

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 AUGUST PUBLIC MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2024; TO BEGIN AT 5:30 PM AT PRINCETON COUNTRY CLUB, 1 WHEELER WAY, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540.

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.

Contact:

Members of the public may submit related materials or inquiries to Michelle De Los Santos via email at: mdelossantos@mercercounty.org, or via regular mail to the Park Commission Administrative Office at the Historic Hunt House, 197 Blackwell Road, Pennington, NJ 08534.

AUGUST 28, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

➤ ROLL CALL

- The following Commissioners answered the Roll Call of the Secretary:
 - Koontz, Masih, Mooij, Sturgeon
- The following Commissioners were absent:
 - Davis, Martinez, Schulz

➤ CALL TO ORDER

- At 5:37 p.m., Commissioner Mooij called the August 28, 2024 Public Meeting of the Mercer County Park Commission to order. The meeting was held at Princeton Country Club, 1 Wheeler Way, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.
- Commissioner Forrester joined the meeting at 5:44 and presided over the remainder of the meeting.

➤ FLAG SALUTE

➤ 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.

➤ **JULY 31, 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

- On Motion by Commissioner Mooij and seconded by Commissioner Sturgeon, by voice vote, the July 31, 2024 Mercer County Park Commission Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Forrester, Koontz, Masih, Mooij, Sturgeon. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis, Martinez, Schulz

➤ **JULY 1-31, 2024 BILLS**

- On Motion by Commissioner Koontz and seconded by Commissioner Mooij, by voice vote, the July 1-31, 2024 Mercer County Park Commission Bills were approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Forrester, Koontz, Masih, Mooij, Sturgeon. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis, Martinez, Schulz

➤ **JULY 2024 REVENUE REPORT**

- On Motion by Commissioner Forrester and seconded by Commissioner Masih, by voice vote, the July 2024 Mercer County Park Commission Revenue Report was approved as presented.
- **Ayes:** Forrester, Koontz, Masih, Mooij, Sturgeon. **Nays:** None. **Abstain:** None. **Absent:** Davis, Martinez, Schulz

Executive Director Joseph Pizza provided a synopsis of the report: Revenue continues to be steady. Golf is ahead of last year's totals by about \$20,000. The pool is having its best year - we're approximately \$37,000 above last year with a week or so to go before the pool closes for the season. I'm pleased to report concert ticket sales are up about \$6,000 over last year. Overall, we are in good shape as we head into our fall and winter seasons.

➤ **EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

- The Tree Crew: Tim Franks Jr., Rockhill Lambert Jr., and Joe Testa were recognized as the July Employees of the Month.

➤ **AUGUST 2024 COMMUNICATIONS**

- C1: Wildlife Center Volunteer Interns (Video)
- C2: River Days 2024
- C3: Baldpate Mountain Restoration
- C4: Juvenile Fox Release

➤ **OLD BUSINESS**

- Sean Hartmann, Assistant Greens Superintendent, gave a wrap up on Golf, stating they are up to approximately 22,000 rounds for the month. Staff have been busy with tournaments and are getting ready for the fall outing season. The maintenance crew has solidified the fall aerification schedule at all courses.

- Mike Melker, General Supervisor of Parks, reported on the busy summer preparations for the weekly events at the festival grounds. Maintenance crews are aerating, seeding and cutting grass every day, and trades are busy with daily requests from facility managers.
- Anthony Cucchi, Superintendent of Parks, updated the status of several capital projects including the Lawrence Hopewell Trail upgrades, Dam Site 21 dredging and trail projects, Vitteritto property clean up, Trenton Wharf, and the Quarry. He also shared news that he is stepping down from his role at the Park Commission, moving on to the next step in his career. He expressed his appreciation for everything he's learned and all the support he has received during his time at the Park Commission.

➤ **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **RESOLUTIONS:**

R-1: MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENT (AWARDED THROUGH A FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) WITH CME ASSOCIATES TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF EXISTING STADIUM TENNIS COURTS AT MERCER COUNTY PARK. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$72,000.00. PERIOD: UNTIL COMPLETION OF PROJECT.

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

Commissioner Koontz asked if this is a full reconstruction of the tennis courts?

Executive Director Pizza responded that it is only one court, the "stadium court."

Commissioner Koontz also asked if staff had any views on post tension concrete for reconstruction of tennis courts.

Executive Director Pizza explained that, while he does not have any knowledge of post tension concrete, the work is being done because of a drainage problem where water is trapped underneath the court, making it spongy and soft. A previous attempt to correct this was unsuccessful and the court is now unplayable. To fix the issue, a new drainage system will be installed and the court will be resurfaced.

R-2: MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH HUNTER RESEARCH (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) FOR INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE DESIGN AND PERMITTING FOR THE TRENTON WHARF PARK, CITY OF TRENTON. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$17,030.00 PERIOD: SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2025.

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

Commissioner Koontz asked for the reason the work was not completed under the original contract.

Superintendent Cucchi responded that the initial contract was for a one-year period but there were delays with the permitting component. The initial piece of the contract was to assist the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) in preparing and submitting a permit application to the Historic Preservation Office. Because of delays on the DOT side, the submission was finished but not the actual design interpretation, which will be the bulk of this contract. The contract couldn't be extended because it had expired, so now we have to enter into a new contract. The funding that was left in that contract was cancelled and will be used in the new awarded contract.

R-3: MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE PURCHASE OF THE FOLLOWING REPLACEMENT GOLF MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT: SIX (6) JOHN DEERE GATOR GS, THREE (3) SALSCO ROLL AND GO, ONE (1) RYAN DT20 OVERSEEDER, ONE (1) REDEXIM SPEED BRUSH 1400, AND ONE (1) TURFCO T3200 FROM THE BERGEN COUNTY COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM. VENDOR: FINCH TURF, INC. TOTAL AMOUNT: \$196,192.67 (CK04 BERGEN 24-10)

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

Commissioner Forrester asked if there is any value to the machines being replaced and, if so, what is being done with them?

Executive Director Pizza explained that typically, the machines are used until they no longer function and then are auctioned off. However, the equipment being replaced here was lost two years ago during Hurricane Ida. There is still a lot that hasn't been replaced

yet. We are just starting to get the necessary capital funds and we are addressing the most urgent needs first.

Commissioner Mooij asked if there is a replacement plan for future?

Executive Director Pizza explained that our capital program is not just for building maintenance and improvements, but also for vehicle inventory. Vehicles are replaced after they get a certain number of "hours". We are a little bit behind because financial issues over the last two years. We are doing the best we can with the dollars that are available.

Commissioner Mooij asked if there is a plan for staging locations for future storm events?

Executive Director Pizza responded affirmatively. During hurricane Ida we lost all the equipment at Princeton Country Club and Hopewell Valley Golf Course. Now, when we know that a storm is coming we move everything out of the garages that have flooded in the past.

R-4: MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH YALE ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO. TO PURCHASE NEW LED LIGHT FIXTURES AT THE MERCER COUNTY SKATING RINK THROUGH THE NEW JERSEY STATE CONTRACT NUMBER 23-TELE-49718-T1778. FOR A ONE TIME PURCHASE IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$146,281.43

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

Commissioner Mooij asked if the replacement LED is replacing old non-LED?

Executive Director Pizza responded yes and explained that we originally wanted upgrade all of the lighting in the park, but it was cost prohibitive. We are able to do the rink and the tennis center with our in-house electricians because the county CFO was able to free up funds so that we could purchase the actual fixtures to do those two locations.

R-5: AMEND RESOLUTION PC2023-02, ADOPTED JANUARY 25, 2023 AND THE MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES AN AMENDMENT (AMENDMENT NO. 2) TO THE GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION FOR THE PERMITTING, DESIGN AND PARTIAL INSTALLATION OF A LIVING SHORELINE AND ECOLOGICALLY FRIENDLY BOAT RAMP IN ROEBLING PARK. COMPLETION TIME PERIOD PER PRIOR RESOLUTION (AMENDMENT NO. 1): SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023. AMEND RESOLUTION (AMENDMENT NO. 2) TO REVISE AND EXTEND THE COMPLETION TIME PERIOD TO DECEMBER 31, 2024. (GRANT ID NO. 0403.20.068622; DUNS NO. 054177662)

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

R-6: MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A JOINT FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, FOR MONITORING OF THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ONE (1) GAUGING STATION ON THE ASSUNPINK CREEK ('CLARKSVILLE GAUGE'). TOTAL AMOUNT: \$18,250.00. PARK COMMISSION AMOUNT: \$12,775.00; UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY AMOUNT: \$5,475.00 PERIOD: OCTOBER 1, 2024, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2025 (25LJFA24)

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

R-7: MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDING AND THE EXECUTION OF SUBSEQUENT GRANT AWARD DOCUMENTS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION FOR A FY2025 GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT GRANT TO SUPPORT CURATORIAL AND RESEARCH OPERATIONS FOR HISTORICAL RESTORATION PROJECTS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT THE HOWELL LIVING HISTORY FARM. PERIOD: JULY 1, 2024 TO JUNE 30, 2025. TOTAL AMOUNT: \$25,923.00 [\$25,923.00 - STATE FUNDS; \$77,769.00 - PARK COMMISSION MATCH, SATISFIED BY HOWELL LIVING HISTORY FARM GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES] (GRANT NO: HC-GOS-2025-00002)

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

R-8: MERCER COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AUTHORIZES THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENT (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) WITH CLARKE CATON HINTZ TO PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING ADMINSTRATIVE SERVICES FOR THE PHASE 2 UPGRADES TO MERCER COUNTY WATERFRONT PARK, CITY OF TRENTON, COUNTY OF MERCER. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,440,000.00. PERIOD: THROUGH COMPLETION OF PROJECT.

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

Commissioner Mooij asked for a refresher on the plans.

Executive Director Pizza responded that Phase One was a five million dollar grant that was procured for interior renovations to the stadium, and that Phase Two is for exterior renovations with the playing field, in particular, and extending the fences. Right now, the ballpark does not meet the standards for major league baseball, so this is part of assisting the Trenton Thunder in becoming affiliated with a major league team again. The administration is behind this and supporting it.

➤ **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Prior to the Executive Director's report, Park Commission Counsel, R. David Blake, gave an update on the Kevin Bannon case and shared a copy of the Order of Disqualification from Future Public Office or Employee, barring Mr. Bannon from future public employment or office.

- **Golf:**

- At my request, our golf staff to put together training sessions to increase awareness and sensitivity to people with disabilities. I want to thank Connor Moffatt, Brian Zarzecki, and Bob Kauth for taking the lead on putting together an agenda for the training sessions and finding a guest speaker. I would also like to thank the entire golf supervisory staff for their support in ensuring people with disabilities have every opportunity to go out and enjoy playing the game.
- We are preparing for our Annual Employee Golf Outing. This year's outing will be held at Mountain View Golf Course. The fee is \$75.00 and includes breakfast, lunch, and a staff shirt. There will be prizes for closest to the pin and longest shot.

- **Tennis:**

- This Monday, 24 junior tennis players selected from our program traveled to the US Open in NYC to demonstrate their skills at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. This marks the second year our tennis program has been invited to attend the Net Generation Program at the US Open.
- Congratulations to Marc, Devin, and our tennis staff for the good work they are doing in making our tennis program second to none!

- **Stewardship:**

- Over at Rosedale Lake, a group from ISLES, along with some of our Stewardship volunteers, participated in the removal of invasive species around Rosedale Lake.
- Mike Long will be meeting with the Federally Recognized Tribes on October 7 to discuss and advance our Living Shoreline Project.

- **Environmental Education / Nature Center:**

- The Environmental Education department will be providing a series of afterschool programs for first and second graders at Foundation Academies this year. This program is an extension of the relationship our Nature Center staff started with Foundations during our Art League program.
- Director Kelly Rypkema met with ISLES recently to explore the idea of incorporating ISLES Climate Corps programs to assist with our Native Plant and Garden Stewardship initiatives.
- Nature Center staff, along with Friends of the Abbott Marshlands, will meet with Trenton Area Stakeholders on September 10 to discuss Nature Center programming and ways to expand and collaborate.

- **Howell Farm/Capital City Farm:**

- Mercer County Summer Interns spent one of their two end-of-season career exploration days at Howell Farm and Capital City Farm touring the facilities and helping harvest crops for local food banks and pantries. At Howell Farm, they harvested several hundred pounds of potatoes that they added to melons and tomatoes that were picked at Capital City Farm for distribution through a new program with Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service.
- At Howell Farm, a record 700 people attended the annual Fiddling on the Farm event that included a fine exhibition performance by Commissioner Andrew Koontz. The event features judging and prizes in adult and youth divisions and attracts talent from all over the tri-state area.
- Fall school programs are filling quickly and include new content that aligns with New Jersey Core Curriculum standards. The farm's education staff is meeting with Capital City Farm staff to develop joint programming.

- **Stables:**

- Summer Camps and Summer programs concluded on August 25. The Stables had a successful summer with many compliments from parents.
- September/October program registration opened August 26. All lesson spots and Tiny Riders programs are filled. September/October session begins September 3.
- Heads-Up, Friends of Mercer County Stables, received a horse donation August 7. Maple Syrup, a 14-year-old mare, has been a very nice addition to the Stables' program horses.

- **Recreation & Events:**

- Our Summer Concert Series in the Festival Grounds concluded last Friday with Elton John / Billy Joel cover band and 2,629 attendees enjoying the show.
- Overall 7,743 people have come out to enjoy our concerts this season, surpassing last year's total attendance. Despite two rainouts and one hurricane, we had a great summer concert season - and we still have a winter indoor concert at Mercer Oaks on December 5 with The Nerds.
- My sincere thanks to our Recreation Staff, Dean Gray and Peter Bullock; Park Maintenance Staff, Mike Rossi and Mike Melker; Park Rangers, Dave Buxton, and our Chief of Finance, Nanci Lambert for a job well done. Thank you!

- **Wildlife Center:**

- Wildlife Center staff released Red Foxes last week. I was able to participate in this fun and easy exercise. If any of you have the time and would like to assist in releases, wildlife staff will be doing releases throughout the fall. We can include you on the emails. I encourage you come out, if your schedule allows.

- **Hopewell Valley Pool:**
 - Pool season is winding down. The last of our birthday parties is scheduled for this upcoming weekend.
 - This season, the pool has made over \$112,000 in sales.
 - \$60,000 in season passes were sold, which is almost double from last season.
 - We also maintained a little over \$50,000 in sales for walk ups which is equal to last season.

➤ **PUBLIC SESSION:**

- None

➤ **SEPTEMBER 25, 2024 MEETING:**

- Mercer County Stables
431-B Federal City Road
Pennington, NJ 08534
5:30 pm

➤ **ADJOURNMENT**

- On motion by Commissioner Koontz and seconded by Commissioner Mooij, by affirmative voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:38 pm.

*Michelle De Los Santos
Assistant Administrative Secretary
Mercer County Park Commission*