

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PARK & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 17, 2015

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on September 17, 2015. Chairman Fritchey called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

Those present:

Park & Recreation Board: David Fritchey, Chairman
David Gordon, Vice Chairman
David Malinowski, Member
Andrew Newbon, Member
Dennis Wysocki, Member

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

Absent: Patricia Bunn, Park & Rec Board Secretary
Bryan McNamara, Park & Rec Board Member
Dobby Dobson, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Gordon moved, Mr. Wysocki seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of June 9, 2015 as written.

DISCUSSION OF 2015 GARDEN OF REFLECTION EVENTS

Mr. Fedorchak stated everything went well. He stated the Candlelight Vigil scheduled for September 10 was rained out and was moved to the evening of September 11. He stated the morning service on the 11th was well attended as was the evening service that night.

Mr. Fedorchak stated there is information in the Board's packet about some problems which arose just prior to the event when Ms. Saracini tried to put together a prayer service the night of September 11. He stated he and Ms. Liney had discussions with Ms. Saracini and sent e-mails to her as well making it clear that she did not have a Permit to do that. He stated at the last minute, Ms. Saracini backed down which made it tense leading up to September 11. Mr. Fedorchak thanked Ms. Liney for her help in this matter.

Ms. Judi Reiss and Ms. Tara Bane were present. Ms. Reiss thanked Ms. Liney, Mr. Fedorchak, and Ms. Tyler for helping her with the September 11 Ceremony. Ms. Reiss stated there have been ongoing problems, and they have been reactive as opposed to proactive in dealing with Ms. Saracini. Ms. Reiss stated she had been contacted by multi media including television, and had not put anything in the media; however, that changed with Ms. Saracini. Ms. Reiss stated she was being asked questions the week before the Ceremony about Ms. Saracini's funds, and she deflected them the best she could. Ms. Reiss stated Ms. Saracini's fund had the original name of Garden of Reflection Maintenance and Preservation, and since the time she met with the Park & Recreation Board representatives she has changed the name to Endowment. Ms. Reiss stated she has also changed her Board members.

Mr. Fritchey asked when she changed the Board, and Ms. Reiss stated it was within the last month. Ms. Reiss stated Mrs. Godshalk was previously the Treasurer, but she was never able to see the books.

Ms. Bane stated Ms. Saracini has been raising funds under the premise that it was going toward maintenance but it has not.

Ms. Reiss stated Ms. Saracini had indicated she did not want to do anything with a Ceremony this year. Ms. Reiss stated she took the Permit for the entire day and the evening, and had felt that if it rained the evening before, they could have a quiet program. Ms. Reiss stated signs were put out, and she then received a call from Ms. Michelle Freiling the Saturday night before Labor Day that the signs were gone. Ms. Reiss stated Ms. Freiling has very strong feelings about what happened regarding the services at the Garden this year. Ms. Freiling has indicated she would like to do the Candlelight Vigil again next year. Ms. Reiss stated the signs disappeared Saturday night of Labor Day, and she reached out to Ms. Tyler and Mr. Smith about this so that they could get together with Ms. Freiling. Ms. Reiss stated she was advised that Ms. Saracini had indicated that the signs were her signs, and they then disappeared. Ms. Reiss stated fortunately Ms. Liney was able to get more signs but they lost out by not having any signage out at Family Day on Labor Day.

Ms. Reiss stated she also tried for two months to have the morning service put on the Garden of Reflection Website. Ms. Reiss stated she found out that the Webmaster is Ms. Saracini and Greg Tarallo does nothing without her okay. Ms. Reiss stated she had discussions with Ms. Saracini on the phone and by e-mail up until two weeks before September 11 and had asked her and Debbie Senko to be at the program. Ms. Reiss stated Ms. Senko explained her reasons why she could not be there. Ms. Reiss stated she then found out that Ms. Saracini was planning a prayer vigil. Ms. Reiss stated they knew that there was going to be rain on

September 10 so she wrote to Ms. Saracini advising her that she had a Permit which allowed her to use the Garden on September 11 as a rain date for the candlelight service. Ms. Reiss stated there was push back from Ms. Saracini who wrote a "horrible" letter, a copy of which she had provided to the Park & Rec Board, which Ms. Saracini had sent to several businesses and some of the clergy indicating that "the Township was being extremely disrespectful to the 9-11 families." Ms. Reiss stated that is not true. Ms. Reiss stated Ms. Saracini also went to one of the clergy. Ms. Reiss stated she received a letter from Susan Vigilante who had volunteered to work with the Candlelight Service, and she was concerned that the signs were taken down. Ms. Reiss stated one of the clergy was going to "selectively message" the 9-11 families that were there, and Ms. Reiss stated she was extremely uncomfortable. Mr. Gordon asked for further clarification about Ms. Reiss' statement, and Ms. Bane stated he was "airing some laundry" to the public which was not appropriate. Ms. Bane stated this was a community person who appreciated having a Ceremony and was "out of sorts" because of the conflicts that are now apparent.

Ms. Reiss stated Ms. Saracini also called Joan Hellyer from the Courier Times and it was in the paper.

Ms. Reiss stated she feels the Township needs to start being proactive and not reactive with Ms. Saracini. Ms. Reiss stated it is very difficult to do fundraising and make sure that the Garden is maintained today; however, Ms. Saracini does not recognize that. Ms. Reiss stated originally Ms. Saracini had indicated that when the Endowment reached \$3 million, she "would give her gift." Ms. Reiss stated it is not her gift since it is not her money. Ms. Reiss stated she then heard \$1.5 million, and another time she heard \$2 million.

Ms. Reiss stated one year at the last minute Ms. Saracini indicated she was not going to do anything as she was going to New York; and then this year she indicated she was not going to do anything, and then tried to step in at the last minute. Ms. Reiss stated she felt very bad for Ms. Freiling who is a volunteer from the outside and does not have a vested interest as the families do.

Ms. Bane stated Ms. Saracini's intention is to create a Trust. Mr. Newbon asked if they know the value of the fund, and Ms. Bane stated she feels it is approximately \$400,000. Ms. Reiss stated she just got \$51,000 from Steven Singer. Mr. Gordon stated it was at \$350,000 the last time they checked. Ms. Reiss stated Ms. Saracini is very good at fundraising. Ms. Bane stated she feels that most people go to the 9-11 Website and not the Township Website to make donations. Ms. Reiss stated the Garden of Reflection is the Official State Memorial and people are traveling to it even from other Countries, and people who Google Garden of Reflection will get to Ms. Saracini's Website. Ms. Reiss stated she understands that someone

from the Township helped Ms. Saracini set up the Website which was supposed to be off the Township Website, but at some point it became Ellen's private fund. Ms. Reiss stated people are making donations, but the Township is not seeing it for the maintenance of the Garden. Ms. Reiss stated Ms. Saracini has the Golf Outing and the Walk which are major fundraisers. Ms. Reiss noted the Walk was not as successful this year possibly because of the date which Ms. Saracini picked which was Rosh Hashanah. Ms. Liney noted Mr. Tarallo was granted a Permit for the Walk; and since he is a Lower Makefield Township resident, he is eligible to run an event in the Township. Ms. Bane asked if the event costs the Township anything, and Ms. Liney stated it does not.

Ms. Reiss stated she also questions having a Garden of Reflection Golf Outing at a Course other than the Township Golf Course. Ms. Bane stated initially she feels this was a logistics issue since the Course at that time could not accommodate the number of people that were attending. She stated she understands that the now have a tent. Ms. Reiss stated it is a premier course, and they have had a U.S. Open Qualifying Match there.

Ms. Bane stated she appreciates so much the work done by Ms. Freiling who did the Candlelight Vigil adding that she is a neutral person. Mr. Fedorchak stated Ms. Liney reached out to some people after Mr. Benedetto announced at a Supervisors meeting that there was not going to be a Candlelight Service. Ms. Bane stated everything was beautiful and touching and it did not take an "army" of people or hours to set up the event. She thanked the Township for the work they did for this event.

Ms. Reiss stated she feels being proactive is important next year since it will be the 15th Anniversary. She stated she has put in an early request for a Permit for Saturday night and all day Sunday so that there can be a rain date for Saturday night. Ms. Reiss stated Ms. Freiling does want to do the Candlelight Vigil next year; and since she is not a Township resident, the Permit had to be in a Township residents' name. Ms. Reiss stated since it is a Sunday and the 15th Anniversary there may be more people.

Mr. Fedorchak stated they are being proactive and giving them the Permits for the 10th and the 11th, and he would recommend that there be some sort of event the night of the 11th. Ms. Reiss stated it was very upsetting this year from Saturday night of Labor Day until September 11th. She stated it is a very difficult time for the families, and they do not want to have these issues happening any more.

Mr. Gordon stated they recognized this, and it is taking longer than they had hoped to get this resolved. He stated they did meet with Ms. Saracini, and he feels they have a plan in place to move forward; although he cannot guarantee the resolution. He stated they are working on gathering some information which will lead to additional conversations, and they hope to clarify all of these issues which are frustrating everyone. He stated they know that this is not a good thing for the Township or the Garden, and they also have an obligation to the taxpayers. Mr. Gordon stated they are working toward a resolution.

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CENTER

Mr. Fedorchak stated approximately one month ago the Board of Supervisors rejected the bids for the Community Center which came in at \$2.75 million which was nearly \$500,00 over what they had anticipated. He stated the Board of Supervisors looked at it again and directed the architect to come up with a variety of alternatives to try to keep the construction costs of the building around \$2 million. He stated they would then add to that another \$300,000 for the architectural and engineering fees which would bring it to approximately \$2.3 million which the Board felt they could agree to. Mr. Fedorchak stated at the last meeting of the Board of Supervisors, George Hibbs, the architect, laid out a \$1.5 million, \$1.75 million, a \$2 million, and a \$2.25 million building; and the Board selected the \$2 million option. Mr. Wysocki stated that was for a 5,235 square foot building. Mr. Fedorchak stated they are now preparing the Bid specs which will take another month or two since they have to re-engineer certain things.

Mr. Wysocki asked if they have factored in expansion in the planning stage so that it could be expanded more easily in the future. Ms. Tyler stated that was part of their discussions; and while it can be done, she feels a second phase would be ten to fifteen years in the future. She stated Mr. Hibbs, the architect, indicated that it could be expanded. Ms. Tyler stated it will be a single story. She stated once you have to put in an elevator it can cost \$180,000 to \$250,000 which would be a quarter of the Grant money. Ms. Tyler stated the option they selected is not just one room, and different groups from the community would be able to meet at the same time. Mr. Gordon asked if there are movable walls, and Ms. Tyler stated they took this out since the cost was \$115,000. She stated this also enabled them to lower the ceiling and lower the cost.

Mr. Fritchey stated a lot of single-family residences in the Township are 5,200 square feet, and it is costing them \$2 million to build this even though they already own the land. Mr. Fritchey asked if there has been any further contact with the Masons; and Mr. Fedorchak stated he has not pursued this in the last few months, and he is still hopeful that they will get a new building.

Mr. Fritchey asked when the Bids will come out, and Ms. Tyler stated they will be working on this since the timing of the bids is very important.

PRELIMINARY 2016 OPERATING BUDGETS

Ms. Liney stated 2016 will be the 16th year Park and Recreation is presenting a budget with no change in millage. Park millage for 2016 is shown at 1.28 which equals approximately \$52 per property. There are no planned increases in personnel from last year, and the Park crew is supplemented with seasonal summer help. As in 2015, capital projects or large scale maintenance will be reflected in the Park and Recreation Fee-In-Lieu Budget in 2016. the Fee-In-Lieu Budget for 2016 shows \$75,000 for the purchase of equipment to plow the bike paths during snow events.

Mr. Malinowski asked why they are not adding personnel since they have discussed during the year that it seems that they are short handed, and he feels they should ask the Township for more people so that they can service the Township better and give the taxpayers the Parks they expect and deserve. Mr. Fedorchak asked Mr. Malinowski where he feels they are lacking, and Mr. Malinowski stated he questions whether they have enough laborers since they have indicated in the past that they can only do so much maintenance. Mr. Malinowski asked how many laborers they have, and Ms. Liney stated they have three. Mr. Fedorchak stated there are three full-time and they add three seasonal in the summer. Mr. Malinowski asked if they feel that is enough to adequately take care of all the parkland, and Mr. Fedorchak stated he feels it is. Mr. Malinowski asked if it is enough to do the job well as opposed to adequately. Mr. Fedorchak stated if there is something special they need from time to time they do contract work out. He stated they have a talented group of Township employees that they add to with seasonal workers, and he feels that they are taking care of everything quite well.

Mr. Malinowski stated he agrees they do a good job, but he wonders with all the parkland the Township has if it is enough. Ms. Tyler stated if he sees a deficit, he should let them know.

Ms. Liney stated they are adding parkland, and they have the two new ball fields and a softball field at Memorial Park. She stated as they add facilities, it does become more challenging. Mr. Fedorchak stated this is a valid concern, and they may want to look at one or two more seasonal workers; and he would not be adverse to that if Ms. Liney would come to him indicating that there was a need.

Mr. Fritchey noted Page 6 Fee-In-Lieu where there is an entry “2015 truck to replace old sewer truck.” Ms. Liney stated this year they purchased a new truck to replace an old sewer truck the Park crew was using which was over twenty years old.

Mr. Wysocki stated he understands the millage rate is staying the same but asked about the tax revenue. Mr. Fedorchak stated the total property tax revenue has been increasing the last few years by approximately .2% to .3% and this has been somewhat offset by the number of Appeals they have had over the last five to six years. He stated now some of the office building complexes are submitting Appeals which is resulting in a sizable reduction, although it is still positive at this time. He stated with the economy improving, Deed Transfer Taxes have increased. He stated Building Permit Fees have also increased as have Franchise Fees. He stated because of this, they have been able to hold the line on taxes.

Pool Budget

Ms. Liney stated the Community Pool will be entering its 35th year of operation in 2016. The Pool continues the vision of establishing the Pool as the place to be in the summer with special events every weekend, hot dog specials, and float nights. The swim lesson program was revamped in 2015, with the establishment of senior guards as lesson leaders and experienced a 30% increase in revenue with much positive feedback. The top notch swim and dive teams continue their dominance in the Lower Bucks Swim League, and the various program offerings of free water aerobics and aqua zumba continue to grow in popularity with the membership.

There is no increase in membership fees recommended in the Pool 2016 budget.

Capital projects targeted for 2016 are the installation of a shade pergola in the baby pool area and the installation of an enhanced sanitation system in the tot and intermediate pools.

Ms. Tyler stated Ms. Liney and the Pool staff did a remarkable job. Ms. Liney stated the Pool staff did an excellent job, and Jeff Brown has done an excellent job as Pool Manager. Ms. Tyler stated it was a very positive season. Ms. Tyler stated Mr. Brown is on top of everything, and she feels the lifeguards responded very well to him.

RECREATION DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Liney stated Fall 2015 Permits have been issued to the Township user groups. Pennsbury High School boys and girls soccer teams, Varsity and JV, are scheduled for games on October 19 for the boys and October 21 for the girls at Macclesfield on Field D. These games always draw a big crowd, and the Township is happy to host them.

Ms. Liney stated Lower Makefield hosted LMT Fun Day on Monday, Labor Day, at the Community Park and Edgewood School complex. This event had several thousand participants and all attendees enjoyed themselves, from the pie eating contest, the impressive fire truck pieces on display, to the rousing entertainment, everything was terrific. On behalf of the Township, Ms. Liney thanked Park Board Members Dave Gordon and Bryan McNamara for their volunteer efforts in the dunk tank as well as Supervisor, Kristin Tyler. She also offered a special thanks to the Park crew, Public Works, Police, Firemen, and Pool staff for their support in making this day a complete success.

Ms. Liney stated the Community Pool ended a highly successful and safe season with a large crowd of over 2,000 patrons enjoying LMT Fun Day.

Ms. Liney stated the Park crew worked this week at the Pool locating and repairing a leak in a pipe feeding the baby pool which was in the deck area by the Pool office. The pipe has been replaced, and they will be completing the concrete work by the end of the month.

Ms. Liney stated an administrative work session for the Lower Makefield Dog Park has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 6 with the Township engineer, Park Board representatives, and the Township Manager.

Ms. Liney stated this year's 9-11 Honor and Remembrance ceremony held the morning of 9-11 at the Garden of Reflection was beautiful and moving. The program, organized by Judi Reiss and members of the Garden of Reflection Preservation Committee, was attended by several hundred people. The 9-10 Candlelight Vigil was also well attended with over 400 members of the community joining in the Vigil.

Park and Recreation provided support in preparation for these events, installing signage, draining and cleaning the fountain, power washing the walks, painting the restrooms, cleaning the glass panels, and replacing two dozen lights in the Garden.

Ms. Liney stated she would like to bring to the attention of the Garden Preservation Committee is the deteriorating condition of the in ground lights in the Garden. The design of the lights is that they are in the ground, and are continually filled with water, which results in the wires decaying. There are several hundred lights which will need to be replaced in the next few years, with an estimated cost of about \$150 per light.

Mr. Fedorchak asked Ms. Liney if they know the number of non-Pool members were at the Pool on Family Fun Day, and Ms. Liney stated she would have to look into this. Mr. Fedorchak stated it would be a good idea to send them information about the Pool.

Ms. Tyler commended Ms. Liney for the work she did putting together Family Fun Day. Ms. Tyler stated they should discuss what they want to do going forward.

LEAGUE LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Joe DePalma was present from PAA. Mr. DePalma stated they are up by 40% in fall baseball and softball registrations, and they are making a push for registrations in the spring. He stated they are giving the younger players a lot of clinics and instruction.

Ms. Tyler asked if they are using the new fields, and Mr. DePalma stated they are. Ms. Tyler asked about coordinating a ribbon cutting, and Mr. DePalma stated he would prefer to do it in the spring at Opening Day.

Mr. Sean O'Hara, YMS, stated the Fall season has started, and the Intramural numbers are very high at around 900. He stated they also have High School teams playing at Mac D, and they also played last Friday on the turf field as well. He stated they are hosting Holy Ghost Prep on Saturday night. They have also asked Bishop Egan and Morrisville High School if they want to play on the turf at no charge.

Mr. O'Hara stated they have two major Tournaments – the Epic and the Columbus Cup. He stated they will have 250 teams playing at the Columbus Cup, and they will have between 275 and 300 teams playing at the Epic. He stated they started a third Tournament in the summer, and the first year they had 50 teams, and they expect that to grow as well.

Mr. O'Hara stated they are still using Pennsbury fields for Pee Wee and Special Stars, and getting more fields is their number one priority. Mr. Wysocki stated he thought they were going to use Memorial Park for Special Stars, and Mr. O'Hara stated they need to have a set schedule and using Memorial Park would be uncertain since those fields are not Permitted. Ms. Liney stated Flag Football is using those fields without a Permit so if someone else is on them, they cannot use them.

Mr. O'Hara stated they worked hard to get the security cameras installed at Macclesfield Park, but they have since had items stolen from soccer and football. Ms. Liney stated the cameras were not working at the time, but she understands that they are working now. Mr. O'Hara stated YMS lost a spreader and football lost a painting machine. He stated they do not believe it is kids doing this.

Mr. O'Hara discussed some repairs needed in the men's restroom, and Mr. Fedorchak asked that Ms. Liney look into this and make some recommendations.

Mr. O'Hara stated the financial health of YMS is good, and the Capital Reserve Fund grew \$120,000 over the past year. He stated a lot of soccer rule changes are coming up involving changes to the size of the fields, the size of the nets, and the number of players per field. He stated they have been given two years to meet the new requirements. He discussed the reasons why the rules have been changed. Mr. Wysocki stated research has been done that indicates smaller sized fields for the younger players promotes more activity, keeps them more interested, and improves their skills.

Mr. Gordon asked about their plans for the turf field, and Mr. O'Hara stated they have two to three years left on the turf field. He stated they also wanted to add a turf field. He noted that Field D is immaculate, and people prefer to play on that field rather than the turf field.

Mr. Wysocki stated it seems there is a demand for more soccer fields, and there were sites in the Township earmarked for more soccer fields. Mr. Fritchey stated that would be Snipes. Mr. Fedorchak stated they have not discussed that for some time and possibly it should be put on a Park & Rec Board Agenda so that they can gather facts as to the needs. Mr. Malinowski stated the new baseball fields cannot be used at night so it does not alleviate all of the field problems for baseball and they need Macclesfield H at night in the spring. Mr. Malinowski stated lights across the street would help. Mr. O'Hara stated YMS would be willing to help with that if they could than have Field H.

Mr. Fritchey asked Mr. O'Hara if they did a second turf field it would be at Macclesfield, and Mr. O'Hara stated that would be the preferred location. Mr. O'Hara noted that YMS does a lot to take care of the fields, and they have equipment at Macclesfield which helps them do that.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Newbon stated the Lower Makefield Farmers Market has two weeks left. He stated there is also a Farmers Market in Yardley Borough on Saturdays which goes throughout the whole year, and they will be moving it to the Friends Meeting House and go through the winter. He also noted Saturday is Harvest Day.

There being no further business, Mr. Newbon moved, Mr. Wysocki seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Fritchey, Chairman