

7:30 PM Tuesday  
November 11, 2013  
**Upper Merion Park and Recreation Board Minutes**

**Attendees:** Mary Ann Ahearn, David Burns, Eileen Connelly, Tina Garzillo, Bill Jenaway, Dan Russell, Neil Sardifias, Barbara Schafer, Bill Schutter

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Approval of Minutes:** Oct 8, 2013 and Oct 22, 2013 (special session)

**Directors Report:** Dan Russell - Upper Merion's Park and Recreation 2014 Budget was presented to the Board of Supervisors in early November. The budget calls for an increase of 11.1% or \$181,477. Most of this increase is due to staffing, materials and supplies for the new Upper Merion Community Center.

**Heuser/Valley Forge Trail Update** - the township is currently waiting for the easement agreement from Norfolk Southern for the bridge crossing at Trout Run. Township officials are currently meeting with other property owners to work out agreements for the trail alignment.

**Comprehensive Master Plan** - The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to approve the T&M Proposal at their November business meeting.

**UMPR Brochure** - The Winter Activity Guide has gone to the printer and will be available after the Thanksgiving holiday.

**New Business:** Updates from Upper Merion Organizations the UMPR Board. Checks for the organizations will be issued this month or next.

**King of Prussia Soccer Club:** Representatives, Maura Buri & Andy Bahmueller - The goal is to grow the number of participants by creating opportunity for people to try playing to see if they would like to join. Currently more than four hundred soccer players use Baxter Field. Ninety-five percent of the players are township residents. The season is six months of the year. The KOP Soccer Club provides for a large portion of Baxter's expenses. There is limited use of Baxter by other organizations. KOPSC supports the area soccer community and offers scholarships.

**Soccer Goals:**

- To provide recreational soccer programs for community members.
- To provide educational development in team play and fair play for community members.
- To provide travel soccer as an option at a competitive level.
- To provide a framework in all programs for individual growth and responsibility.
- To provide facilities to meet the needs of our participants.

**Upper Merion Crew Boosters:** Representatives, Mike Buce & Barb Linnenbaugh - This organization is comprised of the parents of Upper Merion rowers. The team is comprised of UMAHS students. Currently there are 46 rowers. It is anticipated that there may be up to 60 rowers in the future. The group is looking to have young rowers as a farm team. A few of the rowers have made to championship events.

They received a \$5,000 grant which was used for oars. This year's regatta comprised 14 schools and 100 boats. Boats cost between \$10,000 and \$35,000. There are spring and fall regatta seasons. The Upper Merion Rowing Club has been in existence for 50 years. Other clubs have asked to be part of the Upper Merion location. The boathouse is nearing the end of its lifespan.

**Valley Forge Generals:** Representatives, Rich Lachenmayer & Pedro Lopez - American Legion Baseball - 18 players, all players are local. The team only uses wooden bats. Last year they were second in the championship tournament. Home field is Upper Merion High School Field. Approximately 30 games are scheduled.

**Goal:** to promote baseball in Upper Merion Township by providing the opportunity for boys 16 to 19 years old to play in one of the most prestigious baseball organizations in the US. To strive to provide the boys with the best and safest equipment and teaching tool that can be provided.

**Upper Merion Aquatic Club:** Representatives, Melissa Faw & Michael Frebowitz - 240 members, who are swimmers, divers or both with ages ranging from 6 to 18 year old. UMAC is a member of the Suburban Aquatic League (SAL). SAL is composed of 22 teams organized into four geographic divisions in Bucks, Montgomery and Delaware Counties. The season runs from early November through February. In addition to and in support of the league activities, UMAC sponsors swimming lessons and competitive swimming and diving clinics. The Long Course Season runs from June through August and offers additional training opportunities. UMAC is all-inclusive, does not have tryouts and offers a few scholarships. There are 15 paid coaches over the course of the year.

**Upper Merion Lacrosse:** Representative, Jose Almonte - In 2013, 95% of players are Upper Merion residents. Next year the percentage is expected to be 100%. The ratio of male to female players is 50:50. They range from kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Equipment has been upgraded to the new concussion standards. Currently 200 elementary school students participate in clinics to determine if they are interested. Every year the team hosts a tournament. It is a fund-raising event to help cover costs. They play at Heuser and love the facilities. High School players help younger players learn Lacrosse skills as part of the mentoring program. Older players can receive support to become referees. Equipment is available as part of a loaner program.

**King of Prussia Football Association:** Representatives, George Nikolaou & Harry Arena - Membership is 100% Upper Merion Area School District students. Players range from ages 6 to 13. With 5 football teams (flag, 80lb, 90lb, 105lb, 120lb), and 2 cheer teams. The number of football players is ~110, and the cheerleaders are ~25. The team has exceeded expectations.

All coaches are trained in USA football technique. KOP Football Association is a member of the Pop Warner Bux Mont League, the largest league in the US. Rules include that every child must play. Bux Mont Pop Warner organization participates in the Challenger Program for special needs children. No one is turned away. Approximately 15 players received waivers for 100% of the cost. There are ~25 football coaches and ~8 cheerleading coaches.

Last year 100 helmets were replaced because of new safety standards. New safer pants were purchased.

**Upper Merion Spring:** Representative, Linda Moser - Upper Merion Special Education Parent Resource and Interest Group - 90 percent Upper Merion. SNAP Special Needs Adaptive Programs Equipment was purchased. SNAP Basketball program supports children to enable all participants to be able to score.

**Goals:**

Providing parents with a network of support, information and training.

Encouraging inclusion through an atmosphere of open communication, understanding and mutual respect among all children, parents, educators, professionals and the community at large.

Collaborating with the parent teacher groups, school councils, school boards and other school organizations towards the betterment of education in Upper Merion.

Providing opportunities to increase awareness within our community.

Improving the quality of our special education programs.

Promoting Upper Merion Special education Parent Resource and Interest group in the school district and community of Upper Merion.

**Upper Merion Youth Wrestling Association:** Representatives, Robert Wochele & Harry Arena – Approximately 50 participants ranging from 5 to 18 years old. Four wrestlers are female. The organization provides a 3-week clinic for young people to determine if they are interested.

Each year Upper Merion is the location for the district qualifier tournament. Last year's tournament hosted 400 wrestlers. Practice sessions are at Upper Merion Middle School, twice a week.

Open to all residents of Upper Merion Township and the Boroughs of Bridgeport and West Conshohocken. The majority of the participants are residents of Upper Merion and the Upper Merion Area School District. The season runs from November to April.

**Goals:**

To offer one \$500.00 scholarship to a graduating senior who has participated in the wrestling program for at least three years.

To supply UM Youth club with t-shirts and uniforms for practice and meets.

To increase positive attitudes by the public towards wrestling.

**Park Report: Bill Schutter -**

**Bob Holland Park:** Repaired the turf damage that was done by vandals.

**Bob White Park:** Repaired the damaged seesaw for the second time this year.

**Executive Estates Park:**

Painted the ceiling of the pavilion.

Removed the old picnic table.

Removed the old bench.

Planning to replace the picnic table and the bench in the spring.

**Swedeland Park:**

Filled holes in various locations throughout the park.

**Tabak Park:**

Driveway path has been repaired.

**Township Building Park:**

Removed the fountains from the pond.

**Walker Field:**

Delivered wood chips (wood carpet) for the volunteers to spread throughout the playground area.  
Delivered paint and painting supplies for the volunteers to paint the back boards of the basketball courts.

**Other Business:**

**Shade Tree Committee:**

Completed the preparation for the 38 trees to be planted at Heuser Park. Completed the preparation for the 9 trees to be planted at the corner of Ross and Henderson Roads and the preparation for 6 trees to be planted at Executive Estates. Waiting for the delivery of the donated tree from Davey Tree Company that will be planted at the Township Park.

**Tricentennial Bonfire:**

A Tricentennial bonfire is planned for Upper Merion Township Park on Dec 6th 8:00  
The park board voted unanimously that a bonfire is not in the best interest of the park.

**SEPTA:** An extension of the Norristown High Speed Line is being considered that would cross some parkland. We will hear more from SEPTA in February.

Neil Sardiñas

*Neil Sardiñas*