**TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD**

**DISABILITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**November 8, 2023**

A meeting of the Disability Advisory Board of the Township of Lower Makerfield was held via zoom on November 8, 2023. Chairperson Huchler opened the meeting at 6:12 pm.

Those present:

Lisa Huchler, Chairperson

Michele Williams, Vice Chairperson

Cynthia Lang, Member

John Lewis, Supervisor Liaison (absent)

**APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 9, 2023 MINUTES**

Ms. Huchler moved, Ms. Lang seconded, and the August 9, 2023 minutes were approved unanimously.

**OPEN POSITIONS**

Ms. Huchler stated that there are currently 2 open member positions and 1 alternate position for the Disability Advisory Board (DAB). Please send a letter of interest with a current resume to township manager at admin@lmt.org. For further information, please email dab@lmt.org or leave a message at the LMT main number at 267-274-1100. You can also reach out to any LMT Disability Advisory Board Member.

**DAB EMAIL AND WEBSITE**

The email - dab@lmt.org is now working.

Ms. Huchler sent agenda to be posted on the DAB webpage on lmt.org. Need to include call in instructions for anyone interested in asking a question or making a public comment. Will do this for all future meetings.

Newspaper article- always nice to see the Secret Garden Playground featured.

[https://www.phillyburbs.com/story/lifestyle/things-to-do/2023/09/02/accessible-inclusive-playgrounds-bucks-county-horsham-montgomery-county-special-needs-pa/70731420007](https://www.phillyburbs.com/story/lifestyle/things-to-do/2023/09/02/accessible-inclusive-playgrounds-bucks-county-horsham-montgomery-county-special-needs-pa/70731420007/)

**APARTMENT INQUIRIES**

2 people have inquired about the new apartments – The Madison at Prickett Preserve. Specifically asking if the apartment buildings had elevator access so they could be accessible to persons with Disabilities and Seniors.

Some people with disabilities do not feel safe on the first floor. One person expressed concern that they are not totally accessible because there are no elevators.

We discussed in detail that the first-floor apartments have proper accessibility which would comply with ADA Requirements. Ms. Williams thought the plans showed handicapped parking across from apartment buildings. Ms. Huchler and Ms. Williams will go over to review the parking situation now that 3 buildings are occupied.

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Accessible housing is in short supply in Bucks County. Especially affordable housing. Grundy Towers in Levittown has a 1 year wait. Ms. Lang also stated that the Presbyterian Towers in Morrisville were also accessible.

Ms. Williams did look into renting the apartments at Prickett Preserve but found the rent of $3,200 unaffordable.

**HOUSE BILL 1761 – ELEVATOR REQUIREMENTS**

Mr. Lewis sent an email with information regarding House ill 1761. He asked if the DAB wanted to draft a letter of support to Rep. Munroe, our Rep Warren, and the PA Housing & Community Development Committee members?

The proposed bill is as follows:

Rep. Brian Munroe (D-144) introduced House Bill 1761 (<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2023&sInd=0&body=H&type=B&bn=1761>) requiring all new apartment buildings and condominiums with two or more floors to have at least two elevators. Current buildings would be exempted. The legislation stemmed from multiple incidents over two years that occurred in western Bucks County. Earlier this year, Park Place, a 55-and-older community located in Warminster Township, was struck by lightning during one of the summer storms, which resulted in the only elevator in the building to stop working for more than seven weeks. Residents unable to use the stairs were left with no option but to remain at home, missing appointments and losing the ability to take out trash or grocery shop. This bill would help alleviate the problems of non-functioning elevators and their effect on our residents' lives, particularly those with mobility issues.

Ms. Lang has written a letter of support. We will review and send out to the appropriate representatives.

We discussed that the cost of putting in elevators may be cost prohibited. Ms. Lang did look at the House bill and it states that any building over 2 stories and more than 3 apartments. This does seem like the cost would be a burden on small complexes. Ms. Huchler said she would reach out to Rep Warren’s office to see if there is further clarification on what they are asking for. Ms. Williams concern is that the amount of rent they would need to charge to offset the cost of elevators would prohibit affordable housing, especially for those in need. We agree it makes sense for any building with a senior or disabled population or buildings requiring elevators but will look into the scope of the Bill.

**MACCLESFIELD STUDY GROUP**

Final steering committee meeting to be held November 14, 2023. Ms. Huchler to attend.

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**LMT PROJECT UPDATES**

Several Parks and Rec projects were included in the ADA Transition Plan completed last year. The Disability Advisory Board (DAB) will review plans, work with Parks and Rec in any planning, suggestions and monitor as progress is made.

5-mile Woods -Parks and Rec asked for additional funds to extend the path to another path within the trail system. The project in total will cost $40,000 and will be 710 linier feet, 5 feet wide.

Memorial/Secret Garden- the new sign at the Secret Garden has been installed. Looks exactly like the previous sign that was removed.

Shade/Surface at Playground-LMT does have a grant for Memorial Park and will likely be going to the board for approval to RFP the design in January. Budget discussions are going on right now. Currently the shade structures and the rubberized surface are recommended for 2024.

Veterans Park- still in design phase.

Pool Bathrooms- This project is going to be much larger and more expensive than anticipated. In 2024, Parks and Rec are recommending that they finish the master plan for the pool that was started in 2019 to include all outbuildings. This of course will include accessibility.

Community Center handicapped door and parking - It is not just a bus trip issue it is every Wednesday and Friday issue (and one Tuesday a Month). They have already made modifications for bus trips. The DAB will continue to monitor and make recommendations for an automatic door if additional parking is placed on the side of the building.

Parks and Rec programming- reviewing the ADA transition plan; would like discuss how LMT can better incorporate programming into the plan.

**BUILDING PLAN REVIEW**

Prickett Preserve –

The Chase Bank and CVS Pharmacy are now open. 3 of the apartment buildings are now occupied. They will have a new building ready for occupancy every month going forward.

Building permits will be submitted soon for the renovations to the stone barn (restaurant) and farmhouse (bakery). Plans will be forwarded once LMT receives. Construction work will start on the other restaurant/retail buildings this month. Will forward plans for fit-out of individual spaces once LMT receives them.

Wegmans will be ready for occupancy be employees next month. The store will open to the public in February. The pedestrian connection from Stony Hill Road across the I-295 bridge into Edgewood Village is now under construction.

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**NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Lang wanted to bring to our attention that the Yardley-Makefield Bucks County Library branch continues to have the service of bringing books out to your car. You must call ahead but this is a great service to have for people with Disabilities. She asked if we wanted to thank them for doing this. Ms. Huchler thought we could send an email and encourage them to continue this service.

Ms. Lang asked if we would receive plans for the proposed new high school – Pennsbury is conducting meetings regarding plans but no decision has been made at this time. Since the school is in Falls Township all plans would go through that municipality.

**MEETING SCHEDULE**

Next meeting will be held in January 10, 2024. 6:00 pm via zoom.

Meeting for December 2023 has been cancelled.

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Williams moved and Ms. Lang seconded to adjourn, approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Huchler

Chairperson, Disability Advisory Board