

## UPPER MERION PARKS & RECREATION VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

7:30 PM

**Attendees:** Mike Trachtenberg, MaryAnn Ahearn, Paul Salamy, Neil Sardiñas, Deena Newman, Dana Augustine, Tina Garzillo, Jerry Recupido, Dan Russell

**Guests:** None

1. **The Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **Approval of the September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 5-0.**
3. **Guests**
4. **Board of Supervisor's Liaison Report- Tina Garzillo**
  - Thursday is the Board of Supervisors meeting
    - Announcing the second round of BCA grants
      - Focused on COVID support
    - Presentation of the pool feasibility study
    - Voting on a few items regarding Catalyst
      - Need to change the zoning for the signage
      - Not doing anything commercial
      - A lot of discussion over social media
      - Mike asked if the deal with Catalyst is done? Tina said they are discussing everything Thursday
  - Parking garage being built for the Biotech units near the old GSK sites
  - Water main break
    - Affected mostly Norristown and Swedeland residents
  - Halloween and Harvest Decorating Contest
    - Oct 18<sup>th</sup> deadline
    - Voting will be Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> and Oct 24<sup>th</sup>
  - Farmer's Market is planning modified activities
    - Still doing Trick or Treating – can dress up and pick up a pumpkin decorating kit to do at home
  - Trick or Treating still on for the area
    - Requesting everyone follow CDC guidelines
  - Paul asked about Moore House
    - Commercial proposal but nothing in the works other than the arboretum
    - The condition of the house is very poor and restoring it would be very costly
    - There was a group of contractors that were going to put a bid for interior remediation (mold, etc.) but they did not want to enter the building
  - Paul asked about the land near Heuser that the township was looking into purchasing
    - Company that was looking to purchase it did – our offer was refused

- Inquirer printing area is now for sale
- Something going in near Aldi but not sure what

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

- COVID exposure at Community Center
  - An employee tested positive after calling out sick and getting tested
  - Had a staff meeting with this person the day prior to them calling out
  - A few days later, the staff was tested and another employee was positive and ended up having to go to the hospital
  - Did contact tracing – the two employees worked together for several areas the day before the first employee called out sick
  - Closed due to exposure as a precaution
  - No passholders were at risk as no exposure – only staff
  - Took another hit with members freezing memberships
  - No further spread
- Halloween and Harvest contest looking for judges
- Parks – Jerry doing a great job
  - Renovation projects moving along
  - Valley Forge Acres and Swedeland
- 20/21 budget meeting happened last week
  - Budget is difficult – significant reductions
- Shared use with school district – some fall sports are back so they will utilize some parks
  - Put together memo of understanding
  - Hoping for a good relationship
  - Paul – school district dropped off grass seed at Heuser
- Trails – Crow Creek Trail awarded to Jim Kenney out of Collegeville
  - Came in slightly under budget
  - Gilmore is working on the contracts
- PennDot sent cost estimate and scope of work for the SRWT to connect to VFP – number came in where they wanted it
- Tina asked which park of the Crow Creek Trail will be worked on first – Dan waiting on a schedule from Gilmore

#### 6. Park Maintenance Report- Jerry Recupido

- Did a few things based on the park evaluations sent by the Park & Rec board members this month
- Been very busy
- Yard waste collection
- Performed maintenance on equipment
- Performed monthly park summary
- Continue bi-weekly mowing of properties
- Tree-trimming/removal at various properties/islands
- Cut grass along SRWT
- Tree removal from creek on Kerrwood road
- Performed minor tree work at Arboretum
- Removed trees at the Trout Run WWTP

- General park maintenance

#### **7. New Business**

- Dan appreciates the board even though we are disconnected due to COVID
- Wants the board to start setting some goals for 2021
  - Deena asked about Heuser Park plan – last we knew the soil was being tested
    - Had some money set aside but funding was taken away due to COVID
    - Could apply for some other grants
  - Jerry would like to focus on court conditions, pedestrian bridges and athletic field lighting – some things he noticed that need improvement
- Still need to hear sports organizations
- Shade Tree
  - Arboretum – working with Morris Arboretum for tree tagging
  - Bamboo area is taking over so it will need to be removed – public works will do it this winter
  - Drafting a vegetation ordinance for invasive plants

#### **8. Old Business**

- Dog Park
  - Catalyst still in the works and may cause some changes
  - Also looking into acquiring additional parklands
- Walker Park
  - Playground right next to creek and ground cover ruined during all big storms
  - Talked about relocating playground
    - Met with general recreation and Mike Scioli – looking at other side of the creek near field 1
    - Will put plastic borders to help a little – will still get water in but not too much
    - Will help save the wood carpet
    - Need to keep it ADA accessible
  - Got a quote to remove fences but more expensive than they thought

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

- Down passholders since March – 20% cancellation and freezing due to COVID
- Pool feasibility study – wanted more respondents
- Not a lot of pushback for masks except for some teens
- Two subcommittees created
  - One to simplify membership tiers and fees
  - One to discuss a five-year anniversary celebration

Adjournment: 8:48PM

Kindly Submitted  
Dana Augustine

