

PRINCETON BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSIONERS

A meeting of the Princeton Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners was held on November 18, 2021 remotely via Zoom.

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

Public Comment

Mr. Young asked that the public limit comment to a maximum of 2 minutes in the interest of time, as per the municipality's guidelines for public meetings. Mr. Moorhead reported that a pickleball presentation received last month from members of the public was included in this month's agenda packet for the Commission. Earlier in the workday, Mr. Moorhead received a revision of the same pickleball presentation. However, that revision arrived too late to make the current communications packet, but will be included in the packet of information for the December meeting. Mr. Moorhead commented that staff and Administration are aware of the public interest in pickleball. However, the specific presentation in question did not arrive by request of the staff or commission nor was it put together by a professional design firm. Therefore, the specifics of that design are not something that staff or the commission plan to discuss in any detail. Mr. Moorhead believes that it may be possible to at some point to have dedicated pickleball courts at CP South but not without first taking the time to have a professional master plan of the entire park.

Junglien Chen (Princeton Resident) commented he thinks the pickleball courts are best suited to be installed directly next to the CP Tennis Court in the area of the current tennis wall and does not believe there is another suitable location due to the issues of noise, lighting and proximity to homes. Mr. Chen does not feel installation of pickleball courts need to wait until a master plan is developed for CP South. Mr. Chen asked what other amenities would be included in a CP South Master Plan beyond a restroom and soccer fields as those are the only amenities, as he understands, that will be a part of the park.

Heidi Fichtenbaum (Princeton Environmental Commission), attended the meeting to observe.

Corner House Student Board

Andrew Marshall stated the Dodgeball Tournament was moved indoors to PHS due to inclement weather. The event was well attended. Mr. Marshall said Corner House is looking into planning an Acapella night by Princeton Public Library as their next event. Mr. Koontz commented he heard there was an incident at the end of the Dodgeball Tournament and asked Mr. Marshall for an explanation. Mr. Marshall commented several Hun students started pushing other players around, as they were upset they were eliminated from the tournament. The referees were able to control the situation after about 1 minute of turmoil. *Discussion was held.*

Activities Report

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

Fall/Winter Programming

- Men's & Women's Platform Tennis Leagues began play on 11/2/21. More than 60 players are participating.
- Two free Platform Tennis Clinics were held 11/17/21. The feedback thus far has been positive. Three more clinics are scheduled for 11/20/21.
- The Chair Fitness Class wrapped up last week. Participants provided positive feedback and there are plans to run this class in the spring of 2022.
- An Aerobic Fitness Class is being planned for this winter at the Suzanne Patterson Center.
- Dillon Basketball Update: The league will take place this winter, albeit on a modified schedule. Registration will be open to youth in grades 4-10 that live in Princeton or attend school in Princeton. Games will be held Mondays – Fridays, from 6 – 9 pm at the Princeton Unified Middle School starting in January of 2022. There is currently no update on the use of Princeton University facilities by outside groups for this upcoming season. In addition, Princeton's Athletic Department has informed PRD that many Saturday mornings at Dillon Gym are already booked for internal usage.

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

- Ms. Paulucci noted that utilization of the Pool Community Room has been a great benefit for PRD, especially during the fall months.
- The last Special Needs Dance on 11/12/21 went very well in the Community Room. A December Special Needs Holiday dance has been scheduled for indoors at the Hun school on 12/17/21.
- The Rhythm Works dance program wrapped up this month. Ms. Paulucci is looking into utilizing an indoor space and running the program during the winter months.
- PRD will make every attempt to utilize all indoor spaces available for upcoming winter programs.
- An adaptive Platform Tennis Clinic Series is in the works with assistance from a Recreation Commission member.

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

- Mr. Marrolli returned to PRD to serve as Assistant Director of Recreation in October and is excited to be back on Team PRD.
- Mr. Marrolli has been trying to visit as many PRD parks as possible to help familiarize himself with our park inventory, as well as help identify potential park improvements and future capital projects. Mr. Marrolli recently visited several parks with Princeton's new Open Space Manager, Cindy Taylor.
- Mr. Marrolli attended the November Special Needs Dance and commented that Ms. Paulucci did a great job organizing and running the dance. *Discussion was held.*

Director's Report

Mr. Moorhead reported on the following:

- Mr. Moorhead commented he is excited to have Mr. Marrolli back on staff and feels the transition for staff has been excellent.
- **Maintenance Staff Update:** PRD Maintenance Foreman, Joe Scullion, recently informed Mr. Moorhead that he will retire and relocate to Tennessee in December. This is a major blow to PRD as Mr. Scullion has been Foreman for over 10 years and has been an extremely resourceful and knowledgeable employee. Mr. Moorhead stated that current PRD Assistant Foreman, Gerry MacFarlan, is extremely capable and has been working side by side with Mr. Scullion for over ten years. The application process is open to internal candidates and Mr. Moorhead plans to move forward with the process once the application window has closed. Mr. Moorhead feels this is a bitter sweet moment, as he is happy Mr. Scullion is able to retire, but knows this is a tremendous loss for the department.
- **Day Camp Staff Update:** PRD Day Camp Director, Steve DiGregorio, unfortunately passed away in October after a 2-year battle with cancer. Mr. DiGregorio was very connected to the Princeton community and will be greatly missed by all that knew him. Mr. Moorhead hopes Day Camp is able to return in 2022 if health standards allow. Ms. Paulucci and Mr. Petrucelli have been working on the job description for the Day Camp Director position to be posted in the near future. Mr. Moorhead acknowledged that Mr. DiGregorio left big shoes to fill.
- **Open Space Update:** Princeton recently hired an Open Space Manager, Cindy Taylor. The position had been vacant for several years. This hire should help centralize inquiries for trail maintenance and open space moving forward. Ms. Taylor most recently worked at D & R Greenway and has been visiting the municipal parks to familiarize herself with the town's open space inventory.
- **CPR/AED Update:** PRD Pool Manager Joe Vazquez recently recertified several PRD staff members on CPR & AED. Certification is good for 2 years.
- **CPO Update:** Mr. Moorhead & Mr. Macfarlan recently renewed their Certified Pool Operator's licenses. PRD Maintenance Staff member Kyle Rogers also took the CPO class and obtained his certification for the first time. Mr. Moorhead stressed the importance of having multiple staff members with CPO certification and suggested Mr. Marrolli will obtain his certification as well in the near future.
- **CP Pool Update:** Winterization of the facility is nearly complete. The locker room building and the showers were winterized a few weeks ago. The Admin building has been utilized during fall for multiple programs and thus staff had to wait to winterize it until those programs were complete. Maintenance staff finished taking apart the pool filters to assess damage from Hurricane Ida. The total estimated cost to replace all of the damaged parts is \$26,000. After discussion with the municipal CFO, it was determined that it would be more efficient to purchase the replacement parts through the tax-supported budget (instead of the Recreation Trust). Mr. Moorhead reported there should be disaster funding available from FEMA to reimburse the town for this expense. As soon as the parts arrive, Maintenance staff will begin working on the repairs. *Discussion was held.*
- **Kiddie Pool Re-plastering Project:** Based on its current condition, staff anticipates that the kiddie pool will need to be re-plastered prior to the '22 season. Staff has been preparing for this eventuality for several years and \$58,500 has previously been approved by the Commission to fund this project. *Discussion was held.*
- **Park Restroom & Fields Update:** As of today, all park restrooms have been winterized and closed for the year. This is a routine maintenance task done annually to try to avoid any frozen pipes or potential water damage. Portable restroom units have been placed at Hilltop Park & CP North for the winter months. The Fall Youth Sports season has almost ended, aside from youth soccer. Mr.

Moorhead commented the downtime for all of our fields seems to shrink every year, and serves as an example of how heavily utilized our fields are. *Discussion was held.*

- **Farmview Field Fence Repair:** The fence on the lower baseball field is under repair. This project was budgeted for in the 2021 Capital Budget. Mr. Moorhead plans to meet with John Durbin (Princeton Little League) to see what future field improvement projects PLL and PRD can work together on in '22.
- **CP South Tennis Court & Basketball Court Lights:** Light usage was extended for the month of November for the first time, with the lights running daily until 8 pm. The lights will be turned off for the season following the Thanksgiving weekend.
- **New Landscaping Ordinance:** Princeton has passed an ordinance regarding the use of gas-powered blowers. The ordinance prohibits the use of gas-powered blowers during certain times of year and hours of the day. This ordinance represents a push towards sustainability by encouraging the use of battery-powered equipment. Mr. Moorhead anticipates receiving more details from administration in the future about the impact to municipal operations.
- **Dog Park Presentation:** At the last Princeton Council meeting, a Citizen's Task Force presented a proposal for potential dog park locations in Princeton. Feedback and input was not sought from Recreation Department Staff or Commission prior to that meeting. Mr. Moorhead reiterated that we are not in a position to lose any active athletic field space for a dog park. Some of the locations listed in the presentation were active recreation space. In addition, Mr. Moorhead is very sensitive to the possibility of installing a dog park close to residences due to the anticipated increase in noise and traffic. This is concern is particularly acute as it relates to any of our neighborhood parks that are directly bordered by homes.

Mrs. Germaine questioned whether any of the proposed park locations have suitable parking for hosting dog park attendees. Mrs. Germaine also highlighted that some of the neighborhood parks are very close to residences and that she would not want barking dogs near her house. Mr. Koontz agreed with Ms. Germaine's points and stated some park areas should be kept as open, recreational space, and that field maintenance for dog parks can be costly and cumbersome. Dr. Nosker mentioned the local County dog parks are often in bad shape and must be offline for an extended period in order to address maintenance issues. Dr. Cahill stated she feels that having dog parks located in active recreation areas can be dangerous, especially for young children. *Discussion was held.*

- **Pickleball & CP South Master Plan:** Mr. Moorhead commented there although there is no current plan in place for revitalizing and redesigning CP South, he believes that now is the time to pursue this idea in more detail. A geo-technical survey was completed at CP South a few years ago, and there is some money remaining from the ordinance that funded that survey. Mr. Moorhead feels that based on the recent requests from residents, the size and location of CP South and our overall park/facility needs, the next step should be a master plan with concept design that takes into account the needs and desires of all user groups. Mr. Moorhead listed the following amenities as examples of things that parks users might like to see in a renovated CP South; pickleball courts, a dog park, a restroom facility, improved athletic fields, adult exercise area, sand volleyball courts, improved walking/jogging track, additional covered outdoor picnic/multi-use space, additional parking and indoor basketball courts. Dr. Nosker asked how soon we could anticipate starting the Master Plan process. Mr. Moorhead did not have a timeline but stated that the municipality would need to solicit proposals from interested vendors. Those proposals would then need to be reviewed thoroughly before moving forward. Dr. Nosker also raised the question of the condition of the existing terrain at CP South that is noticeably poor in many locations. *Discussion was held.* Dr. Cahill inquired as to the possibility of installing pickleball lines on a couple of the existing tennis courts at CP South.

According to Dr. Cahill, this could serve as a short-term solution and to help staff determine if there is, in fact, additional demand for that sport. Mr. Moorhead has spoken with the director of PTP about that very idea and will continue to discuss the possibility moving forward. Mr. Moorhead reminded the Commission that PRD is currently in a 3-year lease with PTP for use of those courts, and PTP needs to generate revenue in order to sustain their operation. There are also logistical challenges with court reservations/scheduling that would need to be considered. *Discussion was held.*

Mr. Young feels a Master Plan for CP South is well overdue. Mr. Moorhead stated he plans to speak with Administration and the Engineering Department about how to best move forward with this idea. *Discussion was held.*

- **Appointment of Commission Chair:** Mr. Young is currently in his third year as Chair of the Commission. Mr. Moorhead reminded the Commission that they will need to appoint a chair for '22 at an upcoming meeting.
- **2021 NJLOM Conference:** Mr. Moorhead and Mr. Marroli attended the NJLOM Conference this past Tuesday & Wednesday and were able to interact with several colleagues and other municipal employees from across the state.

Old Business

- **Mercer at Play:** Mr. Moorhead recently received the requested proposal for an adaptive/inclusive playground at Hilltop Park but has not yet had time to review. Mr. Moorhead will be contacting the Commission sub-committee soon to set up a zoom meeting to discuss the proposal. *Discussion was held.*

New Business

- **Pool Drain Cover Purchase:** Mr. Koontz made a motion to approve the Pool Drain Cover Purchase, seconded by Dr. Cahill and approved.
- **712 Paperwork – 2022 Bookkeeping Contract:** Dr. Nosker made a motion to approve the 2022 Bookkeeping Contract in favor of 712 Paperwork, seconded by Mr. Burt and approved.
- **Adaptive Platform Tennis Clinics:** Mr. Koontz made a motion to approve the Adaptive Platform Tennis Clinics, seconded by Dr. Cahill and approved.
- **Minimum Wage Increase – 1/1/22:** Ms. Germaine made a motion to approve the upcoming 1/2/22 Minimum Wage Increase to \$11.90/hour, seconded by Mr. Koontz and approved.

Communications

Communications shared in agenda packet.

Approval of Minutes

August & October minutes approval were tabled to 12/16/21 meeting due to late notice and to allow the Commission additional time to review.

Approval of Bills

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

Next Meeting Date

December 16, 2021