

## UPPER MERION PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

7:30 PM

**Attendees: Mike Trachtenberg, Mary Ann Ahearn, Paul Salamy, Deena Newman, Neil Sardiñas, Dana Augustine, Dan Russell**

**Guest: Gilmore and Associates: Chris Burkett**

1. **Approval of the December 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 5-0.**
2. **Reorganization**
  - Motion to make Paul temporary chair for reorganization
  - Neil nominated Mike as chair, approved 5-0
  - Neil nominated Mary Ann for vice chair, approved 5-0
  - Neil nominated Deena for secretary, approved 5-0
  - Deena nominated Paul for community center liaison, approved 5-0
3. **Guests –Gilmore and Associates: Chris Burkett**

Residents: Nick Falcone-364 Covered Bridge Rd., Jim Shelton, Susan Shelton-316 Covered Bridge Road, Kim Bullock, Colleen Bullock-348 Covered Bridge Rd, Helen Rooney-448 Springhouse Rd., Mindy Wood 513 Tulip Lane, David Craig-316 Covered Bridge Rd,.
4. **2020 Year in Review**
  - Board reorganization in January 2020
    - Chairperson: Michael Trachtenberg
    - Vice Chairperson: Mary Ann Ahearn
    - Secretary: Dana Augustine
  - We had a presentation by pickleball enthusiasts requesting solutions at Bob White Park & consideration of courts in Phase 2 development at Heuser Park. UMASD will line their new courts and any rehabbed courts in the township will include pickleball lines.
  - Permits approved for Schuylkill River West Trail to Valley Forge Park.
  - Meetings were held with Upper Merion Area School District for scheduling and maintenance sharing of athletic fields.
  - Discussions held on Norfolk Southern Land Opportunity.
  - Roofing project at Community Center.
  - Pool feasibility study.
  - Discussions continued for possible dog park site.
  - Meetings cancelled in April and May due to Covid-19.
  - Meetings held on social media.
  - Community Center Closes for Covid-19; opens and closes based on state/county mandates and outbreaks; playgrounds, playing fields also closed/opened per state and

county mandates; some closings of sports activities by our youth leagues; Community Center suffered cancellations and freezing of memberships.

- Crow Creek Trail- permits received, contract awarded and construction began.
- Playground renovations continued.
- A forum for over 90 residents of the Township was held concerning Catalyst and Bob White Park.

#### **5. Board of Supervisor's Liaison Report- Tina Garzillo**

- Catalyst Project
  - Tina thanked us for our time. The entire proposal from Catalyst was rejected.
- Some employees were furloughed and took early retirement packages. Lost about a dozen employees. Parks and recreation department had 3 losses. Dan quickly made reassignments.
- MLK annual celebration on Jan 21<sup>st</sup> will be virtual this year and will be televised at 6pm through township and school district website.
  - Different structure this year. The theme: A Time to Dream and a Call to Action.
  - A day of service this coming Monday Jan 18<sup>th</sup> from 12pm-3pm at the township building. Rain date Sunday January 24<sup>th</sup>. Goal is to clean-up litter.
- Christmas tree pickup-leave out at curb for the entire month of January and trucks will pick up as they see them (no call necessary).
- PennDOT has started road construction on Rt 320 by hanging rock. Due to be completed by November 2021.
- There are 3 citizen boards with openings: Farmers Market Advisory board, parks and recreation board, and ECDC board.
- A citizen reached out to the supervisors to honor residents who lost their lives due to COVID-19. To date we lost 23 residents. This was scheduled for Jan 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm. There will be a candlelight vigil at the township building.

#### **6. Park and Recreation Director's Report- Dan Russell**

- Staff layoffs included 3 full time positions: Farmers market manager, assistant director of parks and recreations, and a full-time front desk staff manager at the community center. There has been a lot of communication regarding the delegation of responsibilities.
- Norfolk Southern is causing some problems with finishing the connection of the trail but Dan is working through this and feels confident about the completion.
- Dan spoke to Mike Fabrizio, the new sports director of Upper Merion, regarding park field usage for spring sports from the school district. A meeting will be set up in the future.
  - Paul Salamy will continue with regularly scheduled field maintenance at Heuser.
- An Eagle Scout is interested in putting a box for infield mix at Heuser Park (10x10x5 box instead of using parking lot.) He will be invited next month after talking with park maintenance.
- This Thursday night, the consultants for the pool feasibility study will give their final findings.
- Dan will be out of the office for medical leave and will be working from home once recuperated.

## 7. Park Maintenance Report- Jerry Recupido

## 8. Old Business

- Crow Creek

- Construction started December 2, 2020. Started construction at Schuylkill trail. Contractor has finished trail clearing at Bob Case and Beidler Road down to Anderson. Cover Bridge Rd and Hansen Cul de Sac has a temporary bridge and completed clearing. It takes 10-12 weeks to complete the bridge. This week they will start the clearing adjacent to the community center and grade trail. Shop drawings of retaining wall have begun.
- The contract is set up to run until the end of July 2021. He expects to have all of the trail stoned, cleared, and ready for paving in March. Walker Park will begin after Volpe Commons.
- Shade Tree Commission has been working closely with this project.
- Susan Shelton-The bridge is being built directly behind her house. She would like to know what the bridge will look like and if the chain link fence will be included.
  - It will be a flat 80 ft span, no chain links proposed. Will be brought in 2 pieces. Dark brown.
- Jim Shelton- He was unaware of the clearing and that this project will be taking place. He was upset that he lost many of the trees he was maintaining and that there was very little communication. He would like to know what the restoration plan might be for the clearing. He expressed some erosion control concerns and what the timing would be for this.
  - Concerns were heard and plans to work with residents in the future will be planned.
- Nick Falcone- In February 2019 the trail began to widen and trees were bulldozed and now more trees are being lost and privacy was lost. The street level at covered bridge-parking is a concern, will there be signs that people can't park there? Is there a way to address people crossing and the road and vehicular traffic? Will the crosswalk be raised?
  - Police will be notified regarding this concern, but may need to wait to see if this concern becomes a reality.
- Kim Bullock-What is the usage for this trail and what is the width? She would like a copy of the survey and wants to know if it is right at the back of her property line. Now the riverbed has been redirected and she is concerned that they will have problems with flooding in her home going forward.
- Helen Rooney-Where are the plans for the completed trail for viewing? Will be online soon. Where does trail begin and end? Will there be lights on the wooded part of the trail? No. Will Crow Creek be cleared of all the trees that are cluttering the waterway or in the woods? No new clearing except the trail. Completion date? July 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Mindy Wood 513 Tulip Lane- Asked a question about the retention pond in the Volpe Commons area.
- Colleen Bullock- She is upset with the lack of transparency with this project.
- Helen Rooney- Will there be tennis courts at Volpe Commons? No. There are many trees inside of the creek which is likely contributed to the properties being flooded, can they be removed? There is also a great amount of trash through

the trail which she has been picking up and leaving bags of trash for the township to pick up. After the last rainstorm the trash was three times the amount of trash there now.

- Tina will reach out to public works. We will continue to have bi-yearly cleanups. Thank you for your hard work!

**9. Community Center Complex Advisory Board Report- Deena Newman**

- Passholder cancellations -984 – 34.4% of original 2859 when originally closed. Over 300 new cancellations since last month.
- There was a subcommittee meeting regarding possibly reducing the number of subcategories for membership type and a discussion about future raising the price of the community center membership.
  - Identified one easy way to encourage more yearly membership is to raise the fee of monthly rates, especially since community center is currently getting charged service fees monthly.
- Free Passholder Program presented at the Township Supervisor meeting and the program was approved.

Adjournment: 9:59 PM

Kindly Submitted,  
Deena Newman