**Opening Parks & Recreation | Facilities and Programs**

As the Region, State, and Nation begin to look forward to reopening our communities, many factors are being considered. As always in an operation that is based on service to people, health and welfare is our primary concern. The City’s operation of the Parks & Recreation Department encompasses a breadth of physical locations, as well as programs and community-wide events. A strong plan and foundation is established through many advisory agencies: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC and the Texas Department of State Health Services, DSHS to name a few, when opening facilities for employees as well as the general public. In this area of decision making, I am able to provide the below steps to align with guidelines produced by those agencies to help accomplish the President’s goal of ‘Opening Up America Again’. The area involving programs and events has taken further research, and a compilation of guidelines and advice from the following agencies: the CDC, DSHS, The International Festival and Event Association, The Texas Festival and Event Association, ‘Opening Up America Again’, Executive Order GA-16, and conference with other jurisdictions around the State and Nation.

As a City we have always enjoyed the patronage of the roughly 5,000 guests we provide entertainment for at the Celebration of Freedom each year in observance of Independence Day. This year provides unique challenges in fulfilling that service. This event falls under the designation of ‘Mass Gathering’ per the guidelines of the CDC, and as such, does not rise to the priority of Phases 1 or 2, of the very practical phased approaches presented and supported by the President of the United States, or the Governor of Texas. Both task forces advise their respective public health agencies: CDC and DSHS, and it is with their guidance that I regretfully have to make the recommendation that best protects our community and its residents from the feared viral resurgence, and that is to cancel this event for 2020. The planning of this event requires work beginning as early as January, and much of that has been stunted as the situation has been in evolution since that point around the COVID-19 illness. According to health authorities, gatherings of this size are dangerous and pose a very high-risk of exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. In addition to spectators in very close proximity, the event requires over 100 staff members from all areas of the City, including many First Responders to ensure site safety. In a time of pandemic crisis, and against the advice of health authorities, it is not a premise with any support grounded in guidance from official channels to further enhance the exposure of our First Responders and other City Staff, unnecessarily. The premiere health authorities that I have mentioned indicate disease models that extend beyond the timeline for the City to host this event, dictating cancellation, and doing so at this time allows for expenses to be avoided and remove any undue burdens to the budget as well, returning potential expenses as positive flow to the General Fund.

The second component I have made a data-driven decision to cancel in consideration of the COVID-19 Pandemic, is the annual summer camp for children beginning at 6 years of age during the summer. The components of hosting a summer camp, are unable to comply with any of the standing Executive Orders, or their successive reentry programs for reopening that respect the safe ability of a phased approach as the best method to begin providing historic services again. If we look at the 14-day gaiting period, and that alignment with the current disease models projected by the highly accurate and nationally respected Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, IHME, of University of Washington Physicians and Epidemiologists, the time frames and activities that comprise summer camp don’t respect the orders contained within the plan of ‘Opening Up America Again’. In addition to the individual components not aligning, for the sake of planning, camps have been included in the category for schools for planning purposes of local governments. It is already committed to the President’s plan that schools (in this instance, a camp) are closed through the 2019-2020 school year. There has been confusion as to what constitutes an academic year. The Texas Education Agency recognizes summer school as part of the traditional two-semester year that precedes it. For reference, the current, and upcoming academic calendars for Pearland ISD are included and aligned with the TEA, demonstrate the summer months as part of the preceding semesters:

<https://www.pearlandisd.org/cms/lib/TX01918186/Centricity/shared/_district_documents/19-20_District_Calendar.pdf>

<https://www.pearlandisd.org/cms/lib/TX01918186/Centricity/shared/_district_documents/20-21_District_Calendar.pdf>

* Parks
  + Open now to align with GA-16 and surrounding counties
  + </= 5 Max Group Size
  + Masks Required While in Park (Dog Parks Included)
  + Playgrounds Remain Closed
  + Continued Moratorium on Rentals
  + Plan to roll out larger group sizes in alignment with larger authorities’ messaging, if safe, as well as PPE provision
* Facilities
  + Re-Open to Same Logic as Closure: Least Susceptible Space/Audience First, and So On…
  + IHME Models are based on social distancing until June 1
    - DFNC à RCN à KAC (WEC Dependent on Programming)
    - Spaces will be partially opened as appropriate to expedite that process as safely as possible
      * DFNC – Open for Patronage, No Tours or Programming until group sizes reach 50
      * RCN – No Basketball, Swimming, Daycare or Fitness Classes until group size reaches 50, Distancing Cards for weight room
      * KAC – CDC and DSHS have been issuing specific guidance for Senior Centers, and those still appear to be closed until all social distancing measures are lifted as unnecessary; plan to follow that guidance
        + Tentative Schedule

DFNC – Monday 1 June 2020

RCN

½ Staff end of May

Full Staff beginning of June

Reduced Hours (TBD, but not drastic) and Features late-June/early-July

KAC

TBD

* Programs/Events
  + Summer Camp
    - ~100 Kids and 15-20 Staff
    - Unable to program and realistically practice any type of social distancing
    - Requires Transportation Services, and Off-Site Trips with external factors beyond our control
    - Fed Plan lists ‘Camps’ in category of Schools and designates closed until ’20-’21 school year; this is only guidance, but consequences of not following could be magnified based on publication
    - With number of registrants anticipated to withdraw, based on surveys staff has conducted, program will be revenue neutral, and we can return expenses (including salaries) to general fund: $34,214 in supply expenses, and over $60,000 in salaries/benefits.
      * Caveat: while typically revenue neutral, could have slight loss this year if not fully enrolled
  + Celebration of Freedom
    - ‘Mass Gathering’ Category per CDC/DSHS
    - IFEA/TFEA (International and Texas Festival and Events Associations) recommending against July 4th Celebrations; instead return to large scale events/gatherings late-August/early-September
    - Only expense to-date: fireworks; 180 day service credit to reschedule; not eligible for refund
      * Would add to Christmas Events or have display only (no event) for New Year’s Eve