

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
MINUTES: March 25, 2008

MEMBERS: Chair: Ken Jenkins; Legislators Bronz, Burrows, Burton, Harckham, Myers, Pinto, Rogowsky, Spreckman

IN ATTENDANCE: **RNN-TV:** Carolyn Rowe, Don Vaectomy; **WCBS-TV:** Chris Calarco, Tony Aiello; **WABC-TV:** John Carroelli; **WNBC:** Dianna Russin, Mark Lieb; **Parks:** Peter Tartaglia, Dan McBride, Joanne Marchesani, Peter Neglia, Joe Stout; **Journal News:** Scott Blain, Glenn Blain; **C.E.:** Andrew Neuman, Bill Randolph;

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jenkins at 1:15 p.m. The chair asked for a motion to accept the minutes of March 18. On the motion of Legislator Pinto, seconded by Legislator Burton, the committee accepted the minutes.

Chair Jenkins, in introducing Commissioner Stout, said the Committee was interested in knowing the status of Playland and what has been done over the past few months. Commissioner Stout said he would be doing a short power point presentation that Playland had been presenting to service organizations and schools. He also pointed out that both safety reports indicated that the park is safe and well operated. The park has close to one million visitors a year.

Commissioner Stout presented a Safety Pyramid which listed the various positions and what was required of each person. Legislator Bronz asked who was responsible for the staffing of the rides. Commissioner Stout said there is a ride operations manual for each ride listing the minimum staffing. Legislator Harckham asked who were the employees certified by and what is the criteria. Commissioner Stout replied that there were no standards but the manufacturers operating guidelines are used and during the course of the year they do receive bulletins from the manufacturer should there be problems. The staff does have a written test and an operations test and people come in from the outside to train leadership. Playland is implementing an annual safety audit in 2008 but will not use either of the consultants that were used in the past as recommended in both reports.

Commissioner Stout then went on to list what they have done at the park so far: a new ramp in the Kiddy coaster to allow parents to escort their children on the ride; "Rules when Riding..." located at the Park entrances for better visibility; additional audio enunciators on several rides informing guests of rules of specific rides, i.e. Dragon Coaster, Log Flume and Derby Racer; guest service team members to greet guests; stored value cards can now be used for food purchases, added lockers by the Dragon Coaster and Super Flight; locking gates replaced the turnstiles on the Gondola and the Kite Flyer; affordable school and camp offer includes food and rides and one stop shopping for planning birthday parties in a new themed area.

The County's Safety Audit recommended several items to be corrected and they were done: the website is now consistent with ADA signs at the rides and in the ride operations manuals; the spelling of the ride names in the ride manuals and ride signs is consistent; the dragon Coaster ride has to have two empty cycles before anyone rides on it; Whip height lines have been adjusted to be more accurate; the Kite Flyer manufacturer's ID tag has been removed; the fence on the Mini Scrambler crowd control has been repaired; the Log Flume operators station at life #2 has been modified and the manual updated; the queue line railing has been repaired on the Gondola Wheel; the Boathouse ramps railings meet the current building code; the potential tripping hazard at the rear of the music stage seating has been removed; a thorough review of the Derby Racer ride operator's duties with respect to the ride operator's movement on and off the ride with the operator manuals and training reflecting the changes has been done; and the fence at the exit of the Family Flyer was adjusted to prevent someone from entering the ride area. Yet to be done before the opening of Playland: Signage will indicate on which Kiddyland rides adults can ride; Playland Express operations manual will indicate the proper year of rides manufacturing; Crazy Mouse ground level fence will be modified to reduce the openings to 4"; the Ye Old Mill safety announcement statement will be adjusted; Catch A Wave turnstile will be moved; the tape over the connection point in the restraint seat belt will be adjusted; a ride attendant will be repositioned on the Log Flume at the location of the tunnel; the warning signs at the Sea Dragon that are worn will be replaced; the owner of Starship 2000 has been asked to add a sign to direct patrons to the exit; the owner of the Thunderbolt has been asked to add a do not enter sign on the rear exit gate; the Family Flyer platform is to be adjusted to fill the gap at the rear of the load/unload platform and the ride operation manual will

be adjusted accordingly; and the lower section of the lockers will now be reserved for handicapped patrons.

Legislator Rogowsky asked if there was a crisis management plan in place should an emergency arise. Commissioner Stout advised there is a plan that kicks in and it was followed to a “T” and it worked as designed. It is in conjunction with the Department of Public Safety and local emergency responders.

Commissioner Stout then went over the suggestions made by the safety firm that was hired by the Board of Legislators which have been completed: safety levels for the rides has been reviewed based upon the manufacturers’ recommendations and ride operation experts; shift change procedures have been reviewed to minimize the distractions to the ride operators; ride operation manuals will now be in standard format and concession owned and operated rides will follow this same format; the mist on the Dragon Coaster has been restored; and the owner and operator of the Thunderbolt has reviewed the ride operator stations and has added decking for safer operation. The following will be completed prior to the opening of the Park in May: ride signage reviewed for consistency; supervisor training program has been designed to identify and correct the at risk behavior of the ride operators; supervisory staff will receive ongoing leadership training throughout the season; an expert will review the ride operating requirements and update the operating guidelines as part of the safety audit; the ride operators will receive training opportunities throughout the season; the walls of Ye Old Mill will be painted; the Derby Racer horse movement has been restored and the Derby Racer building is to be restored by an upcoming capital project; electric transformers will be screened where possible from public view; congregating of the park rangers; Playland management to be part of the training of the park rangers and better supervision of the sweepers and garbage attendants to provide consistent service in all areas at all times.

Legislator Kaplowitz wanted to know if all the rides that the County had purchased would be operational. There are two new rides that will be in and running by July 4th. He also asked about the last five concessionaire rides – if the County would be taking them over. Mr. Stout said it would be long term as he wants to have qualified mechanics available and once he is comfortable with that, then he would consider the last five rides.

Commissioner Stout mentioned that a park pass is a season pass to Playland. With a 30 point fun card for \$30, you receive 2 additional ride entitlements that you can use as often as you want. A six hour fun band is \$25 and you receive a \$10 discount. The Fun Cards and the Fun Bands can be purchased on-line.

A recreation survey was recently completed by the County indicating over one-half of the residents of Westchester County visited Playland over the survey period. It is the most visited park in the County and the lowest per capita cost park. Both consultants have said it is a very safe park.

Legislator Harckham asked if anything was needed from the Board to insure the safety of the park and Commissioner Stout said at the present time there is nothing – that the Board has always been cooperative if money was needed to insure the safety of the Park. He did say that the bathhouse, the towers and the colonnades need to be repaired but it is not a safety concern.

Legislator Pinto mentioned that the New York State Parks and Recreation Commission is awarding Commissioner Joe Stout a distinguished service award at the Saratoga Springs Hotel on April 1.

On the motion of Legislator Myers, seconded by Legislator Pinto, the Government Operations Committee adjourned at 2 p.m.