

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 NOVEMBER PUBLIC MEETING ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2023; TO BEGIN AT 5:30 PM; AT TULPEHAKING NATURE CENTER, 157 WESTCOTT AVENUE, HAMILTON, NEW JERSEY 08610.

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, MATTERS INVOLVING CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AND POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF LAW.

AGENDA

➤ **ROLL CALL:**

The following Commissioners answered the Roll Call of the Secretary:

- Davis, Horne, Koontz, Martinez, Mooij and Smith.
- Commissioner Forrester joined the meeting at 5:36pm.

The following Commissioners were absent:

- Gardner and Schulz.

➤ **CALL TO ORDER:**

- Vice Chair Davis called the November 20, 2023 meeting of the Mercer County Park Commission to order at 5:30pm at the Tulpehaking Nature Center, 157 Westcott Avenue, Hamilton, NJ 08610.

➤ **FLAG SALUTE:**

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

➤ **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.

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

- **In-House Operations:**

- o Upgrades to Catering Office at the HVGC
- o Carport Masonry at Dam Site 21

- **Golf Operations:**

- o Hardest Day of Golf Event
- o Gift Card Promotions

- **Capital Projects:**
 - o **Dam Site 21/Miry Run Ponds** – Lake Lowering operations commenced at the site to begin the Lake dredging process.

Commissioner Mooij asked if there have been any incidents at the site.

Deputy Director, Joe Pizza, confirmed that incidents of graffiti have been found at the site.

Executive Director Watson confirmed staff are currently reviewing quotes received for the purchase of additional security cameras at the site, at the recommendation of the County's Risk Management Office.

Commissioner Smith stated that our Golf Courses are in great shape for the season.

Commissioner Smith stated that our concert series and the HVGC and Pool have been great revenue-generating additions.

➤ **APPROVAL OF REGULAR MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 25, 2023 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION MEETING:**

- On Motion by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Martinez, by voice vote, the October 25, 2023 Mercer County Park Commission Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Horne, Koontz, Martinez, Mooij and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Forrester, Gardner and Schulz.

➤ **APPROVAL OF OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2023 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION BILLS:**

- On Motion by Commissioner Martinez and seconded by Commissioner Koontz, by voice vote, the October/November bills of the Mercer County Park Commission were approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Horne, Koontz, Martinez, Mooij and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Forrester, Gardner and Schulz.

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

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

➤ **NEW BUSINESS:**

- RESOLUTIONS:

R-1 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A MARKETING AGREEMENT WITH THE CURE INSURANCE ARENA. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024

Commissioner Mooij asked to clarify if the Golf Outing provision applied to one (1) outing at each course, or one (1) outing total, at a course of choice by the Cure Insurance Arena organization.

Deputy Director Pizza replied that the outing provision is for one (1) outing, at a course of choice by the Cure Insurance Arena organization.

Commissioner Mooij asked how the exchange of golf services for marketing with the Arena is valued.

Director of Golf Operations stated that the Arena provides the Park Commission a cost of advertising time on the Large Marquis and for in-event signage for a specific period of number of days in-use. The value provided by the Arena is matched with a selection of golf services that are equivalently priced.

Commissioner Mooij requested to Amend the Agreement language for Agenda item R-1 to the below:

WHEREAS, the **CURE ARENA** partners with the **PARK COMMISSION** to offer advertising and marketing in exchange for the provision of equivalently valued: Greens and cart fees, complimentary foursome offerings and a golf outing event at the Mercer Oaks Golf Course, Princeton Country Club, Hopewell Valley Country Club or the Mountain View Golf Course; which are owned and operated by the **PARK COMMISSION**; and,

- On Motion to Amend the Agreement language in Agenda Item R-1 by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Mooij.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Horne, Koontz, Martinez, Mooij and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner and Schulz.
- On Motion to Approve Agenda Item R-1, as Amended, by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Forrester.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Horne, Koontz, Martinez, Mooij and Smith. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Gardner and Schulz.

R-2 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE FIRST TEE OF GREATER TRENTON TO ESTABLISH THE ROLES OF A PARTNERSHIP TO OFFER JUNIOR GOLF PROGRAMMING AT THE MOUNTAIN VIEW COUNTRY CLUB, MERCER OAKS GOLF COURSE, PRINCETON COUNTRY CLUB AND HOPEWELL VALLEY GOLF COURSE FACILITIES. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024. PARK COMMISSION COST \$0.00

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

R-3 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AGREEMENT WITH LIVE GOLF ENTERPRISE TO ESTABLISH THE ROLES OF A PARTNERSHIP TO PROVIDE GOLF EXPOSURE AND REDUCED RANGE AND COURSE FEES TO LIVE GOLF ENTERPRISE INTRODUCTORY CLINICS, AT THE MOUNTAIN VIEW COUNTRY CLUB, MERCER OAKS GOLF COURSE, PRINCETON COUNTRY CLUB AND HOPEWELL VALLEY GOLF COURSE FACILITIES. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024. PARK COMMISSION COST \$0.00

Commissioner Smith asked for background regarding the partnership.

Executive Director Watson stated that this Agreement is similar to Agenda item R-2, to provide discounted fees and course use times to foster golf exposure to junior golfers, and expand access to golf to the community.

Commissioner Horne asked if the Park Commission has performed an analysis on cost vs. value for these and similarly structured partnerships.

Commissioner Forrester asked if the Park Commission collects use data from the program partnerships.

Director of Golf Operations, John Kostin stated that the partnerships have minimal monetary value.

Commissioner Smith stated that it would be beneficial to capture participation data to continue to show the accessibility value of the program.

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

R-4 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING FOR ADVERTISING SERVICES FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

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

- R-5 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES PAYMENT TO THE NEW JERSEY STATE GOLF ASSOCIATION FOR GHIN SERVICES RENDERED FOR THE MERCER COUNTY GOLF COURSES. INVOICED PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2023 THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2023. INVOICED AMOUNT: \$21,433.00

Commissioner Koontz requested additional background on item R-5.

Deputy Director Pizza provided background on the purpose and need for GHIN services.

Commissioner Koontz asked if the need to pay the vendor directly is a result of an out of Contract purchase that requires public bidding due to exceeding purchasing thresholds.

Deputy Director Pizza confirmed as affirmative.

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

- R-6 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH FOUNDATION EQUINE WELLNESS (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) FOR ON-CALL VETERINARY SERVICES FOR THE MERCER STABLES AND HOWELL LIVING HISTORY FARM FACILITIES. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024. AMOUNT UP TO, BUT NOT TO EXCEED: \$60,000.00 [MERCER STABLES AMOUNT: \$57,000.00; HOWELL LIVING HISTORY FARM AMOUNT: \$3,000.00]

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

- R-7 AWARD OF REBID RECEIVED OCTOBER 18, 2023, TO GOLF CART SPECIALTIES, LLC FOR THE LEASE, SERVICE AND ON-CALL RENTAL OF GOLF CARTS FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2025, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT FOR A PERIOD OF ONE (1) YEAR. AMOUNT: \$664,310.00 [LEASE AND SERVICE BASE BID AMOUNT: \$624,310.00; ON-CALL RENTAL AMOUNT UP TO, BUT NOT TO EXCEED: \$40,000.00] (AB2023-35B)

Commissioner Horne asked if there would be a cost savings in purchasing carts.

Executive Director Watson replied that the need and maintenance Leasing is more cost-effective than having to service and replace owned carts

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

R-8 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH THE NEW JERSEY STATE GOLF ASSOCIATION TO FURNISH AND DELIVER UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION - RECOGNIZED GOLF HANDICAP AND INFORMATION NETWORK SERVICES FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION. PERIOD: NOVEMBER 1, 2023 THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2024; WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT FOR TWO (2) ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR PERIODS. AMOUNT: \$33.00 PER GOLFER; UP TO, BUT NOT TO EXCEED:\$30,000.00 (CC2023-16B)

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

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

NEW INITIATIVES

- **DAM SITE 21:**

The first phase of improvements at Dam Site 21 began last month with the commencement of the dredging project. The lake has been lowered and dredging will begin once the lake bed has sufficiently dried out.

- **GOLF OPERATIONS:**

- o Golf Courses will be open Thanksgiving Day, Mountain View, Hopewell Valley and Princeton Country Club will have their traditional 8am shotgun start for golf patrons. Mercer Oaks East and West will offer tee times till noon.
- o On Black Friday Mercer Oaks will host the final outing of the season with their “Hardest Day of Golf” Tournament. over 100 golfers have registered to date.
- o In cooperation with the County “Toys for Tots” drive, complementary “free bucket of balls” at our driving range are being given for every gift donated at all our courses.

TENNIS OPERATIONS:

- **2023 Tennis/Pickleball/Platform ID Cards-** One-Thousand four-hundred and thirty-one (1,431) ID cards have been sold, generating \$100,192 in revenue.

RECREATION AND EVENTS:

- **Upcoming Events:**

- o November 23rd: Turkey Trot @ Rosedale
- o November 23rd: Turkey Trot @ West Picnic Area

- **Ice Skating Center:**

- o The Skating Center is open for the season.
- o first Annual Halloween Skate was held on October 29, with seventy-five (75) attendees. Patrons were provided complimentary skates for attending in costume.

MARKETING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

- **2023 Ropes Course** – Public Participation in our 2023 Ropes Course offerings has totaled 172 ppl . Growing interest can be seen in comments and reviews of the course on our Social Media Postings.

STEWARDSHIP DEPARTMENT:

- **Master Gardeners** – This month, the Park Commission hosted twenty-five (25) Master Gardeners with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension for a tour of Mercer Meadows, as part of their continuing education requirements.
- **Abbott Marshlands Marsh Council** – Stewardship staff participated in a quarterly Marsh Council meeting on Friday, November 17 to discuss matters related to the marsh. Stakeholders in attendance included representatives from: Hamilton and Bordentown Townships, Trenton City, the D&R Canal Commission, D&R Greenway, the NJDEP, and the NJDOT.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:

- **Daughters of the American Revolution Open House event** – This month, the Tulpehaking Nature Center and Howell Farm provided educational demonstrations and table activities at an expanded open house event hosted by the Daughters of the American Revolution at Roebling Park. Visitors learned about Lenape history of the area, created their own Abbots-zoned pottery shard, and observed the work of a blacksmith in addition to touring the Historic Watson House.

HOWELL FARM

- **Corn Maze Attendance** – 690 visitors attended the final weekend of the 2023 corn maze, bringing the total attendance for the year over 6,000.
- **Harvest of Lenape Flour Corn** Howell Farm recently completed the harvest of Lenape flour corn that was planted this spring, with the help of Mercer County school children. The seed was given to the farm by a Lenape chief who uses the corn to pass tribal knowledge and traditions to others, and who in 2024, will be working with the farm's education staff to introduce programs about Lenape culture past and present.
- **Share the Harvest Program** - School groups, families, and partners, including: Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum (SSAAM) and the Trenton Central High School Volunteer Club; are currently harvesting another crop of historical corn for our, “Share the Harvest program.” Since March of 2020, this program has produced fifty-five (55) tons of flour, vegetables, eggs and other products for distribution to local food banks and pantries. The great strength of the program is in the hands-on opportunities it gives visitors of all ages and backgrounds, to contribute to the health and well-being of their community through our Park Commission and Administration.

CAPITAL CITY URBAN FARM:

- **Community Improvement** – Staff participated in a community improvement event November 9th to help prevent illegal parking at several corners in the neighborhood of the farm to allow better sight-lines around the corners. Improvements included implementation of planters and bollards at the site.

MERCER COUNTY STABLES

- **Night of Champions**- Stables Director, Christine Cardinal was invited to attend the Special Olympics of New Jersey organizations’, “Night of Champions” event held on Friday, November 17. The event recognizes individuals who are “game changers” for Special Olympic athletes.

- **Senior Trail Rides** – To help promote participation in trail rides this fall, special Senior trail riding days are being offered this month at the Stables.

WILDLIFE CENTER

– November Releases:

- o **Raccoons** - Our last cage of raccoons have been released. The raccoons were found in August as infants weighing only one (1) pound. They were found tied up in grocery bags and thrown in a dumpster at a local condominium complex. A resident of the complex saw the bags moving in the dumpster and called the police. They were then brought to us and released at sixteen (16) weeks and weighing eight pounds.

➤ **PUBLIC SESSION:**

- 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.

– Public Comment:

No Public Comment was received.

➤ **DECEMBER 20, 2023 PARK COMMISSION MEETING:**

- Mercer County Stables, 431 Federal City Road # B, Pennington, NJ 08534.

➤ **ADJOURNMENT:**

- On motion by Commissioner Koontz and seconded by Commissioner Horne, by affirmative voice vote, Adjournment took place at 6:16 pm.

Heather B. Mauro

Executive Secretary
Secretary to the Board
Mercer County Park Commission