

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PARK & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – JANUARY 12, 2010

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on January 12, 2010. Chairman Fritchey called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.

Those present:

Park & Recreation Board: David Fritchey, Chairman
Henry Carpenter, Vice Chairman
Patricia Bunn, Secretary
Fran McDonald, Member
Andrew Newbon, Member
Dennis Wysocki, Member

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

Absent: Dave Gordon, Park & Recreation Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. McDonald moved, Ms. Bunn seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of December 8, 2009 as written.

REORGANIZATION OF THE PARK & RECREATION BOARD

Mr. Newbon moved, Mr. McDonald seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the following for 2010 – David Fritchey, Chairman, Henry Carpenter, Vice Chairman, and Patricia Bunn, Secretary.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED BIKEPATH LINK

Mr. Peter Borowsky was present and stated he has put together a map of how he feels the bikepath could be done easily. A copy of the map he prepared was provided to the Board. He stated he would recommend that they take the path on the Golf Course side of the road on Township land. He stated there are over 60 homes in the Clearview development, and they could then go up Woodside Road on the Golf Course side and

then cross just past the Golf Course driveway which is where the current path ends on the other side of the street. He stated there are good sight lines to cross at the location where he has suggested.

Ms. Liney noted the letter from Mr. Majewski with regard to the PennDOT requirements for line of sight.

Mr. Borowsky stated he realizes that they need to find finding to proceed with his proposal.

Mr. Newbon asked if he has a proposal to cross back to the south side down the hill, and Mr. Borowsky stated he does not. He stated he understands that the Master Plan indicates it would go all the way down Woodside; and while they would like to see this, the most important concern for their neighborhood is to allow them to safely get out to the path from their development.

There was discussion with regard to the Scudders Falls Bridge proposal, and Mr. Fritchey stated the way the entrance to the Bridge is now, the south side would be the closest to the Bridge; and he feels this was one of the initial considerations when it was concluded that the south side was the preferable side. Mr. Fritchey stated the proposal was for the bikepath to go down the south side of Woodside Road down the west side of Taylorsville Road to the ramp and then across the Bridge rather than making people cross Woodside Road. He stated there was also concern that the Golf Course emptied out into Woodside from the north and there was concern with vehicles coming in and out of the Golf Course with a bikepath on that same side. He stated they felt the potential for a bike/car accident would be minimized if the bikepath were on the south side.

Mr. Borowsky asked where those from his neighborhood would be expected to cross if the bikepath were on the south side. He stated the lines of sight from their neighborhood are not as good for crossing at that location. He stated crossing the Golf Course driveway would be safer than what they are doing today. Mr. Newbon stated he felt the intention was to cross at the top entrance of the neighborhood.

Mr. John Lewis, 1550 Surrybrook Court, stated if you stay on the north side, you can go back up the canal/towpath so there could be a way to get an entrance from the towpath up to the Bridge.

Mr. Borowsky stated they moved into their home ten years ago, and they are still waiting for the connection from their neighborhood to the bikepath.

Mr. Newbon asked if there is something that can be done to make the area safer even if they do not do a formal bikepath so that those from Clearview can travel this road safely. Ms. Bunn stated there are ditches, and they would need to consider stormwater run off.

Mr. Robert Zuczek, 65 Upper Hilltop Road, stated a simple solution would be to pave the shoulder where all the rocks are now which would make it a little better than what they have now. He stated he agrees the bikepath should be on Clearview's side of the road as it would service more homes in the Township and would be safer. He stated his property is on the opposite side of the street. He stated the shoulder is fairly level, but there is a rocky surface.

Mr. Al Drummond, 66 Upper Hilltop, stated he lives on the corner. He stated the bikepath would go across the side of his house. He stated presumably a bikepath is also a sidewalk and pedestrians could go on it. He stated if they take Federal money, they would have to comply with Federal law, and a sidewalk would have to comply with ADA requirements. He stated he is a licensed engineer; and he does not feel they could build a bikepath going down the hill which would be compliant with ADA requirements.

Ms. Bunn stated there are exceptions to the law and it is not possible to meet ADA requirements in all circumstances. She stated you are expected to have 5' clearance and certain cross slopes where you can. She stated the ADA recognizes that you cannot meet all requirements in all circumstances, and there are exclusions. Mr. Drummond stated you cannot prohibit someone in a wheelchair from going on the path. Ms. Bunn stated the Township recently built Black Rock Road, and this was a similar situation.

Mr. Drummond stated the problem he has with the bikepath is that it will go alongside his fence and then cut in behind his fence around the inside of the trees. He stated the bikepath is a Class A recreational facility, and he feels he is entitled to a Class A buffer behind his house. He stated when the Golf Course went before the Zoning Hearing Board, it was written into the requirements that the Township had to contact every resident alongside the Golf Course to find out what type of Class A buffer they wanted. He stated the Plans for Clearview showed the bikepath behind his house, and not allowing him to have the 8' buffer was totally incorrect. He stated if the Township builds behind him, he will have a lawsuit against the Township. He stated the bikepath as currently engineered and approved by the Township is not the proper design and is discriminating against him. He stated they could put the bikepath between the street and the fence as the Township owns that property since it is the right-of-way, and he would have no say in this. He stated when they built Clearview they widened the road 3', and he lost 3' of buffer space. He stated this was in the Township's interest; and if they had not widened Woodside at that location, there would be more accidents. He stated if they are going to put it in, they could still maintain the 5' separation between the edge of the cartway and the edge of the bikepath, but it should be run along the Woodside side of the trees and not on the inside. He stated he would prefer to have the bikepath on the north side of the street adding there are sixty houses on the north side and none on the other side. He stated by putting it on the south side of the street where it was originally planned, anyone from Clearview would have to cross Woodside twice. He stated if they wanted to be very safe, there is a court in the rear of Clearview, and they could obtain an easement along private property and have a pathway into the Golf Course; and they would not have to go on Woodside Road.

Ms. Bunn stated it is difficult to get easements. Mr. Carpenter stated they do not want to have people cutting through the Golf Course. Mr. Newbon stated those from Clearview are trying to get to the Park in the area and not the Golf Course. Mr. Carpenter stated if the bikepath is on the south side, those living in the area on the south side would not have to cross Woodside Road. He stated those in Clearview will have to cross somewhere. Mr. Borowsky he is willing to listen to other solutions, but wants to make it as safe as possible. Mr. Carpenter stated he is most concerned about the crossing of Woodside, and he wants the least amount of people to have to cross Woodside. Mr. Carpenter stated he is concerned about crossing at the Golf Course. He stated he feels they need to look into what would be the safest proposal.

Ms. Bunn stated she feels the Board needs to see where the connections will be. She stated the connection down the hill is on the south side. She stated they need to focus on “the big picture” and not just this one portion. Mr. Newbon asked if they can go on either side of the road east of Clearview and down the hill on Woodside. Ms. Bunn stated the south side is less steep. Mr. Zuczek stated it is not less steep. Ms. Bunn stated there is room on the south side to correct this.

Mr. McDonald stated if they do the bikepath all the way down to Taylorsville on the south side, where are they expecting the residents from Clearview to cross Woodside. Mr. Newbon stated initially it was proposed to cross at the entrance where there is a “T.”

Mr. Borowsky stated while he recognizes that they will probably not proceed with the whole plan, he asked if there is a way to do something to get 200 yards of a safe passage. Mr. Newbon stated if they decide to stay with the bikepath on the south side, they need to determine from Clearview down which side they will go. He stated he does not have a problem with the bikepath on the north side provided they can go all the way down; otherwise, they would have to have another crossing.

Ms. Bunn stated her concern is where they tie in to Taylorsville Road as it would not make sense to have multiple crossings. Mr. Drummond stated there would be three crossings – one at the Golf Course, and one at each of the entrances for Clearview. He stated all traffic coming off the Bridge will be looping around the jug handle, and there will be an intersection. He stated presumably the bikepath will cross at the intersection, and there will be a traffic light. He stated there are not a lot of people going up Woodside Road as it takes a lot of aerobic capacity to go up the hill, but it does not take a lot to go down; and he feels they are creating a magnet for children to ride skateboards and bikes down the hill. He stated the people who are most likely to use the path are the residents of Clearview. He stated it may not make sense in the long-term to connect the path all the way down to Taylorsville. He suggested that they not go down the hill but go alongside the basin and run it down the woods where there would be safer slopes, and they can then bring it out to Taylorsville and cross Taylorsville at the north side and go on the Canal path. He stated he assumes there will be a ramp from the Canal path to go across the Scudders Falls Bridge.

Mr. Fritchey stated they cannot decide this matter tonight. He stated he feels Ms Bunn is correct and they need to look at the entire picture. He stated they will have discussions with the Township engineer and will also need input from the Police to see what would be best in terms of public safety.

Mr. Maloney joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Fritchey stated the Park & Recreation Board would then make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors who would make the final decision on the design and funding. He noted funds are very limited at this time; and there is currently a substantial debate going on as to what, if anything, should be done for recreation. He thanked the residents for their opinions on this matter.

Mr. Newbon stated he would like to look at what they might be able to do on the north side in terms of an extension on the side of the road in the shoulder area to help provide safe passage.

Mr. Borowsky asked if there is anything else the residents from Clearview can do, and Mr. Fritchey stated they will refer this to the Township Manager who will consult with the Chief of Police. Mr. Borowsky stated he understands that once they agree on the right approach, they will have to consider how they can move forward. Mr. Fritchey stated the price tag for building bikepaths is very high. Mr. Borowsky stated this is why he suggested that doing only 200 yard may make sense. Mr. Fritchey stated the Board of Supervisors does look into doing what would benefit the most people. Ms. Liney agreed to advise Mr. Borowsky if the Park & Recreation Board would be making a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on this. Mr. Fritchey stated the final decision would be made by the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Maloney stated once it gets to the Supervisors, it would be a matter of lobbying the Supervisors that the funding for this project supersedes the value of other funding the Supervisors would be debating in the Budget.

Mr. Maloney stated he assumes that what is being discussed is a blacktop path, and Ms. Liney agreed. Mr. Maloney stated there are alternatives that could be discussed. Ms. Liney stated Mr. Borowsky has suggested that possibly they could do something on a temporary basis, and she could have the Township engineer look into something that could be done temporarily on the north side. Mr. Maloney stated what they did at the Black Rock culvert was similarly temporary, but it was a way to alleviate a concern. Mr. Maloney stated previously there were Grant funds available for projects such as this; and while there is less of this now, they could still look into this.

DISCUSSION OF PARK & RECREATION ITEMS AND APPOINT LIAISON TO THE CITIZENS BUDGET COMMISSION

Ms. Liney stated she met with members of the Citizens Budget Committee this afternoon; and Mr. Joe Menard, Mr. Ken Martin, and Mr. Roger Owen are present this evening to provide an update on what their charge has been from the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Menard stated the Citizens Budget Committee has been assigned as their major charge to put a business plan together to address the active field situation. He stated they met with Ms. Liney today to get an overview of the situation. He stated they are supposed to put a business plan together that will encompass the Park & Rec Plans along with the user use plans and funding. He stated in order to do this they will need assistance from the Park & Recreation Board and will also be meeting with the athletic organizations. He stated they would like to have one of their members be a liaison to the Park & Rec Board and would like to have a representative from the Park & Rec Board work with them as well.

Mr. McDonald stated over the years the Park & Recreation Board has made recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to try to meet the needs of the residents. He stated he does have a level of frustration since a number of these recommendations have been put forth, but there has not been any movement on them. He stated they are willing to do anything they can to get something moved forward. He stated they did provide a priority list some time ago, and the Park & Rec Board is willing to work with the Citizens Budget Committee to get something moving forward.

Mr. Carpenter stated the Park & Recreation Board has done a lot of work on the Plans and had a significant amount of public comment during the planning process. He stated he hopes that the substantial amount of work that has already been done does not get brushed aside. Mr. Menard stated this is why their first meeting was with Ms. Liney and their second meeting is with the Park & Recreation Board. Mr. Menard stated he hopes to put forth a plan that is the collective input from everyone to move this forward.

Mr. Newbon stated they are very willing to work with the Citizens Budget Committee. He stated he has been on the Park & Recreation Board for thirteen years, and they have been talking about building fields all of this time. He stated if the Citizens Budget Commission can help them convince the Board of Supervisors that there is a need to develop these fields, he is in favor of this. Mr. McDonald showed copies of the Plans which they have worked on over the years with everyone's input.

Mr. Fritchey stated the Park & Recreation Board has put in a huge amount of time over the last fifteen years developing neighborhood consensus over what should be put in the parks. He stated over the past almost ten years, very little has been funded whether there were good or bad economic times. He stated he feels a lot of the direction of the debate in this matter has been disingenuous, and he feels discussion about whether or not there is a need for fields is not something that reasonable people can differ about. He stated there are National standards, and the Township aspires to be a “first-class” Township; and they have 50% of the active recreation field capacity that they are supposed to have for a Township of our size. He stated this can be ameliorated because parcels of land have been bought which have not been developed and have been lying fallow for ten years while an entire generation of children has gone through the School system. He stated there is over \$5 million invested and nothing has been done which he feels is not good stewardship. He stated National standards are accepted in everything else done in the Township, and he stated they are plainly below standards in terms of active recreation fields. He stated if they decide they do not want to build the fields because they do not have enough money or do not want to raise taxes, this would be an honest answer, but he feels it is wrong to say that they have enough fields. Mr. Fritchey stated if they recognize that they do need the fields but indicate they do not have enough money to do everything they could then decide on a “financial triage” and consider a prioritization.

Mr. Fritchey stated his problem is with the basic direction from which the Citizens Budget Commission has been directed to come, which is to establish a business plan. He stated he is not sure what this means. Mr. Menard stated it is not the type of business plan that would be put into play for the Golf Course or other enterprise fund that is long term geared to make money. He stated they are going to look at all the additional points that may not have been investigated so that they can move this forward. He stated they plan to come up with alternatives to get something done. Mr. Fritchey asked if they are going to do away with the Plans that have been developed over fifteen years with the input of community groups, and Mr. Menard stated they are not. He stated their premise is they will start with what the Park & Recreation Board already has.

Mr. McDonald stated he feels it is important to get anything from some piece to all of it done; and he feels the Citizens Budget Commission has been tasked with determining the best way to get something done now. He stated the frustration is that the Park & Recreation Board had been asked to do certain things which they did and now they are being told that they did not do enough or they have to do something different; and they do not know what that “something different” is. He stated they would like to know what they are being asked to do now.

Mr. Fritchey stated a lot of the debate has been on how they can justify building the parks based on expansion of user groups, and one of the Supervisors has suggested that the volume of users has remained static. Mr. Fritchey stated the reason they need more parks is because there is an unsustainable situation based on the volume of park land they have currently as the parks are being overused. He stated this is not a matter of poor maintenance, and the Park & Rec crew does an excellent job working on the parks; but the parks are suffering because they are overused. He stated YMS saved Macclesfield Park by building the turf field; and before it was built, there were serious issues, and they had to close fields. He stated they have a similar situation with baseball; and over the years they had experts come in to look at the ball fields and they told the Township how much time their fields should be used and recommended ten hours per week. He stated the fields are used significantly more than this, and they have been able to do so because of the efforts of the Park & Rec staff and the user groups working on the fields.

Mr. Fritchey stated even if the user fees are increased, he does not feel it will bring in that much more money.

Mr. Maloney stated he is not sure what the mandate is of the Citizens Budget Commission, and he does not know for sure what the three “no” votes are asking for.

Mr. Menard stated they are trying to work with the Park & Recreation Board to get input.

Ms. Bunn stated she feels what they are trying to do is to help the Township formulate a plan to move forward. She stated Park & Recreation has spent a significant amount of time and money to come up with the plans which the Park Board, user groups, and residents are comfortable with. She stated if they are going to suggest that they need to change the plans, she feels the Park & Recreation Board may not be that receptive because they have been through this already. She stated she does recognize that some of the plans were done a decade ago, and they may have to consider if things have changed which may involve looking at the plans again, recognizing that this would also involve additional costs.

Mr. Maloney stated he wants to make sure that before anyone spends any effort that they know what they are trying to do and make sure that they are responding to the needs of the three no votes. Mr. Owen stated he feels this should come from the Board of Supervisors, and Mr. Maloney stated he feels they should first go back to the three no votes to see what they want to see. Mr. Menard stated the Citizens Budget Commission is trying to get more information so that when they meet with the Board of Supervisors they have more of a background and information to put forth very specific points. Mr. Owen stated he feels they should get direction from their Supervisor liaison and the Township Manager to make sure that they are proceeding in the proper way. Mr. Maloney stated there are two Supervisors who are in favor of proceeding, and there are three Supervisors

who have not yet articulated what they would need to see to be convinced that any portion of the plans is worth going forward. He stated Mr. Fedorchak has no decision-making authority on this, and it is Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Stainthorpe who need to articulate to the Citizens Budget Commission what they would like to see.

Mr. McDonald stated they need to determine how the projects will get paid for. He stated he feels the Citizens Budget Commission needs to determine what is the best way to pay for this so that costs are shared by the user groups and the residents.

Mr. Fritchey stated if a determination is made to spend a certain amount of money and there is a request for a prioritization, the Park & Recreation Board would be willing to discuss this further. He stated they recognize that there would have to be phases to complete the parks. He stated he now understands that when they discuss a “business plan,” it is a sustainable financial formula to accomplish construction. Mr. Maloney stated he feels that they need to find out if a product that addresses the financial issues alone will be sufficient for the three Board members who voted no. Mr. Martin stated they work with Mr. McCloskey, the Finance Director, who is very creative.

Mr. Carpenter stated he feels someone should be formally appointed from the Park & Recreation Board to liaison with the Citizens Budget Commission, and Mr. Menard stated this was what they wanted from the Park & Recreation Board this evening.

Mr. Wysocki stated if their charge is to validate what is shown on the plans, this is a different situation than just looking into how to finance the plans.

Mr. Fritchey stated the Park & Recreation Board has never taken a position on financial matters until they were explicitly asked if they should proceed; and they responded in a positive fashion. Mr. Menard stated they would like to be able to come up with an outline in the next few weeks so that they can proceed. Mr. Martin stated hopefully the 2010 Budget will reflect the spending proposal that they hope to put forward.

Mr. Greg Mauro, Princess Drive, stated he assumes there were costs associated with each of the proposed projects, and it was noted this is correct. Mr. Mauro stated he feels the Citizens Budget Commission needs to know how much money they are going to spend. Mr. Fritchey stated this is still subject to debate.

Mr. Newbon moved, Ms. Bunn seconded and it was unanimously carried to appoint Fran McDonald as the liaison to the Citizens Budget Commission.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORT

Mr. Maloney stated he is happy to be the Liaison to the Park & Rec Board this year. He stated he would like to see the park Plans that have been on the docket for a long time to come to fruition. Mr. Maloney advised that the sharp shoot is scheduled for February 5, 2010 and advised the Board of the sites on which the hunt will take place. Residents adjacent to these sites will be advised.

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Liney stated Park & Recreation has a full schedule in the next few weeks reaching out to some of the key user groups in the Township particularly YMS and PAA to revisit with them opportunities to be sure we are optimizing use of all the current field space available on Township and School District facilities. She stated they are reviewing existing fee structures, potential impact of increasing the fees, and what they may be able to do to help control costs to the Township taxpayers. She stated YMS and PAA organizations will be forwarding their financial information as part of the permitting process with their field applications for 2010.

Ms. Liney stated Park & Recreation met today with representatives of the Citizens Budget Committee, and had some good dialogue regarding the sports programs in the Township. She stated Park & Recreation welcomes feedback and support from the Citizens Budget Committee in helping to address the fiscal challenges that we face.

Ms. Liney stated the Township is working with the Seniors Group to offer qualified residents free tax preparation by AARP. This service has been scheduled for Monday mornings in the Township main meeting room beginning February 1 through the tax deadline.

Ms. Liney stated representatives from PAA will be meeting this Friday with the Township regarding a planned opening day parade for the softball, baseball, and tee ball programs on Saturday, April 10, rain date Sunday, April 11. Preliminary route for the parade is being planned, ending at the Township baseball complex. She stated she will keep the Park Board informed.

Ms. Liney stated registration for the Community Pool is underway. Applications for the required permits for the pool operation from the State of PA and from Bucks County have been submitted. Paperwork for pool staffing and purchasing of materials is being handled. The Township is meeting with swim team officials next week to wrap up the 2009 season and look forward to partnering with them this coming season.

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Ms. Liney stated the Township has begun the paperwork process to issue spring field permits and scheduling space for the picnic grove at Kids Kingdom for 2010. Planned summer camps are being arranged and information for registration for the camps should be available to the community in the near future.

Ms. Liney stated many of the projects the Park crew has scheduled are weather dependent, such as the parking lot crack filling at Macclesfield, playground lumber replacement and barn roof repairs at Kids Kingdom. The cold weather is a good opportunity for the crew to focus on the indoor tasks such as replacing the flooring in the Pool concession stand and relocating chlorine lines and meters. Once the weather breaks, the crew will resume the outdoor projects.

Mr. Bo Birkhead, PAA, provided additional information about the proposed PAA Opening Day Parade.

Mr. McDonald asked the status of the electrical issues at Memorial Park, and Ms. Liney stated they are still working on these issues.

There being no further business, Ms. Bun moved, Mr. McDonald seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Bunn, Secretary