

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PARK & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – APRIL 8, 2008

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on April 8, 2008. Chairman Fritchey called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Those present:

Park & Recreation Board: David Fritchey, Chairman
Henry Carpenter, Vice Chairman
Patricia Bunn, Secretary (joined meeting in progress)
Fran McDonald, Member
Andrew Newbon, Member

Others: Donna Liney, Recreation Director
James Majewski, Township Engineer
Steve Santarsiero, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: David Gordon, Park & Rec Member
Dennis Wysocki, Park & Rec Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. McDonald moved, Mr. Newbon seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of March 25, 2008 as written.

DISCUSS PARK & RECREATION PROJECTS

Mr. Fritchey stated the Board of Supervisors has indicated they would like an informal indication of what the Park & Recreation Board deems to be the recreation priorities. He stated the Board received in their packet the current Plans for the various projects. He stated approximately eight to nine years ago the Park & Recreation Board recommended to the Board of Supervisors approval of what is now Memorial Park. He stated the Board of Supervisors approved this Plan before 9/11/01. Since that time, the Memorial has been built at the Park, but the concept for the Park remains fundamentally the same. The reason for building the Park was that it was identified as early as 1992 in the Comprehensive Plan as an essential park needed in the Township to be a community park as opposed to an athletic complex. It was to contain a variety of venues to be used by families and other groups.

Ms. Bunn joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Fritchey stated these venues would be more readily available for members of the community who were not part of an organized athletic association. He stated Phase I has been built as has the Memorial. He stated they anticipate more phases so this would be one of the projects to be considered. Mr. Fritchey stated the Park & Recreation Board has also approved and recommended to the Board of Supervisors that they approve the Plan for the Snipes Complex. He feels that the Board of Supervisors has agreed to this as well. He stated there other worthy projects that the Park & Recreation Board has expressed interest in but he feels Memorial Park and Snipes are the furthest along and the closest to fruition.

Mr. Fritchey asked Mr. Majewski to review what has been completed at Memorial Park and what is left to do according to the Plan approved in 2000. Mr. Majewski provided colored renderings of what the Park would look like with the proposed and existing features. He stated they have built the main entry road and a small parking lot for the community gardens. They have also constructed the detention basin, two volley ball courts, the Memorial, the Shade Tree Arboretum, a restroom facility, two basketball courts and two soccer fields. He stated the area where the dual-purpose hockey rink is proposed has been graded. He stated to finish the east side of the Park which contains four tennis courts, two volleyball courts, parking, a gazebo and a detention basin, he estimates would cost between \$750,000 and \$1 million based on the approved Plans. This would also include the trail going around that area including the stream crossing which is why the cost is somewhat high. Mr. Majewski stated he feels they already have the Permits needed to construct the stream crossing, but he needs to make sure that they have not lapsed.

Mr. Majewski stated finishing the west side of the Park would include the ice hockey rink, picnic areas, playground areas, parking, a secondary entrance off Woodside Road, grading another soccer field and another large multi-purpose field, and the re-located softball field which was budgeted in this year's Budget and will be constructed this summer, and a softball field in the "chimney area." He stated the total cost for all the work on the west side ranges from \$1 to \$1.5 million.

Mr. Newbon stated he assumes that if the entire project were done at the same time there would be some economies of scale, and Mr. Majewski stated he feels they may save only \$25,000 since they are separate stand-alone areas. He stated if prices came in low, it could cost slightly less than \$2 million to complete the Park. Mr. Majewski stated a number of these items could be phased in at a later date such as gazebos and pavilions.

Mr. Fritchey stated it appears that they could do one phase one year for \$1 million and the other phase the next year for \$1.5 million and complete the Park, and Mr. Majewski agreed.

Mr. Newbon asked if there is an advantage to doing one side more than the other, and Mr. Majewski stated the only advantage of doing the west side first would be there would be a second entrance off of Woodside Road although the Park does not get that heavy usage by user groups such that this would be critical. He stated the decision should be based on whether they want more fields and parking or more tennis courts. Ms. Bunn stated she would choose the side that includes the stream crossing because if the Permit lapses, they would have to reapply and comply with any new requirements. Mr. Fritchey stated he would also be in favor of proceeding with that side because it would result in additional tennis courts which has been identified as a need in the Township at this time. He stated until they are able to move onto the Samost Tract and install tennis courts at that location, he feels they should construct them at Memorial Park.

Mr. Newbon stated the west side does have a significant amount of macadam which could cost more in the future. Ms. Bunn reiterated that it could also be costly if they have to comply with new stormwater regulations on the other side of the Park. She stated the Township did spend a significant amount of money securing the Permit already. Mr. Fritchey stated if they build the east side, they are putting money into venues that people can use noting people could park on gravel if necessary.

Mr. Carpenter stated he agrees that there is a crisis with tennis courts and installing the tennis courts would make the most sense as they have been hearing from residents that there is a real need for tennis courts. Mr. McDonald stated given the Permit issue, he would agree that they should proceed with that side of the Park as well. It was the consensus of the Park & Recreation Board that Memorial Park would be their first priority.

Mr. Majewski stated with regard to Snipes, the estimated cost for construction is \$2.5 million. The complex will contain nine soccer fields of varying sizes. He stated the design has flexibility built in so that as needs change, they will be able to reorient some of the fields to change the size of the fields. He stated the grade is such that they will have three different fairly flat areas. He stated they had tried to get the entire area similar to Macclesfield Park which would have provided maximum flexibility, but it is not possible at this location because of the way the water flows. They will be going before the Planning Commission next month for approval. He stated they could start the project late fall if approved and if funds were available.

Mr. Fritchey stated he felt that this Plan was already approved by the Board of Supervisors and questioned why they are going back to the Planning Commission. Ms. Bunn stated she feels only the Master Plan was approved not the actual design Plans. Mr. Fritchey stated he recalled that the Plan had gone before the Planning Commission who had recommended changes to the roadway. Mr. Majewski stated there were some changes made and they will now formalize that approval from the Planning Commission,

Bucks County Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Fritchey asked if there is a consensus that Snipes should be their next priority or is there interest in advancing another project.

Mr. Santarsiero noted the Samost tract and stated Mr. Majewski has shown a cost for the 90' field. He asked the cost to install the smaller field and the tennis courts.

Mr. Majewski stated the tennis courts would cost approximately \$50,000 to \$75,000 per court. He does not feel a final decision was made as to the number of courts to install at this location. He stated if they built another smaller baseball field, the cost would be \$150,000 to \$200,000. He stated he does not feel there was a consensus on the Master plan for Samost. He stated there was discussion as to whether there should be four, eight or twelve tennis courts at this location.

Ms. Bunn asked if the tennis courts in Yardley Hunt are not a higher priority than building Snipes because the courts are continuing to deteriorate and there are liability issues. Mr. Fritchey stated he feels many of them are built on top of unsound sites, and he would prefer to eliminate them and build courts on a proper bearing surface.

Mr. Santarsiero stated this is why he raised the issue of the courts at Samost. Ms. Bunn stated she feels tennis is a higher priority at this time since there are existing soccer fields which can be used. She feels providing a safe place to play tennis would take away the liability for the Township, and she would recommend this need be ahead of Snipes.

Mr. Santarsiero stated he feels they could take out the funds for the restoration of the courts at Yardley Hunt and put that money toward new courts at Samost. Mr. Fritchey agreed. Mr. Fritchey noted having courts at the Samost Tract would provide a large central location for tennis in close proximity to other Township recreation facilities. He does feel they should also have tennis courts at Memorial Park so that there is an opportunity for residents in this area of the Township to have access to tennis courts as well.

Ms. Bunn stated she is not only concerned about the courts on Schuyler but also the courts inside Yardley Hunt on Revere Road which are in very poor condition.

Mr. Santarsiero questioned if they need the courts at that location, and Ms. Bunn stated if a decision is made to eliminate those courts, they need to remove them and return it to some kind of open space so that the liability issue is addressed. Ms. Liney noted there are four courts on Revere Road and two at Heacock which are also in poor condition. Mr. McDonald stated there would be costs involved taking out the courts in Yardley Hunt so that the \$250,000 could not simply be transferred over to construction of courts at Samost. Mr. Majewski stated he would need to research the demolition costs.

Mr. Fritchey asked if it would be possible to reorient the Yardley Hunt courts such that while there would be fewer courts, they would be on solid ground so that these would be available for use by the people in the neighborhood. Ms. Bunn stated she feels they

would need to poll the residents in Yardley Hunt to see if they really want these courts at the existing location. Mr. McDonald stated the residents may want to keep the Schuyler courts.

Mr. Carpenter asked if it would be possible for the Township to ask the local residents if they would be interested in having the Township lease the courts to them and the residents could create a neighborhood association, fix the courts themselves, and have them available for use. Ms. Bunn stated she feels all the residents would have to be in favor of this in order for them to proceed with this as she feels those adjacent to the courts will not want them retained as tennis courts. Mr. McDonald stated those who moved into the area knew that there were tennis courts there. It was noted there is no Yardley Hunt Homeowners Association. Mr. Carpenter stated there may be a majority of people who want to pay for renovation of the courts, recognizing that these would still be Township tennis courts. He stated there could be an Association formed of Township residents interested in renovating the existing courts whether they live in Yardley Hunt or not. Ms. Bunn stated she would not be in favor of this. Mr. Majewski stated this may be a viable idea for the Schuyler Road courts. Mr. Carpenter stated these are the courts he would consider for this option, and he would be in favor of removing the courts at Revere.

Mr. McDonald stated he feels they should first get input from the residents. He stated he lives in Yardley Hunt and while the courts at Revere Road are used, they are not used nearly as much as the courts at Schuyler. He stated he knows that the residents adjacent to the Revere Road courts would like them taken out, but there are residents a few blocks away who do walk to the Revere courts and use them. Ms. Bunn stated she feels that only those who live near Revere Road are aware of these courts. Mr. Carpenter stated he feels the Revere courts need a substantial amount of work and since only the people living near Revere Road are using these courts, he does not feel they would be in a position to raise the kind of money needed to fix these courts. Mr. Fritchey stated he does not feel there will be people interested in contributing money privately to fix these tennis courts particularly when the Township is building additional courts elsewhere in the Township. Mr. Newbon stated even if a group of people privately funded their restoration, the courts would still be open to other residents since they are still Township courts.

Mr. Carpenter asked how much it would cost to restore Schuyler, and Mr. Majewski stated they feel it would cost \$40,000 per court for the four courts. Mr. McDonald stated this facility does get a lot of use apart from the tennis program, and he feels the Township will get some opposition if they do not repair these courts. Ms. Bunn stated this is why she feels Samost is a higher priority than Snipes. She stated possibly they could do one phase at Snipes and save some of the money to put in the tennis courts at Samost. She does not feel all the funds should go toward soccer when there is a need for tennis as well. Mr. Fritchey stated there is an approved Plan for Snipes and they have not yet

begun to discuss Samost with the community. Ms. Bunn stated they should begin working on a plan now since she does not feel all the funds should go to soccer if there is a limited amount of money. Mr. Fritchey stated if they were to begin planning Samost immediately, it would probably be at least two years before something could be constructed given the time involved in the planning process. Ms. Bunn stated she would not vote to spend all the money on Snipes when there are other needs in the Township.

Mr. Majewski stated if funding were available it would take four to six months to complete Snipes. Ms. Bunn stated she is concerned that they continue to put money back into the complexes which serve the Leagues. She would prefer putting a portion of the money toward Snipes and save the rest of the money for something at Samost. Mr. Majewski stated while it would not be preferable, they could phase Snipes.

Mr. Fritchey stated the Snipes project is basically grading and a parking lot. Mr. Carpenter stated they could still do a portion of it and save some of the money to be used for tennis.

Mr. Fritchey stated if they build the east end of Memorial Park, this will include four good quality tennis courts. He stated there is not a Plan for Samost at this time. Ms. Bunn stated they told the residents that they would not Permit any portion of Memorial Park, and there is a need for Permitted tennis for the tennis program. Ms. Liney stated the tennis program does get a Permit for the four Schuyler Courts. Ms. Bunn stated they would need a place for that program which she feels would be Samost and not Memorial Park. Mr. Fritchey stated they would still have to get an approved Plan for Samost which includes discussions with the neighbors. He stated he feels they should proceed with the project that is approved and in the meantime start working on the planning for the next project. Ms. Bunn stated she feels they should save some of the money for another project that is equally as important. Mr. Fritchey stated if they had \$5 million this would take care of Memorial Park and Snipes and they would need another \$750,000 to build tennis courts at Samost. Ms. Bunn stated she still feels they can reserve a portion of the funds they do have so that they can install the tennis courts at Samost when a Plan is approved. Ms. Bunn stated there is not an unlimited supply of money and they need to be conscious of the needs of all of the user groups. She stated there is an opportunity to save some of the money and use it for the needs of residents not involved in a League organization.

Mr. Carpenter stated he agrees that it might make sense based on the economics to take out some of the money and save it for the tennis courts. He stated the Board of Supervisors should take into consideration the different opinions expressed by the Park & Recreation Board members this evening.

Mr. Newbon stated he still feels they need to have a consensus of their priorities. He stated he feels the consensus is that they should proceed with Phase I (east) of Memorial Park which includes tennis courts. He stated he would then proceed with Snipes and then Phase II of Memorial Park. Ms. Bunn stated she is concerned that they will be Permitting the tennis courts after they told the residents they would not be issuing Permits for Memorial Park. There was some disagreement whether or not this was promised to the residents. Ms. Bunn stated she felt they advised the residents there would be no Permits and no lights. Ms. Liney stated she feels the residents were concerned about the numbers of people associated with the very large athletic organizations, and she does not feel this would be a problem with the tennis program.

All members present this evening were agreed that Phase I (east) Memorial Park would be the first priority.

Mr. McDonald stated he would recommend Snipes as the next project, followed by Samost (tennis courts), and then Phase II of Memorial Park.

Mr. Fritchey stated after Phase I of Memorial Park, he would then recommend Phase II of Memorial Park, Snipes, and then tennis.

Mr. Carpenter stated he would recommend Phase I of Memorial Park, followed by a combination of Snipes/tennis courts at Samost such that some items would not be included at Snipes in order to fund tennis. Ms. Bunn stated she would agree with this proposal noting that they could build all the fields at Snipes, leaving the parking/road stone as opposed to paving. Mr. Carpenter stated he would then recommend the rest of Snipes, followed by Phase II of Memorial Park.

Mr. Fritchey expressed concern with delaying construction of an approved project pending getting approval to do a part of Samost which does not yet have an approved plan. Ms. Bunn stated there is a concept plan for Samost. Mr. Fritchey stated they have never presented Samost to the public or sent it to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Carpenter stated if the Park & Recreation Board feels the concept for Samost is a good plan, they should start the process.

Mr. McDonald asked the cost to put a Plan together for Samost. Mr. Majewski estimated it would cost \$50,000 to \$100,000 to prepare Plans to go out for construction. To date they have spent approximately \$70, 000 to \$80,000 on Snipes and over \$140,000 for Memorial Park. Mr. McDonald asked if the Park & Recreation Board decided to proceed with Samost and put Snipes aside, would they have to go through the process for Snipes again in the future, and Mr. Majewski stated they could proceed where the project was left off with the exception of Permits which may have been obtained which may have lapsed.

Mr. Newbon stated based on scoring he developed as a result of priorities of the various Park & Recreation Board members, Snipes and Samost were of equal importance as the #2 priority, and because there are approved Plans for Snipes, he feels they should proceed with that Plan. Mr. Carpenter stated while Snipes is easier to proceed on, he feels they should consider what is best for the Township. Ms. Bunn stated there is no reason why they cannot build the fields at Snipes and use a gravel parking lot/main road for a period of time so that funds can be used at Samost for the tennis courts. Mr. Newbon stated he is concerned that they have half-done projects.

Mr. Fritchey stated while he has been a proponent of constructing a tennis complex, he would prefer moving forward with approved plans rather than constantly starting and stopping projects. Mr. Fritchey stated because of the potential sale of the sewer system, there may be funds available that could be used to complete some of these projects. He stated the amount of money which may be available will determine what they may be able to do.

Mr. Newbon did a further review of the priority rating and stated it appears that their priority would be Phase I Memorial Park, Snipes, Samost, and Phase II of Memorial Park.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORT

Mr. Santarsiero stated there will be further discussion at the April 16 Board of Supervisors' meeting about the potential sale of the sewer system. He stated this discussion will be focused on future costs for the Township including what has been discussed by the Park & Recreation Board this evening. He stated there are also other capital costs including roads, etc. which need to be considered as well as where the Township Budget is going over the next few years. He stated they will consider how the Township will face these costs if they sell the sewer system and how they will face these costs if they do not sell the sewer system. Mr. Santarsiero stated at the last meeting representatives from Aqua were present and answered questions about their performance following their purchase of other systems. He stated it seemed that every other system they purchased included a treatment plant, and since the Township does not have a treatment facility, there is a question as to how this will impact future rates. He stated there were a number of Townships where the rate increases were more than the 49% projected for Lower Makefield whether or not Aqua takes over the system. It was noted by the Aqua representatives that the larger increases were due to repairs needed because the systems were in such poor condition. The treatment facilities used by the Township currently would continue to be used if Aqua owned the system. He stated Aqua representatives have indicated that they feel they would be more efficient maintaining the Township system than the Township is as they can get more competitive prices and do not have to go through the public bidding process. The service center they would use for this area is headquartered in Souderton.

Mr. Santarsiero stated there was a concern raised by Mr. Steil about the Township selling open space where the pump stations are located; however it was indicated that they would only sell the footprint of pump stations and provide easements across Township property to access the pump stations.

Mr. Santarsiero stated at the last meeting there were residents present voicing concern over selling the system as well as proponents of the sale of the system.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Majewski stated there is a bid opening on Monday for the lights. Eight bidders picked up bid packages; and depending on the bids, an award may be possible at the next Board of Supervisors' meeting. This project includes the lights for the softball field, tennis courts, and basketball court.

Ms. Bunn asked for an update on the intersection at Black Road and Makefield Roads. Mr. Majewski stated the intersection has been reconstructed with the paving, traffic signals poles are up, and wiring is anticipated to be completed tomorrow. They are currently waiting for the pedestrian crossing signals which were not in stock. They still need to do striping as well.

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Liney stated Park and Recreation activity is always rapid pace this time of year. Some of the key items they are involved with will be the activating of the fountains at Memorial Park for 2008 which will take place in May.

She stated the Township engineer is preparing the specifications for bidding in mid-April the installation of the softball field at Memorial Park in 2008. The Township is also working with CMX grant writers on a submission for a possible matching grant for Phase II of Memorial Park. The deadline for this submittal is April 25.

Ms. Liney stated Lower Makefield will again be hosting a number of camps this year on Township facilities. Over 1,000 children are expected to participate this summer in a variety of offerings, including The Roving Nature Camp, Yardley Makefield Tennis, Yardley Makefield Soccer, Acting Naturally, and Speed Pursuit. The Artist Circle will continue their sessions at the Elm Lowne facility. All camps have met Township requirements for registration, insurance, and background clearances.

Ms. Liney stated Wallover Architects is working with the Township engineer on the required submittal to BCCD for the planned pool renovations. Feedback from the pool

members coming to the Township for their picture ID cards has been very positive on the proposed renovations to the tot pool and the intermediate pool. The Community Pool is scheduled to open for the season Saturday, May 24. Full-time operations will begin Monday, June 9. Pre-season maintenance at the complex continues, and they expect to begin filling the pools in about three weeks.

Ms. Liney stated plans continue for the upcoming Midnight Madness at Macclesfield on Saturday, May 31; and Park & Recreation is happy to be a part of this special event. The Township is delighted so many of the user groups are showing their support with YMS hosting instructional clinics, PAA will run a home run derby and softball tournament, Ultimate Frisbee is planning a showcase and there will be fund-raising touch football games. Boy and Girl Scouts will be holding activities, volunteers will be staffing games, and there will be music, demonstrations, and a big screen movie. The Police Department is working on security requirements, and this promises to be another outstanding Township special event.

Ms. Bunn asked about the bon fire, and Mr. Liney stated this has been eliminated.

There were further discussions on the grant-writing for Memorial Park. Ms. Liney stated this is a matching grant with the highest award being approximately \$500,000. Mr. Majewski stated the grant is being written for the east side of Memorial Park.

LEAGUE LIAISONS REPORTS

Mr. McDonald noted the upcoming Epic Soccer Tournament, and stated they are partnering with SKF Incorporated which has a “Meet The World” Tournament which takes place in Sweden. The winner of the top bracket in the U-16 age group will win an all-expense paid trip to Sweden for the Meet The World Tournament. He stated they are looking at a three-year commitment with SKF.

There being no further business, Mr. Newbon moved, Mr. Carpenter seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Bunn, Secretary

