

## UPPER MERION PARKS & RECREATION VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

7:30 PM

**Attendees:** Mike Trachtenberg, MaryAnn Ahearn, Paul Salamy, Neil Sardifias, Tina Garzillo, Jerry Recupido, Dan Russell

**Guests:** Barbara Williamson

1. The Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 4-0.
3. Guests
  - Barbara Williamson – applied for vacant board spot and wanted to sit in on a meeting
4. Board of Supervisor's Liaison Report- Tina Garzillo
  - Mall is really struggling
    - Mostly the restaurants with no outside access
    - Lord & Taylor filed for bankruptcy
    - Brooks Brothers purchased by Simon
    - Mike – are they still discussing expansion?
      - Tina said that BOS is still looking for ideas to discuss. Didn't love the idea of a hotel which was previously suggested
    - Paul asked about Amazon and JCPenneys – Tina is still unsure about either of these retailers occupying any spaces in the mall
      - Everyone is worried about even more delivery vehicles
    - Retail space generates the highest amount of revenue for the mall
    - A sports facility in a mall space was suggested but nothing concrete
  - Mike – is there a plan for committees to meet in person again?
    - Most likely yes – Library and Community Center opened today
    - Most committees still doing virtual so we will see for October
    - Dan – typically October is when the sports organizations come in to present so it will be crowded – virtual would be ideal for this situation
      - MaryAnn suggested Freedom Hall – Dan will look into this
    - Board of Supervisors working on budgets and objectives for next year – doing two different levels of planning just in case
5. Park and Recreation Director's Report- Dan Russell
  - Community Center opened today!
    - Things went really well
    - Around 20 people first thing in the morning and then not as many the rest of the day
    - Evening picked up a little bit

- Staff did a great job
- Had to remind a few teens to keep their masks on but for the most part, people were very compliant
- Working on tracking usage on a day-to-day basis
- First day of the Shape Program
  - For kids with parents who work full-time
  - Wi-Fi worked well – they were worried about this
- Pool is open M-F 1pm-4pm and the weekends from 11am-4pm
  - Pool is rented out in the mornings and weekend evenings
  - Goal is to shut down at the beginning of October
- Crow Creek
  - Total of 8 bidders
  - Ranged from \$1.8M to \$5.75M
  - Solicitor looking at all the paperwork
- Dan talked with PennDOT regarding the connection of VFP and the Schuylkill River Trail
  - They have the plans and are waiting on the cost estimate
  - 422 bridge work is mostly on hold because of COVID so not happy with how slow things are going
  - Want to start and complete the connection trail by Fall
- Working on budget for next year
  - Also doing two different levels
- Resident off Hidden Valley road has several dead ash trees on the border of Sweetbriar Park
  - Wants them removed
  - Near playground
  - Contractor cannot access them through their property and would need to go through the park
  - Trees would fall into the park so they need to go
  - Homeowner is covering the cost so allowing them to remove the trees is win-win
  - Motion to allow access – MaryAnn motions, Dana seconds
  - Dan will keep us posted

## 6. Park Maintenance Report- Jerry Recupido

- Continuing to take care of parks
- Trying to not have any issues by the time members of the committee inspect their assigned parks for the month
- Moving ahead with park renovations

## 7. New Business

- Walker Park Storm Damage
  - Looking at moving the playground – ground area gets destroyed every big storm
  - Want to look into taking the fences down around the baseball fields
    - Originally put in as a deterrent for vehicles driving over fields
    - Field was a multipurpose field 10-11 years ago until it became only baseball

- Fences are damaged often during storms and need to be replaced for between \$7,000-\$13,000 every time
- Taking the fences down would save a ton of money
- Will meet with Mike Scioli to discuss
- Mike – used to have a snow fence so temporary fences have been done before and could just be stored
- Will meet with general rec to discuss options on playground relocation – current locations is right between both sections of fields which is ideal for parents with smaller kids
- Jerry feels this would be fine – save money and the kids that play at this level don't typically hit balls to the fence
- Tina was in NY over the weekend and found a playground she loved
  - Used a compressed poured surface that she'd like to look into for our playgrounds
  - Looks like wood chips but they can cut it into any shape

#### 8. Old Business

- None

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

- Board members were upset regarding not learning about the opening of the Community Center prior to the general public
  - Felt like the board was not important or necessary
  - GlennAnne did apologize and will attempt to increase communication moving forward
- Lot of discussion surrounding the opening of the Community Center's program for virtual learning
  - Members were concerned about liability

#### 10. Additional comments

- Paul – He went to the CC on opening day and had a very good experience
  - Lots of staff walking around
- Barbara – Didn't realize how much we oversee in the community
- Jerry – Tree planting event this weekend at Heuser
  - MaryAnn mentioned the trees really need to be taken care of along the trail border – lots of vines
- Tina – Shade Tree Committee working on new ordinance on invasive plants – high priority to bamboo

Adjournment: 8:17PM

Kindly Submitted  
Dana Augustine

