

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
DISABILITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 8, 2025

A meeting of the Disability Advisory Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held at the Township building on October 8, 2025. Chairperson Huchler opened the meeting at 6:04 pm.

Those present:

Lisa Huchler, Chairperson (in person)
Abbey Yeatts, Vice Chairperson (in person)
Michele Williams, Member (zoom)
Kierstyn Zolfo, Member (zoom)
Larisa Gambale, Member (in person)
Jody Smith, Alternate (absent)

John Lewis, Supervisor Liaison (absent)

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 13, 2025 MINUTES

Ms. Yeatts moved, Ms. Gambale seconded, and the August 13, 2025 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment this week.

PRESENTATIONS

Disability Awareness Badge – DAB members attended a zoom presentation by 2 scouts earning their Disability Awareness Merit Badge.

One presentation focused on Person first language. Using “Person with a Disability” instead of a “Disabled Person”. One interesting point was that we need to be flexible since someone may want to use “Disabled Person” using the disability first. When in doubt, ask the person how they choose to identify, and respect their language preference.

The next presentation was regarding Wheelchair etiquette. Discussed how the wheelchair is an extension of the person’s body and should be treated with care. Ms. Yeatts said this applies to all assisted equipment, like walkers or crutches. You should always ask before you touch or start providing assistance. Some people want to be able to do things themselves without help.

Pennsbury High School Renovation project

Pennsbury Superintendent gave a presentation to the BOS on August 20, 2025. Supervisor Lewis did ask questions regarding how the building will be set up to accommodate those with special needs or disabilities. The Superintendent stated he used to be a Special Ed teacher and made sure to look at the needs of that community. If anyone is interested there will be more presentations given to the public as the project progresses. If you have specific questions concerning your child’s needs you may want to attend.

SERVICES ON HOLD

Services for People with Disabilities are on hold due to the budget impasse. Seth Hoderewski, Executive Director of Bucks County Center for Independent Living (CIL) is asking people to contact their state legislators to pass the budget. Critical services are on hold including Core Services such as peer support, information and referral, independent living skills, and advocacy. Without these services people in need may not be able to gain access to things like equipment, food or shelter. This decision was not made lightly. These programs are lifelines for people with disabilities—providing access to independence, empowerment, and inclusion in our community. Without the release of state funding, the CIL cannot sustain operations at the level our community deserves. Ms. Huchler sent a letter written to the local state Representatives. Ms. Zolfo has been in touch with the 3 local Representatives and they are all on board and are willing to pass the budget.

UPDATE BROCHURE

The brochure has been completed and approved thanks to Ms. Zolfo for putting all of our ideas together for the DAB.

We will place the brochures in the LMT Community center, Township building and library for now. The brochure has a QR code taking people to our webpage. Ms. Zolfo has suggested we remove the QR code for the webpage brochure and add additional photos. Once it is updated, Ms. Huchler will send to the township manager to place on our webpage. The link is:

<https://www.lmt.org/government/boards-commissions/disability-advisory-board/>

We can also send to Kellie Frain, LMT Management Analyst, to post on various social pages such as LMT Facebook, Instagram, twitter and LinkedIn pages.

EVENTS

5 K Color Fun Run for Accessibility was held Sunday, September 28, 2025. This is the fifth year for the event and had more than 300 participants. A portion of the funds raised will be allocated to the ADA Transition Plan. Parks and Rec would like to have the DAB help with getting more sponsors next year to help cover the costs associated with the event. Ms. Zolfo asked if a Disability Legal Law Firm could be a sponsor. Ms. Huchler said that many companies provide water bottles, bananas, ChapStick, sunglasses, etc. but does not have to be a give-a-way. Businesses could have their name put on the T-shirt for a monetary donation. The DAB will put that on our goals for 2026.

Community Health Fair – October 11, 2025 Ms. Huchler saw something on Facebook that the LMT Seniors were holding a Health fair at the community center this Saturday. This might be a good event for the DAB to have a table and distribute the new brochures and other information. Ms. Gambale will look into it and see if we could attend this year or the next event they hold.

Veteran's Day Parade – November 8, 2025 Everyone is welcome to attend.

LMT PROJECT UPDATES

Update on PECO Green Open Space grants to preserve, protect, and improve open space in the region. The BOS did approve the project but there is no start date for work to begin on 5-Mile woods additional accessible pathway. Monica Tierney is waiting on a potential donation. She will let us know when they have a firm date.

ADA Transition Plan Update –Ms. Huchler reviewed the plan and sent all comments to Monica Tierney. Ms. Tierney is waiting to hear back from the Parks and Rec Board for their comments. Once all of the comments are incorporated into the plan it will be sent to the Solicitor for review and then DAB and Parks and Rec Board can recommend it be presented to the LMT Board of Supervisors. The ADA Transition plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors in April 2021 and must be updated to keep our accreditation.

Sensory Events

The DAB discussed working with the Parks and Rec Board to incorporate inclusive programming for events they sponsor. There is a Halloween event and Holiday party in the near future. We will begin discussions with the Parks and Rec department to see if we do something prior to an event, or set up in a separate area to have a "quiet" room. We will see when the Holiday party is scheduled.

Ms. Huchler thought we might need to attend a Park and Rec Board meeting in accordance with the Sunshine Act, however, if it is only 1 or 2 members, we can gather information and bring it back to our Board for discussion.

Communications

At our last meeting, the DAB members agreed that inclusive sports programming should be included in each section. It provides parents a quick way to see that children with all types of abilities are included in our sports community.

Upon our recommendations, Monica Tierney changed how the inclusive sports will be presented on line under Sports and Recreational Tab and in the newsletter to be included under Recreational Opportunities.

In addition, under Township owned Recreational Facilities webpage and newsletter Ms. Tierney changed the wording and now states: The preserve features over five miles of trails, including a 0.13-mile ADA-accessible boardwalk and viewing platform, designed for hikers of all abilities, including those using mobility aids or service animals. This trail was made possible through a PECO Green Region Grant and the support of the Township Board of Supervisors, the Disability Advisory Board, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Newsletter

Parks and Rec will include the Blue Envelope Program and info about the Handle with Care registry in the next newsletter. The current newsletter is in final review so not sure if it will make it in this one or the next issue.

POTENTIAL GRANT UPDATES

Accessible growing Microgrant

<https://disabilities.temple.edu/programs-services/health-equity/food-justice/pennsylvania-accessible-growing-microgrant>. This grant is to help make gardens and growing spaces in Pennsylvania more accessible for everyone. Funds can be used for tools, renovations, and other accessibility improvements.

Ms. Gambale gave a detailed description of the pricing and different styles of raised beds that are available. Pricing could be \$700-\$1,000 for a raised bed that a wheel chair could go under. Ms. Williams said that a wheelchair or walker could pull up next to a bed if it is not possible to go under. This would be a perfect scout project and the materials could be purchased and the scout could build it. There are also other options besides wood that might work such as a horse trough or Ms. Gambale said the plastic beds are much cheaper. Ms. Gambale said we needed to show who specifically would benefit from this project and who would be using. She has some questions that we could put out to the public to get information. Ms. Huchler stated we have done surveys in the past and the statistics are probably the same. Ms. Huchler will forward the past survey and results to see if this would be helpful prior to doing another survey.

Shade Structure grant-The American Academy of Dermatology grant is available for up to \$8,000 and does not have a matching requirement. <https://www.aad.org/public/public-health/shade-structure-grants>.

We must demonstrate that we are promoting a Sun safety program for 1 year before we can apply for the grant. Ms. Yeatts discussed options with the pool manager and Monica Tierney and they thought providing free sunscreen at the pool would be a great safety program. We would have to look into the cost of dispensers and sunscreen. We also need a local dermatologist that can assist and Ms. Williams said she could ask her dermatologist. Ms. Zolfo can also come up with a marketing plan to get the word out and provide helpful sun protection information to LMT residents.

BUILDING PLAN REVIEW

Prickett Plan Updates -Jim Majewski will be forwarding some additional plans for the DAB to review for other retail establishments.

Prickett Preserve Handicapped Parking

On September 4, 2025, Lisa Huchler, DAB Chair met with Joe Deluca, Prickett Preserve Developer and Jim Majewski, LMT Director of Community Development to review the handicapped parking spaces in the Prickett Preserve parking lot where Paris banquette, Wonder and Woof Bakery will be situated.

The DAB had recommended that the handicapped parking spots be reviewed and potentially moved closer to the stores and accessible walkway, in accordance with the ADA guidelines. Joe Deluca stated he would be able to flip the Van Accessible spots to the parking area closest to the stores. However, upon our inspection this may not be the best solution for a wheelchair user. There is no space behind the vehicles to add "safety" striping to allow safe transport from behind the vehicles to the accessible crosswalk. The 2-way traffic on the narrow roadway and a low wheelchair passing behind a vehicle could cause a potential issue.

The closer parking spots would be a better option for a person with a disability not in a wheelchair. Another option discussed would be to have 1 Van Accessible spot in the current location and have 1 regular handicapped spot on the other side. This would cause the businesses to lose another parking spot in an already small lot.

We determined the best course of action is to leave the spots as is until the stores open and we can review the traffic patterns and usage of the parking spots available.

Ms. Huchler thanks Jim Majewski for his insight and thanks Joe Deluca for his patience, time and willingness to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. He stated he will work with us and LMT Community Development Department for the best possible solution.

The DAB discussed in further detail and Ms. Williams and Ms. Yeatts had been over to the parking lot. They expressed their concerns that the parking lot is very narrow, traffic flow is cramped and getting to the crosswalk are would not be safe from the spots along the closest road to stores. For now, everyone agrees that safety will need to take priority over location. We will monitor as additional stores open.

OLD BUSINESS

PECO is planning to feature the Five Mile Woods Trail in a short social media video. These would be short clips, either filmed onsite or at the person's home. Former DAB member David Mann visited the accessible path and has agreed to be interviewed and share his experience. Will follow up – no one from PECO has reached out yet.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Huchler wanted to let everyone know there was a ruling on 9/29/25 that consumer protections for airline passengers using wheelchairs will not be enforced. USDOT said in a filing it is writing a new rule and will not enforce the requirements imposing airline liability for mishandled wheelchairs or a requirement for airlines to reimburse passengers using wheelchairs the difference between a fare on a flight taken and the fare the passenger would have paid on a flight if their wheelchair could have fit in the cabin or cargo compartment of a different aircraft. A spokesman for Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said the department has and will continue to support flyers with disabilities and will enforce other provisions of the rule, adding the department is reevaluating whether those provisions "adhere to statute or if they are redundant. No final decision has been made."

MEETING SCHEDULE

Next meeting December 10, 2025 at 6:00 pm at the Township Building meeting room.
November 2025 meeting cancelled.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Zolfo moved, Ms. Yeatts seconded to adjourn, approved unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa Huchler
Chair, Disability Advisory Board