

MERIDIAN MONITOR

July 2012
Vol. 15 Issue 2



Senior Citizen, Recreation, and Human Services Millage Proposal

Meridian Township is able to provide youth programs, senior programs, and emergency needs programs through the Senior Citizen, Recreation, and Human Services Millage which expires this year.

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'Medical Clinic' Zoning Up to Voters

In 2010, Dr. Shannon Wiggins requested that her property at 4133 Okemos Road be rezoned. The property is the former Kindercare property that is zoned residential. It is completely surrounded by property that is zoned Professional Office, and used for office purposes. Dr. Wiggins proposed that the former Kindercare building on the property be used for a medical clinic.

Residents voiced their concerns at Township meetings that if the rezoning were granted, the clinic would be used to dispense medical marihuana. Although medical marihuana dispensaries had been outlawed and Dr. Wiggins had stated medical marihuana would not be dispensed at the clinic, many residents were still against the rezoning. Issues were also raised concerning the building's location near the Chippewa Middle School.

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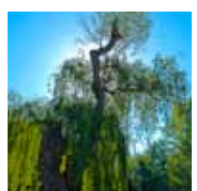
OFFICIAL Ballot Language

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Road Repair Millage

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Heritage Trees

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Neighborhood Watch

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This millage funds 100% of the Township's cost for staff to run the Meridian Senior Center and the Township's Human Services Office. A portion of the millage goes to the Parks and Recreation Department, which makes additional recreation programs possible.

When Meridian Township residents head to the polls for the August Primary Election, they'll have the opportunity to vote on a renewal and slight increase for this millage. This renewal and increase of the millage will allow the Township to continue existing programs and expand the hours of operation of the Senior Center.

The millage being renewed is a .1 mill that has been in effect since 2002. The additional increase being proposed of .05 mills means that, if the proposal is approved, the average resident in Meridian Township living in a home with a Taxable Value of \$100,000 will pay about \$15 a year in taxes to support the three service areas mentioned above. ■



facebook.com/MeridianSeniorCenter
[facebook.com/
MeridianTownshipRecreationandSports](https://facebook.com/MeridianTownshipRecreationandSports)



New Tax Payment Options: Visa Debit or Recurring ACH

By: Staff

Paying taxes sometimes involves a last minute rush. Now, residents have an opportunity to pay with just a few clicks of the mouse. Meridian Township is offering residents a new option to pay their taxes online with a Visa debit card. Previously, taxpayers could pay with a credit card either online or on the phone, but many expressed displeasure with the 3% convenience fee associated with the payment. Official Payments is offering a flat \$3.95 fee for online tax payments made with Visa debit cards.

Residents can also sign up for the automatic ACH payment plan, now offered with a recurring option. Taxes can be paid automatically on the due date by enrolling in the plan (no additional fees). The ACH option withdraws funds directly from your account. Choices include a one-time payment for either summer or winter tax, or recurring payments which will automatically deduct tax payments from your account each season. Both year end and due date options are available for winter tax.

To find out more information about the Visa debit card payment or the ACH payment, visit the Meridian Township Treasurer's section of the website at www.meridian.mi.us. ■

OFFICIAL BALLOT LANGUAGE: Proposal to Provide Continued and Increased Funding for Senior Citizen, Recreation & Human Services Programs Throughout the Township

Shall the currently authorized millage rate limitation on the amount of taxes which may be levied against all property in the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County (1) be renewed at 0.1 mills (\$0.10 on each \$1,000 of taxable value) to be disbursed to the Charter Township of Meridian to provide funding for senior citizen, recreation and human services programs throughout the Township; and (2) be increased 0.05 mills (\$0.05 on each \$1,000 of taxable value) to be disbursed to the Charter Township of Meridian to provide increased funding for senior citizen programs throughout the Township, both for a period of ten (10) years, 2012 to 2021 inclusive? The estimate of the revenue the Township would collect from this 0.15 mill renewed and new millage in the first year (if approved and levied in the 2012 calendar year) is approximately \$233,000. ■



OFFICIAL BALLOT LANGUAGE: Meridian Township Zoning Amendment

On March 1, 2011 the Township Board adopted Zoning Ordinance Amendment #2011-01 which amended the Township Zoning Map to rezone a parcel of land at 4133 Okemos Road, Okemos from RA (Single Family-Medium Density) to PO (Professional and Office).

This parcel is located generally west of Okemos Road, north of Bennett Road and south of Sower Boulevard with a specific legal description of M28-46 & 28-47 S 150 FT OF E 660 FT OF NE 1/4 OF SW 1/4 OF SEC. 28, T4N R1W EXC. E 50 FT. THEREOF. Do you wish to approve this Zoning Ordinance Amendment? ■

Continued from page 1...

The Township Board voted to approve the rezoning to Professional Office in March 2011. Concerned residents led a petition movement to place the issue on the ballot, putting the rezoning in abeyance, pending a vote on the matter.

Now, voters will decide at the August 7th primary election whether the property should be rezoned Professional Office. If the "yes" votes prevail, the zoning of the property will be changed to Professional Office. If "no" votes are in the majority, the property will continue to be zoned Residential. ■

Road Repair Millage Renewal Proposition

The current local road Pavement Preservation Program in Meridian Township will continue if the Road Repair Millage Renewal Proposition (initially approved in 2008) is passed on the August 7th ballot. Otherwise, the program will be reduced by nearly two thirds when the current millage expires in 2014. The proposal offers an opportunity for voters to continue current funding for repair of subdivision and other local roads within the Township. Currently, Ingham County pays for all maintenance of the primary roads and minor maintenance of the local roads, while the Township pays for much of the cost for major maintenance of the local roads. There are approximately 150 miles of local roads within the Township.

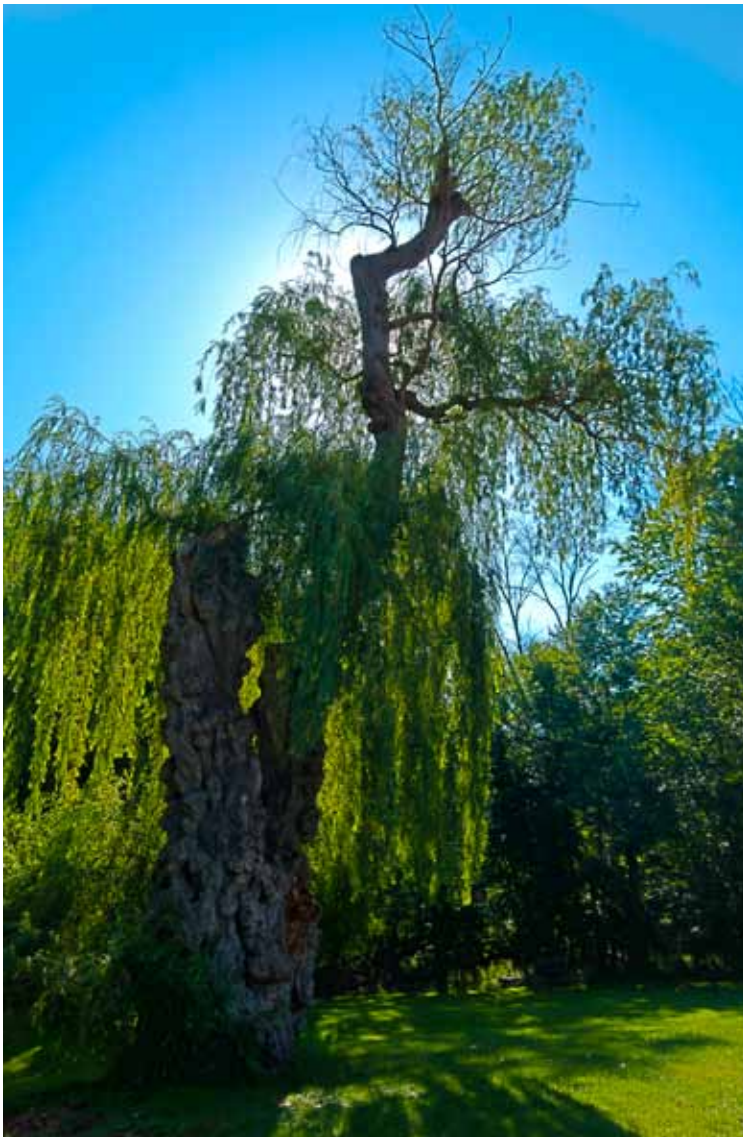
The Township Road Repair Millage Renewal Proposal is a proposition to renew a 0.25 mill tax (\$0.25 for every \$1000 of taxable value) towards the "preservation, maintenance and resurfacing of roads within the Township for a period of ten years, 2014 to 2023." Estimated revenue that the Township would collect from this renewal comes to about \$390,000 in the first year. Ingham County has budgeted between \$50,000 and \$115,000 for major maintenance for local roads in the Township (when funds are available), while the Township General Fund provides \$115,000 each year for this purposes.

Thus, in the absence of the renewal of the millage, there is a maximum of \$230,000 for Township local road major maintenance. On average, five miles of local roads have been repaired annually with the combination of Township and County funding, as well as the addition of the road millage funds. ■

OFFICIAL BALLOT LANGUAGE: Road Repair Millage Renewal Proposition

Shall the currently authorized millage rate limitation on the amount of taxes which may be levied against all property in the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County, Michigan (currently scheduled to expire at the end of the 2013 calendar year), be renewed at 0.25 mills (\$0.25 on each \$1,000 of taxable value), to be disbursed to the Charter Township of Meridian to provide funding for the preservation, maintenance and resurfacing of roads within the Township for a period of ten (10) years, 2014 to 2023, inclusive? The estimate of the revenue that the Township would collect from this 0.25 mill renewal in the first year (if levied in 2014) is approximately \$390,000. ■





Recognizing Heritage Trees

By: Josh Sidorowicz

Thanks to a program established in 1996, residents in Meridian Township can nominate trees they believe to be noteworthy enough to be called a Heritage Tree. The voluntary program also is meant to recognize the stewardship of those individuals who own noteworthy trees.

“It was meant to be a ceremonial recognition of landmark or heritage trees of any given species that are large for their particular species,” said Rick Brown Meridian Township Associate Planner. “Whether it be a hickory tree, or an oak tree, or walnut tree, you name it, if it meets the requirement, we want to recognize it.”

Although the program doesn’t necessarily place sanctions on the trees or protect them from being cut down, Brown said the recognition still helps bring attention to the importance the Township places on trees and the environment. “Just reminding people that we have some beautiful trees that have been here since before we were, is a way of educating and empowering people,” said Brown. The program’s popularity has decreased since its initial inception, but the Township is looking to increase exposure. “We still have interest in heritage trees, and if people are interested in submitting applications or nominations, we’d be glad to take them,” said Brown.

Applications to nominate a tree can be found on the Meridian Township website under Forms & Applications or can be requested by contacting Rick Brown at 517-853-4568. ■



“Just reminding people that we have some beautiful trees that have been here since before we were, is a way of educating and empowering people.”

~ Rick Brown, Associate Planner



Partners for Sustainability

By: Staff

Over the next three years, Meridian Township, along with dozens of organizational partners and thousands of residents, will conduct the largest sustainability project of its kind ever carried out in this region. The Mid-Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability will help the tri county communities develop a comprehensive long-term vision. Work will focus on energy efficiency, housing, community and environmental health, land use, water quality, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure for the region, among other issues.

“Those places around the country that are having successes are not going it alone, or focusing singly on economic returns. They are, instead, deliberately improving their environment, their economies, and their communities at once,” states John Kinch, Executive Director of Michigan Energy Options in East Lansing.

Earlier this year, organizers held a kick-off meeting to inform mid-Michigan residents about the initiative and ways they can participate. Citizens can get involved by logging in to <http://ideas.midmichigansustainability.org> and sharing their perspectives. Residents are also invited to participate in upcoming meetings to be announced by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, and give their suggestions about how to improve and maintain quality of life in our region for generations to come. ■



For all things recycling go to: recycle.meridian.mi.us



[facebook.com/GreenMeridian](https://www.facebook.com/GreenMeridian) or



twitter.com/MeridianRecycle





Watershed Protection and Conservation

By: Staff

Meridian Township is a member of the Greater Lansing Regional Committee (GLRC) on Phase II Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention, which prepared a watershed management plan for the Red Cedar River, which is the Township's main drainage area. The watershed management plan is a requirement of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Phase II Storm Water Rules, which pertain to the quality of surface water in Meridian Township. Phase I pertained to communities of more than 100,000 persons, and was in place before the year 2000.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) enforces the Phase II storm water rules for the EPA. The goal of the rules is to minimize pollution of surface waters in Michigan. Meridian Township decided to participate in the GLRC's preparation of a watershed management plan because water runoff impacts every area located downstream.

Raymond Severy, Director of Public Works and Engineering, believes a key component is to educate the public to ensure that this problem is minimized. The GLRC is coordinating the educational effort by developing brochures and putting up billboards and signs that talk about clean water and the Red Cedar River. "It's key for residents to have an understanding of what we're trying to do," said Severy.

There are several ways residents can help in making sure contamination of surface water in the Township's is minimized. A key one is to not dump anything except clean water into a catch basin or waterway. Dispose of motor oil, paint, and chemicals properly. Do not dump them into a catch basin or on the ground.

"Cars should be washed on a grassy area and not on a driveway," said Severy. "The soapy water usually drains from the driveway into a catch basin and right into the river, whereas most of the soap will soak into a lawn area and not pollute as much." Severy also encourages residents to pick up waste after their pets and flush it or double bag it and put it in the trash. Storm water runoff can wash the pollutants into the drainage system.

For more information on watershed management and sustainability, visit www.mywatersheds.org ■

Preventing Sewage Backups

By: Brandie Hansen

The unfortunate circumstance of a sewer backup is a situation that must be dealt with in a very careful manner. If not handled properly, health and safety problems can occur, as well as significant property loss.

Plugged sewer lines are caused most often by tree roots, grease, or paper towels. Meridian Township's Public Works and Engineering Department provides the following information to prevent sewage backups in resident's homes.

Avoid dumping grease down the drain or flushing paper towels. Residents, who have a basement level bathroom, should have a Backwater Valve installed. If bathrooms were added without a builder's permit, it is possible one was not installed to meet the code. Homeowners may wish to purchase additional insurance as standard policies don't always cover this type of damage and depending on circumstances; local governments have had immunity to claims for damages through Michigan law.

For all water or sewer emergencies, please call the Meridian Township's Public Works and Engineering Department's on-call number, 517-349-0010, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If the call is made on nights, weekends or holidays, leave a message including name, address, phone number and a brief description of the problem. Residents will receive a return phone call shortly and someone will respond to the address if necessary. Please call the Township BEFORE calling a plumber or drain cleaner. If the problem is the Township's responsibility, it will be corrected, and the homeowner will save the cost of a plumber. The Township does not reimburse plumber expenses unless the expense is authorized in advance.

Please call the Public Works and Engineering Department at 517-853-4440 with questions. ■



"Cars should be washed on a grassy area and not on a driveway. The soapy water usually drains from the driveway into a catch basin and right into the river, whereas most of the soap will soak into a lawn area and not pollute as much."

~ Raymond Severy, Director of Public Works and Engineering

Keeping Neighborly

By: Lauren Ragan

As people are enjoying Michigan weather and spending time on Township parks and trails with their pets, Meridian Township ordinances are in place to keep those experiences enjoyable for everyone. "Whether it's loud music, shouting, a loud party or a barking dog; these noise violations are all treated the same. Depending on the circumstances it would be the officer's determination if there was a violation. For a barking dog the ordinance also states the barking must be of a continued duration," said Mark Kieselbach, Director of Community Planning and Development.

According to the Common Code Violation for the Charter Township of Meridian, Chapter 50, Offences and Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 50-84 Unlawful Noise Prohibited, it shall be unlawful, and it shall be deemed a public nuisance, for any person to unreasonably make, continue, or cause to be made or continued any noise that annoys or disturbs the quiet, comfort, or response of a reasonable person of normal sensitivities or that injures or endangers the health, peace, or safety of the public within the Township. The following acts, among others, are declared to be unlawful noises in violation of this section and are deemed to be public nuisances per se.

In regards to the picking up and/or removal of animal waste; according to Chapter 46 Nuisances, Section 46-2 Nuisances Per Se, no person shall maintain or permit to remain of premises owned or occupied by him, or throw, place, or leave; or permit the throwing placing, or leaving on the premises of substances in any public street, highway, lane, road, alley, public place, square, sidewalk or any lands within the boundaries of the Township. This also includes any

river, lake, stream, or other body of water. Any private place or premises where in the opinion of the township superintendent or his agent the specific substances constitute a dangerous condition or are detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or offended aesthetic or may cause sickness or attract flies, insects, rodents, or vermin.

Following these codes allow everyone to be able to have a continued enjoyable outdoor experience. ■



Recreation Programs for Area Kids

By: Lauren Hansard

The Parks and Recreation Department has long focused on ways to keep kids in Meridian Township busy, especially during the summer months. However, more recently, funding has been cut to specific programs like the Snell Towar Recreation Center summer recreation programs. "Three years ago funding was cut from the Township's General Fund for the program. We have been able to continue the program since that time from donations and fundraising," said Greg Grothous Meridian Township's Recreation Specialist. "It's a greatly reduced program from what it's been, but it's been nonetheless a very successful program." Since these budget cuts, they have relied on fundraisers, like their annual one at Buddies Pub and Grill in East Lansing and financial assistance from Towar Community Concerns Committee (TC3) and Edgewood Village to keep the summer recreation program sustained.

The Snell Towar Recreation Center is located in the middle of a 4 acre Towar Park, and spans over 13 city lots that have been donated or purchased by the Township. The center has a billiards table, two foosball tables, air hockey table, three computer stations, and a Nintendo Wii system. The Center provides after-school programs for elementary school-aged children, tutoring and teen-focused activities.

The Parks and Recreation Department has also implemented a youth recreation scholarship fund. Due to increased requests for scholarships for recreation, sports and environmental education activities, the Township has created a fund comprised of donations. One recent fundraiser was held at Douglas J Aveda Institute in East Lansing from May 22nd-24th where 20 percent of sales were donated to the fund. Donations have also been received from the Haslett-Okemos Kiwanis Club and from private contributors. Scholarship applicants are able to receive one scholarship per season that will cover up to 50 percent of the program cost. The policy and application forms are available online and in the Parks and Recreation office.

The Recreation Center and Scholarship fund are a few of the many ways Meridian Township is reaching out to help kids stay busy. "It gives an option to kids that in some cases wouldn't have options, they would be in trouble choosing some options that aren't exactly what you would like them getting involved with," said David Caszatt, President of the Towar Community Concerns Committee (TC3). Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Department is committed to helping kids thrive. ■

Neighborhood Watch

By Michelle Oliver



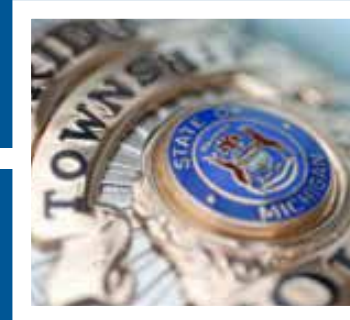
When planning vacations and a trip away from home, the Meridian Township Police Department is here to keep watch. While your neighborhood may feel safe, you can never be too careful. Compared to this time last year, both violent crime rates and property crime rates have increased. One way to prevent crimes from happening in your neighborhood, while away on vacation or just relaxing at home, is to start a Neighborhood Watch program.

Neighborhood Watch involves citizen participation in a self-help battle against crime...and ...can help make the Meridian Township Police Department more effective in its fight against crime. Neighborhood Watch relies on caring members of the community to watch out for each other and communicate disturbances to the police and others. It's one of the most effective and cost-efficient ways to prevent crime.

Neighborhood Watch is the first logical step for any community to organize against crime. The program consists of a coordinator, block captains, and a notification system for the residents. The coordinator is the liaison between the neighborhood and the police. Block captains are recruited by the coordinator to help connect with residents and obtain contact information for the notification system. The notification system should be one that distributes information as quick as possible to the residents. Examples would be email alerts, telephone tree, Twitter, Facebook, etc. When selecting the best notification system to use, one that gives the most immediate response to the most people is preferred.

Celebrate community policing and crime prevention during National Night Out on August 7. Police officers, K-9 units, and McGruff will be visiting neighborhoods to celebrate the Neighborhood Watch teams. National Night Out informs criminals that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back against crime. Plan an event like a fun summer barbeque to get the neighborhood together to celebrate the safe community you've all helped create.

For information about the Neighborhood Watch program, visit the Township website or contact the Police Department at 517-853-4800. ■



nixle



Receive community public safety alerts instantly by text message and email. Registration is quick, easy, and secure.

<https://local.nixle.com/meridian-township-police/>



Check out the Police Dept. Blogspot meridiantwppolice.blogspot.com/



[facebook.com/MeridianTwpPD](https://www.facebook.com/MeridianTwpPD)



twitter.com/MeridianTwpPD

Wolverine Pipeline Maintenance

By: Zachary Peña

Residents may have noticed large sections being cleared in different areas of the Township. Those clearings are to allow aerial inspection of the Wolverine Petroleum Pipeline running through the Township.

Earlier this year, Wolverine Pipeline sent a letter to Meridian Township stating, "Any brush, trees, or other obstructions must be removed from the easement, enabling Wolverine to effectively inspect the easement as required by the federal Pipeline and Hazardous materials Safety Administration." Director of Public Works and Engineering Raymond Severy said it is important for the pipeline's easement to be cleared so that it may easily be inspected for leaks or discoloration of soil. So far, there have been no reports of any serious damages or complications.

In that same letter, Wolverine Pipeline said if any damages are sustained during the clearing, a landscaper will be hired for repairs. Wolverine Pipeline Right of Way Specialist Fred Hipshear stated that areas that have been cleared will be seeing landscapers grinding stumps and, seeding, and mowing with a completion date in mid July. ■

Scan to view the map of the pipeline through Meridian Township



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MERIDIAN MONITOR

July 2012
Vol. 15 Issue 2

Watch the
Video Versions
of the **MONITOR**
ONLINE!

HOMTV Government Access Channel student interns gain invaluable multi-media journalism experience by interning in the Communications Department and jointly working on collecting research data, writing articles, and producing accompanying videos to this newsletter. Read more about the internship program at www.homtv.net.

Watch the videos by scanning the QR Code or www.meridian.mi.us by clicking "Township Publications" under the "Media Room" tab. ■



HOMTV Election Coverage



Be an informed voter by tuning in to HOMTV on Comcast 21 or online at www.homtv.net. Ballot Meridian 2012 features candidates appearing on the Meridian Township ballot who are running for contested seats for State Representative, County, and Local Races. Each candidate running for 69th District State Representative, Ingham County Drain Commissioner, 12th District County Commission, 30th Circuit Court, 54B District Court, Meridian Township Clerk, Meridian Township Treasurer, Meridian Township Trustee, and Meridian Township Park Commission were given the opportunity to participate in election coverage with LIVE Debates, Candidate Interviews, and Candidate Statements.

LIVE Debates feature issues each candidate will address with an opportunity for rebuttal. If you're watching the LIVE stream on www.homtv.net or on Comcast HOMTV 21 and CAMTV 30, or AT&T CAMTV 99, you can call in with a question for the candidates by dialing 517-349-1232. If you're on Twitter, follow @HOMTV coverage at #elections2012.

Watch HOMTV LIVE Election coverage at 8pm on August 7th.
For more information, go to www.homtv.net. ■

