



## **COUNCIL MEETING**

### **Notes**

### **Conference Call**

#### **March 6, 2020**

**Present:** Denis Gagnon, R.P.F., President  
Peter Street, R.P.F., Past-President  
Carol Walker, R.P.F.  
Scot Rubin, R.P.F.

Chris McDonell, Vice-President  
Lacey Rose, R.P.F.  
Gordon King, R.P.F.  
Susan Gesner, Public Member

Fred Pinto, R.P.F., Executive Director and Registrar  
Louise Simpson, Registration Manager  
Priscilla Doyle, Registration Coordinator

Members of the 2020 Annual Conference Committee:

Graeme Davis, R.P.F., Chair  
Kerry McLaven, R.P.F. in Training  
Caroline Mach, R.P.F.  
Richard Raper, R.P.F.

Paul Krabbe, R.P.F.  
Mike Clarke, R.P.F. (Ret.)  
Phil Davies, R.P.F.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the meeting is to discuss whether the 2020 OPFA Conference should proceed due to the risks associated with the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus.

Background Information and Discussions:

- If the OPFA were to cancel the conference, the OPFA will lose the \$10,000 deposit to the Nottawasaga Inn Resort & Conference Centre. Approximately 50 delegates have registered to date. The registration refunds would be approximately \$15,000 bringing the total cost to cancel the conference at this point to \$25,000. There may be other costs such as credit card processing fees and any unknown liability for delegates' hotel room cancellation charges. Cancelling at a later date would substantially increase those costs;
- There is some risk that speakers, trade booths etc. could cancel for personal reasons or if they feel the attendance is too low or risk too high;
- 126 room nights have been booked to date. With the hotel's guest room cancellation policy being 30 days from the booking date to April 6 or 7, this deadline has passed, and the charges are not eligible for a refund;
- The organizing committee has worked hard on the conference. It is hoped that if the conference is postponed to the fall or next spring, the work would not be in vain. To postpone until the fall 50% of the deposit (\$5000) would be lost, to postpone to spring 2021, 100% (\$10,000) of the deposit will be lost;
- To date the risk to public health is considered low, however, attendance could be affected. If the conference is cancelled it should be cancelled soon to minimize the cost;

- Fred Pinto will ask the hotel if they would provide refunds to delegates for the guest room(s) who do become ill and unable to attend;
- The OPFA will alter their refund policy on registration policy for those who are ill;
- It is unlikely that if the government puts a moratorium on public gatherings, that there would be any compensation from the government;
- The hotel will be asked to provide extra measures (e.g. hand sanitizer in all areas) to minimize any risks;
- Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) is continuing to hold a conference in Blue Mountain for 600 delegates and has issued a statement about the steps it is taking to monitor the situation and minimize risk. Their message is as follows:

*Parks and Recreation Ontario is issuing the following information to members about COVID-19. At this time, the Ontario Ministry of Health has stated that the risk to Ontarians from COVID-19 remains low and PRO currently has no plans to cancel or postpone upcoming events.*

*As we place the health of our delegates first, PRO is carefully monitoring information from the Ministry and local public health units. Preparedness and prevention are key and PRO is taking the following steps in advance of the Educational Forum and Trade Show:*

- *Daily monitoring of information from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Public Health*
- *Working with the local public health unit and Blue Mountain Conference Centre to ensure all public health protocols are followed and that all parties are prepared to follow recommendations for prevention*
- *Informing all attendees about how to protect oneself from infection*
- *Requesting that attendees who feel ill do not attend the event*
- *Requesting that attendees who have recently returned from travel in the current affected areas follow the protocols outlined on the Government of Ontario website, including reporting to their local public health unit immediately and following self-isolation guidelines until they are confirmed negative for COVID-19*

*PRO will update attendees and members with any new information as soon as it is available. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Diane English at Parks and Recreation Ontario at [denglish@prontario.org](mailto:denglish@prontario.org).*

#### *Decisions:*

- All 8 Council members were in favour of proceeding with the conference as scheduled;
- Fred Pinto will send an email to members that is similar to that used by PRO and regarding the revised refund policy for registration for the conference. This information will also be placed on the OPFA website.