TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD

PARK & RECREATION BOARD

MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

The regular meeting of the Park & Recreation Board of the Township of Lower Makefield

was held in the Municipal Building on September 12, 2023. Mr. Krauss called the

meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Park & Recreation Board: Douglas Krauss, Chair

 Kim Rock, Secretary

 Rob LaBar, Member

 David Malinowski, Member

Others: Monica Tierney, Park & Recreation Director

Absent: Michael Brody, Park & Recreation Board Vice Chair

 Mike Blundi, Park & Recreation Board Member

 Dennis Wysocki, Park & Recreation Board Member

 Daniel Grenier, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. LaBar moved, Mr. Malinowski seconded and it was unanimously carried to

approve the Minutes of June 13, 2023 as written.

PICKLEBALL UPDATE

Ms. Bonnie Gannon was present and stated she has been a resident for twenty-

seven year. She stated in 2014 she was before the Board requesting the creation

of multi-use courts for pickleball. She stated at that time there were 12 members,

and it was a private club. She stated over time Lower Makefield took over the

program, and today there are 458 members, there are 11 courts, 4 of which are

dedicated, and they run 25 sessions a week, two hours each, spread out over

three locations – 9 at Revere, 14 at Cardinal, and 2 at Memorial Park. She stated

there are three levels – beginners, intermediate, and advanced. Ms. Gannon

stated as of June, 30, 2022, there were 261 members, and today we have 458

which is a 75% increase. Ms. Gannon stated that she has not increased the

sessions per week, and what is occurring is that many of the members are on

wait lists to join one of those 25 sessions. Ms. Gannon stated yesterday there

were about 80 to 90 people on the wait list as people are now back from vacations.

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Ms. Gannon showed a slide reflecting the sessions by day. She stated the graph

shows that the heaviest times are Mondays and Thursdays, but it could be on

weekends too if they added more sessions. She stated there are over 63

participants every day playing pickleball using our facilities. Ms. Gannon showed

a slide of that same data by level. She stated the largest pool of members are

intermediates.

Mr. Krauss asked Ms. Gannon how many people are able to sign up for a session

before they have to go on the wait list. Ms. Gannon stated different levels have

different capabilities. She stated at Cardinal there are four courts so we can

support 16, and she maxes it out at 24. She stated if there are any more than

24 people who sign up, the balance go on the wait list. Mr. Krauss stated for

the advanced it is capped at 20.

Mr. LaBar stated he assumes the wait list is not people sitting on the side of the

courts, rather it is people who are physically not able to come to the courts

themselves because there is no room for them, and Ms. Gannon agreed.

Mr. Krauss stated if 24 is the cap, the first 24 who sign up get in; and anyone

else who wants to sign up goes on the wait list, and if someone drops out, it

is prioritized based on when you signed up.

Ms. Gannon stated all of the plans and objectives she has for pickleball are

aligned with LMT Park & Recreation Play for All. She stated the mission is

health, environment, and community; and pickleball supports all of those

primarily health and community. She stated pickleball is also aligned with

the Park & Rec goals in that they are creating active living through recreation

and improving our facilities.

Ms. Gannon stated she wants to increase social recreation; and during the

summer, we offered beginner lessons. She stated as soon as that was

advertised, they were completely full. She stated four sessions per week

were offered at Memorial Park with 32 participants total over a six-week

period. She stated since it was so successful, it is being run again in the fall.

She stated two beginner sessions were advertised over the weekend, and

they are completely full.

Ms. Gannon stated they had tried to serve the community for ages 12 and

above; however, it was not successful in terms of enrollment so it was

converted back to an adult beginner level. She stated at this point she is

anticipating 32 new participants at the beginner level and 1 intermediate

who will all eventually flow into the club as well.

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Ms. Gannon stated she wants to improve the user experience for the existing

participants. She stated there were a number of wait lists at the intermediate

level, and a quick fix is not to request additional courts but to add more

reserved times at the existing facilities. She stated if she added four more

sessions, she would reduce the wait list and improve the user experience.

Ms. Gannon stated since they have been in existence since 2014, they have

had three levels and have always been self-rated. She stated over that period

of time, many members have increased their skill level immensely. She stated

within the advanced, there is a sub-set of highly-skilled players, and she is

looking to improve their user experience. She stated this year she plans to

create a fourth level. She stated it will not be self-rated, and she will leverage

a universal rating system which is used by many pickleball communities.

She stated in this fourth level, players would be playing people of their skill

level who have a rating that is universal across the U.S. She stated if you

were to play at another location in the U.S. your rating would be the same.

She stated there is an algorithm behind it ,and when you win or lose, your

rating is updated.

Ms. Gannon stated she also wants to improve our tools. She stated since the

beginning, they have been using an app called Meetup which has limitations

both in tech support and back-office operations. She stated she wants to

migrate to a new registration system called Court Reserve which is used by a

local commercial venue. She stated they offer office hours for tech support,

and it will improve the user experience for many of our members who are

having problems with the Meetup app.

Ms. Gannon stated with regard to creating the new level, she will take a few

weeks to document the program, enlist the help of current members including

the volunteer who heads up the advanced level today, there will be a six-week

trial, and they will then refine the process.

Ms. Gannon stated the courts are currently well used by our members and

members of the public.

LEAGUE LIAISON REPORT

Mr. George Schlieben, President of YMS, was present. He congratulated

Ms. Gannon on building the pickleball program from scratch.

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Mr. Schlieben stated they had a smooth start to their season, and they are up

to 980 in the rec program up from 960 a year ago. He stated there is an issue

getting into Macclesfield Park during some of the change-over sessions, and

he believes the problem point is between D and E and E and G. He stated he

is happy to have volunteers help, and he asked if they could drop barricades.

He stated if that were to be only one-way for about an hour and a half in the

morning to get everyone in the Park and circle them around, that could work

as that is what is done for tournaments. He stated getting out is fine. He stated

the problem is with the left turn at the stop sign as everyone is trying to park in

front of the football field and going to the back. He stated if we can get them

to go around, the cars can at least get into the Park.

Ms. Tierney stated she believes it was one-way at one time, and Mr. Schlieben

agreed it was about four to five years ago. Ms. Tierney stated it was two-way

when she started with the Township. Mr. Schlieben stated he understands that

there is Park Study going on, but he feels making it one-way would solve a lot of

issues. Ms. Tierney stated she believes it was designed to be one-way initially,

but she does not recall how it became two-way. She stated she feels it should

be one-way all the time. Mr. Schlieben stated this would get drivers into the

Park and cars would not be blocking the street. Mr. Schlieben stated he would

be willing to have volunteers there with barricades this weekend. Ms. Tierney

stated she would appreciate YMS helping with that until we come up with a

solution. Mr. Schlieben agreed to do this.

Mr. Krauss stated Football is there as well. Mr. Schlieben stated the 8:00 a.m.

sessions are fine for both since YMS starts at 8:30 a.m. and Football stated at

8:00 a.m.; and it is the first change-over at 10:00 a.m./10:15 a.m. when there

is an issue. Ms. Tierney stated she feels it should be a permanent change to

one-way traffic, and she will look into what it would take to make that change

permanent; and she would appreciate YMS’ help to assist with this until the

change is made permanent.

Mr. Schlieben discussed community-service projects including the Lake Afton

Clean-Up and the Run the Course event.

Mr. Krauss asked about the Columbus Cup, and Mr. Schlieben stated that was

canceled about two years ago as it was a lot of work for not a lot of return.

Ms. Tierney stated she sent Mr. Schlieben an e-mail today that he should look

at about a potential additional user group.

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There were no other League Liaison Reports at this time.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Tierney stated she would like to present some items that she would like the

Board to consider with the hope that at the next meeting, we can come up with

some solutions. She stated she will be communicating with the Board through-

out the month leading up to the October meeting. She stated she will be

providing some Policies for the Board to review individually, and she asked that

the Board provide her with feedback so that she can consolidate the feedback

ahead of time.

Summer Camp After Action Review

Ms. Tierney stated there were 207 campers this year, there was a second

location, and CITs were added. She stated everything was “fantastic.”

She stated every year we learn new things, and with growth there were some

growing pains. She stated they found out late that they were not going to be

able to use Edgewood on Fridays so Fridays were made swim days; however,

there was a problem when there was poor weather. She stated coming up

with last minute plans became an issue this year so we are looking at creating

a three-layer approach with a first, second, and third plan in the event of poor

weather. She stated the Community Center does not have enough space to

accommodate 207 campers along with Senior Programming which is why

we had Edgewood in order to be able to expand the Camp. Ms. Tierney

stated they are reaching out to bus companies to see if we can have a bus

on hold or a site on hold and create an Agreement with different spaces for

Fridays in particular.

Mr. Krauss asked what was the reason that Edgewood was not available on

Fridays, and Ms. Tierney stated it is part of their Contract that they do not

work on Fridays during the summer. Ms. Tierney stated she may also look

into whether we could pay overtime to their staff to be there on Fridays.

Mr. Krauss asked the number of campers at Edgewood, and Ms. Tierney

stated she believes it is 100. She stated anyone under age 9 was at Edge-

wood this year. She stated the older campers and the Tweens were at the

Community Center. She stated the older campers and Tweens were on

alternative trip days as well which helped alleviate the numbers at the

Community Center.

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Ms. Tierney stated we want to create a more well-rounded training program for

the staff ahead of time. She stated we do that now at the Pool, and she feels

we need to do something similar as far as training for the Summer Camp staff

now that the staff is much larger.

Ms. Tierney stated they also want to adjust the pick-up procedures at

Edgewood.

Ms. Tierney stated they received a lot of feedback from the parents about

making sure the campers were using sunscreen, and there will be scheduled

times when everyone has to apply sunscreen. Ms. Tierney stated parents also

wanted more well-rounded programming, and we will change the way the

counselors are set up.

Ms. Tierney stated we will also be re-evaluating the trips to make sure that

we have more full-day trips and less part-day trips since a lot of times they

were going on a long journey only to be somewhere for one or two hours.

Ms. Tierney stated this year they split based on age, but they realized that

was a problem; and they will split by grade next year so that campers are

with their friends.

Ms. Tierney stated she provided the Board with the After Action Report, and

she will make it available on-line on the Camp page so people can see what

the feedback was and what we are looking at for next year. Ms. Tierney

stated they did get a lot of great feedback. She stated they heard that a lot

of campers and counselors plan to return. She stated the CIT Program was a

great success and will be a great feeder for next year. Ms. Rock stated she

heard great things from people she encountered about Camp.

Community Day After Action

Ms. Tierney stated we had a great Community Day this year. She stated the

layout was changed based on feedback from last year, and the vendors were

moved onto the grass so that there was a better flow with the rides.

She stated there was also a Touch-A-Truck Event. She stated we still have

the problem with the vendors leaving at 6:00 p.m. and for a few hours there

is a wait for the fireworks with just food trucks and music. She stated people

are showing up at 6:00 p.m. expecting to be able to do things, but all they can

do is wait for the fireworks to happen. Ms. Tierney stated she feels we need

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to re-evaluate Community Day to decide what is the mission of Community Day

and how it fits with our current mission and vision for the parks. She stated we

may want to consider different dates as well as other ways of donation and fund-

raising since Community Day ultimately involves taxpayer dollars, and we do not

make enough money to cover the cost of Community Day. She stated we should

also consider how to improve the flow of the day to make it one complete package.

Ms. Tierney stated it usually takes almost a year to plan for this event, and they

start marketing and reaching out to sponsors in January. She stated this is now

the time to make decisions. She asked that the Board consider if they are

comfortable with the expense of Community Day as part of a general line item

and how we could better fundraise for it. She stated she is asking the Board to

consider these issues because it is a community decision and not just an internal

decision.

Mr. Krauss asked what time the event starts, and Ms. Tierney stated currently it

starts at Noon. She stated we need to consider a safety zone for the fireworks.

She added the way we changed the lay-out this year, we probably could have

started later and kept the vendors because it would be a long day for a vendor

if they were to stay until the fireworks. She stated they also would have to

take down their tents in the dark.

Mr. LaBar asked if the start time has always been noon and what was the

reason for that. Ms. Tierney stated it has always been Noon, but the food

vendors generally come to an event that has a lunch and a dinner, so

starting at Noon has been a perk to get food vendors. Ms. Tierney

stated there was feedback about the expense because food vendors are

becoming more expensive, and we also had some “pay-for” activities.

She stated there were some free amenities including rides and the fireworks.

Ms. Tierney stated what she has not included in the costs are the staff costs

which included the Police, all Park & Rec staff, and all Public Works staff.

She stated it involves a lot of work for the staff as they are there late the

night before and after hours.

Mr. Krauss stated the event was previously held Labor Day weekend. Ms. Tierney

stated the issue with Labor Day weekend is that the staff would be working the

entire three-day weekend on a holiday.

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Ms. Tierney asked that the Board think about Community Day and she will also

put out a survey to the residents to get the feelings of the community.

Ms. Laurie Grey, 895 Slate Hill Road, asked what is the amount that is coming

from the taxpayers for this event. Ms. Tierney stated the total expense for the

day was about $60,000, and we have re-couped about $30,000. She stated this

does not include the staff costs. Ms. Grey asked how the residents will be

surveyed, and Ms. Tierney stated she will put it out on social media.

Policy Review Preparation

Ms. Tierney stated since we are an accredited agency, we constantly have to

review everything that we do which holds us accountable. She stated at this

time of the year, we need to start Policy review. She stated she sent the Board

a document of all the things that we need to review. She stated this includes

the Recreation Program Plan which is a “huge, very well thought out document.”

She stated we need to go over Program Objectives, our Community Education

process, which is how we educate the community about what we do, and our

Maintenance and Operations Standards. She stated we are also reviewing our

Admin Policies and Procedures. She stated we have a “little bit of Records

Disaster Mitigation,” but they are looking for something more detailed than

what we have.

Ms. Tierney stated when we went through the CAPRA review, CAPRA indicated

that there were certain items that would not pass the next time with what we

currently have so those are the items we need to think about moving forward.

She stated at the next meeting, the Board can expect to see the League Policy

and the Code Book.

Code of Conduct Review

Ms. Tierney stated she would like to focus on how we can incorporate a Code

of Conduct Statement into the Ordinances that change our Code Book.

She stated she had provided the current Code of Conduct in the Board’s

packet, and she feels that we should require this to be signed by all of our

volunteers, staff, and participants so they all know what the expectations are.

She stated there have been some instances where there was poor conduct,

most recently in pickleball. She asked the Board to review this and provide

feedback over the next month, and she will bring back a draft based on the

feedback.

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Mr. Krauss stated when he was head of PAA, they had a Code of Conduct; and

as parents filled out the Registration Form, they had to sign something in this

regard. Mr. Krauss stated he feels anyone who signs up for something should

have to sign the Code of Conduct. Ms. Tierney stated she feels that the Leagues

should be encouraged to show us what their Code of Conduct is.

Mr. LaBar asked if the Township will collect and have those on files or is it up

to the individual Leagues to have those. Ms. Tierney stated if the Leagues

have it, they would retain their records, but she would be asking that they

provide an example of what has to be signed. She stated for the Township

participants, staff, and volunteers it would be in our software where they

would be required to sign a Code of Conduct the same as they currently sign

a waiver.

Mr. Schlieben stated the way YMS handles this is through TeamSnap, which

is a platform they use for their scheduling; and at registration you can add

whatever policies you want that parents have to check off indicating that the

parent and child will adhere to the policy as part of the program. He stated

two years ago Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer required them to come up

with a Risk Management Policy which is a little more in detail than a Code of

Conduct including child safety, safe sports, etc. that they are required to do;

and he could share that with Ms. Tierney.

Mr. Krauss noted the items that are in need of review, and he asked if those

Sections will be sent to the Board electronically; and Ms. Tierney stated she

will be doing that over the next month, and she will provide a few at a time.

Ms. Tierney stated we should be reviewing our Code annually. She stated she

has been looking at Municipality Codes from the local area and from across

the Country to see if there are examples of things that we might need.

She stated we have not considered in the current Code drone usage, photo-

graphers in the park, e-bikes, vape pens, etc. Ms. Tierney stated once she

has a had legal review done, she will provide the Board with a draft.

Pool After Action Preview

Ms. Tierney stated while the Pool recap is not completed she can provide

some feedback that we have heard throughout the season that she would

like to address for next year. She stated the full Pool recap will be provided

before the next Park & Rec Board meeting. Ms. Tierney stated there were

approximately ten requests for a military discount, and she feels that is

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something that we could consider. She stated there was also discussion about

some kind of “high-level membership” so that a grandparent can have guests,

and we should consider that over the next month. She stated another item was

rain checks. She stated if someone has a pass for the day and it rains, we do not

refund. She stated she does not feel it would be too hard to offer a rain check,

but there are some logistics that go with it because we require members to bring

guests. She stated if we provide a rain check, she asked if we would be providing

that back to the member or providing it to the person who had the pass.

Ms. Tierney stated she feels we should also consider a “lap pass during the

shorter days in the early and late season.” She stated there are a lot of conflicts

with the lap lanes because we are limited in space and how they can be used.

She stated they feel they could extend, particularly in August, the hours for the

lap lanes and how this could also be done in the early season. She stated they

are considering a lap pass which is something extra that could be purchased.

She stated only a limited amount would be sold, and you could come in extra

hours during lap pass time and just use the lap pool. She stated it could

potentially be 16 passes, which she feels would reduce a lot of conflict that

we currently have.

Ms. Tierney stated a lot of Capital improvements will be coming up, and

we need to talk about how we are going to pay for those improvements.

She stated we need two new filters in the very near future. She stated she

does not anticipate that we would want to use tax dollars for these types

of things, and they should be paid for with Pool funds. She stated the Board

should consider this, and she will talk with Board members over the next

month. She stated these repairs are necessary at the Pool in the future.

Macclesfield Project Timeline Update

Ms. Tierney stated she will be setting some dates for public presentation and

participation in the near future. She stated they have been collaborating

closely with the School District talking about how we might be able to work

together for space usage. She stated we have collected a lot of data.

She stated the Steering Committee will be meeting again since at the last

meeting of the Steering Committee there were a lot of questions that needed

to be answered. She stated she hopes that in the next month or so we will

be having the public meeting where everyone can provide feedback on a

proposed Concept Plan. She stated she has not received the Minutes from

the last Steering Committee meeting; but once they are received, they will

be posted.

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Snipes NaturalLands Assessment Presentation Scheduled for September 20,

2023 Board of Supervisors Meeting

Ms. Tierney stated NaturalLands is coming to the next Board of Supervisors

meeting on September 20 to discuss their findings on Snipes. She encouraged

the Park Board members to attend. Mr. Krauss asked if they have shared the

results. Ms. Tierney stated she met with the representative from NaturalLands

last week, and she was still pulling together her final thoughts and answering

questions that we felt needed to be addressed. Ms. Tierney stated when it is

ready, she will share the report with the Park & Rec Board.

Capital Improvements for 2024

Ms. Tierney stated we started the Pool Complex Master Plan before COVID,

and we have had a few years since then, and she feels we should complete

that Master Plan and talk about all of the needed capital improvements

including the snack bar and the bathrooms which will need a complete re-haul.

She stated she feels we are looking at a complete Master Plan in the near future.

She stated next year the lap pool will be sand-blasted and painted. She stated

it was determined with the leak detection that we are going to need a new

filter next year in the lap pool as it is not filtering properly. She stated we will

also be re-caulking as we are seeing that we are losing some water in the caulk

line.

Ms. Tierney stated at Memorial Park one of the primary focuses is going to

be repair of the basketball surface which is currently shut down because the

cracks are too big.

Ms. Tierney stated we are also looking to patch a couple of the pickleball courts

over the next year or two.

Art in the Park Recap

Ms. Tierney stated Art in the Park just finished, and the last sculptures were

picked up today. She stated it was a huge success with all positive feedback,

as well as constructive criticism future projects. Ms. Tierney stated next year

she feels we should focus on how we can better partner with outside agencies

and develop a full, all-encompassing culture and arts plan. She stated we are

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looking to see if we can implement some other Grants next year, and she feels

that we need to have a good plan in place as to funding and decide how we will

continue to move forward having arts and culture in the Township.

Ms. Tierney showed a video on Art in the Park that was prepared by a member

of the Park & Rec staff. She stated this program reached a different element

of the community. She stated there were readings at the Park, a movie in the

Park that Ms. Rock helped with, and Ultimate Frisbee that Mr. Krauss helped

with. She stated there were also tours with the Artists of Yardley and a Hula

Hoop social media experiment where a video camera was watching people

using the hula hoops at Kids Kingdom. Ms. Tierney stated the Art Show in the

Park was also a great success. Ms. Tierney stated it was clear that this was

something that the community needed, and she feels that we can expand on

this in the future with some additional partners.

Ms. Tierney stated we learned that there were demands put on the staff as we

had doubled the size of Summer Camp and did Art in the Park in the same year,

and it was difficult to get everything done. She stated she feels having outside

partners helping would help take us to the next level.

Mr. Krauss congratulated Ms. Tierney on the success of Summer Camp, Art

in the Park, and Community Day. He stated there were lots of activities for our

constituents and residents, and he looks forward to what is in store for 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Laurie Grey stated she has been coming to a few of the meetings, and

under the Liaison Report, YMS is typically the only organization that makes

a report. She asked if the organizations are required to make a report,

and Ms. Tierney stated that they are all invited, but they are not required to

make a report.

There being no further business, Ms. Rock moved, Mr. Malinowski seconded and

it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

 Respectfully Submitted,

 Kim Rock, Secretary