

**Upper Merion Township  
Park and Recreation Board Minutes  
December 13, 2011**

**Attendees:** Dan Russell, John Tallman, Mary Ann Ahearn, Barb Schafer, Eileen Connelly, Neil Sardinas, Dave Burns

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Minutes for October 2011 meetings were approved with the following correction:**

Proposed 2012 Park & Rec Operating Budget noted should be \$1,600,000 rather than \$160,000.

**Board of Supervisors Liaison Report:**

1. "Gold's Gym" building – the township has signed an agreement to purchase the building on the Gold's Gym property. Due diligence is under way and the closing should take place in January. No decision has been made about how to best use the facility.

**Director's Report:**

1. New Activity Guides have gone out.
2. Tree lighting and Holiday Lights contest – both holiday events were well received and well attended.
3. Heuser-VF Trail – Dan had a very positive meeting with James Brown from Norfolk Southern today and we should be able to make progress on getting an easement for the trail. Neil's photos helped. The township engineer, Brian Keavney from Pennoni and Associates, will put a good design together and pass it on to the real estate people. The railroad has put up "Jersey Barriers" and the land does get narrow in places, but we can take out the barriers to make the trail more attractive. Available width for the trail on the bridge is a main concern and the trail may have to narrow to 10 feet in places. Additional good news is that we've heard from the state that they will send their consultant to go over the plans and paperwork with us.
4. New online Park & Rec activity registration system has a friendlier user interface and can now take credit cards, charging users a convenience fee. It has a better accounting system which is less labor intensive for instructors and P&R staff. There is also a kiosk downstairs where users can process their own registrations.
5. Gold's Gym – the bank accepted our bid for the property and environmental inspections are underway. Much work is needed to come up with the best usage plan for the building.
6. School District – Park & Rec met with UMASD last week and the proposed fees are now off the table. Youth programs will see no change. UMASD may charge hourly rates for adult programs. Programs presented by for-profit groups may see a change in revenue sharing but could benefit by increased marketing by the school district. Dave and others commented that UMASD needs to do more maintenance at the middle school gym which is dark and dirty.
7. Farmers Market – the winter market continues on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of December, followed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays from January till the regular market re-opens in May.
8. Community Gardens – Park & Rec is partnering with UMASD and the Farmers Market to get a grant for community gardens at elementary schools. The proposal is due by the end of the year and we should know the results by the spring.

**Old Business**

1. Heuser fields – Lengthy discussion of the current state of the additional fields at Heuser. They have been filled and graded as per the agreement with Allen Myers, and at this point they still require top soil and seed to be usable as practice fields. There are no available funds for this currently, however when there is money this is the most economical site for additional fields which are badly needed.

2. Park rules & permits – Lengthy discussion of the best way to improve compliance with rules for permits and group rentals so that the township is not left with expensive clean up and repair bills. Should we look at updating P&R ordinances as a goal for next year? Should the \$25 security deposit be increased so it could cover repairs/clean up costs? What are the holes in our current permit and use agreement systems? Dan is working on rules for permits, group rental rules and use agreements for borrowing equipment. All agreed that comprehensive rules should be on permits and should be part of rental/borrow agreements. We will look at the current permit and send Dan our suggestions for things to include. Dan will get us copies of the park ordinances.
3. Goats for weed control in BWP – nothing new to report since last meeting. Mary Ann will contact Yvonne Post to see what can be done in the spring.

#### **New Business**

1. Park reports – Lengthy discussion of how to create more continuity and feedback for our park inspection reports. So far, John has made binders to hold the reports for several of the parks. These are meant to be taken to the park at inspection time so chronic problems can be better spotted. Jay is making a spreadsheet with reported problems that will get updated when repairs are done and will report on a monthly basis although there was no report this month. Perhaps we should prioritize needed repairs on our reports.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Ann Ahearn  
Secretary