

**NEW JERSEY RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION
PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES – NOVEMBER 10, 2021**

Present: Bill Foelsch, Denise Lanza, Rick Wright, Dina Trunzo, Lenny Celluro, Janice Grasso, Mary Beth Wheeler, Jim Truncer, Dawn Thompson, Carl Jennings, Jen Underwood, Kat Avitt.

In the absence of specific bills to review and the lack of recent action, multiple topics were discussed.

Election results: Rick mentioned that there was one bill that would affect membership, related to free access for veterans' spouses. He then discussed the results of State elections including the loss of several of NJRPA's supporters. As a result of Sen. Sweeney losing, there will be an election in the Senate for his successor. Certain races were still uncertain as of the meeting, in particular we are watching the race in which Assemblyman Houghtaling seemed to be very close. According to Rick, there were two takeaways from Election Day – possible interparty disconnect; what will the dynamic be going forward? What will be the status of South Jersey's Democratic representatives? Redistricting has been delayed due to the pandemic but will be completed before the next election. The current lame duck session ends January 11 at noon. If there is no movement on our bills, they will need to be reintroduced.

Fall 2021 Activity Status:

NJDOH Recreational Bathing Regulations – What will the status be for 2022? There were some “relaxations” due to COVID. Some of the current regulations increase operational costs for pools and lakes.

NJDOH Youth Camp and Summer Program Regulations – Similar to the bathing code, certain existing regulations increase costs. Can those be adjusted? Should a conversation be held with DOH to discuss? Review this with the Aquatics Section. There was much discussion about the applicability of the regulations to municipal operations. There is confusing information about licensing versus the implementation of guidelines for health and safety, and also between registration and licensing. Guidance is needed. Rick will seek a meeting with the Governor's Counsel. Members must be aware of the new regulations regarding “high risk” activities. If municipal operations are specifically excluded in the law, this cannot be changed by a department. Child care standards are also a consideration. Meetings will be requested in January.

Jake's Law Regulations: Bill provided a link to the amendments. Our recommendations were clearly accepted. There were no comments for the regulations except to note that we appreciate the consideration of our concerns.

Recreation Administrator Certification: We hope the bill passes during the lame duck session. We may need a new Assembly sponsor for the next term if Assemblyman Houghtaling is not re-elected.

Forest Stewardship Package: Nothing is moving. Efforts are likely stalled due to the multiple natural resource interest groups involved in commenting with opposite views.

NJRPA PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM: The previous platform was offered prior to the meeting. Bill asked attendees to review the information for updates and revisions and email him with suggestions. A working group will be created to edit the document. Rick noted that there could be an opportunity to support State parks as the funding might be available for certain requests such as the staffing vacancies

and the backlog of maintenance. Bill will reach out to senior staff to discuss. A possible discussion with the Governor's Counsel could follow. Dina suggested that we prioritize first year/current interests from the platform and create a postcard since the full policy statement is lengthy. She has a sample from Texas that she will share.

Work Groups: Most of the groups will continue, except accessible playgrounds. These include:

- Certification

- Camps

- Recreational Bathing

- Forest Stewardship – the work group for this topic seems to be County Park Directors.

Anyone interested in being on the groups, if not already, should contact Denise or Bill.

Meeting Dates for 2022: The following dates were proposed –

- January 19

- March 16

- May 11

- July 13

- September 14

- November 9

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.