

Upper Merion Park & Recreation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes September 10, 2024

Attendees: Mike Trachtenberg, Paul Salamy, Neil Sardifias, Kathy Garro, Dan Russell, Holly Meade, MaryAnn Ahearn and Jerry Recupido

Absent: Mark Vondra

Guests: John Baessler, Tim Hoover, Terri Hoover, Blake Holden

1. Approved meeting minutes 08/13//24
2. Comments from the Chairperson
 - a. Apologies to Vytas Masalitis, Park Ranger of the McKaig Nature Center, but the P&R board will reschedule a future meeting to be held at the McKaig Nature Center.
 - b. The Upper Merion Area School District and the Upper Merion Township Board of Supervisors have come to an agreement for the placement of tennis courts on the newly acquired parcel of land near Walker Field. Unfortunately, the P&R Board does not have plans available to review but will take comments from interested parties.
 - c. Guest John Baessler, President of Upper Merion Baseball Association, and resident of the Cannon Run area of the township, expressed concerns about the process of deciding where the tennis courts would be placed, the lack of input from the Cannon Run residents, and potential impact to the existing use of Walker Field. He also wanted detailed plans as to how traffic/parking would be addressed.
 - d. Guests Tim and Terri Hoover, also residents of Cannon Run expressed similar concerns as Mr. Baessler, as well as concerns about the potential noise from a tennis/pickle ball facility and the impact on open space.
 - e. Guest Blake Holden, part of UMBA, expressed concern that the fields at Walker already needed attention and that further expansion of the general use will deteriorate conditions.
 - f. Mr. Trachtenberg informed guests that the next meeting of the P&R board would be held in the Township Building, Freedom Hall, to review plans for the tennis courts as well as allow residents to express concerns.
 - g. Neil Sardifias presented artwork for the signage project he has been working on. He expressed concern that the color reproduction was not acceptable and he would continue to work with the vendor for better results. Depending on the timing of the final artwork, Neil hopes to have the placards installed in the coming months.

3. Park & Rec Director Report - Dan Russel

- a. The P&R Fall Activity guide is out.
- b. The Community Fair will be held at Heuser Park on 10/5/24, from 12 to 4 pm. There will be over 100 vendors in attendance as well as food trucks.
- c. Concert Under the Stars had their final show on 9/15. Because the show was non-ticketed, attendance was difficult to predict and therefore parking became an issue on the side streets surrounding the township building. Future free concerts will address the parking issue prior to the event.
- d. Residents surrounding the parks where the deer management program will be held were notified by the township. Over 1200 letters were sent out.
- e. The 2025 Budget process is ongoing.
- f. The Eagle Scout project at Sweetbriar Park (kiosk) will hopefully be done by June 2025, and the bike repair project at Heuser has been completed.
- g. The Valley Forge Patriots softball club provided a community service day at Heuser where the conditions of the two softball fields were addressed.

4. Park Maintenance Department - Jerry Recupido

- a. End of the year projects have been determined and Jerry commented that work by his department would be decreased as his staff will be pulled to handle leaf pick up services throughout the township.
- b. P&R board members provide reports on various parks throughout the year and Jerry assured the board that the comments were systematically reviewed and addressed as the budget and staff allowed.

5. Community Center Advisory - Paul Salamy

- a. Membership and usage slightly down as fall sets in and the pool is closed for the year.
- b. Community Center received a \$6000 grant from the BCA to reinstate a Child Watch program at the center beginning this fall.
- c. A student liaison for the Community Center board is still needed.

6. New Business

7. Adjournment 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Garro
Secretary
UM P&R Advisory Board