

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 MAY PUBLIC MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2024; TO BEGIN AT 5:30 PM; AT THE HOWELL LIVING HISTORY FARM VISITOR CENTER, 70 WOODENS LANE, HOPEWELL, NJ 08530

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, Forrester, Koontz, Martinez, Mooij and Schulz.

The following Commissioners were absent:

- Masih and Sturgeon.

➤ **CALL TO ORDER:**

- At 5:35 p.m., Commissioner Forrester called May 29, 2024, Public Meeting of the Mercer County Park Commission to Order; at the Howell Living History Farm Visitor Center, 70 Woodens Lane, Hopewell, NJ 08530.

➤ **FLAG SALUTE:**

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

➤ **NOTICE OF MEETING: *Board Secretary, H. Mauro***

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 THE MEETING MINUTES OF THE APRIL 24, 2024, MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION MEETING:**

Commissioner Koontz requested a clerical correction to the April 24 Meeting Minutes.

- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Koontz, by voice vote, the April 24, 2024, Mercer County Park Commission Meeting Minutes were approved as corrected.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Koontz, Martinez Mooij and Schulz. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Masih and Sturgeon.
- **APPROVAL OF APRIL 1-30, 2024, MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION BILLS:**
 - On Motion by Commissioner Forrester and seconded by Commissioner Koontz, by voice vote, the April 1-30 Mercer County Park Commission Bills were approved as presented.
 - **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Koontz, Martinez Mooij and Schulz. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Masih and Sturgeon.
- **APRIL 2024 PC REVENUE REPORT - *Acting Executive Director, Joseph Pizza provided a synopsis of the April 2024 Park Commission Revenue Report:***
 - “Overall revenue is currently up by about \$26k over last year. The Park Commission generates between \$10 and 11M in revenue annually. It is good to see us ahead of last year so far.*
 - There are two (2) areas where we are currently showing significantly up over last year:*
 - *Recreation – Due to the BuyRite Beer Festival and rental of the Rink to the, “Just between Friends” organization. The organization representative attended our monthly public meeting. requesting to hold Flea Market in the rink.*
 - *Marina / Regattas: Fees collected from PNRA.”*
- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Koontz, by voice vote, the April 2024 Mercer County Park Commission Revenue Report was approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Koontz, Martinez Mooij and Schulz. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Masih and Sturgeon.
- **EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH - *Nominated and Presented by Acting Executive Director, Joseph Pizza***
 - Mercer County Park Commission Senior Staff Members.
- **COMMUNICATIONS – *Presented by Acting Executive Director, Joseph Pizza***
 - C-1: DEER MANAGEMENT REPORT
 - C-2: NATURE CENTER
 - C-3: VIDEO - BALD EAGLE

- ZACKARY MILLER, MERCER COUNTY TENNIS PARTICIPANT WAS RECOGNIZED BY TENNIS DIRECTOR, MARC VECHIOLLA, FOR HIS PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM, “SOLES 4 SOULS”; FOR WHICH HE RAISED OVER 42K IN DONATED SHOES; WITH THE MERCER COUNTY TENNIS CENTER AS ONE OF SEVERAL DONATION LOCATIONS.

➤ **RECOGNITIONS – *Recognitions for Years of Service on the Board of the Mercer County Park Commission:***

- Sharon Gardner
- Walter D. Smith

➤ **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Golf Operations, Superintendent of Golf, Jay Long:**
 - This month has been very busy, as golf moves into full season with daily play, high school play and league play.
 - April and May are showing a significant increase in range balls purchased, as well as in regular play participation over 2023 data.
 - Outing season is beginning, with a busy schedule booked so far.
 - The First Tee of Greater Trenton has shown significant participation at Mt. View.
 - The Caterer at Princeton Country Club has shown an increase in sales compared to the 2023 year so far.
- **Park Maintenance, Superintendent of Operations, Robert Doherty:**
 - Carpenters have been performing on-going upgrades and maintenance at the Mercer Stables, Child Pool at Hopewell Valley Golf Course, and Waterfront Park.
 - Masons have been performing on-going upgrades and maintenance at Waterfront Park, correcting trip hazards at various park locations and pouring pads for various memorial bench requests.
 - Electricians and Plumbers have been taking various service calls Park Commission-wide.
 - Fertilization and Aeration operations to courses and fields is on-going.
- **Capital Project Updates, Superintendent of Parks, Anthony Cucchi:**
 - The County Executive participated in the Ribbon Cutting for the Spring Lake Parking Lot project. The rain garden component of the project is in bloom and is functioning
 - Bids open June 6 for a Contract to install deer fencing at Baldpate and Cadwalader Park. Funding for the project has been obtained through a Federal US Forest Service Grant.
 - Dam Site 21 Municipal sign-off on permitting from Hamilton Township has been obtained. Robbinsville is pending. Robbinsville will be sending a Resolution of support and a maintenance agreement for our consideration of approval as a condition of sign-off.

- NJDOT and the NJDEP are working together to finalize permitting for the modifications to the project design at the Trenton Wharf site, required for the NJDOT's Floodwall construction.

➤ **NEW BUSINESS:**

- RESOLUTIONS:

R-1 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AGREEMENT WITH THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL COLLABORATIVE OF MERCER COUNTY [501(C)3] TO ESTABLISH THE ROLES OF EACH PARTY TO CO-SPONSOR A JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION EVENT AT THE MERCER COUNTY PARK FESTIVAL GROUNDS. PERIOD: JUNE 15, 2024

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

R-2 RESCIND RESOLUTION NO. PC 2024-07, ADOPTED MARCH 27, 2024, AUTHORIZING A ONE (1) YEAR EXTENSION TO THE COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH HARVEST HOSPITALITY GROUP, LLC, FOR CONCESSIONAIRE CATERING SERVICES AT THE HOPEWELL VALLEY GOLF COURSE. 'RESCIND RESOLUTION DUE TO MISCALCULATION OF THE CONTRACT PERIOD' (CC2021-03B)

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

R-3 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE CHANGE ORDER (NO. 1) WITH CAPELLA CONSTRUCTION, INC., FOR DREDGING AT MIRY RUN, DAM SITE 21, TOWNSHIPS OF HAMILTON, ROBBINSVILLE AND WEST WINDSOR; FOR AN ADDITIONAL NINETY (+90) CALENDAR DAYS FOR SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT. REVISED CONTRACT PERIOD: THREE-HUNDRED AND THIRTY (330) CALENDAR DAYS FROM NOTICE TO PROCEED. ALL OTHER TERMS REMAIN THE SAME (AB2023-33)

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

Commissioner Schulz asked for the trajectory for substantial completion.

Acting Executive Director Pizza stated that late fall is the new date for substantial completion; and that a weather log is being utilized by our Project Manager to track any further delays.

- R-4 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXERCISE THE OPTION TO EXTEND THE COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH BLEND BAR AND BISTRO, FOR CONCESSIONAIRE BEER AND WINE SERVICES FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION. OPTION YEAR THREE (3) PERIOD: JULY 1, 2024, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025. AMOUNT: \$150.00 PAID TO PARK COMMISSION PER EVENT. ALL OTHER TERMS REMAIN THE SAME (CC2022-08)

Commissioner Mooij asked if the monthly amount of \$150.00 paid to the Park Commission by the contracted service provider for the extension year would be considered a low amount comparatively.

Acting Executive Director, Joseph Pizza, responded that initially, this new service contract for the Park Commission drew little interest when competitively advertised and was a new intended to build public interest in the Concert Series.

Commissioner Mooij asked if the current market pricing would be reviewed.

Acting Executive Director, Joseph Pizza, confirmed that market pricing would be reviewed for future extensions and/or Requests for competitive proposals.

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

- R-5 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A BLANKET PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH MULTIPLE VENDORS CONTRACTED WITH THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION OF NEW JERSEY COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM FOR THE ON-CALL PURCHASE AND DELIVERY OF VARIOUS PARTS AND SUPPLIES TO SERVICE COUNTY-OWNED GROUNDS MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT. PERIOD: MAY 30, 2024, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024. AMOUNT UP TO, BUT NOT TO EXCEED: \$115,000.00 (ESCNJ#22/23-12)

Commissioner Davis asked for an elaboration on the need for the Contracted items for purchase.

Acting Executive Director, Joseph Pizza, confirmed that the blanket Contract allows for the purchase of various parts for mowers and grounds equipment that perform grounds maintenance.

Commissioner Davis asked for greater detail on the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNJ) pricing system.

Acting Executive Director, Joseph Pizza, confirmed that the ESCNJ is a Cooperative pricing system that the County is approved to participate in as a member to obtain advantageous pricing for various goods and services from a wide selection of vendors and service providers.

Commissioner Schulz commented that currently, over 1,200 agencies participate in the ESCNJ Cooperative for competitive pricing and business opportunities.

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

R-6 AWARD OF BID RECEIVED NOVEMBER 30, 2023, TO SUNSET CREATIONS, INC., FOR STONY BROOK TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION. PERIOD: NINETY (90) CALENDAR DAYS FROM FORMAL NOTICE TO PROCEED. AMOUNT: \$213,332.00 (AB2023-39)

- On Motion by Commissioner Forrester, seconded by Commissioner Koontz.
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Koontz, Martinez Mooij and Schulz. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Masih and Sturgeon.
Chair Forrester asked for a motion to add a LATE STARTER New Business item to the May 29, 2024, Meeting Agenda.

- On Motion by Commissioner Schulz, seconded by Commissioner Mooij, by voice vote, *a LATE STARTER New Business item was added to the May 29, 2024, Meeting Agenda.*
- **Ayes:** Davis, Forrester, Koontz, Martinez Mooij and Schulz. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Masih and Sturgeon.

LATE STARTER

R-7 MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH ASI MUSIC GROUP FOR SOUND AND LIGHTING SERVICES FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION CONCERT SERIES. PERIOD: JUNE 1, 2024, THROUGH MAY 31, 2025; WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT FOR THREE (3) ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR PERIODS. AMOUNT: \$32,200.00 [SEVEN (7) PUBLIC CONCERTS AT \$4,600.00 PER CONCERT] (CC2024-12)

Commissioner Koonz asked why the Contract period dates were structured in one (1) year periods.

Commissioner Davis asked if the price increases per year.

Acting Executive Director, Joseph Pizza, confirmed that the Contract was structured in one (1) year increments so that we can evaluate service levels per year coinciding with our Entertainment Procurement Service Contract.

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

➤ **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Presented by Acting Executive Director, Joseph Pizza**

GOLF

- All our courses are beginning to shift into high gear, as evidenced by the revenue numbers.
- Tee times are full at all five (5) courses, outings are underway at all courses.
- Some notable outings: Hurricane Junior Tour, Boys & Girls Club of Trenton, Mercer County CYO, National Babe Ruth League.
- All four (4) driving ranges are open, the Golf Academy provides group lessons on the range on Monday and Saturday.

TENNIS

- Friday, May 31, we are hosting NJ District USTA parent / child doubles round robin tournament. This is the second year for the event, as it has grown from a four (4) court event to a twelve (12) court event this year.
- Mercer County Tennis Hall of Fame Induction Dinner will be held on Friday, June 14. The deadline to purchase tickets to attend the event is Friday, May 31st.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION / NATURE CENTER

- The Nature Center hosted their Youth Art League Exhibit Reception on Friday May 17. In collaboration with Capital Area YMCA, Foundation Academy, and Artworks Trenton, children created and depicted a Superhero to protect the environment. Approximately fifty-five (55) people attended the event.

HOWELL FARM

- On Thursday, May 16, the farm hosted a program titled, "Witness Stones". The program is part of a larger research project being performed by the Hopewell Valley School District to recognize enslaved people who lived here in New Jersey. Timberlane Middle School students researched the life of Nance, an enslaved woman who lived on the farm and

worked for the Phillips family. The school district presented the farm with a plaque to remember Nance's life. The plaque will be mounted on the Phillips house.

RECREATION & EVENTS

- Expansion of the Disc Golf Course resumed with our tree crew trimming trees, removing brush. The only trees taken down for this expansion were dead trees. The project is ahead of schedule and should be complete by mid-summer.
- Our first event of the season, the Buy Rite Beer Festival was held in April. This first-time event drew approximately 800 people to the park.
- On May 9, the Mercer County Park hosted the National Police Unity Bike Ride. Police and first responders from all over the country met at the Boathouse to assemble for their annual bike ride in support of fallen officers and their families. The ride started in the Mercer County Park and concluded in Washington D.C.

WILDLIFE CENTER

- Our Director, Diane Nickerson, was recognized for her outstanding work with Endangered Species. Diane was interviewed and filmed for a segment on Endangered Species Day. Diane also received a personnel call from Governor Murphy thanking and recognizing her for her efforts in saving the American bald Eagle.

MARKETING / COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Our Director, Wanda McNeill, met with our new marketing firm, Fuerza Strategy Group, to discuss services. We are currently anxiously planning our marketing strategy for the next few months using social media posts, and paid advertising supporting our Summer Concert Series, camps, and all of our summer offerings.

HOPEWELL POOL

- The pool opened this weekend, with 340 patrons in attendance. Season passes went on sale May 1 and to date, we have sold \$21k in Season passes. Swimming lessons are also being offered. Currently, we have seven (7) Birthday parties booked with the caterer; and three (3) camp groups have signed up for various days throughout the summer: Camp Mercerville, Hopewell Recreation Camp, and Katzenback School. Kris

➤ 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:**
 - Kris Grudt, Executive Director, Princeton National Rowing Association.

Commissioner Schulz commented that rowers who practice on our lake are currently in Switzerland.

Kris Grudt commented that ten (10) of fourteen (14) boats qualified for the Olympics and are utilizing Lake Mercer for practice until July 7.

- **JUNE 26, 2024, PARK COMMISSION MEETING (ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS); TO TAKE PLACE AT 5:30PM AT:**
Hopewell Valley Golf Course
114 Pennington-Hopewell Road
Hopewell, NJ 08525
- **ADJOURNMENT:**
 - On motion by Commissioner Forrester and seconded by Commissioner Schulz, by affirmative voice vote, Adjournment took place at 6:39 pm.

Heather B. Mauro

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Executive Secretary

Secretary to the Board

Mercer County Park Commission