

TOWN OF SIMSBURY – CULTURE, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Subject to Vote of Approval – Regular Meeting Minutes – **Thursday, January 28, 2021** – 3 pages

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by David Bush, Chairman via Zoom video conference. Other commission members who were present included Kelly Kearney, Gerry Wetjen, Sarah Cramer, Lori Coppinger, Liz Keppel, Rachel Wellman and Danielle Celli. The C. P. & R. Director, Tom Tyburski, Board of Selectman Liaison, Chris Petersen and Golf Professional, John Verrengia were also in attendance.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

No changes were made to the December 3, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes. Mr. Bush declared the minutes approved and requested that they be put on record.

Public Session:

None.

New Business

Introduction of New Simsbury Farms Golf Course Restaurant Operator- Mr. Tyburski introduced Chez Hospitality Group as the new restaurant vendor for the Simsbury Farms Golf Course Restaurant. Marc Sparks from Chez Hospitality Group spoke and stated that they are looking for local talent and are beginning to run some ads in local publications/social media. They want to begin kitchen testing their menus, it will be a solid regular traditional menu with weekly specials. They would like to put forth some name suggestions to the public and possibly have a contest where the people help choose the name of the restaurant. Marc stated that they have the ability to interview and hire for every position right now. Mr. Bush stated that he would like to float the potential menu to all leagues for their input.

Mr. Kearney asked if they are looking at obtaining a full liquor license any time soon. Mr. Sparks stated that they are looking at starting the process for a beer and wine license almost immediately and will be looking into the requirements for a full liquor license. Mr. Bush asked if there was a timetable as to when proposed menus would be submitted, applications submitted, etc. Mr. Tyburski stated that the contract needs to be signed before they can file any paperwork.

Simsbury Farms Golf Course 2021 Fees Proposal – Mr. Tyburski shared that a survey of the rates of local courses was done. The 2021 proposed rates are based on the level of play that they've had, what they could expect for the upcoming season as well as driven by the budget. Mr. Kearney asked what the thoughts of the golfers in the group are on the fees proposed. Mr. Wetjen stated that our fees represent the value of the course and he believes the course is providing a fair value at the rates that are proposed. Ms. Cramer stated that the proposed fees all look like modest increases and she can't imagine there will be any real big problem with them. Mr. Verrengia stated that they went from 2019 numbers as the norm and not 2020 numbers. Mr. Verrengia also stated that he should put it on the website that there is a surcharge and put it into the rate structure where it says carts, that single carts are available but at a certain price. Ms. Cramer made a motion to approve the golf fees as proposed. Mr. Kearney seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Simsbury Farms Aquatics and Day Camp Fees Proposal – Mr. Tyburski stated that if the fees are approved by the C.P.R. Commission, hopefully the Board of Selectmen will approve them at their next meeting so they can begin summer program registration. They are hopeful that they will be back closer to normal this year, at the very least they are hopeful that they will be able to open up these facilities how they had them last year. There were significant minimum wage increases and almost all of the staff at the pool is seasonal and their rates continue to go up a dollar a year. They will be trying to open the pool a little bit earlier this year as schools will be getting out earlier. During conversations with the Board of Finance and a few members of the Board of

Selectmen over this past summer and fall, they did indicate that based on usage, that they believe current fees to be a little low. Based on that and the need to meet the expenses with the rising minimum wage, they are proposing fee increases for season passes (\$10) and daily admission (\$2). The post-season rate will be raised as well. The projected revenue is based on a four year average of participation in each of the categories, with 2020 not being included.

Mr. Tyburski discussed the proposed day camp fees. Camp Stuff-Ta-Doo is the largest day camp and was the only day camp operated last season, however, it is expected to be closer to capacity this year. It is uncertain at this time if Koala Kids and Awesome Adventure will run this year due to Covid-19. Mr. Tyburski stated he is looking into running more youth-orientated programs at the Apple Barn with controlled numbers and contracted staff. Mr. Wetjen made a motion to approve the aquatic and day camp fees as proposed. Ms. Coppinger seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Simsbury Farms Golf Course Assistant Superintendent Position Opening- Mr Tyburski reported that the position for Golf Course Assistant Superintendent is posted, the closing date is midnight tonight, right now there are 13 applications and there are a number of qualified people in the applicant pool. Tomorrow Mr. Tyburski and Mr. Johnson will recommend 4-5 people to be interviewed by a panel consisting of Mr. Tyburski, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Verrengia and Mr. Casiano and then one candidate will be put forth to the Town Manager's office as the preferred candidate. Ideally, by the end of February the person is hired.

Old Business

Simsbury Farms Lighting Project Update - Mr. Tyburski reported that the lighting project did start this fall, however, the snow put a hard stop on the construction project. They had trenched halfway down the hill toward the Simsbury Farms entrance. It is anticipated that they will resume within the next two weeks and they anticipate that by the end of April the lighting will be installed. The fiber optic line may take longer due to some interior work. The basketball lighting was a project add-on, however, they were short funds to get that done. Friends of Simsbury Farms have agreed to donate up to another quarter of the amount needed, they are exploring ways to get the additional portion of funds needed. If the project doesn't happen this spring, it is likely to happen early fall. Mr. Kearney stated that the Friends of Simsbury Farms had discussed setting up a gofundme. Mr. Tyburski stated that although the budget isn't finished yet, he did include the basketball lighting as a request for a CNR project for post- July 1, another option is to use end of the year funds. Mr. Tyburski stated he will know more after he speaks to the Town Manager and finishes the capital budget review next week.

'20-'21 Rink Season COVID Update - Mr. Tyburski stated that the State has updated their guidance for operations like the rink. They are now allowed to do youth hockey practices and high school practices. As of February 1st, youth hockey and adults can begin playing games on the rink. They have increased their daytime morning skating numbers from 4 to 25. They have had an extraordinarily high demand for ice time and are not offering public skating on weekends at this point.

Downtown Beautification Update- Mr. Tyburski shared that they are in the process of getting pricing on holiday lights for the poles along Hopmeadow. They are also getting pricing on additional pole banners to fill in the gaps between the summer when Talcott Mountain series banners are up and in the fall when the Simsbury celebrates banners are up.

Adjourn

Ms. Coppinger made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Keppel seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17p.m.

Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission will be February 25, 2021 at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Taylor,
Commission Clerk