

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PARK & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – MARCH 25, 2008

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on March 25, 2008. Chairman Fritchey called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Those present:

Park & Recreation Board: David Fritchey, Chairman
 Patricia Bunn, Secretary
 David Gordon, Member
 Fran McDonald, Member
 Dennis Wysocki, Member

Others: Donna Liney, Recreation Director
 Steve Santarsiero, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: Henry Carpenter, Park & Rec Vice Chair
 Andrew Newbon, Park & Rec Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Gordon moved, Ms. Bunn seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of February 19, 2008 as written.

FIVE MILE WOODS PRESERVE ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. John Heilferty, Naturalist, was present with John Lloyd and Jan McFarlan from the Friends of the Five Mile Woods. Mr. Heilferty thanked Ms. Liney and her staff for their continued support. He also thanked the Friends of the Five Mile Woods for all their help with the property. He stated the Township rents the house on the property to a family and they represent a presence on the property and also do a lot of routine maintenance on the house. He reported on some of the improvements which have been made to the Woods noting that not a lot has been done this year in an attempt to save money. He noted the Friends of the Five Mile Woods and Eagle Scouts are responsible for many of the improvements at the Woods. Mr. Heilferty stated this year they have already held the Annual Friends of the Five Mile Woods meeting, a maple syrup demonstration, and an evening frog walk.

Mr. Lloyd stated the Friends have scheduled their work days for the second Saturday of every month from March through November when trail, building, and grounds maintenance is done. He stated they also hold two Open House events where tours are given by Friends of the Woods. The first will be on April 20 of this year and another will be held in the fall. Mr. Heilferty stated the Office in the Woods is open during the Open House events as well. He stated they are also involved with Community Pride Day where they set up a table and provide information about the Five Mile Woods. Mr. Lloyd stated they also schedule special educational events one of which this year will be a presentation on bats. Mr. Heilferty stated the Friends have been very helpful with regard to community outreach.

Ms. McFarlan stated the Friends will also be working with Pennsbury High School students who are applying to the National Honor Society and need to do volunteer work as part of their qualifications. Mr. Lloyd stated they hope to get some of the students out for the regularly-scheduled work days.

Mr. Gordon asked if the School District makes use of the Woods for any of their own classes, and Mr. Heilferty stated the Schools do reach out to him on a regular basis; and while he is not available to work with them during the school day because of his own work commitments, the facilities are offered for their use.

Mr. Heilferty reported on the “Frog Squad” which is the amphibian club where they go to various locations in the Township and monitor the frogs in the Township.

Mr. Heilferty stated they are still desirous of preserving any land that is adjacent of the Five Mile Woods. He noted particularly the nine acre Foulds property on Big Oak Road which they would like to acquire. There was discussion on the potential development of this property, and Mr. Santarsiero stated there are water issues on the property and they would be subject to the Low Impact Development Ordinance. Mr. Santarsiero stated the EAC is working on an Open Space report which should be completed shortly. He stated there is consideration being given to another Referendum in the fall to purchase additional open space. Mr. Heilferty stated if this property were obtained, it would involve basically no maintenance costs. Mr. Lloyd stated one of the larger pieces of properties adjacent to the Woods is in Falls Township; and he is not sure how much communication there is with Falls Township about the property. Mr. Santarsiero stated he did previously have discussions about this parcel with Falls representatives, and he would be willing to discuss it with them again. Mr. Santarsiero noted there is also a piece of property behind Kohl’s which could be developed. He added this tract would also be subject to the Low Impact Development Ordinance. Mr. Heilferty asked that he be kept advised of any developments with regard to potential land acquisition or development of parcels adjacent to the Woods. Mr. Heilferty offered their assistance as well.

There was discussion on the deer problem in the Woods. Mr. Heilferty stated a consultant did prepare a deer management plan for the entire Township and a recommendation was made to employ sharpshooters to cull the deer. It was noted that while this is expensive, it would be the only effective way to have a Township-wide deer management program. Mr. Heilferty stated while bow hunting is an option, the consultant indicated it would take a lot of time and effort to take a significant number of deer out of the Township. It was noted there would be a significant amount of area where such hunting would not be possible because of setback requirements. Ms. Bunn asked if they have contacted the Game Commission which would be a less expensive option. Mr. Heilferty stated Township representatives did meet with the Game Commission and at the meeting the Game Commission indicated they did not feel that bow hunting/recreational hunting could solve the Township problems. Mr. Santarsiero stated one of the issues with the sharp shooting option was the expense but concerns were also expressed with bow and arrow hunting related to the length of time it can sometimes take for the deer to die. Mr. Santarsiero stated they are continuing to work with the consultant to see what they can do in a cost-effective way. He stated whoever they work with, the meat would go to a food bank. Mr. Heilferty stated whatever they do, they would need to receive a Permit from the Game Commission which would require that the meet be donated to a food bank.

Mr. Heilferty stated he does have serious concerns about the potential of bow hunting on the property and the fact that the rate at which they would be able to remove deer would require them to be on the property for a significant period of time.

Ms. McFarlan noted the negative impact the deer are having on the Woods. She stated inside the deer exclosures it is full of a variety of plants, and the area next to it is barren. She asked that a decision be made as soon as possible as the deer continue to eat everything in the Woods. Mr. Heilferty stated he would appreciate being kept informed on what the Township is considering with regard to this issue.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSED 2008 LMT POOL SNACK BAR MENU

Ms. Marsha Klayman was present. It was noted the proposed menu was included in the Board's packet. Ms. Klayman stated they have added some wraps. She stated prices have gone up because of oil/gas prices. She stated the prices include the Sales Tax. She feels her prices are comparable to what else is being sold in the area.

Mr. Gordon moved, Ms. Bunn seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Menu as presented.

SUPERVISOR LIASION REPORT

Mr. Santarsiero stated the Board of Supervisors is still discussing the potential sale of the sewer system. He stated one of the concerns expressed by members of the public was the impact on rates; however, the sewer consultant has indicated that the rates will be basically the same whether or not the Township owns the system. Mr. Santarsiero stated given the Township's financial condition, without the proceeds of the sale of the sewer system, the Township would not be able to consider any major capital projects unless they are willing to issue bonds and raise taxes.

Ms. Bunn asked if the Supervisors have made it know what they intend to do with the proceeds. She stated she would not be in favor of having the majority of the funds go toward the Parks or a Community Center as this would not be in the best interest of the entire Township. She stated she feels this is also a concern of many of the Township residents. Mr. Santarsiero stated before there is a vote to sell, he feels there needs to be a proposal as to what will be done with the proceeds. Mr. Santarsiero stated they also need to have a discussion as to the various costs the Township will be facing over the next ten years. Mr. Santarsiero added that any funds generated from the sewer rates must remain within the sewer system if the Township continues to own the system. Mr. Gordon noted it may be advisable to hire a consultant to advise what should be done with the proceeds from the sale of the system. Mr. Santarsiero stated there are time constraints as to the offer which has been made. Mr. Fritchey stated it is important to let the residents know that the rates will not remain at their current level if the Township continues to own the system. Ms. Bunn stated she is concerned with the Township's liability if they continue to own the system as a significant part of the system is more than forty years old.

Mr. Santarsiero stated he did advise at the public meeting that the Park & Recreation Board unanimously recommended the sale of the system. He stated he anticipates that the Board will discuss the matter again for at least two to three more meetings.

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Liney stated the Township staff met this week with Suntechnics to discuss energy use in the Township Complex and at the Pool. She stated some of the suggestions will be able to be implemented easily, and the Township will weigh recommendations versus costs and determine what direction they can proceed to achieve long and short term energy improvements.

Ms. Liney stated stone and sand are being installed this week on Macclesfield C in preparation for the laying of the artificial turf carpet. This project is tracking on schedule with a targeted completion date of mid-April. Upon completion of this project YMS will have the ability to host a full-size field layout or three mid-size fields.

Ms. Liney stated the Park and Recreation crew continues with facility preparations during this typically busy period. She stated it is a challenge to satisfy the field demands and still perform the necessary slit seeding for turf recovery of the facilities. The Township is working closely with YMS in seeking the optimum balance between facilities utilization and required maintenance.

Ms. Liney stated Pool membership enrollment has been rapid pace and appears ahead of prior years. Issuing of the bar-coded photo ID cards is ongoing, with approximately 65% of the families registered issued their ID cards. The Township is meeting with Capturepoint tomorrow to review items and insure the process continues smoothly. Ms. Liney acknowledged the people who have put in the extra effort to make this project happen. Before the Pool opens this season, the Township will have offered extended hours for four evenings and fourteen Saturdays, which has helped with the administrative process and has been much appreciated as evidenced by the feedback of the community.

It was noted that there was a comment made at the Supervisors' meeting complaining that the pools were cold, and Ms. Liney stated they will try to adjust the temperature as much as they can. She stated they try to take the chill off the pools but not have them too warm. Park & Recreation Board members who are also members of the Pool indicated they did not feel the pools were too cold. Ms. Liney stated she also reviewed the prior surveys as requested by the Park Board Chairman, and there were only three requests out of more than 1400 respondents to increase the temperature of the pool. She stated there was also a request made at the Supervisors meeting that there be no smoking at the Pool, and they are going to enforce this.

There was discussion on the upcoming spring event to be held at Macclesfield Park, and Ms. Liney stated she met at Macclesfield Park today with Special Events Committee members laying out what they foresee, and they will meet with the Police tomorrow. They will then meet with the Rivergate residents. Mr. Gordon asked how they will protect the fields. Ms. Liney stated it appears the camping will be on Fields E and F and the Movie on Field G.

There being no further business, Mr. Wysocki moved, Ms. Bunn seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Bunn, Secretary

