

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PARK & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – DECEMBER 14, 2010

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower called Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on December 14, 2010. Chairman Fritchey called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Those present:

Park & Recreation Board: David Fritchey, Chairman
 Henry Carpenter, Vice Chairman
 Dave Gordon, Member (joined meeting in progress)
 Fran McDonald, Member
 Andrew Newbon, Member
 Dennis Wysocki, Member

Others: Terry Fedorchak, Township Manager
 Donna Liney, Park & Recreation Director
 Matt Maloney, Supervisor Liaison (joined meeting in progress)

Absent: Patricia Bunn, Park & Rec Secretary

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER, 2010 MINUTES

Mr. Newbon moved, Mr. McDonald seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of November, 2010 as written.

TOWNSHIP MANAGER UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PA STATE GRANT FOR TOWNSHIP PARK PROJECTS

Mr. Fedorchak stated State Representative, Steve Santarsiero has discussed with the Township two earmarks. He stated the first is a \$2 million project with a \$1 million local match and \$1 million for the construction of ball fields, upgrades to the Pool tennis courts and basketball courts, and possibly upgrades to Stoddart.

Ms. Liney stated in September the Park & Recreation Board recommended to the Board of Supervisors the adoption of a lay out for the Samost Tract which included a 90' field and a 75' field with fencing, and tennis courts to be constructed at a future date. She stated PAA had also requested space be reserved for an indoor batting facility which they would be financing.

Mr. Maloney and Mr. Gordon joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Fedorchak stated the Township had spent \$1 million on the purchase of the Samost Tract, and this qualified as the local match. He stated since the ball fields will be located on the Samost Tract, they will be able to use this as the \$1 million local match.

Mr. Fritchey asked the next steps. Mr. Fedorchak stated he has folded this into the Capital Reserve Budget for 2011, and Mr. Santarsiero will advise the Township as to the timeline and what needs to be done next.

Mr. Fedorchak stated the second phase has to do with the possible construction of a Senior/Community Center. He stated the Board of Supervisors is very interested in maintaining the Township's eligibility for the second phase which would be a \$2 million project with a \$1 million local match. Mr. Fedorchak stated there have been a number of possibilities discussed including the use of the barn at the Patterson Farm which is something that possibly could be upgraded and made suitable for a Senior/Community Center. He stated a few other properties in the Township have been considered including a site on Oxford Valley Road which would be new construction.

Mr. Fedorchak stated at the last Board of Supervisors meeting there was a presentation made by Gary Cruzan who indicated that he has been in discussion with Toll Bros about the possibility that the Township could enter into a partnership with them such that Toll Bros. would construct the Senior Center. Mr. Fedorchak stated there is a financial obligation on the part of Toll Bros. to the Township which was intended to be an upgrade to the I-95 overpass. He stated there has been discussion that in lieu of this, they would construct a Senior/Community Center up front. He stated the Supervisors gave Mr. Cruzan until March 2 to come back to the Board with hard numbers.

Mr. Fritchey stated his understanding from one of the developer's representative was that it could be up to five years before they would sell the first residential unit, so he feels any potential for development of such a Center would not be for several years in the future. Mr. Maloney stated the "several years" the developer's representative alluded to was more in terms of build out. He stated the developer is currently marketing the property, and he feels they intend to be selling units in 2011; but the build out would take several years, and the money only comes in when each house is built. He stated the amount to be paid is \$1,600 per unit. Mr. Maloney stated they would be asking Toll Bros. to put that money forward before the development actually occurs.

Mr. Maloney stated he does not feel Mr. Cruzan is making an offer of any substance as he had the opportunity to do this more than seven years ago and did not do so. Mr. Maloney stated Mr. Cruzan wants to have complete authority of the project, and he does not feel a majority of the Board of Supervisors would be in favor of this. He stated the Township has already done a significant amount of work with the Seniors in developing a concept of what programming would look like for a Center. Mr. Maloney added the money from Toll Bros. is supposed to be sent to the Township, and Mr. Cruzan

is asking the Township to hand over the authority of these dollars. Mr. Maloney stated there also have to be changes to the Settlement Agreement which cannot be done unilaterally.

Mr. McDonald stated the Patterson Farm buildings have been in disrepair for a long time, and he feels the option of using the Patterson Farm barn would address the need for a Center as well as provide funds for renovations to the Barn. Mr. Maloney stated he is hopeful that they can accomplish those renovations in a way that would meet everyone's needs. Mr. Maloney stated he wanted to have use of the Patterson Farm buildings for the arts and community uses. He stated he feels it is most important to do something for the Seniors.

Mr. Newbon asked for details on the money that Toll Bros. was going to use for the widening, and Mr. Maloney stated the Settlement Agreement calls for the \$1 million to be used on a bridge over I-95 on Big Oak Road which is a PennDOT road in Middletown Township. Mr. Fedorchak added that this improvement is not on the PennDOT Twelve Year Capital Improvement Program. Mr. Fedorchak stated the Settlement Agreement does require that these funds are to come to the Township for this purpose, and Mr. Maloney stated all Parties would have to agree to give Mr. Cruzan's organization, RAM, authority to spend that money independently. Mr. Maloney stated the Settlement Agreement would also have to be revised with all Parties agreeing that it could go to some other purpose than the bridge improvements. Mr. Maloney stated they would also have to have Toll Bros. agree to put the funds up front.

Mr. Carpenter asked if the Township could negotiate directly with Toll Bros, and Mr. Maloney stated there are other Parties involved in the Settlement Agreement including RAM and Ms. Dana Weyrick.

Mr. McDonald asked the Seniors present this evening if they feel the area under discussion where Toll Bros. will be building is a desirable place for a Senior Center, and a number of those present indicated they did not feel it was appropriate since that location has a significant amount of traffic and is on the edge of the Township.

Mr. Frank Fazzalore stated he also feels that what was being considered by Mr. Cruzan was a smaller building than what they had been discussing with the Township. Mr. Fedorchak stated this is correct. He stated Mr. Cruzan had indicated that they could build a building of 2,500 to 3,000 square feet; and when the Township first began to discuss a Senior Center seven to eight year ago, the architect they hired worked with the Seniors and they developed a minimum number of 10,000 square feet.

Mr. Irv Hirsch, 1782 N. Dove Road, thanked the Park & Recreation Board for considering a Senior Center and also thanked Ms. Liney for all her help over the years. Mr. Hirsch asked for clarification on the possible use of the funds that had been set aside for the bridge improvements, and Mr. Maloney stated currently the Agreement calls for the money to be paid out over a number of years rather than at one time up front. Mr. Fritchey stated there are also individual Parties who would have to agree to a modification of the Settlement Agreement, and if they were to refuse to agree to a modification, the release of the funds could be tied up in litigation for a significant period of time.

Mr. McDonald stated there are two options being considered, one is the Grant that has been discussed by Mr. Santarsiero with a Township match for use of the Patterson Farm barn or some other location. Mr. Hirsch asked if the purchase of the Patterson Farm could be considered the local match. Mr. Fedorchak stated they need to consider the total cost of a new Senior Center, and he feels this would be \$2.5 million. Mr. Fedorchak stated Mr. Santarsiero has come up with \$1 million, and the Township needs an additional \$1.5 million. Mr. Maloney stated even if they could use the Patterson Farm as the local match, they would still need to come up with \$1.5 million in cash to pay for the rest. Mr. Hirsch asked if they feel it would take \$2.5 million to build the Center if they use the Patterson Farm barn. Mr. Fedorchak stated the only experience they can draw from is the exercise they went through with the Elm Lowne barn about five to six years ago, and the potential renovation costs to upgrade that structure to a Community/Senior Center was going to be \$1.5 million to \$2 million. Mr. Fazzalore stated that barn had structural deficiencies which brought up the costs significantly. Mr. Maloney stated he still feels the Township will have to put money into the Patterson Farm barn, and he feels they need to be prepared to spend money whether it is \$500,000 to \$1.5 million. He stated they still need a majority of the Supervisors to be willing to spend money. Mr. Hirsch stated he understands that a number of the Board members are unwilling to raise taxes. Mr. Maloney stated the Township debt costs are going down in 2013 because of the way they structured the refinancing so they could do it without raising taxes, but some of the Supervisors have also indicated that they do not want to add any debt.

Mr. Fazzalore stated he is on the Board of Trustees for the Bucks County Community College, and they are going to do a \$6 million project and they borrowed funds from the bank at 2.5% which they will pay back in two years. Mr. Maloney stated this is the message he was giving one year ago. He stated there has never been a better time to borrow money. Mr. Fazzalore stated he tried to get the third Supervisor vote for this project when he was on the Board of Supervisors. He stated at that time he was opposed to the fields because he did not feel they should continue to ignore 18% of the Township population which is the percentage of Seniors in the Township. Mr. Fazzalore stated they are present this evening to ask for the continued support of the Park & Recreation Board. He stated it is important to take care of everyone in the community.

Mr. Fritchey stated they have had the support of the Park & Recreation Board for a long time. Mr. Fazzalore stated it would be only a \$1.50 per month increase in taxes per household if the Township were to borrow \$2 million at 4% for 30 years. He stated Lower Makefield is a wonderful community to live in, and he would like to see them continue to move forward. Mr. Fritchey stated he does not feel they can allow their fear to trump their sense of vision, and they should plan for the future to meet the needs of the people in the community. Mr. Fazzalore stated he is thankful for what Mr. Santarsiero has done for the Township with regard to the Grants from the State, and Mr. Maloney agreed. Mr. Fazzalore stated there are some funds that they are eligible for from the County, but they need to have a Center in order to get the funds.

Ms. Gail McPhaden thanked the Park & Recreation Board for allowing them to discuss this matter. She stated through the Seniors Board of Directors, they have a Senior Center Committee which she and Mr. Fazzalore co-Chair. She stated they have done a lot of research on their needs and also visited other Centers, and they want to be reasonable in their request. She stated people do not know that the Lower Makefield Seniors exist because they do not have their own Center. She stated their activities are now on TV thanks to Mr. Fedorchak. She stated they also have their own Website. She stated they have recently held a flea market, and they made \$1,300. She stated they also participate in the Veterans Parade and were a presence at the Memorial Day Parade as well. She stated they give to the community and prepare packages for the troops who are deployed. She stated they also donate to a number of other organizations including Head Start and the food banks. She stated they would like to become even more active. She stated they are getting recognized in the local newspapers. Ms. McPhaden stated the Yardley Voice will dedicate their January issue to community groups, and she will be writing an article for them. She stated there are many activities that they would like to offer but they cannot because they do not have a facility. She stated Seniors need to have activities for their mental and physical well being. She stated they would like to have a rental facility as there are almost no facilities in Lower Makefield to rent for events or group meetings. She stated this would also provide income that could support the Center. Ms. McPhaden stated she would prefer that this be a Senior Center that would be available to the community on an as-needed basis.

Ms. McPhaden stated they visited the Northampton Senior Center which was built four years ago for \$2.7 million with the Township providing the land. Ms. McPhaden stated they had 400 members and within a year they had over 1,000. She stated at the current time Lower Makefield Seniors do not meet the guidelines for funding from Bucks County because they do not have a Center. Ms. McPhaden stated she is concerned about what is available to certain age groups in the Township versus nothing for the Seniors who make up 21% of the Township residents. She stated she feels it is a great time to build as the contractors are looking for work, and they could get a better price. She stated it has been estimated that it would cost only \$1.50 per household per month to pay for this, and she feels the Seniors are worth this.

Ms. McPhaden asked that if there are plans for a Senior Center, their Committee would like to be involved as they have done significant research on this, and would like to provide input.

Ms. McPhaden stated she reviewed the Minutes of the Park Board for the last year, and she only saw the Seniors mentioned three times and never about the Senior Center so they were not aware that the Park & Rec Board were in favor of this. Mr. Fritchey stated the Park & Recreation Board has been in favor of the Center for many years, but have been told every year at Budget time that there was no funding available in terms of capital improvements. He stated the recent discussions are the first time they have been given positive input in terms of spending money since the financial crisis it and Fee-In-Lieu money stopped coming in. Mr. Carpenter stated they have spent a significant amount of time over the years discussing this, and they have recommended this to the Board of Supervisors many times in many different ways. Mr. McDonald stated the Park & Recreation Board felt that they were not able to act on this although it was a priority for the Park Board for many years. He stated there are two votes on the Board of Supervisors for this now, and they need one more vote in favor of proceeding.

Ms. McPhaden stated Mr. Fedorchak and Mr. Maloney have been very helpful.

Mr. Maloney stated he feels that in recent years, the Park Board was essentially told that this matter had been taken out of their control. He suggested that everyone continue to discuss this matter with the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. McPhaden stated the Seniors are willing to do their part and are willing to accept suggestions on what they should do.

Mr. Fazzalore thanked Ms. Liney for all the work she has done for the Seniors.

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Liney thanked all members of the Park and Recreation Board for their ongoing support this year, their promotion of Park issues on behalf of the community, and contributing to the success of the recreation function.

Ms. Liney recognized the efforts of the volunteers in all the user groups such as YMS, PAA, Lower Makefield Football, the Swim and Dive Programs, and the Lower Makefield Seniors Group for all of their contributions to the community. She stated these grass roots organizations make Lower Makefield Township a great place to live. She stated donated time and facility improvements result in a win/win for the Township and the organizations. Ms. Liney stated all user groups have met their obligations to the Township for 2010, totaling approximately \$134,000 for the year.

Ms. Liney stated the Township will have the opportunity to thank the twenty-five volunteer coordinators, Officers, and Board members of the Lower Makefield Seniors group this Friday at their annual Holiday event.

Ms. Liney stated she is pleased and excited looking forward to 2011 and is optimistic that the Township will move forward with the completion of some long-planned Park projects to benefit the Lower Makefield residents.

LEAGUE REPORTS

Mr. Newbon stated he spoke with Tom Augustin about Lower Makefield Football. Mr. Newbon stated the season ended on the 13th, and they have their Championship Saturday which is also Family Day. He stated their numbers were down slightly this year. Mr. Newbon stated Mr. Augustin stated everyone was very satisfied with the facilities at Macclesfield Park. He stated they have a new President although Tom Augustin will continue as the Township liaison. Mr. Newbon stated they started a scholarship program this year and gave out three, \$1,000 scholarships to players in the High School that went through the League. Mr. Newbon stated they moved the maximum age from thirteen to fourteen to allow Middle School students, that otherwise would not make the School team, to be able to continue to play football. The 2011 season will begin in August, with registration beginning March 1. The fees are \$260 for tackle and \$225 for flag. There is a \$50 discount for those registering between March 1 and March 31. He stated they include a \$25 surcharge which is for the Snack Bar; and if you work at the Snack Bar, that fee is given back to the family. Mr. Newbon stated there will have two Saturday camps prior to the season. He stated they are not looking for any additional fields. Mr. Newbon stated Mr. Augustin indicated that they greatly appreciated the field space they were given, and they thanked Ms. Liney and PAA for allowing them to use Macclesfield H. Mr. Newbon stated they did discuss the problem of parking on the fields, and Mr. Augustin will send an e-mail to all members advising them not to park on the fields.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Carpenter stated he recently held a family event at the Golf Course which was handled exceptionally by the staff at the Golf Course. Mr. Newbon stated he too recently held a family function there, and they did a fabulous job.

December 14, 2010

Park & Recreation Board – page 8 of 8

There being no further business, Mr. Carpenter moved, Mr. Wysocki seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Fritchey, Chairman