
- **Day Camp:** Without CP Elementary School as an inclement weather site to use in the event of rain, thunder, lightning and excessive heat, Mr. Moorhead stated that running our traditional youth day-camp for 250+ kids is not possible. Running such a camp is contingent upon having a location in the immediate vicinity that can safely house that many people and that we can access on short notice. Without that, we cannot assume responsibility for that many kids each day. Staff considered many other options and alternatives however, without that indoor location, a full-day camp for a large group is not feasible. In addition, Mr. Moorhead referenced the challenge that rebuilding the day camp staff from top to bottom will require once we are able to run that program again in the future. We will need to hire a new camp director, as well as 25-30 counselors since the majority of the staff that was in place in '19 when we last ran camp has moved on to other employment opportunities.

Dr. Nosker reiterated the importance of the full day youth camp for our community. Ms. Pirone-Lambros inquired as to whether other locations for the camp had been considered. Mr. Moorhead and Ms. Paulucci discussed the logistical challenges involved with an off-site location. Dr. Cahill expressed concern that there may be youth whose only opportunity to take swim lessons was through day camp. She suggested a reimagining of our day camp in future years and stressed the importance of swim lessons as a life-long skill. Ms. Germaine brought up the summer school kids that often missed swim lessons all together and mentioned the creativity staff had shown in the past with regards to providing them swim lessons. Ms. Germaine inquired as to how the middle school pool is being used during the summer. *Discussion was held.*

For this summer, staff will pivot as we did in '21 and provide a large menu of options that include programs with smaller capacity and shorter duration. This will include popular programs from last summer such as; Magic, Chess, Empowerment, Arts & Crafts, Track/Running and Skateboard, as well as US Sports Institute programming. Staff is hopeful that we will be able to bring back a week of full-day basketball camp for both boys and girls in '22. At this time, we are waiting on the schools to approve requested dates and then lock in our staffing. Staff is also considering whether we can bring Teen Travel Camp back in a limited capacity this summer and is reaching out to returning staff to determine their availability.

- **NJ Recreation & Parks Association Annual Conference:** – The conference will take place in-person in Atlantic City in early March. Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Marroli, Ms. Paulucci and Mr. Petrucelli will be attending. The 2021 conference was held virtually due to covid.

Old Business

- **Mercer at Play:** At the request of the Commission and following a subsequent sub-committee meeting, staff reached back out to the playground vendors to request additional information from them regarding their playground proposals. Also at the request of the sub-committee, Mr. Moorhead has included Ms. Paulucci in the review of the playground proposals. Mr. Moorhead stated that Ms. Paulucci's input has been extremely helpful to the process. In addition, staff has sought input from several of our colleagues at other public entities around the state who have expertise in this area. Mr. Moorhead anticipates having another sub-committee meeting or two prior to coming back to the Commission for further updates. Mr. Moorhead stated that he has reached out to the Homeowners Association at Campbell Woods, as well as the management at PCV to notify them that we are considering a playground renovation of this type at Hilltop Park. Mr. Moorhead also referenced that staff is seeking quotes for a batting cage installation at Hilltop, as well as replacing the existing metal-halide lights on the ballfield with more energy efficient LED lights.
- Dr. Nosker asked for an update on the beaver situation at CP North. Mr. Moorhead stated that the Open Space Manager has taken the lead and has connected with a vendor to explore ideas that might deter further damage by the beaver.

New Business

- **2022 Program Fees:** Mr. Moorhead presented the '22 program fees, that include a modest 2-3% increase across the board to combat the continued rise in minimum wage, as well as the rising costs of materials/equipment. Mr. Moorhead reminded the Commission that we have been in this cycle for the last several years and that the model of modest increases each year has seemed to work well and allow the department to stay ahead of the curve and off-set our rising costs. Pool Daily admission fee increases are also included in the proposal for this year. Ms. Pirone-Lambros complemented the staff on the variety and volume of the program offerings. Discussion was held. **Dr. Nosker made a motion to approve the 2022 program fees as proposed by the staff, seconded by Dr. Cahill and approved.**
- **RT Reserve Purchase – Flow Meter (CP Pool):** **Ms. Germaine made a motion to approve the purchase of the Flow Meter, seconded by Ms. Pirone-Lambros and approved.**

Communications

Communications shared in agenda packet.

Approval of Minutes

- **January 27, 2022:** **Dr. Nosker made a motion to approve the January 2022 minutes, seconded by Dr. Cahill and approved. Mr. Burt and Ms. Rogers abstained.**

Approval of Bills

- **Mr. Burt made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Ms. Rogers and approved.**

Next Meeting Date

March 24, 2022