

**Upper Merion Township
Park and Recreation Board Minutes
August 14, 2011**

Attendees: Dan Russell, Barb Schafer, John Tallman, Eileen Connelly, Mary Ann Ahearn, Mike Trachtenberg, Dave Burns, Neil Sardinas, Erika Spott

Guests: Grace Kelly Herbert, Steve Herbert, Sprout Herbert, Connie Clay Sondhi, Darlene Dyer, Carole Kenney

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes for April, May and June 2011 meetings were approved.

Guests

1. Grace & Steve Herbert, the founders of Finding Shelter (FindingShelter.org) inquired about hosting their second annual pet adoption fair, "Sprout Fest" in the Township Park from 11 – 3 on Oct. 23, Oct 30, Nov 6 or Nov 13. Finding Shelter is at our Farmers Market every month. It is a Montgomery County "non-profit, no-kill, all-volunteer animal rescue organization dedicated to the saving, rehabilitation, training and permanent placement of dogs and cats in need." Last year's festival in Goshen Park in Chester Co. had 500-600 attendees, with good TV and newspaper coverage, and this year it could draw up to 1000. Dan suggested that parking for so many would be better accommodated at Heuser Park and will look into park use on those dates. The event would be spread out with up to 100 dogs and 40 volunteers who will be sure the park is left spotless. Every rescue organization is insured and Dan said we'd need to have a certificate of insurance that includes the township. Dan & Erika will check on any special event permits that might be required by the township or the county. The board voted unanimously to recommend that Finding Shelter be allowed to hold their event at an Upper Merion park.
2. Darlene Dyer, a resident whose property borders Bob White Park had some concerns about the park:
 - a. She had been concerned about extra traffic and fast driving by the Cricket Club members on weekend mornings, but reports that there have been no problems.
 - b. She would like to see NO HUNTING signs placed in the park after finding a deer which had been shot very near her house. The board voted unanimously to recommend placing the signs in the park.
 - c. She inquired about the goat program to battle the invasive weeds in the park. Our trial last year was aborted but we have spoken again with Yvonne Post, a local goat-weed-eradication expert and gotten some suggestions to try again this year.
3. Connie Sondhi – brought some neighbors' concerns about the cricket pitch and use of the softball field at Bob White Park by the cricket club, and this was discussed at length. The pitch can be removed in 2 hours and causes no problems for the softball teams who gave their OK beforehand. Upper Merion paid \$190 to prepare the undersurface and no permits were required to do so. The one permit conflict incident was easily resolved and there have not been any further problems.

Connie and Darlene have no problems with the cricket club's use of the field and said the club has been great with safety and seeing that no park users are hit with the ball.

All future complaints will be forwarded to the board with complainants invited to attend the meeting.

Board of Supervisors Liaison Report:

1. Community Center presentation to be on September 15th BOS meeting at 7:30. The board should read through the report and attend the meeting.

Directors Report:

1. Summer programs – there is an increase in enrollment for most programs. 1500 children enrolled to date with 3 weeks remaining. By the end of July, Park & Rec has taken in \$63,000 which is a 12% increase over last year (sale of discounted theme park tickets has helped). Operating expenses are \$12,000 less than last year.
2. Trails - The township has been successful in getting the Turnpike Commission to revise their design for a replacement bridge over N. Gulph Rd. & Route 422 in order to accommodate a 14ft. Bike/Ped Path along the east side of N. Gulph Rd. The bridge project should be going out to bid later this year or early in 2012. We have also gotten unofficial word that the Village at Valley Forge intends to include a trail linking Warner Rd. to Guthrie Rd.
3. Skateboard park – the committee continues with meetings and fundraising, with over \$3000 raised so far. Dan will talk to chairman Les Glauner about their web site, and having people present to take donations at Norview fundraisers.
4. Gypsy Woods – an 18 x 24” sign will be installed to acknowledge the donation of the land by Dr. William O.Reed. The Natural Lands Trust and Dr. Reed will cover the cost of installing and maintaining the sign.
5. Swim Club – Barb asked about a No Trespassing sign along the driveway into the club. It may be an old sign and Dan will look into it. Police are dealing with parking overflow where there are tournaments.

Old Business

1. Trails - Heuser to VF Trail – no news on the status of the grant money from the state.
2. Upper Merion Cricket Club will help with a class to teach the sport
3. Norview parking concerns – Dan met with Petrucci’s owner and it was agreed to install tall parking blocks 16-18” from the sidewalk (12” from the curb). Sidewalks are sinking or tilted down in some places and will be redone in the fall.
4. Park permit rules – John distributed a packet of rules from a NYC park for us to read and consider.
5. Park repairs – Jay Kowal, the Parks Superintendent from Public Works, will get us a park report this month. Barb commented that Swedesburg park needs repair and maintenance, and that we need to contact American Infrastructure to fulfill their agreement to do a rough grade for future fields at Heuser. Dan said that the existing fields have been improved after 2 months of work.

New Business

1. Farmers Market - Erika reported that the market has received an application from a vintner for a space and the board unanimously supports the idea.
2. Feedback from board members about summer programs - kids are loving Adventure Day Camp, and the July Fourth celebration was great.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Ahearn
Secretary