

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PARK & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 13, 2012

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on November 13, 2012. Chairman Fritchey called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. It was noted that a quorum was not present this evening.

Those present:

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

Others: Terry Fedorchak, Township Manager
Donna Liney, Park & Recreation Director
Kristin Tyler, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: Frank McDonald, Park & Rec Vice Chairman
Dave Gordon, Park & Recreation Member
Dave Malinowski, Park & Rec Member
Andrew Newbon, Park & Rec Member

REVIEW OF DRAFT OPERATING BUDGETS FOR 2013

Park and Recreation

Ms. Liney stated this is the 13th year Park and Recreation is presenting an Operating Budget with no increase in millage. Since 2000 when the Park tax was \$54, the Township has continued to provide improved service to additional facilities such as the Fred Allan Complex and Memorial Park. She stated the Park crew is a full-time three-man crew, reduced from four men, and employs summer seasonal help. She stated the Park crew continues to complete more projects in house, service its equipment, and do more with less. She stated this is certainly positive from the community's standpoint as residents are living through a difficult economy. Revenues for next year are projected to come in at approximately \$873,000; and expenditures are projected at \$873,000.

Ms. Liney stated the Capital Construction line item is shown at \$40,000, and she would target \$20,000 to resolve the Stoddart Complex access issue discussed at last month's meeting, and continue with the Township's resurfacing of the existing bike paths in 2013. She stated an area that was prioritized would be Edgewood Road from Mill Road and the Tax Office to Sandy Run.

Mr. Fritchey stated it appears that they will only be resurfacing approximately 150 feet of bike path. Mr. Fedorchak asked the amount budgeted for this, and Ms. Liney stated it would be \$20,000 for the bike path and \$20,000 for the paving of the access at Stoddart which had been discussed at the last meeting when Ms. Bunn had noted that there were access issues at Stoddart, and they may need to pave some of that. Mr. Fedorchak stated they may be able to piggyback that project off of the ball field construction, and they could then devote the full \$40,000 to resurfacing the bike paths. Ms. Liney stated they would then be able to do the resurfacing up to Schuyler.

Mr. Fedorchak stated overall he feels the Park & Rec Budget is in excellent shape, and the operating revenues are covering the operating expenditures. He stated this leaves a reserve of approximately \$231,000. Mr. Fedorchak stated he does not see that there will be any significant spikes up in expenses in the near future, and he feels they will be okay for at least the next few years.

Ms. Bunn asked if they are considering any new bike paths, and Mr. Fedorchak stated they are not, and this is only allocating funds for resurfacing existing bike paths.

Pool Budget

Ms. Liney stated the Community Pool Budget for 2013 reflects a positive revenue flow of approximately \$716,000 with expenses projected at \$688,000.

Ms. Liney stated that new programs introduced at the Pool last season were successful, they received positive feedback from the members, and generated over \$3,000 which was three times the projected estimate. She stated Pool membership continues at a slight reduction, which was not unexpected as the economy remains stagnant, coupled with an overall decline in the Township population of school-age residents. She stated they are hopeful that they will be able to close the gap in the near future.

Ms. Liney stated Park & Recreation, at the request of the Township Manager, met with Township engineers today to discuss updating the Capital Program and the Baseline Feasibility Study for the Pool. She stated Budgeted for 2013 at the Pool would be replacement of the Pool heaters for the intermediate and tot pools, which are the original units installed over ten years ago. Also targeted for 2013 is the installation of WIFI access for the Pool members. Park & Recreation continues to address large-scale maintenance items such as concrete work, slide refurbishment, and furniture replacement.

Ms. Liney suggested to the Park Board that they consider recommending a nominal increase of less than 2% in membership fees for the Community Pool. This would be in an effort to keep pace with annual operating costs. She stated no tax dollars support the Pool, and the last modification to membership fees was in 2009. Ms. Liney stated she would recommend increasing the family rate by \$5 from \$395 to \$400 for the discount period, and \$10 which would be \$440 to \$450 for the non-discount period.

It would go from \$200 to \$225 for the non-discount Individual. For the Senior Membership it is recommended to go from \$30 to \$35. A \$5 increase for August Family and Individual Memberships is recommended.

Mr. Fritchey noted the extensive discussion they had previously regarding how much the lifeguards would pay for Pool membership, and he asked how many of those individuals met the hours required; and Ms. Liney stated there was one individual.

Mr. Wysocki asked about the impact of the proposed closing of the Newtown Swim Club; and Ms. Liney stated they will still be open in 2013, but the Board may wish to consider opening up membership to non-residents or sponsoring a specific number of non-resident families. Mr. Fritchey stated this would still be a year off, and there could be a change, they may not close by then.

Mr. Fedorchak stated he feels it is important that a viable short-range and long-range Capital Improvement Program be developed as soon as possible for the Pool. He stated they engaged the engineers who will be working with Ms. Liney and the Pool staff toward that end, and they will then present it to the Park & Recreation Board for their input. He stated the Pool has approximately a \$350,000 reserve which is a good place to start to fund certain capital improvements. He noted the Olympic Pool is thirty-one years old, and they should consider what this means for the future. Ms. Liney stated the Wallover study indicated that the tank is in good shape, but there is a water loss at the seams which has been a problem for many years. Mr. Liney stated the gutters would be a big item, and this was estimated to be \$1 million for the Olympic Pool.

Mr. Fedorchak stated he would caution against a membership increase without adding something to the Pool. He stated there has been a decrease in membership for the last three years, and they are down 8% over this three-year period. He stated this is a \$50,000 loss in revenue. Ms. Bunn stated she feels that there had been discussion previously that it is better to have small incremental increases rather than waiting a number of years and then having a \$25 or \$30 increase.

Mr. Fritchey asked if the problem with the declining enrollment is an issue of demographics, the economy, or a mixture of both. He noted he had read that the school-age population in Lower Makefield is decreasing. Ms. Tyler stated she feels it is the real estate market; and the Township residents with grown children are staying in their homes

until the prices rebound so they are not getting in new, young families. Ms. Tyler stated she feels they could consider opening up some limited memberships to non residents, but it should not be a geographic limitation. She stated she would be in favor of a sponsored-family program, although she is not sure it is needed at that time; and they may want to make this decision after early enrollment closed in March to see where they stand with their numbers. She stated the Newtown Swim Club closing may help if they open up enrollment to non residents. Ms. Bunn stated she would not want to wait to long to have this discussion since in the past they have waited, and there is not enough time to make a decision for the upcoming season. She stated they should consider early on what they are going to do if enrollment is down. Ms. Liney stated they could look at this in April.

Mr. Fedorchak asked if the proposed increase in fees was reflected in the 2013 Budget, and Ms. Liney stated it was. Mr. Fedorchak asked how much they would lose backing that increase out, and Ms. Liney estimated that it would be approximately \$20,000 less.

Mr. Wysocki asked about the Pool salaries, and Ms. Liney stated they do give a percentage increase and try to keep competitive with the surrounding area.

Garden of Reflection Budget

Ms. Liney stated as noted in the packets, slightly more than \$4,000 was deposited as revenue in 2012 to care for the Garden of Reflection with projected expenditures of \$57,000. She stated as they move forward into 2013, the balance will be drawn down to approximately \$70,000. Ms. Liney stated that based on this, the Township may need to re-evaluate the process of caring for this facility. She stated while the Township fully supports the efforts of the Garden of Reflection Committee, funding for the maintenance of the Garden was always the responsibility of the Committee, not the taxpayers.

Mr. Fedorchak stated this situation is a consequence of a unilateral change in policy on the part of Ellen Saracini. He stated the proceeds from their fundraising activities had always gone directly to the Township. He stated they have had a very successful Golf Outing each year that raised approximately \$50,000 a year. He stated they also had a Run that would bring in approximately \$10,000. He stated Ms. Saracini advised that she was creating her own 5013C and that the monies from the fundraisers would go to her 501C3. He stated it has been this way for approximately a year and a half; and the consequences of this is that in the very near future, the Township is going to run out of money. He stated the Township is still paying 100% of all the maintenance costs and utility costs. He stated the fund had been set aside specifically for the purpose of caring for the Garden of Reflection; and the idea was that the Garden of Reflection Committee would make sure that not only was the Memorial itself constructed without taxpayer money, but also that taxpayer dollars would not be needed for maintenance in perpetuity.

Mr. Fedorchak stated the Garden is very unique and special, and they need to care for it very carefully. He stated they pay a landscaping company to do all of the trimming, grass cutting, tree replacement, and they also need funds to pay for pumps, PECO, water costs etc. all of which comes out of the 9-11 Memorial Fund. He stated if they run out of money, they are going to have to cover approximately \$70,000 a year unless Ms. Saracini provides the funds.

Mr. Wysocki asked what the 501C3 Ms. Saracini has created is intended to benefit, and Mr. Fritchey stated he has no knowledge of what is going on. Mr. Fritchey stated if it is a 501C3 there should be some kind of public accounting. Ms. Bunn stated he feels the Township should be sending Ms. Saracini a bill for these expenses. Mr. Fedorchak stated he feels at some point there will be a “day of reckoning” either this year or next year. Mr. Fritchey stated there would have to be public filings for a 501C3 which would be public documents and would include accountings of the administrative costs, expenses, etc. Mr. Fedorchak stated he also feels that tax returns would have to be filed, and there is a number which may be \$100,000 which would result in more scrutiny and more tax filings. Mr. Fritchey stated he feels the Township solicitor should be able to get this information. He stated if they find that she is collecting \$100,000 a year and paying herself a salary of \$75,000; and the Township would then have to decide to hold the fundraisers itself so that the Garden can sustain itself since the 501C3 was not paying its legitimate share. He stated the other option is to underwrite it with taxpayer money. Mr. Wysocki stated they could also ask the Garden of Reflection Committee to come in and have a dialogue. Mr. Fedorchak stated he feels that they do have time to deal with this, and he is going to have a discussion about this matter with the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Fritchey stated he feels that they will be coming to a point that the Township will not be able to count on this for a funding source, and they are going to either underwrite it, make some kind of arrangement, or take over the whole site and run all of the fundraisers themselves. Mr. Fedorchak stated the Township could run the Golf Outing as it is held at Makefield Highlands, and they need to consider this early in the year. He stated the Garden of Reflection Committee members and their friends who have volunteered with this event would have to step forward.

RECREATION DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Liney stated the Park & Recreation crew along with many Township employees put in long hours under difficult circumstances to restore the Township following Hurricane Sandy. The Park system alone lost over 50 trees, including two victim trees at Memorial Park and the 150 year old oak tree at Veterans Square. The crew was able to clean up Veterans Square in order to host the 6th Annual Veterans Parade on November 4.

Cleanup on the bike paths with downed trees continues. Electric was restored to all sites within a week, and the timers have been reset.

Ms. Liney stated on short notice and resulting from a loss of electricity in the Yardley Hunt section, residents and Park & Recreation improvised a Halloween Trunk or Treat October 31st in the Pool parking lot. Over 150 cars participated, and children in the area who otherwise may not have had the opportunity to trick or treat were able to do so.

Ms. Liney stated the Park crew is winterizing restrooms this month with Macclesfield and Kids Kingdom targeted for 11/19. Memorial Park, Stoddart, Roelofs, and the Pool are completed.

Ms. Liney stated Samost Tract is on the Planning Commission Agenda for 11/26/12.

Ms. Liney stated a Budget work shop has been scheduled by the Board of Supervisors for tomorrow evening at 6:30 p.m. in the Township Building.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Bunn, Secretary