

UPPER MERION PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

7:30 PM

Attendees: Mike Trachtenberg, Mary Ann Ahearn, Deena Newman, Neil Sardifias, Dan Russell, Paul Salamy, Holly Meade, Tina Garzillo

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of the December 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 6-0.

3. Reorganization of the Board

- Paul was temporarily leading the board for voting purposes.
- Mike Trachtenberg was nominated for the Chairman of the Parks and Recs Board. Voted and approved 6-0
- Mary Ann Ahearn was nominated to be Vice Chair. Voted and approved 6-0
- Holly Meade was nominated to be the Secretary. Voted and approved 6-0

4. Guests

- Barley Van Clief
 - The deadline for purchasing a tree is approaching. You have a greater chance of getting your preferred species the sooner you make a request.
- Any update on erosion blanket update for the Crow Creek Trail?
 - Not right now.
- Working with an Eagle Scout to look at a project with the vines at Bob Case regarding vines that are jeopardizing the trees at the park. The Scout's leader wants to add something more ecologically significant to the project.

5. 2021 Year in Review

- Dana Augustine resigned from the Board after moving from the area.
- Catalyst proposal was rejected by the Board of Supervisors.
- Staff layoffs in Park & Rec Dept.
- Ongoing discussions with the Upper Merion Area School District on field usage, and maintenance.
- Box at Heuser Park was constructed by an Eagle Scout for infield mix.
- Crow Creek Trail construction began. We hosted a number of residents adjacent to the trail who voiced their concerns. This included the Volpe Commons area. Discussion by Board on improving communication to residents affected by projects. Also, had a project manager assigned with responsibility for carrying out all aspects of the project.
- We resumed meeting in person at the Community Center.
- The number of softball fields in community continue to dwindle. Very limited resources for the summer leagues.

- Registration at the Community Pool at all time high.
- Mask policy still in effect for all Township buildings including the Community Center.
- Our park inspections continued and Jerry and his staff followed through with every concern we pointed out.
- Township Manager Tony Hamaday and Director of Public Works Geoff Hickman attended our May meeting discussing a number of topics including communication, project leadership, and the current state of our existing trails.
- We received a BCA grant for 3 park benches for our trails.
- The Upper Merion Youth Athletic Association has been resurrected and in the process of formalizing the organization to represent all of the independent youth sports organizations in Upper Merion.
- Agreement with Rosemont College Baseball to become a partner with the diamond at Heuser Park.
- Act 65 Agenda initiated for meetings.
- Heuser II survey completed and made public at the Township Community Day.
- Park & Rec Board and Shade Tree Board began having a liaison attending each other's meetings as we work together on so many projects.
- Two new Board members were added: Holly Meade and Michael Cusack

6. Board of Supervisor's Liaison Report-Tina Garzillo

- The Board of Supervisors reorganized. Carole Kenney is the chair and Tina is the vice-chair.
 - First time in Upper Merion history that there are two women in these roles together.
- There are many vacancies on the citizen boards including the Community Center Advisory Board, EAC, The Farmer's Market, Media Communication, Public Safety, Shade Tree Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, ECDC, Storm Water & Sewer, Transportation Authority, and Historical Association
- There is a structure that was created by the Community Garden to secure trees for future project.
- The connection for the Schuylkill River Trail started.
- Top Golf has started demolition. There will be doing a lot of trail work as well to connect other parks.
- The compose site \$10 fee was eliminated for residents. It is limited to residents or contractors for our residents. They would like to reduce the size of the pile to prepare for Heuser Phase 2.
- The winter farmer's market continues biweekly.
- On December 16th, KOP BID had a celebration for their 10th anniversary. The BOS was awarded a leadership award.
- A senior planner was hired for the township.
 - Ashton Jones is beginning next week.

7. Park & Recreation Director's Report-Dan Russell

- The Schuylkill River Trail connection was delayed a couple of weeks. A preconstruction meeting was completed yesterday. A lot of the work is related to a wall that was made

from a particular material that is unavailable to obtain right now. The contractor is proposing to use a different material and is waiting for approval on this.

- There have been some COVID issues at the community center. There are currently 3 part-time front desk staff out with COVID. The full-time staff has been stepping up to cover hours.
 - The membership of community center continues to go up. Every week the number improves since March 2020.
 - The program attendance is low.
 - Farmer's Market-vendor interest is growing.
- February 10th is the goal to have the summer camp guide. They are bringing back the program preview night for residents to meet directors of the programs.
- There will be a meeting with the school district and Rosemont College to plan a schedule for Heuser Park.
- Concert Under the Stars is not available again due to lack of budgets but Parks and Recs is looking for other creative ways to do some sort of concert summer series alternative.

8. New Business

- BCA Grant applications are open. Do we have any ideas to apply for anything?
 - Signage board.
 - Replace lights at the park that was cut from the budget.

9. Old Business

- Tabak Park
 - Do we want to plant a berm?
- The Upper Merion Youth Athletic Association Update
 - Trying to put resources together and raise money by having families completing surveys. The swim team raised over \$1000 but all of the other teams raised less than \$100.
 - Lacrosse and Baseball may be sponsored and awarded money from CHOP.

10. Community Center Complex Advisory Board Report- Paul Salamy

- Pickleball use is still in high demand.

11. Public Comment- None

12. Adjournment

Adjournment: 8:28 PM
Kindly Submitted
Deena Newman