

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PARK & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – JUNE 8, 2021

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held remotely on June 8, 2021. Mr. Krauss called the meeting to order and called the Roll.

Those present:

Park & Recreation Board: Douglas Krauss, Chair
 Michael Brody, Vice Chair
 Kim Rock, Secretary
 Mike Blundi, Member
 Dennis Wysocki, Member

Others: Monica Tierney, Park & Recreation Director
 James McCartney, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: Robert LaBar, Park & Rec Board Member
 David Malinowski, Park & Rec Board Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Wysocki moved and Mr. Blundi seconded to approve the Minutes of May 11, 2021 as written. Motion carried with Mr. Brody abstained.

CAPRA MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Ms. Tierney stated she met with Ann Toole who is working on the Master Plan and the Needs Assessment for the community, and she highly recommended pulling together a group of community residents with diverse backgrounds involved in sports, activities, park users, Seniors, and youth to be on the Steering Committee to help put together the Needs Assessment to make sure we are capturing everyone. She stated Ms. Toole stated seven to nine members is typically a good number. Ms. Tierney stated Ms. Toole will also attend the meetings. Ms. Tierney stated they are looking for people who have time to commit and help with surveys by going to Macclesfield Park on a busy Saturday to talk to the residents or go to the Pool on a busy weekend, etc. to survey residents and get information. She stated she is looking for a recommendation tonight to the Board of Supervisors from the Park & Recreation Board.

Mr. Krauss stated the letter Ms. Tierney provided indicated those on the Committee should be residents or Township business owners, and he asked why business owners would be included especially if they are non-residents. Ms. Tierney stated that is not required, but she felt if a business owner was operating in the Township they may be a good candidate to be part of the Committee.

Mr. Blundi asked how long the commitment would be for, and Ms. Tierney stated she feels they would try to get done by January or February of next year at the latest so that it would be in line with our visitation for CAPRA. Mr. Blundi asked when the Committee would start meeting, and Ms. Tierney estimated they would start in July or August.

Mr. Krauss asked how Ms. Toole would identify the members for the Committee. Ms. Tierney stated she herself has some people in mind who are involved and have opinions about the parks. She stated the Board of Supervisors would appoint the Committee members. Mr. Krauss stated Ms. Toole would be putting together a plan to get the residents to be interviewed to be put forth to the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Tierney stated she would work with Ms. Toole on this. She added it can be difficult to get volunteers as they will need to get people willing to put in time on a weekend and help out. Ms. Tierney stated she hopes they can get a good sampling to put this together and make sure we reach a broad audience.

Ms. Rock stated she would want to be sure that those serving will not just push the surveys to their own agenda, and she would want them to remain impartial. Ms. Tierney agreed adding she feels Ms. Toole would help with this. Ms. Tierney stated the Committee would come up with some concepts and ideas, but we would be surveying the broader community to see if there are enough people who support an idea. She stated the Needs Assessment will try to get the entire community involved.

Mr. Krauss stated he is in favor of this, but feels all those on the Committee should be residents. He stated if they are a business owner and a resident that would be fine.

Mr. Blundi asked if Ms. Toole is not putting together the Plan; and Ms. Tierney stated while she is, she would be getting feedback from the community first. Ms. Tierney stated Ms. Toole will be looking at what the community wants and what the community needs based on what the Township has now and the

current standards. Ms. Tierney stated Ms. Toole will make recommendations of what would be good for our community based on our needs. Mr. Blundi stated he wants to make sure that they are putting forth a plan that is good for the community. Ms. Tierney stated she feels they want people on the Committee with different opinions and ideas to help put together the Needs Assessment. Mr. Blundi stated while he agrees, Ms. Toole is the professional and he assumes she knows what works and may have a better understanding. Ms. Tierney stated Ms. Toole has been around for a long time, and her resume was provided to the Park & Recreation Board. Ms. Tierney stated she also did the Township's Needs Assessment that was done in the 1990's and made recommendations based on that. Ms. Tierney stated she is local and very qualified.

Mr. Blundi stated he read the survey from 1990 and it seemed that half of the people were for it and half of the people were against it, and it was not conclusive. Ms. Tierney stated Ms. Toole will make recommendations based on what she knows about the community.

Ms. Rock moved, Mr. Brody seconded and it was unanimously carried that the Board of Supervisors establish a Steering Committee of seven to nine members to assist in the completion of the Park & Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan.

RECREATION DIRECTOR REPORT

Pool Information

Ms. Tierney stated the Pool opened but it was closed early the first weekend because of the weather. She stated the numbers are at a comfortable level, and a head count was provided hour by hour in the Board's packet. She stated at the highest, they have been averaging 700 people, and there is currently a lower capacity of 1,000. Ms. Tierney stated as a "max capacity, they could have 1,500 in the Pool, but they were not close to that." Mr. Krauss asked if the 1,500 capacity is the normal capacity, and Ms. Tierney stated the revised plans are 1,000. She stated she would like to monitor it for another week; and if they decide to allow guests, she does not feel they would go over the 1,000 threshold even then where it would be uncomfortable.

Ms. Tierney stated there have been concerns about the closure from 3 to 4. She stated she does not feel it was made clear enough that it is not just for cleaning that they are closing from 3 to 4. She stated while they are doing cleaning during that time, there is a low number of staff compared to normal so the staff is working very long days, and they need the 3 to 4 time in order to train the lifeguards to make sure they keep their Certifications, and to provide a break in the day so they can be “fresh and safe in the Pool.” Ms. Tierney stated they also use that time to keep the numbers down a little lower as that was one of the biggest concerns that people had about opening the Pool this year. Ms. Tierney stated they will need that break all summer as the staff needs to stay safe and alert, and they need that hour break in addition to being able to clean. She stated at this point she does not see that the break from 3 to 4 is going to go away.

Mr. Brody asked if they are not able to hire more staff. Ms. Tierney stated there is a Nationwide lifeguard shortage for many reasons one being that it was hard for people to keep their Certifications during COVID because a lot of the indoor and outdoor facilities were closed. She stated many of the lifeguards let their Certifications run out. She noted that grocery stores are also paying a higher wage, and it is much easier to work at a grocery store than be a lifeguard where you are responsible for saving lives. Ms. Tierney stated training new lifeguards was also a challenge, and usually they can train them throughout the year but since pools were closed they could not do that. She stated we were fortunate to get water in the Pool before the season started, and we ran training for the staff in the heated pool so we have more lifeguards and are in a better position than other pools, but we are still short-handed. Ms. Tierney stated they will put out another advertisement for more lifeguards.

Mr. Wysocki stated the feedback he was getting was that 3 to 4 is a bad time to close the Pool since many of the members get there at 1 for the afternoon, and they then have to leave at 3.

Mr. Krauss stated he did not recall that 3 to 4 was the specific time based on certain criteria versus 4 to 5 which would be the end of the afternoon, and the evening session would start at 5. Ms. Tierney stated the reason they did 3 to 4 was because it was the “most middle of the day time that they could do without disrupting every other program.” Ms. Tierney stated if they pushed it back, it would mean the people who come in the evening would have less time, and if they pushed it forward it would involve swim lessons and the other programming they have during the day. She added that if they pushed

it too far, people would not eat dinner there which would impact the Snack Bar operator. Ms. Tierney stated some people wanted the time to move forward and others wanted to move it later and 3 to 4 was the most “middle of the road” they could do. Ms. Tierney stated it also relates to when the staff comes in for the day. She stated she feels other pools close for different things, and people will get used to the schedule.

Mr. Wysocki asked if it is just staffing that is the impediment to keeping the Pool open. Ms. Tierney stated it is not just staffing. She stated they extended the hours so that they could do more things throughout the day with less people; and because that was done, there is less time to train the staff, and less time to do a deep clean. She stated it also gives them an opportunity to re-group and keep the numbers a little lower. She stated people had been concerned about the number of people using the Pool at one time, and this helps keep numbers down.

Ms. Rock stated she has also heard concerns that the lap lane time limits are too long and most people felt a half hour would be enough rather than one hour. Ms. Tierney stated some people feel that one hour is not enough. She added that if someone does not use the full hour, the lap lane would be available for someone who comes in but did not make a registration, so that allows for some flexibility. She stated she feels the one-hour time limit and requiring reservations has worked out well.

Mr. Wysocki stated it seemed that the people who were discussing the one-hour closure issue with him did not know about the rationale for the closure, and he feels there should be better communication. He stated if there are remedies for the issues that could minimize or eliminate the shut-down, he feels a lot of people would be appreciative of that. Ms. Tierney stated there are other things that she is hoping that they will be able to give back such as guests, but she feels that unless there is a “huge staff influx” she does not see the one-hour closure going away this summer.

Mr. Wysocki asked Ms. Tierney if she has the authority to pay the guards more. Ms. Tierney stated they would have to raise rates or taxes, and that would have to be planned for the following year and not something she could change now. Mr. Wysocki stated the Supervisors may want to address this since they may be getting complaints as well and may be willing to provide funding. Mr. McCartney stated he discussed this at length with Ms. Tierney yesterday because he was getting a lot of feedback from residents regarding the new policies. He stated Ms. Tierney explained what the situation was, and he feels the communication

piece was a key piece that was missing; and now the residents understand that the one-hour closing was not just needed for a deep cleaning but that there was also training happening as well as providing a break for the staff. Mr. McCartney stated with regard to additional funds to hire more staff or pay more he could discuss this with Mr. Ferguson from a Budget standpoint, and there might be an opportunity for an offset; however, he noted the Pool is supposed to be self-sufficient.

Mr. Wysocki stated he feels that this could be a special circumstance, and he does not feel this would be the norm. Mr. McCartney stated with people asking for “special things to be done,” it may be time to consider if it is time to raise rates in order to offset what the members are asking for. Mr. Krauss stated for this year it may be a bonus for just this year to get people to work as opposed to increasing the hourly rate so that it would not carry over every year. Mr. McCartney stated there could be an opportunity to use some of the stimulus money that came to the Township, and they could look at that as an option.

Mr. Krauss stated he understands that the cleaning is being done by the employees so if there was a way to use funds for a cleaning crew, that could provide an opportunity for the guards to be trained and/or rest. He asked if that would reduce the time that the Pool has to be closed or have a shift in the time. Ms. Tierney stated there is a maintenance staff that does the cleaning, and the guards just assist the maintenance staff during the cleaning hour; but the guards are also getting training during that time. Ms. Tierney stated this is a twelve-week operation; and by the time they would train and bring on more lifeguards it would be almost the end of summer. She stated they have been struggling getting lifeguards. She stated this year they did hire a Certified, qualified lifeguard trainer who is running all of the training throughout the year; and Ms. Tierney stated she hopes to bring her in mid-season and run a lifeguard training open to the staff and the community to take the training. Ms. Tierney stated the schedule is very busy so it may be hard to fit that in.

Mr. Brody stated he has complained previously about the “construction road sign on Edgewood field advertising about lifeguard positions and other advertisements.” He stated he feels it looks terrible.

5K Any Way Color Run to Raise Money for Accessibility in the Parks

Ms. Tierney stated this will be held in Macclesfield Park to raise money to complete some of the projects listed in the accessibility program that was created earlier in the year. Ms. Tierney stated they will need volunteers to help with the course, and the Disability Advisory Board is also reaching out to see if they can find volunteers. She stated they are also looking for sponsors.

Mr. Brody asked if the whole complex will be closed that day, and Ms. Tierney stated it will be held in the middle of the summer on a Sunday so it should not impact anything. Mr. Krauss stated it will probably be done by Noon, and Ms. Tierney agreed.

Ms. Rock asked if there are any vendors who could help raise additional money. Ms. Tierney stated possibly a Park & Recreation Board member could help with that or some other volunteer. Mr. Wysocki asked if they could contact food truck vendors who could pay to be there. Mr. Krauss stated possibly the individual who just did the Food Truck Event could contact several of those vendors to see if they would be interested, and Ms. Tierney stated they could do that. Ms. Rock stated she recently attended a Run where there was a balloon artist and other activities for children which could help raise more money. Ms. Tierney stated they could look into that. She added they are starting to get their vendors for Community Day, and they could discuss this with them as well. Ms. Tierney stated they are also looking to get donations from the grocery stores. She stated there will be medals and t-shirts.

Ms. Tierney stated people have been asking for Races/Runs and this would be a start. She stated they are looking to potentially do a 10K at the Golf Course in the fall. She stated they also have the 9/11 Run on September 12. Mr. Wysocki stated he does not feel it would be safe to have a Run at the Golf Course. Ms. Tierney stated she knows that the management company does them at their other Courses.

Food Truck Event

Ms. Tierney stated the Food Truck Event was very crowded. She stated cars were backed up onto Woodside Road, and they will have to re-visit how to arrange the food trucks and the vendors in the future if they do this again. She stated the only negative feedback was the time it took to get in, but people were very excited to be at a live event. She stated there were 15 food trucks, 40 vendors, and many activities.

Community Day

Ms. Tierney stated they are starting to look for sponsors and consider activities for Community Day. They have locked in fireworks and reserved Pennsbury field. She stated they are planning the concert and looking for activities that are more open than bounce houses. She stated they are looking for sponsors and volunteers. The date is August 28.

Memorial Park Project Update

Ms. Tierney stated the Memorial Park Project was approved by the Board of Supervisors, and this will include four pickleball courts, three tennis courts, a path, and a parking lot at Memorial Park east.

Community Center Doors Update

Ms. Tierney stated the Board of Supervisors approved the Community Center doors, and they are starting that project.

Summer Camp

Ms. Tierney stated Summer Camp will start on June 23, and they are full. There is a waiting list.

Community Center

Ms. Tierney stated she has been meeting regularly with the Seniors; and she understands they want to come back in September, but she is waiting for a final decision on that. Ms. Tierney stated they are starting to bring in other programming into the Community Center.

Township Facilities Open June 15

Ms. Tierney stated all of the Township facilities will open on June 15 and everyone is being asked to wear masks in the Township facilities. Staff will be wearing masks as well.

Senior Games

Ms. Tierney stated the Senior Games are going on at this time, and a lot of our Seniors are participating.

ROAD TOUR/MEETING DISCUSSION

Mr. Krauss stated they decided that Ms. Tierney needs more time to put the Road Tour together; and while the Road Tour would normally be in July, they will look to do it in August. Ms. Tierney stated she will come up with a list of available dates. There will be no meeting in July, the Road Tour will be in August, and the Board will then meet in September. Mr. Brody asked if the September meeting will be in the Township Building. Mr. Krauss asked if meetings will be taking place in the Township Building beginning in June when the Township Buildings are open. Ms. Tierney stated that is still being discussed. Mr. McCartney stated he believes the plan is to do a hybrid system for all of the Committees so that some members could be in the Township Building and some could be at home. He stated they have paid for the video service through 2021.

There being no further business, Mr. Brody moved, Mr. Blundi seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Rock, Secretary