

TOWN OF SIMSBURY – CULTURE, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Subject to Vote of Approval – Regular Meeting Minutes – **Thursday, December 3, 2020** – 2 pages

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 p.m. by David Bush, Chairman via Zoom video conference. Other commission members who were present included Kelly Kearney, Gerry Wetjen, Liz Keppel, Sarah Cramer, Rachel Wellman, Lori Coppinger, and Gina Morgan. The C. P. & R. Director, Tom Tyburski, Board of Selectman Liaison, Chris Petersen, Recreation Supervisor, John Thibeault, and Golf Professional, John Verrengia were also in attendance. Simsbury Farms new Golf Superintendent, Brian Johnson and newly retired Golf Superintendent, Mike Wallace were also in attendance.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

No changes were made to the October 22, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes. Mr. Bush declared the minutes approved and requested that they be put on record.

Public Session

None.

New Business

Summary of 2020 Season- Simsbury Farms Golf Course- Mr. Wallace commented that the weather plays a dramatic part in what they can and cannot manage to do. This year has been an extremely good year as far as being dry and people being able to play golf. Mr. Verrengia shared that they will not miss a beat and Mr. Johnson is very capable of doing the job, however Mr. Wallace will be missed.

Mr. Verrengia shared that it has been an unbelievable year. He believes last year they did 30,000 rounds and this year they did about 41,000, which was the best in about 15 years.

Recognition of Mike Wallace retirement as Golf Course Superintendent at Simsbury Farms- Mr. Bush voiced his thanks as it comes from fellow golfers. The course was fair when Mr. Wallace was brought in and now it is left in Mr. Johnson's hands in immaculate conditions.

Recognition of the appointment of Brian Johnson as Golf Course Superintendent- Mr. Tyburski introduced Mr. Johnson to the Commission. Mr. Johnson shared that he has been Assistant Golf Course Superintendent with Mr. Wallace for 5 years and that he is very excited to be there. He stated that his goal is to just keep improving the golf course. He shared that this past year it was very difficult growing grass due to the dry and humid conditions and he wants to continue getting the turf dialed in, working on their tree program and with drainage improvements, and possible cart path projects, everything to keep moving forward and keeping everyone wanting to come play at the course.

Mr. Bush stated that the commission is really looking forward to working with Mr. Johnson and welcomed him aboard.

Acceptance of 2021 Culture, Parks and Recreation Meeting Calendar- Mr. Bush stated that they are looking to keep the meetings on every fourth Thursday at the same time. Ms. Coppinger made a motion to approve the meeting schedule for 2021 as presented. Ms. Keppel seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Old Business

Review of Special Revenue Fund Subcommittee Discussion- Mr. Bush reported that they have continued to talk with the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen about what they are doing with the revenue fund as they

need to move unnecessary administrative expenses away from the fund. They just had a Tri-Board meeting this week, Mr. Wetjen is going to sit down with a number of people, town staff, BOF, BOS and they are hopeful that the BOF will accept their recommendations, however the concern is that if they take on more of a financial burden it could affect the town's mill rate. They are still working with the BOF and BOS to come to a resolution.

Simsbury Farms Golf Course Monthly Report- Mr. Tyburski reported close to \$1.2 million in revenues, that is following 2 years of break-even totals, had a couple down years due to weather. We are well on track to end up with a net gain next year. Mr. Verrengia and his staff are selling a lot of pre-season passes.

Golf Course Professional RFQ Process Update- Mr. Tyburski shared that John Verrengia submitted a response to the RFQ, they are negotiating his new contract and within the next couple of weeks it should be resolved.

Golf Course Restaurant Lease/RFP Update- Mr. Tyburski reported that an RFP was put out along with a marketing brochure. They have received six bids back from that RFP, four local and two not local. They are excited about the potential from these bids. There is selection committee that is going to review the applications and narrow it down. They will then forward one preferred candidate to the Town Manager for contract negotiation.

'20- '21 Rink Season COVID Update- Mr. Thibeault stated that the rink has been a challenge, the pause by the governor hit them hard. They are going to lose over 80K in revenues from the pause. There are still questions about what youth hockey is going to be allowed in the middle of January. They are starting to get a nice flow of people looking to rent the rink, they can't play hockey, they can only skate. Public skating has been selling out within two hours and they still have their lessons program with a large waiting list.

Ms. Keppel shared that the 350 Committee will be sponsoring some public skating sessions in January at a discounted rate.

2020 Simsbury Celebrates Summary- Mr. Tyburski shared that the Committee did a great job with this event. Mr. Tyburski shared that there was a virtual show on SC TV, a standing firetruck parade and thanked Hopmeadow Country Club for allowing them to use the space to shoot off the fireworks. It was a great event with a lot of positive feedback.

Adjourn

Ms. Coppinger made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kearney seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting of the C. P. & R. Commission will be January 28, 2020 at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Taylor,
Commission Clerk