

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
JOINT MEETING  
MAY 2, 2011

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Joint Meeting on Monday, May 2, 2011, in the Board Room, in the Township Building in King of Prussia. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by a pledge to the flag.

SHADE TREE & BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present: Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Joseph Bartlett, Edward McBride and Erika Spott. Others present were: Mr. Ron Wagenmann, Township Manager; Barbara Van Clief, Chairman; Bob Dempsey; Jay Kowal, Township Liaison.

DISCUSSIONS:

Ms. Barbara Van Clief, Chairman, stated the King of Prussia Business Improvement District is working on proposals for beautification improvements on the median strips along DeKalb Pike and First Avenue, and preparing for the 2011 beautification awards; properties will be reviewed in June.

Ms. Van Clief discussed the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Plant One Million campaign and how it could dovetail and complement the township's Shades of Green program for 1,000 trees. The commission can work more intently with the Tree Vitalize grant program offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and orchestrated through the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society for Southeastern Pennsylvania.

The Upper Merion Tree Tenders planted 10 River Birch trees around the pond at Bob White Park last fall. These plantings can continue as the township identifies areas in parks or other publicly accessible and visible locations. The commission can also work with residents who are interested in obtaining plantings at a reduced rate. Ms. Van Clief would encourage anyone planting a tree whether it is obtained through the township, through tree vitalize or from the nursery that they register their tree with Plant One Million in order to keep track of the trees planted in the township working toward the 1,000 tree goal.

Mr. Jay Kowal, staff liaison to the Shade Tree and Beautification Commission, emphasized the great job being done with the McKaig Nature Center newsletter and website, [www.enjoymckaig.org](http://www.enjoymckaig.org) and discussed the ranger program and work being done to arrange tours for seniors, schools and other interested nature-lovers.

Mr. Waks suggested that the McKaig link could be placed on the township website.

Mr. Bartlett asked for clarification about the definition of a tree and learned a tree by definition has a single stem. The tree vitalize program referred to trees between 12-15 feet tall and approximately an inch and a half to two inches in diameter.

Mr. Bartlett asked about any giant trees in Upper Merion wired with lightening rods. Ms. Van Clief did not know. Mr. Kowal indicated that there might be one 100-year old white oak off of Horizon Drive, but he is not sure.

Mr. McBride asked if June is the time frame for the beautification evaluations. Ms. Van Clief responded in the affirmative.

Mr. McBride is trying to get an idea of the time it takes to evaluate all the properties. Ms. Van Clief responded the process is divided among commission members and is accomplished in about two weeks.

Mr. McBride asked for clarification about the Tree Revitalize program and if there is a limit to how many trees a family could get. Ms. Van Clief responded since funds are disbursed among four counties minimum orders should be roughly 10 trees for the township and the maximum usually ranges between 40-50 and it would have to be "first come first served." Some municipalities have a public meeting where they introduce the species that are available and people will decide what tree they would want and submit an application.

Mr. McBride asked if people are advised of such things as Pennsylvania One Call, setback and other requirements for planting the trees in the front yard. Ms. Van Clief responded in the affirmative and this would be part of the public meeting.

Mr. Bartlett asked about controlling the size of the tree underneath wires. Mr. McBride said it is important to get the right species under overhead wires whether it is electric, telephone or cable TV so the tree does not eventually grow into the wires. Ms. Van Clief responded the species of trees offered by Tree Vitalize are usually divided into small, medium and large maturing trees.

Mrs. Spott asked if there is a way the township's Shades of Green program could be promoted and revitalized in order to remind residents that it is an ongoing program. Mr. Wagenmann suggested that the Shades of Green certificates might be combined with the beautification awards and given out at the same time.

Mrs. Spott suggested that the Shade Tree and Beautification Commission take advantage of the township's E-newsletter to make residents more aware of such things as the beautification awards and other beautification efforts.

Ms. Van Clief said promotion could also be done at the Farmers Market.

Mrs. Spott asked if there is any way that a partnership or incentive could be established with tree services to foster an environmental awareness so that more thought would be given to replacing trees that are cut down.

Mr. Jenaway asked if the commission has coordinated with the Media Board for a program on UMGA-TV other than the notification of the beautification awards. Ms. Van Clief said she would talk with the Media Board about additional education in this area.

#### MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BOARD:

#### ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present: Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Joseph Bartlett, Edward McBride and Erika Spott. Others present were: H. David Rassbach, Chairperson; Gerald Denick, Secretary; Michelle Michael; William Carroll; Don Herbert, TV Services Coordinator; Ed Higgins, Public Information Officer; James Kravitz; and Jeffrey Pasquale.

#### DISCUSSIONS:

Chairperson H. David Rassbach discussed the franchise base that the township receives from Comcast and Verizon. The franchise agreement provides a franchise fee of 5 percent to the township. In comparing Comcast and Verizon totals for 2010 to 2009 the total for 2009 was \$505,894; and in 2010, it increased 8.7% to \$554,382. Comcast has remained relatively the same from 2009 to 2010 whereas Verizon increased 30%. That increase is due to Verizon building its business while Comcast is protecting its business. Mr. Rassbach pointed out that one of the advisory board's objectives in the franchise agreement is to protect the amount the township is receiving from Comcast as much as possible.

Mr. Don Herbert provided a sampling of the various television offerings produced by UMGA-TV. After this presentation, Mr. Ed Higgins pointed out that during the past season UMGA-TV, once again, won first prize from PSATS for its "On the Move" program. The township website tied for second place in the statewide contest.

Mr. Jeffrey Pasquale stated that the township website is attracting more unique visitors on a daily basis. The friendly look to the new website allows township's residents to gain access to up-to-the minute information on activities within their community and what services are available to them. The next phase of the website will be a full blown commerce site residents can easily access.

Mr. Jerry Denick discussed the advisory board's work on social media policy in order to protect the township's interests from outside interference. Care will be exercised as to how we approach these kinds of issues in moving forward and integrate with various media options with the new website.

Mr. Rassbach asked if there is a time limit in developing the social media policy. Mr. Higgins responded in the negative and until the policy is developed, Mr. Wagenmann has put into place several guidelines for the two departments currently using Facebook – the Park and Recreation Department and the Library. These departments have been instructed to have one way messaging only so that they will not solicit replies or respond.

Mr. McBride commented that he looks forward to review the social media document.

Mr. Jim Kravitz discussed third party printing and the upgraded Township Lines and map mailed to all residents. Since Franklin Maps is soliciting advertising for these publications, the township is saving approximately \$13,000 on a yearly basis. They handle the entire production including the layout as well as postage costs. If Franklin Maps reaches a certain point of profitability that covers their costs, profit, and mailing costs, etc. the township receives a rebate; and on the first mailing, the township received \$300.

Mr. McBride commented that both documents are excellent examples of what the citizen advisory boards, in this case the Media Communication Board, can accomplish on behalf of the citizens. They are not only saving tax dollars, but also creating an improved and visually attractive document.

Ms. Michelle Michael discussed the E-Newsletter and the raffle that was conducted to increase the subscriber base from 600 to 1,504. New subscribers are being added at the rate of three additional per week.

Mr. Rassbach further discussed the Comcast Cable Franchise Agreement. The Comcast 15-year agreement expires this year and noted the agreement was considered a cable franchise model for almost every municipality in Southeast Pennsylvania. The Cohen Law Group was hired as part of an Ad Hoc consortium of 11 other township municipalities to negotiate basic franchise requirements jointly through this law firm. This basic agreement is a template

that will be customized for Upper Merion Township. At the initial meeting with the Cohen law firm, a list of items was developed for customization in this agreement. This list has been refined and in the final stages of development prior to negotiating the final agreement.

Mr. Bartlett referred to the 2009 and 2010 franchise fees Mr. Rassbach mentioned earlier in his presentation and asked about the figure for 2011. Mr. Rassbach responded that this is part of the negotiations, although the first quarter 2011 will still be 5%. Mr. Rassbach noted that the total franchise fees received from both Comcast and Verizon was 8.9% higher than last year. He predicted that this will probably increase since more and more services are being added.

Mr. Jenaway commented about the video clip that was produced by UMGA-TV for use at the Montgomery County Association of Township Officials and how well it was received by attendees.

Mr. Waks commented that during the cable negotiations it is extremely important to retain the senior discount not only because seniors on fixed incomes do not necessarily have the financial resources, but with all that is going on in the township and with the school district, it is important that people are able to follow both the township and school district channels.

Mr. Waks also noted that he wanted the Media Communications Advisory Board to know how many positive responses he has received about the township map that was distributed to all residents.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

##### ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Joseph Bartlett, Ed McBride and Erika Spott. Also present were: Janet Medrow, Chairman; Lewis Luchie, Jr., Vice Chairman; Sandra Moskowitz; Vivian Peiken.

##### DISCUSSIONS:

Ms. Janet Medrow stated that last year the EAC concentrated on recycling education, and this year the focus will be more personal in dealing with the environment in our front and back yards. Attention will be given to using non toxic pest control, plants to attract birds and butterflies, use of rain barrels, bat houses and information on composting. EAC's Earth Day offerings will be expanded at Community Day to help residents make their yards more environmentally friendly. Displays will be placed in the township building lobby.

Ms. Vivian Peiken indicated that additional work is necessary to make the EAC website user friendly and easily accessible to the community. She reported on the Household Hazardous Waste Collection being held at the Upper Merion Middle School on May 14 and an Energy Summit at the Lower Merion High School on May 5.

Ms. Medrow discussed the EAC network and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

Mr. Luchie stated that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection provides environmental education grants in the \$10,000-\$20,000 range, and the EAC has discussed the possibility of collaborating with the school district and possibly attempting to fund environmental education teachers. The grants could also incorporate some type of community education for the citizens within Upper Merion Township, and he has obtained the application procedure which will be reviewed at a future EAC meeting. Applications are due around the second week of December.

Mr. McBride commented the EAC should let the Board of Supervisors know if they need any assistance with resources of any kind.

A discussion followed about how to facilitate the establishment of the EAC website.

Mrs. Spott suggested the township E-Newsletter as a way of getting the EAC information out to the residents.

A discussion followed about ways to facilitate information for the E-Newsletter and also the follow through required by citizen boards for publicity. During the discussion, Mr. McBride suggested that the EAC utilize space in the Township Lines and coordinate with the Public Information Officer.

Ms. Medrow asked for clarification about responsibility for publicity for Earth Day next year.

Mr. Waks commented about his previous work on Earth Days noting that five or six months in advance of the event the head of EAC and others involved would form a committee and work with the Park and Recreation Department and other interested people interested. The supervisors would like them to work together to make this event what it used to be and what it should be.

Mrs. Spott suggested that those who care about green issues also go to the Farmers Market and the EAC should have a semi regular stand at the market to get their environmental word out.

## LIBRARY BOARD

### ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway, Joseph Bartlett, Edward McBride and Erika Spott. Also present were: Karl Helicher, Library Director; Helene B. Thorpe, Vice Chairman; Marianne Hooper, Adult Programming; Jeanne Kauffman, Head of Children Services; Laura Arnhold, Children's Librarian; John M. Egan, Chairman; Michael Duris; Aleta Cantwell Duey; Tracy Pasquale.

### DISCUSSIONS:

Mr. Karl Helicher, Library Director, stated that total borrowing increased by 1% last year with 6% of that for the adult department and 4% for the Children's Department. The number of programs in 2010 increased over 2009 slightly; however, attendance at the programs in 2010 was significantly higher than 2009.

Ms. Marianne Hooper, Adult Programming, stated their new theme is "Enriching Minds, Building Community, and Connecting to the World." The physical collection increased 2.6% and the E collection has been enhanced significantly. There are currently 3,700 E books and 4,700 audio books. Due to the high demand for electronic resources, the library enrolled in the Advantage Program for Upper Merion card holders who can log on and obtain extra items that are not available to other libraries in the county. Ms. Hooper pointed out that the statistics for electronic resources since January 2010 increased dramatically with the popularity of the Nook.

Ms. Hooper discussed what is "hot" in library services, noting reference questions have dwindled since many people can go online and "google" a question. The huge spike in inter-library loan that began spiking a few years ago is still increasing, but leveling out some. Electronic borrowing of E books and E audio books is up 21%.

A tremendous service to residents is computer usage in the library which is up 14%; wireless usage has gone up 92% last year.

Ms. Hooper discussed some new services in the library:

- Morning Star online for investors is now available for those who want to check their portfolio.
- A to Z travel which is 150 world cities with information on such things as what electric plugs are needed and what to expect once you get to your destination.

- Gale Legal Forms which is a free version of Legal Zoom.

Ms. Hooper discussed the community partnership and outreach with the Senior Center and various activities offered including Friday Flicks and the E Book collection.

Ms. Hooper stated that the library has been partnering with the Farmers Market on Saturdays with various programs and movies. English as Second Language (ESL) classes continue in popularity. Upper Merion's Black History program coordinated by the Friends of Black History was recognized by the Commissioners of Montgomery County and by the State Legislatures.

Ms. Hooper noted that other scheduled events including the jazz concert, job search, art show, gardening and craft programs and movie nights.

Adults and teens also have summer reading. Ms. Hooper pointed out that this is the seventh year for Page Turners. This year's theme for the adults is "Novel Destinations." For teens there is a new summer program called "Wicked Windows" that involves solving a mystery in an artistic and creative way. The key reading program is called "You are Here" and students can read whatever they like to read or listen to a CD and have a chance to win a prize.

The library is starting to prepare for the Tricentennial celebration. Photos will be collected and digitized in conjunction with the yearbook. Potential speakers are being explored.

Jeanne Kauffman, Head of Children Services, provided an update on the Children's Department noting the circulation of children's books increased by 4%, and in the past five years, it has gone up by 18%. She noted in the past five years it has gone up by 18%. Last year the circulation in the children's department exceeded the adults by 25%. There were 485 classes and events for children last year, with 289 of these devoted to the young children from birth to six years old. Ms. Kauffman noted Laura Arnhold and the other story tellers are experts on selecting materials and sharing the information to build early literacy skills with the children. Seven traditional story times are offered during the day and the library is providing more story times in the evening in order to accommodate working families.

The outreach program is continuing with local child care centers and nursery schools in Upper Merion. The library is sharing and modeling literacy building skills with the providers of these services in our community. There are partnerships with many other school districts and local community businesses to offer interesting and worthwhile classes for the community. In addition to such activities as math, music and craft classes, the children are introduced to our



community leaders. Supervisor Bill Jenaway read, “My Daddy the Firefighter” and Supervisor Greg Waks also participated in story time for young children. In addition to the partnership with UMGA-TV, the library works with other Upper Merion Township departments and community organizations.

Ms. Kauffman outlined a wide array of other different kinds of successful activities that have been offered by the library. Highlights include:

- recent census indicates that Upper Merion has become very diverse and more cultural programs are being offered and planned for in the future.
- Science in the Summer Program sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline.
- library has a new library pet, Tara the turtle. Tara will start visiting all the schools in Upper Merion Township to encourage and invite the children to the summer reading program, “One World – Many Stories. “ There will be exciting shows and a cultural festival at the end of the summer with this theme.
- Since middle school age children are more difficult to get involved, there is a strong program planned for this age group since they want something different. The drama and reader’s theater enable them to be in charge and help with the story time. Other favorite activities include book sales and talent shows. Another draw for middle school kids is a Wii gaming system. There are currently 30 pairs of reading buddies that work together each week with some of the older students helping the younger emerging readers.
- This is the 37<sup>th</sup> year for the book contest with a wonderful collection of books that the children have written.

Ms. Laura Arnhold stated that one of the library’s most exciting programs now in its third year is the Enchanted Library where this year’s feature is all things “Dr. Seuss.” The focus is on books that have been transformed for the silver screen. Middle school students volunteer for over six weeks to bring this program to light for the community. For two hours on a Friday near Halloween the library is reopened after the closing hour and transformed into a magical place where normally 300 people travel through the library in a two hour period. Ms. Arnhold showed a small clip from the video for the benefit of the group.

Mr. Waks asked about the library’s space needs. Mr. Helicher responded the consultant estimated the library is about 10,000 square feet short.

Mr. Bartlett observed the impressive library traffic with people laden with books coming to and from the library and commended the work of the library staff.

Mr. Jenaway asked Karl Helicher about other electronic opportunities available at the library. Mr. Helicher responded that they are reviewing a program for downloadable music. Because of the price they are looking to partner with other libraries in order to obtain a group price. In addition they hope to get a laptop card and laptop for computer classes. There is a big demand for this but not enough space. This is one of their high priority items.

Mr. Jenaway followed up by asking if they have talked to any corporations about their electronic equipment being replaced. He said this would provide an opportunity to get some additional equipment and also mentioned some companies might have some electronic training facilities available at least on a temporary basis for Upper Merion Township. Mr. Jenaway pointed out that a number of corporations have this type of outreach and it might be something to explore.

Ms. Kaufmann commented that the library has a good source of creative low cost software because many software companies donate to non profits and libraries. She emphasized that the hardware that is the issue.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Joint Meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

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RONALD G. WAGENMANN  
SECRETARY-TREASURER  
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

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Minutes Approved:  
Minutes Entered: