

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PARK & RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 10, 2015

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on November 10, 2015
Chairman Fritchey called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. Mr. Fritchey noted Mr. Dobson, Supervisor Liaison, is unable to attend this evening as he is attending the Budget Workshop.

Those present:

Park & Recreation Board: David Fritchey, Chairman
David Gordon, Vice Chairman
Patricia Bunn, Secretary (joined meeting in progress)
David Malinowski, Member
Brian McNamara, Member

Others: Donna Liney, Park & Recreation Director

Absent: Andrew Newbon, Park & Rec Board Member
Dennis Wysocki, Park & Rec Board Member
Dobby Dobson, Supervisor Liaison.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Malinowski moved, Mr. McNamara seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of October 13, 2015 as written.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE EAGLE SCOUT PROPOSAL TO INSTALL GAZEBO IN PARK SYSTEM

Mr. Jake Mako was present and stated he would like to build an 8' by 10' rectangular gazebo at Macclesfield Park between the volleyball courts and the playground. He showed pictures of the site where there is a level area. He stated the cost is approximately \$2,500. He stated he is excited to work on this project.

Ms. Liney asked if he will be doing fundraising, and Mr. Mako stated he will raise funds over the winter and in the early spring by having a number of car washes at the Citgo Station by the Middle School on Big Oak Road, a spaghetti dinner, and a gofundme Webpage on the Internet.

Mr. Fritchey stated Mr. Wysocki had indicated at the last Park Board meeting that Mr. Mako may want to talk to YMS who may be able to give some assistance with fundraising if the gazebo were to be installed at Macclesfield. Mr. Sean O'Hara, YMS, was present this evening and stated Mr. Wysocki did reach out to him about this, and he did introduce himself to Mr. Mako this evening.

Ms. Liney stated she will check to see about the Permit requirements for the footings, etc. She stated the Park crew can also help as they have access to backhoes and sometimes they do foundations to help out if footings need to be poured. Mr. Mako stated they will sink four piers three feet down and then pour concrete. Mr. Mako's father stated they did speak to the Building Inspector early on, and he had indicated that it would be easy to get Permits. Ms. Liney stated she can help with this as well.

Ms. Liney noted the area they have chosen would be a great spot since there is no shade in that area at all.

Mr. Malinowski moved, Mr. McNamara seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the project.

Ms. Bunn joined the meeting at this time.

Ms. Liney signed the paperwork needed by Mr. Mako for the project.

Mr. Liney agreed to meet Mr. Mako at the site to determine exactly where it would be located. She stated they could also mark off where they feel would be a good spot. Mr. Mako's father stated they would also like to discuss with Ms. Liney which way they want the gazebo to face.

GARDEN OF REFLECTION DISCUSSION

Ms. Liney stated following up on the meeting last month she researched both Board of Supervisors and Park & Recreation Board Minutes, and she included in the packet excerpts of where the Garden of Reflection Committee had done presentations on both the arboretum and the Endowment Fund.

Mr. Malinowski asked if the Township is doing work that was originally promised they would not have to do, and Ms. Liney stated she did not see any boundaries in any of the presentations. Mr. Fritchey stated based on the Minutes he feels there is an argument going on about a lot of issues that were not addressed with anything approaching any degree of finality. He stated he is still not entirely sure what the point of the argument is because they have to fund the Garden one way or another.

He stated they need to have an endowment in perpetuity, but they also need to be able to meet current operating and maintenance expenses. He stated it seems to be the contemplation of all involved including Ms. Saracini that they were going to be meeting operating and maintenance expenses, and the critical issue is to determine how they are going to go about doing this. He stated he feels it was expressed that it would cost approximately \$50,000 a year in operating and maintenance expenses, but currently it is running lower than that; and Ms. Liney agreed.

Mr. Fritchey stated all of the discussions before the Board of Supervisors were to the effect that an endowment fund would target the accumulation of \$1.5 million which should be self-sustaining; and he feels that is probably a conservative amount. Ms. Grace Godshalk stated she feels that Ms. Saracini has raised it to \$2 million. Mr. Fritchey stated if they invest \$1.5 million at 4% interest, they would get \$60,000 a year. Mr. McNamara questioned if they could get that rate. Mr. Fritchey stated if you went with 2%, it would still be \$30,000 a year. Mr. Fritchey stated he feels \$2 million is more than what is called for. Ms. Bunn stated they are spending more than \$30,000 a year. Ms. Liney stated it is approximately \$40,000 for the Garden of Reflection Operating Budget, and that is if there are no large-scale projects such as the lights. She stated \$40,000 has been budgeted for 2016.

Mr. Fritchey stated Mr. Fedorchak has provided information which he sent to Mr. Saracini, and he received a communication from her about whether everything was appropriately allocated to the Garden or whether some of it should be out. Mr. Fritchey stated he feels the main issue of contention is the arboretum. Mr. Fritchey stated from the Minutes he does not see that there was any clear indication from the Supervisors that they were going to take responsibility for the maintenance of the arboretum.

Mrs. Godshalk stated at the same time the arboretum was put in, they had the ball field moved back further because they got the bathroom donated. She stated she feels this was a trade off since all the toilets were paid for and all the plants were contributed for the arboretum. She stated it is passive open space which the Park is supposed to be partially.

Ms. Bunn stated when they originally had the Plans for what was then North Park, they had an arboretum included; but it was to be a natural area with a lot of different varieties and species. She stated what they have now is a sculptured tree alley, and it is not an arboretum. She stated it was not meant to be that sculptured and that pristine. She stated when this was installed, she feels that was the Garden of Reflection's responsibility because that was not what was intended for that area.

Mr. Fritchey stated it was also not concentrated to that degree in the Plan, and the Plan was that the trees would be spread throughout the entire Park. Ms. Bunn stated what was put in was a really high-intense maintenance piece that had not been contemplated, and they allowed Ms. Laschyk and the others involved to do that; and now they are coming back and saying they do not want to maintain it. Ms. Bunn stated what was put in was not what had been envisioned on the Plan for the Park.

Mrs. Godshalk stated the bathroom was given to the Township for free, and she feels there should be a trade off on that. Mr. Fritchey stated he does not see the offset approach to this argument. He stated that was never addressed when donations were being solicited.

Mr. McNamara asked how much it costs to mow the arboretum; and Ms. Bunn stated it is not broken out, and this is not what the Township crews do. Ms. Bunn stated it is a lot of hand work, and you cannot just get on the tractor to do it as it needs to be edged, weeded, etc. Ms. Liney stated she feels it costs approximately \$10,000 a year.

Mrs. Godshalk stated her group has been raising \$15,000 to \$25,000 a year, and there is money left in the Budget from the original fundraising. Mr. Fritchey stated there is some money left, but it is not that much; and this why they are dealing with this. He stated they need to deal with fundraising for maintenance on an on-going basis for current expenses as well as the fundraising for the endowment of \$1.5 to \$2 million.

Mr. Fritchey stated there have been representations made about who said what at various Supervisor and Park & Rec meetings, but he does not feel all the representations that were made are borne out by the Minutes.

Mrs. Godshalk stated she feels if they could come to a conclusion on the arboretum, it would make Ms. Saracini happier as well as the other group which is doing active fundraising, and then maybe Ms. Saracini will give them some of her money. Mr. Gordon stated they are also working toward the end of Ms. Saracini calling her money “her money.” Mrs. Godshalk stated Ms. Saracini has bad feelings about some things that happened even before the arboretum, and she brings up that some of the money for the construction should not have been charged. Mrs. Godshalk stated they need to determine how they go forward.

Mr. Fritchey stated they are in the process of having discussions. He stated they had one meeting with Ms. Saracini, and they will probably have another now that they have provided her with certain information. Mr. Fritchey stated she has asked for more information, and the Township is asking for financial information from her which they have not received yet. Mr. Fritchey stated she is collecting money

which is to go for a public purpose, and currently it is accumulating in an account; and there is an issue of how they are going to get from today to whenever it is that Ms. Saracini decides she has enough money in the endowment that she will start releasing some of it.

Ms. Bunn asked the current amount now in the endowment fund, and Mr. Gordon stated he believes it is approximately \$350,000. Mr. Fritchey stated he heard it was close to \$500,00 but it is still well south of \$1.5 million or \$2 million.

Mrs. Godshalk asked that the Preservation group be kept informed, and Mr. Fritchey stated that Preservation group is contributing toward the real time operation and maintenance, and they are helping them solve the problem of present time operation and maintenance.

REVIEW AND MOTION OF ANNUAL USER FEE

Ms. Liney stated user fees were assessed to the organizations by the Township beginning in 1996. Rates were \$5/resident and \$10/non-resident per season at that time, and have increased to \$15/resident and \$36/non-resident per season over the years. The last fee increase was 2009. Reviewing the Park accounts that host user group activity – Macclesfield, Fred Allan, and Stoddart, expenditures total approximately \$91,000, with the organization paying over \$105,000 in usage fees in 2015. The organizations are also responsible for light usage, with electricity totals at these sites running \$41,000 total, and the user groups paying \$43,600 in light fees.

Ms. Liney stated the good news is the organizations seem to be covering the cost of the resources they are using. She stated the Township is always open to re-evaluating costs, but for right now it appears the fees are where they need to be.

Ms. Liney stated she attended the Budget meeting earlier this evening, and the Citizens Budget Committee touched on perhaps the Parks were operating at a loss with the user groups; however, they could not substantiate that. Mr. Fritchey stated if anything it seems to be the contrary. Mr. Malinowski stated that the Township taxpayers are not paying anything for the Parks other than those who are users of the Parks paying user fees; however, Ms. Liney stated there are other areas in the Township such as Memorial Park, Veterans Square, Kids Kingdom, and the bike paths that are Park & Recreation areas.

Mr. McNamara asked what goes into the \$91,000; and Ms. Liney stated it would be supplies, minor equipment, contracted services, utilities, repairs and maintenance. She stated it would be everything except Personnel Services.

Mr. Fritchey stated he feels the associations have been a very constructive part of the Township providing good quality programs and financial support in return for getting priorities in Permits. He stated he does not feel it is justifiable to raise user fees at all.

Mr. Greg Weber, a representative from PAA stated they had broken down for their families what they pay in user fees, insurance, etc. He stated 45% of their total income is given to the Township. He provided a copy of a letter written by Jason Simon that sets forth what they have contributed in fees and capital expenditures.

Mr. Weber also noted that they are very encouraged with their registrations. Mr. Fritchey stated it seems that the numbers went down from 2014 to 2015. A gentleman representing PAA stated he feels the 2014 numbers were actually lower than what was shown, and Ms. Liney stated she went by what they paid in user fees. The gentleman stated 2015 was the first year that they actually leveled out, and in the fall they saw an increase mostly at the younger age groups. He stated they are doing a much better job of promoting the philosophy of the League which is to develop young players, and turning it a little bit away from the reputation they had as being super competitive. He stated money brought in is for clinics for the younger players and coaches clinics on how to properly train the players. He stated they are concentrating on the younger players so that hopefully they will stay with them for a longer period of time. Mr. Fritchey stated he believes that if they concentrate on the teaching elements for the coaches and the players, the competitive aspect will take care of itself.

One gentleman stated they have lowered the T-ball age because they were losing players to Morrisville which started earlier than Lower Makefield. He stated usually once you are in a League you stay in it unless something happens. It was also noted that the first year of T-Ball is free, and fundraising is paying for that. He stated this could be fifty to sixty players. He stated they are bringing the product up; and hopefully the numbers which are level now, will grow.

Mr. McNamara asked if there are any plans for tournaments, and it was noted they are also trying to maximize the usage of the fields for fundraising opportunities; and will contact Ms. Liney about some dates. The PAA representative stated last year they did the Pennsylvania State Tournament for Babe Ruth Softball and made a profit on that. He stated they also did the State Tournament for the 8 U and saw some revenue there. He stated they have also taken back the Snack Bar and those Tournaments help at the Snack Bar especially the GEMS Tournament which is their biggest weekend fundraiser for the Snack Bar. He reviewed capital improvements that were done through fundraising. One gentleman stated he coaches the nine year old team, and they have an Agreement to host a tournament; and they are working on a date for that.

Ms. Bunn asked why there is a big softball tournament but not a big baseball tournament, and one gentleman noted that they do not have enough large fields. He stated that would be a College Showcase. One gentleman stated they would need three operable fields and they would also need lights. Mr. McNamara asked about the possibility of bringing in temporary lights. One of the PAA representatives stated while they have looked at tournaments, they got away from the signature tournament which was originally named after Will Thomas; but they struggle with volunteerism and they would need to designate someone to plan and run that. He stated they have discussed this at the Executive Board level that as part of coaching a travel team, you would also have the responsibility of running that age group's tournament and getting their parents involved. One gentleman stated they are also following other League's policy of charging a fee; and if you do your volunteer hours, you get your fee back.

Ms. Bunn stated sending mass e-mails asking for volunteers is not always effective, but if the Coach asks a parent to do, they may agree to do so.

Ms. Bunn moved and Mr. McNamara seconded to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that there be no increase in user fees. Motion carried with Mr. Malinowski opposed. He stated he does not believe in user fees at all.

LEAGUE LIAISON REPORT

Mr. Sean O'Hara, YMS, thanked the Board for standing up for the user groups and fighting not to raise the fees. Mr. O'Hara stated they have 5,000 players playing in all sports in the Township. Mr. O'Hara thanked the Board for addressing the camera issue at Macclesfield. Mr. Fritchey stated he is expecting a briefing from the Police Department in December.

Mr. O'Hara stated they are funding an Eagle Scout project for a new sign at Macclesfield Park. Mr. O'Hara stated the Scout had submitted a request that had the YMS, PAA, and Football logos on the sign. Ms. Liney stated this was not what he had submitted when he submitted it initially, so she asked him to remove the logos of the user groups and said it should only be the Lower Makefield Township logo since there are not logos on any of the other signs on Township properties. She stated this did not come to the Park Board. Ms. Bunn asked if the sign was already made, and Ms. Liney stated it was not. Ms. Liney stated this was just her opinion, and they could bring it to the Park Board who may have a different opinion. She stated there are also other users that come and go at those facilities.

Ms. Bunn stated another soccer area could be built, and YMS may leave Macclesfield and the logo would still be there. Ms. Liney stated the Scout took it to the use groups and did not bring it to the Park Board; and the user groups were all in favor of, but it was the first time Ms. Liney had seen it.

Mr. O'Hara stated he learned at the Budget Workshop that the Pool had a Capital Fund allocated to it, and he asked if there is a Capital Fund allocated to Park & Rec. Ms. Liney stated there is not, and the Citizens Budget Committee has been trying to establish that, but that has not happened yet. She stated they use Park & Rec Fee-In-Lieu money for Capital projects.

Mr. O'Hara stated they had four High Schools playing on the turf field and on Field D. He stated the Columbus Cup had two hundred sixty-five teams.

Mr. O'Hara stated at the National level, they are changing the format of the way kids play soccer. He stated field sizes, net sizes, and number of players per field will be changed starting in 2016. He stated this will result in an additional field they will need to fit in at the current configuration at Macclesfield. Mr. Fritchey asked if this will create congestion, and Mr. O'Hara stated it is going to create a lot of problems.

He stated the configuration of the age groups will go into effect in September 2016 when they will go according to the calendar versus the School year. Mr. Gordon this will be a shame for kids who have been playing together for years, and he feels it should have been grandfathered. Mr. O'Hara stated this will put a further demand for field space.

Mr. Fritchey stated YMS has also been appropriately safety conscious, but he has read that headers are going to be outlawed by USAA for those under a certain age. There was discussion on steps being taken to protect against concussion. Mr. Fritchey stated the other safety issue he read about was the crumbled rubber from the turf field, and he understands there is a new Committee requesting a National study whether or not it is carcinogenic. Mr. O'Hara stated they have had their turf tested, and everything has come back within the standards. Ms. Liney stated four times a year the turf field is sanitized and demagnetized.

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Liney stated the Township honored Veterans this past Sunday with the 9th Annual Veterans Day Parade. Community support was evident in the large turnout, and Park & Recreation was happy to be a part of this special event.

Ms. Liney stated the Park crew will begin winterizing the various park sites next week. By November 23rd all restrooms and concession stands which are not heated will be closed for the winter. The Garden of Reflection fountain and pool are closed for the season.

Ms. Liney stated Park & Recreation, the Pool, and the Garden of Reflection were reviewed at the Budget Session earlier this evening.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Fritchey stated Ms. Liney received an e-mail from Rabbi Vlecher who suggested the erection of a Hanukkah Menorah at Veterans Square Park, and this was something that has not been done before. Mr. Fritchey stated Ms. Liney made him aware of this, and he had suggested that she speak to the Veterans Square Committee as well.

Mr. Fritchey stated while he is in favor of the free exercise of religious and supports religious displays on private property, when you get into Municipal displays there has been a lot of litigation. He stated he does have questions about putting these up in the park system in general and this particular location since it is a relatively small location; and if they had religious symbols of every faith for the holiday season it could completely overwhelm the site. He stated there is a public forum which would be the Township Building; and if the Township is going to entertain external religious displays, he would recommend that they be on the grounds of the Township Building as opposed to Veterans Park. Mr. Fritchey stated he understands that typically inside the Township Building during the holiday season there are both Jewish and Christian religious symbols, and Ms. Liney agreed.

Mr. Gordon asked if there is a community tree anywhere in the Township, and Ms. Liney stated there is not. She stated they do have a tree in the building as well as a menorah. Mr. Fritchey stated he feels it would be up to the Board of Supervisors whether they want to entertain this.

It was the consensus of the Park & Recreation Board that they would be supportive of public displays on private property, but that that they would not recommend that this be at Veterans Square or any of the public parks.

November 10, 2015

Park & Recreation Board – page 10 of 10

There being no further business, Ms. Bunn moved, Mr. Gordon seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Bunn, Secretary