

NOTICE

MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT, CHAPTER 231, P.L. 1975

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION WILL HOLD THEIR JUNE PUBLIC MEETING (ANNUAL MEETING) ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2023; TO BEGIN AT 5:30 PM AT THE HUNT BARN, 197 BLACKWELL ROAD, PENNINGTON, NEW JERSEY 08534

THE COMMISSION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION REGARDING THE DISCLOSURE OF MATERIALS, REPORTS, AND RECORDS OF PERSONNEL, IN PARTICULAR, DISCLOSURE AND DISSEMINATION OF MATERIALS OF PUBLIC CONCERN, INVESTIGATIONS, AND MATTERS INVOLVING CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AND POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF LAW

AGENDA

➤ **ROLL CALL:**

The following Commissioners answered the Roll Call of the Secretary:

- Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz and Smith.

The following Commissioners were absent:

- Gardner.

➤ **CALL TO ORDER:**

- Commissioner Mooij called the June 28, 2023 meeting of the Mercer County Park Commission to order at 5:37 pm at the Hunt Barn Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Pennington, New Jersey 08534.

➤ **FLAG SALUTE:**

- Commissioner Mooij led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Salute to the Flag.

➤ **2023 ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Under the provisions of Article 7, Sections 1 and 8 of the Park Commission By-Laws and procedures outlined in Roberts Rules of Order; R. David Blake, Esq. Counsel, presided over the 2023/24 Elections for the Mercer County Park Commission. A motion was requested by Counsel to open the 2023/24 Election of Officers.

- On Motion by Commissioner Mooij; seconded by Commissioner Schulz, by voice vote, the floor was opened for the Election of Officers.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz, and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

Counsel R. D. Blake requested a nomination for President of the Mercer County Park Commission. Commissioner Mooij. nominated Commissioner Amber Forrester for President of the Mercer County Park Commission for the 2023/24 Year.

Counsel R. D. Blake requested for any other nominations as per procedural provisions. No additional nominations were received.

- On Motion by Commissioner Mooij; seconded by Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Forrester was nominated for President of the Mercer County Park Commission for the 2023/24 Year.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz, and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

Commissioner Forrester thanked the Commission, Administration and Staff for the opportunity to serve as Chair for the Mercer County Park Commission.

Counsel R. D. Blake requested a nomination for Vice President of the Mercer County Park Commission. Commissioner Forrester nominated Commissioner Marissa Davis, for Vice President of the Mercer County Park Commission for the 2023/24 Year.

Counsel R. D. Blake requested for any other nominations as per procedural provisions. No additional nominations were received.

- On Motion by Commissioner Forrester; seconded by Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Davis was nominated for Vice President of the Mercer County Park Commission for the 2023/24 Year.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz, and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

Commissioner Davis thanked the Commission, Administration and Staff for the opportunity to serve as Vice Chair for the Mercer County Park Commission as we move into our next phase of governance.

Counsel R. D. Blake thanked Commissioners Mooij and Forrester for their service to the Commission as officers for the 2023/23 year and welcomed Commissioners Forrester and Davis into their new roles for the 2023/24 year.

Commissioner Forrester Presided over the remainder of the meeting Agenda as the newly elected president of the Mercer County Park Commission.

➤ **NOTICE OF MEETING:**

In accordance with the Sunshine Law (Open Public Meetings Act Chapter 231, P.L. 1975), adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in that notification was given as follows: emailed to the Times, Trentonian, and posted to the Mercer County Website and Mercer County Park Commission Website; and sent via email blast through the County of Mercer and Mercer County Park Commission notification system.

➤ **APPROVAL OF REGULAR MINUTES FROM THE MAY 31, 2023 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION MEETING:**

- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Martinez, by voice vote, the May 31, 2023 Regular Mercer County Park Commission Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz, and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

➤ **APPROVAL OF JUNE 2023 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION BILLS:**

Commissioner Davis requested clarification be included in future meeting materials for identifying Park Commission accounts listed in the monthly bills reports.

- On Motion by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Mooij, by voice vote, the June 2023 bills were approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz, and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

➤ **MAY 2023 REVENUE REPORT (*Executive Director, Aaron T. Watson, provided a synopsis of the May 2023 Park Commission Revenue Report*)**

Executive Director Watson announced the addition of a free concert event at Millyard Park in the City of Trenton.

Commissioner Mooij stated that the Hopewell Valley Pool has been a good addition to our offerings and operations and management have been responsive to patrons.

Chair Forrester asked if tennis ID cards are available for the Hopewell Valley Golf Course Facility.

Executive Director Watson indicated that ID cards are available for the Hopewell Valley Golf Course Facility.

Commissioner Forrester asked if the Park Commission currently offers any services to make golf membership affordable to members of the public who require financial assistance.

Executive Director Watson responded that currently there are a few offerings in the form of camps and youth programs.

Commissioner Forrester asked how many golf memberships the Park Commission currently maintains.

Executive Director Watson replied that Park Commission currently maintains 6,000 memberships.

Commissioner Schulz replied that a universal card would provide greater ease of access. Additionally, Commissioner Schulz commended the current youth golf program and thanked golf staff and the Executive Director for providing this offering in the golf portfolio.

- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Forrester, by voice vote, the April 2023 Park Commission Revenue Reports were approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij, Schulz, and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

➤ **EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH** *(Presented by Executive Director Aaron T. Watson; nominated by Assistant Howell Farm Director, Kevin Watson)*

This month's Employee of the Month is Ms. Christine Madzy. Ms. Madzy started as seasonal employee in 2015 and became full-time in 2022.

Howell Farm Director, Pete Watson provided additional comments regarding Howell Farm Employee of the Month, Christine Madzy. Director P. Watson provided the Board with literature showcasing the farm's spring public programs.

Commissioner Smith commended Pete on his efforts in the establishment of Capital City Farm in the City of Trenton.

Commissioner Schulz additionally commended Director P. Watson on the efforts at Capital City Farm.

Executive Director Watson thanked Director P. Watson for his efforts in providing community-driven public programming, as well as his additional efforts in the establishment of the Capital City Farm Facility.

➤ **COMMUNICATIONS** *(Presented by Executive Director, Aaron T. Watson):*

- **C-1:** "Nature in the Valley: Park Commission Takes Wildlife Safety Seriously on Baldpate" Community News.

➤ **OLD BUSINESS:** *(Presented by Deputy Director, Joe Pizza)*

– **In-House Maintenance Operations:**

- In-house crews performed repairs to the waterfront docks in preparation for upcoming events.
- Additional water fill stations have been installed and all stations are now in-use. Counters on the fill station devices show they have been utilized frequently since installation.
- Painters have refreshed the Park Entrance areas.

– **Golf Operations:**

- All golf ranges are open.
- Summer youth Golf camp at various courses is on-going.

– **Capital Projects:**

- Hopewell Valley Golf Course Facility septic and potable water is fully functional and in full operation.

- Stabilization of the Canal House property will commence within the coming weeks.
- Rosedale Restroom Upgrades are on-going; with roof installation taking place within the week.
- Ropes Course Construction has been completed. A Request for Proposals seeking a qualified operator Received no bids from the initial advertisement and will be publicly advertised again.

Commissioner Davis asked how confirmation was received regarding the water at Hopewell Valley Golf Course.

Deputy Director Pizza responded that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; in concert with the County's contracted environmental consultant reviewed and implemented a water sample schedule for testing. All results were clear and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection provided approval correspondence for use.

➤ **NEW BUSINESS:**

- R-1 THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE CHANGE ORDER (NO. 1) WITH RNM CONSTRUCTION, LLC FOR ROSEDALE PARK RESTROOM FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS. INCREASE THE CONTRACT AMOUNT BY: +\$50,470.00; (+12.63%). REVISED CONTRACT AMOUNT: \$450,220.00. ALL OTHER TERMS REMAIN THE SAME (AB2022-32)

Commissioner Davis asked for further details regarding the justification for the Contract Change Order.

Executive Director Watson explained that upon excavation, it was discovered that the composition of the shale present underground at the required depth for excavation at the site required additional heavier duty equipment to complete the excavation.

- On Motion by Commissioner Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Schulz.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij and Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

- R-2 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH ENGINEERING AND LAND PLANNING ASSOCIATES, (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION SERVICES FOR THE INSTALLATION OF DEER EXCLOSURE FENCING AT CADWALADER PARK, CITY OF TRENTON AND AT BALDPATE MOUNTAIN, TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL. PERIOD: JUNE 28, 2023 THROUGH COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT. AMOUNT: \$22,800.00

Commissioner Schulz asked if there will be any integration with Trenton Psychiatric Hospital.

Executive Director Watson replied that there would be no integration with Trenton Psychiatric Hospital; and that the deer enclosure fencing installation is funded by an active stewardship grant.

Commissioner Smith thanked the Administration for the Park Commission's commitment to working with the City of Trenton.

– On Motion by Commissioner Schulz, seconded by Commissioner Mooij.

– **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij and Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

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R-3 AWARD OF BID RECEIVED MAY 24, 2023 TO EARLE ASPHALT COMPANY FOR SPRING LAKE IMPROVEMENTS AT ROEBLING MEMORIAL PARK, TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON. PERIOD: ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY (180) CALENDAR DAYS FROM FORMAL NOTICE TO PROCEED. AMOUNT: \$306,013.13 (AB2023-16)

– On Motion by Commissioner Schulz, seconded by Commissioner Davis.

– **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij and Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

R-4 AWARD OF BID RECEIVED JUNE 14, 2023 TO GUARDIAN FENCE, INC. FOR PURCHASING AND DELIVERY OF FENCE MATERIALS FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION. PERIOD: JUNE 28, 2023 THROUGH JUNE 27, 2024. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$88,412.60 (AB2023-24)

– On Motion by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Forrester.

– **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij and Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

R-5 AWARD OF BID RECEIVED JUNE 15, 2023 TO ACB SERVICES, INC. FOR JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION. PERIOD: TWO (2) YEARS, COMMENCING: JULY 1, 2023 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025. AMOUNT: \$55,800.00 (AB2023-26)

YEAR 1: \$27,900.00

YEAR 2: \$27,900.00

– On Motion by Commissioner Schulz seconded by Commissioner Smith.

– **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Martinez, Mooij and Schulz and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner.

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➤ **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** (*Presented by Executive Director, Aaron T. Watson*)

Executive Director Watson reorganized Facility Coordinator, Ms. Jill Hogan, who will be retiring at the end of the month after over 40 years of service.

Executive Director Watson formally introduced and recognized Dr. Sharon Sharp, Temporary CFO for the County of Mercer, who joined in attendance for the Park Commission's Annual Meeting.

Executive Director Watson announced that two (2) new Board Members for the Park Commission have been appointed to the Board and will be sworn in in the coming weeks.

GOLF OPERATIONS:

- Golf outings are in full swing at all courses. Two (2) of the larger outings for the year, Capital Health and NJ State Police, will be held at Mercer Oaks this week.
- We have received complements from outside organizations about the condition of the courses. With the lack of rain, and now the very humid wet weather, our golf maintenance staff is doing a great job of keeping the courses in good condition.

TENNIS OPERATIONS:

- The USTA Middle States Open concluded on Monday night with eighty (80) of the best players in the Middle States Section competing.
- The Tim Donovan College Tennis Showcase is ongoing and has attracted 100 coaches from all over the United States. 160 players have travelled from all over the world including Hong Kong, Spain, and Hawaii to participate.

RECREATION AND EVENTS:

- **June 10:** Mercer County Culture and Heritage Cultural Festival @ Festival Grounds (7,000 attendees)
June 17: Paddle for Pink @ Lake Mercer (2,000 attendees)
June 18: American Cancer Society Run for Dad @ Festival Grounds (800 participants)
- **Upcoming (weather permitting):**
 - o L.E.A.D. State Fair will take place from June 30 through July 9.
 - o Happy Hour events are being offered by our caterers throughout the summer, weather permitting.
 - o Princeton Country Club every Tuesday and Friday
 - o Boathouse at Mercer County Park every Thursday
 - o Mt. View Golf Course every Friday

MARKETING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

- **Juneteenth Event at Capital City Farm:**
 - o Approximately 300 people visited CCF for the Juneteenth event on June 10.
 - o A variety of activities were led by Park Commission staff and volunteers. Donated books were available to children for free at a literacy station.
 - o Complimentary food included hamburgers, hot dogs, barbecue chicken, potato salad, collard greens, peach cobbler, and red velvet cake.

- **Juneteenth Event at the Festival Grounds in Mercer County Park in partnership with the American Cultural Collaborative:**
 - o Between 1,500 and 2,000 people visited the Festival Grounds for the celebration on June 17.
 - o Everette Harp and Alex Bugnon headlined a host of great acts that entertained the crowds.
 - o This fun and free event was an unforgettable evening for every family member. Youth enjoyed face painting, arts and crafts and athletic activities.
 - o A host of local vendors and food trucks were available for all to enjoy.
 - o Over 300 cyclists participated in the, *Third Annual Juneteenth Freedom Day Ride*, which kicked off in Mercer County Park.

STEWARDSHIP DEPARTMENT:

- 200 shrubs were planted at Mercer County Park last week to enhance meadows along Paxson Avenue. Participating volunteer organizations included: NJ Watershed Ambassadors and ISLES Climate Corps.
- Regulations for the 2023-2024 Deer Management Season have been finalized and will be published shortly on the Park Commission website.
- Evidence of Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) have recently been identified at Willow Pond and Rosedale Lake. "HAB Watch" and "HAB Advisory" signs have been posted.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:

- **Free Fishing Day at Dam Site 21** - The, *Free Fishing Day at Dam Site 21*, on June 3 was filled to capacity and a great success. Twenty-eight (28) attendees tried their hand at fishing and many caught sunfish for the first time.
- **Summer Camps:**
 - o The first week of summer camp began this week with the Aquatic Adventure Fishing Camp at the marina. Sixteen (16) children will learn about lake and fish ecology and practice their fishing skills with the help of staff and volunteers.
 - o The second week of the Fishing camp, Baldpate Nature camps, and Tulpehaking Nature Camp for 7-9-year-olds have reached capacity.
- **Fall 2023 Program Series Partnership** - ISLES Climate Corps and Trenton High School are interested in registering for our Designing for a Green Future program series for Fall 2023. This new program offers career skills training in park design and green infrastructure for local high school students and young professionals, conducted in partnership with The Watershed Institute.

HOWELL FARM:

- **Trenton Area Stakeholders Meeting** - The Trenton Area Stakeholders held their quarterly networking meeting at the farm on Wednesday, June 7. Afterwards, they were treated to a tour of the farm's Revolutionary War period house and garden.

CAPITAL CITY URBAN FARM:

- **Fruit and Vegetable Donations:**
 - o One hundred (100) pounds of kohlrabi, carrots, and peas were donated to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen on June 19.
 - o Hand-picked cherries were also given out to members of the local community last week.

- **Volunteerism** – Members of the ISLES Climate Corps, as well as several new volunteers from the community, helped to weed gardens, transplant seedlings from the greenhouse, and install trellis lines for tomatoes.

MERCER COUNTY STABLES

- Mercer Stables' summer programs begin next week and run through August. Lesson spots, as well as most camps and educational programs, are full.
- **Summer Camp Field Trips (HAY):**
 - o To date, fifteen (15) of twenty (20) spots for camp field trips are reserved.
 - o There are 120 children registered for July and 110 (to date) registered for August.
 - o Participating organizations so far include:
 - Children's Home Society
 - CYO of Mercer
 - Broad Street
 - CYO of Mercer at Hollowbrook
 - Howard's Healthy Choices
 - Capital Area YMCA
 - The Learning Center
 - Sprout U.

WILDLIFE CENTER

- Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey held their annual, Species on the Edge Art and Essay Contest awards ceremony at the Wildlife Center Outdoor Education Pavilion on June 24. Deputy Director Pizza presented awards to the two Mercer County student winners.

➤ PUBLIC SESSION:

- *No Public Comment was requested*
- The Mercer County Park Commission welcomes the public's participation and comments. If you wish to participate in the public comment section of our meeting you may do so via the Zoom messaging/chat feature or by the, "hand-raising" feature, where you will be prompted to speak to provide your public comment.
- The rules and guidelines for public comment may be found on the Commission's website. Please be aware that individuals are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes during their comment. However, the Commission may, at its option, extend time for certain individuals during the public comment period.
- Each member of the public who wishes to speak during the public comment period shall give the speaker's full name, organization name (if applicable) and Municipality of Residence.
- Individuals may provide comments, or materials, by regular mail to the Mercer County Park Commission headquarters or via email to Hmauro@mercercounty.org.

➤ **JUNE 28, 2023 PARK COMMISSION MEETING:**

- Hunt Barn Conference Room
2nd Fl
197 Blackwell Road
Pennington, New Jersey 08534

Commissioner Smith stated that he attended the Juneteenth event at Capital City Farm and noted that the staff was warm and inviting. Commissioner Smith added that it was great to see more people of color utilizing our Park System and recreational services.

Executive Director Watson thanked Commissioner Smith and stated that with our continued efforts to promote equity in our recreational offerings, we are beginning to see the outcome of our labors.

Executive Director Watson additionally thanked Community Outreach and Marketing Director, Ms. Wanda McNeill for her coordination efforts for the Juneteenth events hosted and co-hosted by the Park Commission for the 2023 celebrations.

Chair Forrester addressed the request for the Board to begin discussions on finalizing Board Committees within the coming months and requested the Board have committees organized by the August 30 Meeting.

➤ **ADJOURNMENT**

- On motion by Commissioner Mooij and seconded by Commissioner Forrester, by affirmative voice vote by all Commissioners, Adjournment took place at 6:44.

Heather B. Mauro

Heather B. Mauro

Executive Secretary
Secretary to the Board

