

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PARK & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – MARCH 10, 2009

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on March 10, 2009. Chairman Fritchey called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Those present:

Park & Recreation Board: David Fritchey, Chairman
Patricia Bunn, Secretary (left meeting in progress)
Fran McDonald, Member
Andrew Newbon, Member
Dennis Wysocki, Member

Others: Donna Liney, Recreation Director
Pete Stainthorpe, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: Henry Carpenter, Park & Rec Chair
David Gordon, Park & Rec Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Wysocki moved, Mr. Newbon seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of February 10, 2009 as amended.

Ms. Bunn stated after reviewing the Minutes of February, she would like to send a memo to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Park & Recreation Board's position about the Garden of Reflection. Mr. McDonald moved, Mr. Newbon seconded and it was unanimously carried to send a letter to the Board of Supervisors to clarify the Park Board's position:

The Park & Rec Board would like to bring to your attention our continuing concerns regarding the Garden of Reflection. We would like the Board of Supervisors to understand that the Park & Rec Board is committed to continuing the development of areas of Memorial Park as funds become available; however, the development of future areas must follow the approved Master Plan for the Park. We would also like to express our concerns that the Garden of Reflection Committee complete the work already under contract. There are several items that remain outstanding. These items need to be corrected so that final acceptance is achieved. Lastly, when the Garden of Reflection Committee came before our Board in the early planning stages, they assured us that money will be raised and set aside for yearly Operation and

Maintenance Expenses. We would like these items to be achieved before the Garden of Reflection Committee considers any future enhancements within the Approved Garden of Reflection footprint.

FIVE MILE WOODS PRESERVE ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION ON PROGRAMS

Mr. John Heilferty, naturalist, was present with Mr. John Lloyd, Friends of the Five Mile Woods, and Ms. Pam Newitt. Mr. Heilferty thanked Ms. Liney for all her help throughout the year.

Mr. Lloyd stated they recently held the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Five Mile Woods. He stated they continue their monthly work days which begin this Saturday adding they have a large number of people who help on these work days including not only the Friends of the Five Mile Woods, but also students from the National Honor Society from Pennsbury and several different Scout groups. Mr. Lloyd stated last Sunday they had a maple syrup demonstration with approximately 150 people in attendance. Mr. Lloyd thanked Mr. Hoffmeister for his work with this activity as well. Mr. Lloyd stated they also hold two Open House events each year where they offer guided walks through the Woods and demonstrations; and these are offered Earth Day and the day after Harvest Day. Mr. Lloyd stated they do two informational events each year – Community Pride Day and Harvest Day as well as several ad hoc educational events throughout the year.

Mr. Heilferty stated the Township benefits immensely from the volunteer hours provided by the Friends of the Five Mile Woods. He stated they will soon be celebrating the thirty year Anniversary of the acquisition by the Township of the Five Mile Woods, and he would like to have some kind of commemorative event. He plans to work with the Friends on this as well as the Environmental Advisory Council. He added the EAC has reached out to him to see how they can better coordinate with the Five Mile Woods including how to manage the invasive species in the Woods and outreach efforts.

Mr. Heilferty stated they will again host the Roving Nature Center for eight weeks in the summer. He stated they also continue to work with Scout groups and Eagle Scout candidates working on projects in the Woods. He also continues his work with the Reptile and Amphibian Group (the Frog Squad) which he started. Mr. Heilferty stated the EAC is taking on a detention basin project, and they are monitoring this to see how this helps restore habitat.

Mr. Heilferty stated he would like to run some additional programs at the Woods. He stated Pam Newitt, in addition to being a Friend of the Five Mile Woods, also runs a program called “Nature by the Yard,” and he has discussed with her the possibility of having her run some programs for them at the Woods. He stated one of these would be taking advantage of time when the Roving Nature Center is not using the facilities. She would offer a program for an age group (9 to 12 years old) which is beyond what the Roving Nature Center caters to. He stated they have also discussed having Ms. Newitt hold monthly family-oriented walks where there would be pre-registration and a fee paid for a monthly-themed walk. He stated Ms. Newitt has done this in other locations including at Drexel Woods, Bowman’s Hill and she also works with the Schools. Mr. Heilferty stated he feels the one-week program for children would be run similar to the way the Roving Center program is run with pre-registration, a maximum number, and a fee to be charged including Ms. Newitt’s costs and Park use Fee which would be remitted to the Township. He stated he feels the monthly family walk should be considered differently, and while there would be a fee to cover Ms. Newitt’s costs, he was not sure if a use fee would be appropriate. He asked if the Board would consider approving Ms. Newitt charging a small fee for the family walk and that the use fee be waived. Mr. Fritchey stated he did not have a problem with no user fee for a family nature walk since they would not have exclusive use of this Township asset. Mr. Heilferty stated there would be a registration fee and a limited number that would go on the guided walk. It would be open to residents and non-residents as well. Ms. Liney was asked to look at the language on the user fees to make sure that there would not be a problem. Ms. Liney stated she does not feel the user fee would be applicable to the family walks. The Park Board was in favor of the proposal, and Mr. Heilferty agreed to work with Ms. Liney and Ms. Newitt on the details.

Mr. Newbon moved, Ms. Bunn seconded and it was unanimously carried to allow Mr. Heilferty to work with Ms. Liney on details of a week-long program in August to be run by Ms. Newitt and for monthly nature walks. User fees would not be applicable for the family nature walks.

Ms. Newitt reviewed the kind of programs she has been involved with for the School District and other groups.

Mr. Heilferty stated he feels this is a good way to make more use of the Five Mile Woods.

Mr. Heilferty stated the maintenance fund that was originally established is dwindling, and he needs to meet with Mr. Fedorchak and Mr. McCloskey to consider how funds will be addressed in the future.

Mr. Heilferty stated they continue to look at the possibility of acquiring the Fould Tract which is adjacent to the Woods. Mr. Stainthorpe stated the Board of Supervisors continues to discuss this as well. Mr. Lloyd stated it would be very unfortunate were this property to be sold to a developer. Mr. Heilferty stated there are natural resource concerns on this property. Mr. Stainthorpe stated an Open Space Referendum was passed at the last Election and this property is on their list.

Mr. Heilferty stated the deer issue continues to be a problem in the Five Mile Woods and will be considered by the Board of Supervisors at their next meeting. Mr. Stainthorpe stated he feels they do need to do something to cull the herd. There was discussion on the possibility of contraceptives, but Mr. Heilferty noted at this point in time there is nothing which has been approved yet for human consumption. Ms. Bunn noted if there is a deer hunt, the meat would go to a soup kitchen. Mr. Heilferty stated he does not feel a recreational hunt in the Five Mile Woods would have any benefit since at the rate recreational hunters could harvest deer from Five Mile Woods, it would be at such a low rate that the increased reproductive rates for White Tail Deer, they could not probably keep pace with the deer. He stated he feels they need to more aggressive. He stated sharp shooting has been recommended by the deer management expert as they can remove deer at an efficient and humane rate. Mr. Heilferty stated an expert has been retained by the Township who can assimilate all the information provided and can explain to the community the relevance of the comments.

Mr. Wysocki asked if the deer situation could become worse, and Mr. Heilferty stated he does feel it could get worse; and if they do not take any action, it could make it more expensive to correct the problem.

Mr. Stainthorpe stated there were 118 car/deer accidents in the Township last year.

Mr. Lloyd stated a lot of the undergrowth in the Five Mile Woods is already gone and a lot of the plant species could be lost in the Five Mile Woods because of the deer; and it is important that this be controlled particularly in the Five Mile Woods where they have these important plant communities. He stated the Friends of Five Mile Woods are of the opinion that the Township has retained the services of an expert in Bryon Shissler, and they agree with his recommendations. He stated they should look at the deer exclosures to see the difference between areas which are protected from the deer and areas which are not.

Mr. Heilferty stated it is the unique ecosystem in the Five Mile Woods that saved the Woods thirty years ago and the deer are impacting this. Ms. Newitt stated the deer do not eat the non-native plants, and there is a huge problem in the Woods with invasive species in the Woods. Mr. Heilferty suggested that the Park & Recreation Board meet with him on Saturday, June 13 at 1:00 p.m. to view the deer exclosures.

Ms. Bunn left the meeting at this time.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE INCLUDING PLAYGROUND IN SPRING APPLICATION TO DCNR FOR MEMORIAL PARK PHASE II

Mr. Liney stated the Township Manager recently attended a DCNR seminar in preparation for the Township's application for funding Phase II of Memorial Park.

Ms. Liney stated the Township engineer has inquired as to whether the Park Board supports including a playground in the Township's request for funding in Phase II. Currently the proposed Phase II request includes four tennis courts, the road accessing those courts, parking by those tennis courts, possibly extending an access road out to Woodside, stone dust or porous trails, and basically opening up the bottom two thirds of the park for activity. The grant would be matching funds for the Township.

Ms. Liney showed a sample layout of an ADA accessible playground currently in a neighboring Municipality which would compliment and be consistent with the existing features in Memorial Park. Ms. Liney showed on the Plan where the facilities would be located. This proposal was acceptable to the Park & Recreation.

APPROVAL OF 2009 SNACK BAR MENU

Ms. Liney stated as required by the Township, the contractor has submitted the proposed 2009 snack bar menu for approval by the Park Board. M.L.E. has operated the snack bar at the Community Pool for the past 16 years. The contractor has held the line on a number of items for 2009, with nominal increases necessary to cover her costs on certain items. Mr. Wysocki stated in the future, they may consider rounding the amounts up to whole dollars as opposed to \$.95, \$.99. The menu was acceptable to the Park & Recreation Board.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORT

Mr. Stainthorpe reiterated that the deer issue will be considered by the Board of Supervisors at their meeting on Wednesday, March 18. He stated they received the report in 2007 and still have not made a decision on this. Mr. Stainthorpe stated he wants to see a plan this is organized, efficient, measurable, affordable, and to the extent that they can make it – humane. Mr. Wysocki asked about the Frankford Hospital issue, and Mr. Stainthorpe stated this matter is still before the Zoning Hearing Board; and regardless of the Decision made by that Board, he feels it will be Appealed to the Court.

Mr. Stainthorpe also reported that Black Rock Road should be opened shortly. He stated the work that has been done with the culvert and dredging the Canal should correct any issues they had with flooding in that area. He stated they are still working on an issue regarding the bikepath.

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Liney stated the Township has received the report from DGW regarding the electrical issues at the Garden of Reflection. DGW is now specing out the necessary corrective action plan. This will not impact the turning on of the fountains in May.

Ms. Liney stated spring is the prime season for Parks & Recreation in Lower Makefield and the Township Park crew is beginning to prepare all ten park sites for use as well as the Community Pool complex.

Ms. Liney stated permitted user groups began play this past weekend on the fields. Park & Recreation continues to balance the needs of the user groups, but must be mindful of weather conditions that affect the resources the Township are responsible for such as freezing pipes. She stated they anticipate water being available by the end of the month in the park restrooms and concessions stands.

Ms. Liney stated the Township added six recycle containers to the Park system. Recycle containers are now available at Macclesfield, Kids Kingdom, Roelofs, Stoddart, Memorial Park, and the Community Pool.

Ms. Liney stated the annual Pennsbury/Conwell Egan girls softball game has been scheduled for Monday, April 6 at the Township Pool softball field. She added this friendly rivalry is always a big draw, and the Township is happy to be the host.

Ms. Liney reported that the Community Pool rear restroom renovations are complete. New fixtures, including hands free sinks, partitions, tiling, mirrors, and added ventilation should be well received by the membership.

Ms. Liney stated Community Pool Membership discount enrollment ended this weekend. In light of the difficult economic times, the Pool appears very close to anticipated level of signups for membership during this period. Deposits are still being coordinated, and they will have the final numbers next week.

Ms. Liney stated the Special Events Committee is targeting Saturday, May 30 for the spring event – An Evening in the Park. This event is planned for Memorial Park, starting about 6 p.m. with a DJ, a picnic dinner, and a free movie, and promises to be another fun event in Lower Makefield.

Ms. Liney stated she did include in the packet the LMT 2015 Draft adding the projects were put together from number of sources; and based on the uncertainty of the time, she projected the loan debt payment for 2011. She stated Mr. Fedorchak indicated they may be on the Board of Supervisors' Agenda for April for this, but she is not sure.

Mr. Fritchey asked if a determination was made as to how the electrical problems occurred at the Garden of Reflection, and Ms. Liney stated Mr. Fedorchak has a report on this, but it was not included in the Park & Recreation Board packet. Mr. Stainthorpe stated they have not signed off on this, and the contractor is owed money; and if it costs more to correct this, it would come out of that money. Mr. Fritchey stated he feels someone should be held accountable for this problem. Mr. Wysocki stated he feels they need to make sure that future projects have the designs reviewed by qualified individuals, the inspections are done toward the design, and that there are provisions for recourse if there are problems.

LEAGUE LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. McDonald stated the Epic Tournament is approaching, and they have 101 teams registered as of today, which are about 45 more teams that they had at this time last year. He plans to cut the number off at 220 teams. He stated they had 213 teams last year. He is trying to not to use many venues from other Townships since if he does so those Township teams have to come in for free which cuts down on the money raised for the Tournament.

Mr. Wysocki stated this and the fall tournament are increasingly important for the Club because it is one of the funding measures for the new field. He stated there were repairs made to the turf field recently and the installer came out to fix areas where it had settled. Mr. Wysocki also noted there are a number of light bulbs out, and Ms. Liney stated Lucas will be coming out but they need to wait until the ground is harder so they can get the bucket truck onto the fields. Mr. Wysocki also asked about trash receptacles around the turf field, and Mr. McDonald stated he has discussed this with Ms. Liney; and they will need six cans, one at each gate and one or two behind the benches. Ms. Liney stated they will be adding a recycle can in this area as well. Mr. Newbon asked if there are any plans for bleachers, and Mr. McDonald stated they are looking into this. Mr. Wysocki stated the turf field has been paying dividends this season noting there are ten teams training there this evening. He stated they are not able to get on the grass at this time of year; and in the past, they were forced to play on the grass which had a negative impact on those

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fields. He stated the turf field is taking the traffic off the grass fields so that the grass fields will be in better condition when they start growing. He also asked if they could consider enhancing Field D with an in-ground sprinkler system. He stated he feels there is water supply to this area. Mr. McDonald stated they did get a bid on this in the fall and it was slightly less than \$10,000. Mr. Wysocki stated the turf field is really a training facility, and for most high-level games, you do want to be on grass.

There being no further business, Mr. McDonald moved, Mr. Wysocki seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Bunn, Secretary