

7:30 PM Tuesday  
September 09, 2014

### **Upper Merion Park and Recreation Board Minutes**

**Attendees:** Mary Ann Ahearn, David Burns, Eileen Connelly, Tina Garzillo, Bill Jenaway, Dan Russell, Neil Sardiñas, Barbara Schafer, Bill Schutter, Mike Trachtenberg; guest Bob Littlewood

### **Pledge of Allegiance:**

### **Approval of Minutes:** August, 2014

Members from the UMPR board discussed the selection of Mike Trachtenberg, Tina Garzillo and Neil Sardiñas to serve on the newly formed UMPR Master Plan Subcommittee.

Dave Burns stated that an “injustice” has been done because the UMPR Master Plan Subcommittee did not have a proper balance and lacked diversity. He continued that the new committee did not have a representative of a sports team or the Upper Merion Senior Services Center. The appointment of UMPR Board member Tina Garzillo to the master plan committee was all “political.” This was “the white elephant in the room.” Dave Burns would like to send a letter to the BOS stating that Barb Schafer should be on the committee to represent the seniors and the sports teams.

In response, UMPR Board Chairperson Mike Trachtenberg mentioned that he was 68 years old and was with the Upper Merion Baseball Association for 18 years. He offered to give his subcommittee spot to Barb Schafer. She turned down the offer. The new subcommittee needs to have an odd number of members to prevent tie vote results. The UMPR board voted to expand the subcommittee from 7 to 9. It was decided to ask an unspecified former township sports team representative and a member of the Upper Merion Senior Center to be part of the committee this change needs to be approved by the BOS.

**Guests:** Bob Littlewood - This was a follow up visit to discuss funding for the Vannicelli sign. The new sign will be attached to the top of the existing scoreboard at Vannicelli Field in Heuser Park. No funding is available from Upper Merion for this project. Slightly less than \$5,000 is needed. Bob Littlewood asked if it is possible for UMPR to front the money to allow the sign to be constructed now. The money would be reimbursed from the fund raisers. Bob Littlewood would pay the balance for the sign if the total amount is not generated by fundraising. Upper Merion Township has never fronted a cost. Bob Littlewood asked if it is a possible for the township to waive specific fees typically required for signage. Multiple ideas were suggested for raising the funds. Dan Russell will investigate other methods for financing. Dan Russell stated that the finished sign layout must be presented to him before the approval process moves forward to the Board of Supervisors.

**Board of Supervisors Liaison Report:** Bill Jenaway - Citizen board members are invited to Maggiano’s on October 5, 2014 for lunch.

**Director's Report:** Dan Russell received an email from George Nikolaou; President of the *Upper Merion Viking Youth Football and Cheer Organization* dated August 25, 2014. The UMPR Board received paper copies of the email pasted below.

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**From:** "George M. Nikolaou" <gnikolaou@comcast.net>  
**Date:** August 25, 2014 at 1:48:39 PM EDT  
**To:** Dan Russell <drussell@umtownship.org>  
**Cc:** "jose@almonite.us" <jose@almonite.us>  
**Subject:** Vanicelli Sign

Dear Dan,

I am writing to you in my capacity of President of the Upper Merion Vikings Youth Football and Cheer Organization in regard to an issue that I believed was resolved. As you may recall well over a year ago I was asked to meet with the Park and Rec Board in order to answer questions about requested monies/grants. During that meeting and unbeknownst to me at the time, the issue of a sign at Heuser indicating it as Vanicelli Field came up. I was asked to comment and did so briefly although not prepared to do so. At that time I was told that the field had been renamed as Vanicelli Field. To be clear and to reiterate the position of our Board, we are **opposed** to any Indian Logo, spear, or hatchet replica being used on the scoreboard. The field and scoreboard are used for **Viking** Football and **Viking** Lacrosse. It is my understanding that the Board of Supervisors approved the name but did not address or approve a logo. Our organization has no issue with the recognition of the Vanicelli's but an Indian Logo does not honor the Vanicelli's. Rather, it is a not so subtle slap in our face motivated by someone that is not happy about the name change.

The synergy and momentum that has been established by our organization after the name change a few years ago is remarkable. We only allow UM kids to participate and yet are only one of 2 organizations (out of 17) in our Pop Warner League that actually have an increase in numbers. Last year our Upper Merion Girls made it all the way to Disney and cheered for the National Championship. I don't want to rehash the views of several years ago but it is important to note that the King of Prussia Indians (where I played as a kid) played their games at Walker field since 1963- the real home of the Indians- while Heuser Field is in its 8th year.

As always, please contact me should you require anything further.

George M. Nikolaou  
UPPER MERION VIKINGS YOUTH FOOTBALL AND CHEER  
610 220 0747 (mobile)

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UMPR Board supports replying to this letter stating that the tomahawk graphic is the Vannicelli's logo, and represents the history of Upper Merion football. UMPR Board is recommending to the Upper Merion Board of Supervisors to approve the current design that includes the tomahawk graphic.

This week the UMPR Department is working on its budget.

Upper Merion's Carnival in Heuser Park was able to generate \$1,000 this year. On Saturday a storm caused the event to close six hours early.

The first meeting of the UMPR Master Plan subcommittee will be Sept 17, 2014 6:30pm in the Valley Forge Room.

The company submitting the lowest bid to be the general contractor for the Upper Merion Community Center has backed-out of the process. The contract may be awarded to second lowest bidder, SMJ Contracting Inc.

On Thursday August 28, 2014 the Heuser to Valley Forge Trail construction bids were opened. Brightline came in with the lowest bid which is \$6,000 dollars over budget. After the selection, Brightline backed out of the process. Upper Merion may quickly repost the bid.

**Park Report:** Bill Schutter –

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PARK PROGRESS REPORT 9/9/2014

Completed Tasks (from last month's meeting until now)

- Every Monday trash removal in all parks
- Delivered in-field to Caley School for the championship games
- Trimmed trees along property on Lantern Lane
- Lined/painted soccer fields

Belmont Park

- Discussed with Dan regarding the removal of the edging around the playground to be replaced with "wood carpet"

BOB CASE PARK

- Prepared the football field for flag football

EXECUTIVE ESTATES PARK

- Completed painting of all park benches and park awning

HEUSER PARK

- Prepared park for the community fair delivered picnic benches, set up tents and lined field for concession stands
- Watered the football fields
- Watered newly planted trees

KINGWOOD PARK

- Removed weeds from fence
- Cut back trees and removed low hanging limbs
- Discussed with Dan regarding the basketball court

#### SWEDELAND PARK

- Cleaned bathroom's for upcoming events
- Repaired steps leading in/out of park

#### SWEDESBURG PARK

- Removed graffiti

#### TOWNSHIP BUILDING PARK

- Removed trash throughout the park

#### VALLEY FORGE ACRES

- Repaired fence

#### WALKER FIELD

- Repaired bathroom heater

#### WHITEGATE PARK

- Completed "wood carpet" around the playground

#### WILLIAM WALL PARK

- Removed trash and limbs

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Yard waste continues to be illegally dumped at the end of Raven Road in Bob White Park. The UMPR Board requested a No Dumping sign.

Significant capital improvement project will replace current park lighting with LEDs to reduce electric costs.

**Old Business:** Approximately \$26,000 is granted to Upper Merion sport organizations from the township. The UMPR Board may require sports teams to complete community projects to be eligible for this money. The board discussed the responsibilities of the teams. Dan will invite the sports organizations to the October meeting and the UMPR Board will present this idea.

#### **New Business:**

Dave Burns reported that the UMASD has begun their master plan study. The school district is anticipating enrollment growth.

Upper Merion may install LED signs at significant locations in the township. The possibility of a sign or signs at the intersection of Valley Forge and Henderson Roads contributing to driver distraction was briefly discussed.

#### **Adjournment:**

Neil Sardiñas