
NOVEMBER 4 CHECK-IN AND PLANNING

GUSTINE RECREATION CENTER

1. WHAT **EXTERNAL CHALLENGES** DO YOU ANTICIPATE FOR PHILADELPHIA PARKS & RECREATION (PPR) OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS?

TRUTH

Funding—Local, state, Federal grants

TRENDS

- Continuity of Department mission and services with new administration/new mayor
- Retirement/attrition
 - Getting new qualified staff to fill vacancies
 - Loss of institutional knowledge
 - Training younger staff
- Concern about violence and vandalism. How to engage youth in positive ways.

UNIQUE IDEAS

- Aging of volunteer force. Make sure to continue commitments to Friends Groups.
- Community support: overturn negative media reporting (negative perceptions)
- Working with other City departments since merger (reduction in City budget)
- Climate change effects on natural land

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2. WHAT **SUCCESSES** HAS PPR EXPERIENCED SINCE THE MERGER? PLEASE BE SPECIFIC.

TRUTHS

- Funding for staff, equipment and supplies
- Increased visibility of the department
- Grounds Maintenance improvements
- Regional Manager positions allowed Programs, Grounds and Skilled Trades to work and communicate better

TRENDS

- Outdoor Recreation programs increased
- Greening of recreation centers
- Blending of cultures of former Park and former Rec units

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3. WHAT **OPPORTUNITIES** DO YOU SEE THAT PPR SHOULD CONSIDER/TAKE ADVANTAGE OF?

TRENDS

- Sell ourselves. Get the word out about what we do. Use social network.
- Use departure of staff as an opportunity to train successors.
- Take advantage of outside collaboration. Who would create win-wins for us?
- Continue pursuing financial support using Fairmount Park concessions model.
- Capitalize on interest of Emerging Leaders to support department initiatives. Diversify the voice.
- Take advantage of renewed interest in our department for relationship building, sustainability, unified message with more staff involved in delivering that message.

UNIQUE IDEAS

- Dedicated public relations person to get our name out for funding.
- Employing technology, stronger internet presence and daily website updates.
- Take advantage of worldwide interest in sumo wrestling and incorporate it into our programs
- Outreach to new professionals and those interested in the field (universities, PRPS, NRPA)

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4. WHAT **INTERNAL PROBLEMS** NEED ATTENTION OR RESOLUTION?

TRUTHS

- Not enough staffing
- High retirement numbers
 - Need succession planning
 - Loss of institutional knowledge

TRENDS

- Lack of
 - Staff morale
 - Equipment/supplies
 - Safety in the field
 - Communications
- Integration/matching up of titles (title changes)

UNIQUE IDEAS

- Update job descriptions to *promote* people and move them along successively
- Draft a policy to guarantee fit and fairness in assignments

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5. WHAT **ADVICE** WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM OR TO DEPUTY MAYOR DIBERARDINIS?

TRUTHS

- Get better connected with the field-level staff
- Concern for retiring work force and to ensure that replacements have knowledge and skill sets needed

TRENDS

Provide specific budgets and empower appropriate staff to manage them (for example, overtime)

UNIQUE IDEAS

- Continue to aggressively fund, but make sure it gets to the “street level”
- What tools are needed to improve communications so that messages from the top are the same when they reach field staff (if the message gets there at all)?