

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
DISABILITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
August 13, 2025

A meeting of the Disability Advisory Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held at the Township building on August 13, 2025. Chairperson Huchler opened the meeting at 6:02 pm.

Those present:

Lisa Huchler, Chairperson (in person)
Abbey Yeatts, Vice Chairperson (zoom)
Michele Williams, Member (zoom)
Kierstyn Zolfo, Member (in person)
Larisa Gambale, Member (in person)
Jody Smith, Alternate (in person)

John Lewis, Supervisor Liaison (zoom)

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 11, 2025 MINUTES

Ms. Zolfo moved, Ms. Gambale seconded, and the June 11, 2025 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

NOMINATION FOR BOARD SECRETARY

Ms. Huchler stated the Disability Advisory Board (DAB) is still in need of a Board secretary. The agenda item will be tabled until 2026. Chairperson Huchler will continue to prepare the meeting minutes until that time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment this week.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

As discussed at the last meeting, we will include the Handle with Care Registry and Blue Envelope Program in our brochure.

Ms. Williams asked how secure is the information for the Handle with Care Registry? Who can access information such as a code to get into the garage or what type of disability a person has? People may be afraid that someone might feel unsafe giving out such detail and personal information. Ms. Huchler will inquire with the LMT Police Department about this. Ms. Yeatts looked up information on the handle with care registry and can see that it is facilitated by Crime Watch Technologies Inc. Info shared with law enforcement agencies.

Update on status of Smart911 program- Per John Geib, Bucks County Director of Emergency Management via email, the Department of Emergency Communications no longer utilizes the Smart911 platform. The best way to communicate this information to our team is through the "Handle with care" registry, which you are already doing. Additionally, many of the wireless devices have the capability to store and share medical information when 911 is dialed, regardless of where you are when you call. These options are free as compared to the subscription-based Smart911 platform. Apple and Google both have an enhanced emergency data feature that can be pre-populated on the phone.

We will include the Ready Bucks – Alert messaging System in the DAB brochure.

An email was sent to Township office to remove the old Special Needs Premise Form and replace it with links to the new "Handle with Care Registry"

UPDATE BROCHURE

Discussed the brochure in detail and all of the DAB members had thoughtful changes and suggestions. A huge thank you to Ms. Zolfo for putting all of our ideas together for the DAB.

Will add Blue Envelope program, Handle with Care Registry- <https://bucks.crimewatchpa.com/lowermakefieldtwppd/17384/webforms/handle-care-registry>, Ready Bucks Alert - <https://member.everbridge.net/453003085612336/login> and QR Code that leads to <https://www.lmt.org/government/boards-commissions/disability-advisory-board/>

Need to update graphics. Ms. Zolfo sent the Board many examples and a few will be added to the brochure. Ms. Williams asked since we had photos of children could we include an adult with a disability. Ms. Zolfo has included a graphic that has all ages but we can look at other pictures we may have available.

Once the Brochure is completed, we will send to Kellie Frain, LMT Management Analyst, to post. She stated she can directly post to the LMT Facebook, Instagram, twitter and LinkedIn pages. We can also place brochures in the Township offices, Community Center and Police Department as well as the DAB webpage.

Ms. Smith asked if she could hand out brochures around the township. We can place anywhere that we think would benefit the community. We should place only in LMT since it relates to a township Board.

EVENTS

The Center for Independent Living (CIL) is celebrating 20 years and Ms. Yeatts said they will be holding a drop in event on 9/5/25 from 1:00-4:00. The CIL empowers persons with all types of disabilities to achieve independence in an inclusive community. See information for CIL Events at www.buckscil.org – Peer Support and Young Adult Groups - Email info@buckscil.org or call 215-781-5070

Disability Fair

Ms. Huchler reached out to Rep. Perry Warren's office 215-493-5420 and spoke to Patrick. He will be bringing up to Rep Warren at the next staff meeting. Hoping they can sponsor an event in the Lower Bucks region with PA State Senator Steve Santarsiero and provide information for government agencies and support organizations for adults and children with disabilities and their caregivers. Ms. Huchler will follow up.

5 K Color Fun Run for Accessibility to be held Sunday, September 28, 2025. This is the fifth year for this event. A portion of the funds raised will be allocated to the ADA Transition Plan. Parks and Rec is asking the DAB members for volunteers.

LMT PROJECT UPDATES

Parks and Recreation Communications for information regarding Inclusive Sports Programming and 5 Mile Woods updated wording. The DAB members agreed that inclusive sports programming should be included in each section. It provides parents a quick way to see that children with all types of abilities are included in our sports community.

Have the Parks and Rec department include information on Inclusive Sports in each newsletter under "Recreational Opportunities" and under the webpage, Sports and Recreation Tab on a permanent basis. It was in one issue of the newsletter but since that page is published with each newsletter the inclusive sports should be added.

Under Township owned Recreational Facilities webpage and newsletter change the wording under 5-mile woods to say Accessible for Individuals with Disabilities. Maybe include the length of the accessible boardwalk?

Newsletter

Ms. Huchler will ask Parks and Rec or Police Chief Kelly if we can include something about the Handle with Care registry.

ADA Transition Plan Update – Monica Tierney stated that they have been working on the update. The updated plan was sent to Ms. Huchler for review this week. Ms. Huchler will review the plan and make sure all of our recommendations were addressed. The ADA Transition plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors in April 2021 and must be updated to keep our accreditation.

Update on PECO Green Open Space grants to preserve, protect, and improve open space in the region. No timeline for work to begin on 5-Mile woods additional accessible pathway.

5-Mile Woods - Girl Scout completed a project connecting the bump out in the path over the meadow to the platform the Boy Scout built.

POTENTIAL GRANT UPDATES

Accessible growing Microgrant

<https://disabilities.temple.edu/programs-services/health-equity/food-justice/pennsylvania-accessible-growing-microgrant>. This grant is to help make gardens and growing spaces in Pennsylvania more accessible for everyone. Funds can be used for tools, renovations, and other accessibility improvements.

Ms. Gambale did some research and spoke to Monica Tierney on July 22, 2025 about ideas for a Community Accessible project from this grant and maybe additional grants from places like Home Depot (up to \$5,000) and Tony Robbins Foundation. The township has 501c 3 status to be able to apply for these grants. Ms. Gambale also gave some statistics on the demographics in our area which would be important when applying for certain grants. 25% Senior population, while the LMT Senior group has less than 1% of the senior population – 280 members, 4.1% population have a disability and 4.1% Veterans without insurance coverage.

Ms. Gambale was thinking we could create elevated garden and vegetable beds or a sensory garden. Potential sites could be the community gardens at Memorial Park or around the community center.

Ms. Gamble and Ms. Monica Tierney visited Middletown to see their sensory gardens and did visit the LMT Community gardens at Memorial Park. Ms. Gambale noted that there is not an accessible pathway to the which would make it difficult for a person with a disability to get there.

Ms. Gamble brought up many ideas to have gardens around the community center, township buildings and Memorial Park gardens. There is some concern about the amount of money the grant provides, \$1,000 and the cost of maintaining any beds outside of the Community Gardens. Costs would have to be picked up by the township through the Public Works and landscaping companies if they were placed around township buildings.

Other ideas/comments were brought up by Ms. Smith regarding tools and could they be supplied, Ms. Zolfo asked if we should do a survey, Ms. Williams said she would use the raised beds, Ms. Yeatts and Ms. Williams both suggested that anyone with a disability in the community that has an interest in gardening would benefit from installing a raised typed of gardening bed, Ms. Huchler said this could be a potential "scout" project.

Ms. Yeatts suggested we do not need to make it difficult and both she and Ms. Williams share the same feeling "if you build it, they would come".

Ms. Huchler has asked Ms. Gamble to gather information on the cost of raised beds and the size of a plot in the current Memorial Park Community Gardens so we can be prepared and make a recommendation for next season.

Shade Structure grant-The American Academy of Dermatology grant is available for up to \$8,000 and does not have a matching requirement. <https://www.aad.org/public/public-health/shade-structure-grants>. Ms. Yeatts will be collecting more information and will give an update at the next meeting.

BUILDING PLAN REVIEW

Per Mr. Majewski, Floral Vale is updating some of their curb cuts to be ADA Compliant. It appears some of the parking spots are not located near the accessible cut outs and the handicapped parking signs are not in compliance with PA Laws. Ms. Huchler will reach out to Mr. Majewski to determine the best way to alert Floral Vale of these oversights. Ms. Zolfo said she had alerted Ms. Huchler about construction bins and work materials blocking handicapped accessible walkways in Floral Vale. Ms. Huchler did go over to see the progress and noted that the storage bins were removed fairly quickly.

Prickett Plan Updates -DAB will continue to review plans as they come in for other retail establishments.

No update on Handicapped Accessible Parking at new section of Prickett. It was noted that the parking lot had been striped and the 2 handicapped spots were located in an area far from the entrances to the stores at this location. Pictures were sent to the LMT Community Development Director, Jim Majewski and he will continue to follow up.

Per ADA guidelines:

In parking lots or garages, accessible parking spaces must be located on the shortest accessible route to the accessible entrance. An accessible route is the path a person with a disability takes to enter and move through a building or facility.

Mr. Lewis is going to forward the contact information for Deluca Properties and Ms. Huchler will send an email directly to them requesting they look into the placement of the handicapped parking spots and move them closer to the building entrances.

OLD BUSINESS

The DAB discussed potential Parks and Rec events/parties that could include children with special needs, physical or sensory. Ms. Huchler will send a note to the Parks and Rec department to see if there might be a way to set aside time prior to their Holiday event that could accommodate children with special needs and create an inclusive environment. She will also send the article about the quiet Halloween party to potentially offer it next year.

NEW BUSINESS

Disability Awareness Merit Badge.

Two Boy Scouts working on their Disability Awareness merit badge need to do a presentation to a group to fulfill their requirement. We have been asked to listen to their presentation in the next few weeks. Anyone available from the DAB can join in via zoom.

PECO is planning to feature the Five Mile Woods Trail in a short social media video, and they're looking for individuals who have truly benefited from the trail and would be willing to be interviewed. These would be short clips, either filmed onsite or at the person's home. Former DAB member David Mann visited the accessible path and has agreed to be interviewed and share his experience.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Next meeting October 8, 2025 at 6:00 pm at the Township Building meeting room.
September 2025 meeting cancelled.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Zolfo moved, Ms. Gambale seconded to adjourn, approved unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Huchler
Chair, Disability Advisory Board