



**AGENDA**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PARK COMMISSION – REGULAR MEETING  
Tuesday, February 11, 2020 - 6:30 pm

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**REGULAR MEETING – MERIDIAN SERVICE CENTER – 6:30 PM**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
  2. INTRODUCTION OF NEW PARK COMMISSIONER MARY NARDO FARRIS
  3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
  4. PRESENTATION – Derek Perry, Deputy Township Manager – MSU to Lake Lansing Trail Project
  5. PUBLIC COMMENTS
  6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
    - A. January 14, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes
  7. COMMUNICATIONS
  8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
    - A. Update on Projects
  9. ACTION ITEMS
    - A. Election of Chair/Vice Chair
    - B. Bid Results – Central Park Projects
  10. DISCUSSION ITEMS
    - A. CIP Review
    - B. Park Videos
  11. PUBLIC COMMENTS
  12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS
    - A. Commissioner Comments
    - B. Events Calendar:
      1. Meridian Moonlight Sledding, Saturday, February 22, 6-9 pm, North Meridian Road Park
      2. Meridian Swims, Sunday, February 23, 6-8:30 pm, Michigan Athletic Club (call to reserve spot 517.364.8888)
      3. Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser, Saturday, May 7, 8-11 am, 242 Community Church
      4. Farmers' Market:
        - a. Winter Market, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday, December – April, 10 am – 2 pm, J. C. Penney Corridor, Meridian Mall
  13. CLOSED SESSION – Property Consideration
  14. ADJOURNMENT
  15. Next Park Commission Meeting: Tuesday, March 17, 2020 (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday), 6:30 pm. Meridian Service Center
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All comments limited to 3 minutes, unless prior approval for additional time for good cause is obtained.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Parks & Recreation Director, LuAnn Maisner: 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, MI 48864 or 517.853.4600 - Ten Day Notice is Required.

Meeting Location: Meridian Service Center, 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, MI



9-A,B

**To: Park Commissioners**  
**From: LuAnn Maisner CPRP**  
**Director of Parks and Recreation**  
**Date: February 6, 2020**  
**Re: Discussion Items**

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**A. CIP Review**

As we begin this New Year, I thought it a good time to review the Capital Improvement Program for parks as well as the Action Plan from our Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. We will soon need to provide an updated CIP for 2021-2026 so our discussions now will help in preparation for the update. We have multiple projects planned and/or underway this year, which is very exciting, but also keeping our small staff very busy. I strongly recommend that we do not apply for any DNR Grants this year but instead focus our attention on completing our existing projects and activating the Marketplace on the Green facility. Our Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan expires in 2021, so we should also be working toward that update as well.

**B. Parks Videos – Commissioner Lead**

In an effort to better promote the wonderful park facilities and resources we manage, I am proposing that the Commissioners lead this effort. It will be fun to make short videos for posting on social media. Commissioner Van Antwerp can help direct this effort because of her expertise in public relations. I look forward discussing this project with you Tuesday!

# Park Commission Meeting

## February 11, 2020

### 6. MINUTES

- a. January 14, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Location: Town Hall Room, Meridian Municipal Building  
Okemos, MI 48864

**DATE:** January 14, 2020

**PRESENT:** Amanda Lick, Vice Chair; Michael McDonald, Chair, Commissioners Mark Stephens, Ami VanAntwerp

**EXCUSED:** Commissioner Mary Farris

**STAFF:** LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair McDonald called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

**2. WELCOME TO NEW PARK COMMISSIONER MARY NARDO FARRIS- CHAIR MCDONALD ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF MARY TO THE PARK COMMISSION. SHE WAS UNABLE TO ATTEND THIS MEETING BUT WILL BE PRESENT IN FEBRUARY.**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Remove item 9a. Commissioner Stephens moved TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED  
Seconded by Commissioner Lick.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jim Buecetta, president of Harris Nature Center Foundation shared the new fundraising effort of selling bricks for the patio addition to the new pavilion. He also shared the upcoming construction of the new bird viewing platform that is being funded by the Foundation and a grant from the Capital Region Community Foundation.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. December 10, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes

ITEM 8-A Motion corrected amounts of bid award Restroom amount = \$155,000 and pavilion amount of \$179,700. Commissioner Lick moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 10, 2019 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. Seconded by Commissioner VanAntwerp

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**6. COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Items to/from the Public  
None

- B. Commission Information
  - 1. Park Commission Membership List
  - 2. Park Commission Meeting Resolution
  - 3. Harris Nature Center Foundation Membership List
  - 4. Land Preservation Advisory Board Membership List
  - 5. Green Gazette, January 2020
  - 6. Press Releases:
    - a. Celebrate Century Old Traditions with Chinese New Year - “Chinese Spring Festival Hosted in Meridian Township”
    - b. Get Active Start to 2020 with Annual Winter 5K – “Township to Host 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk”
    - c. Look and Listen for Owls at the Harris Nature Center – “Enjoy Learning About Owls Around the Campfire”
    - d. Harris Nature Center hosts Snowshoe Classes – “Embrace Winter with Snowshoeing”
    - e. Harris Nature Center Hosts Chipmunk Story Time – “Chicory Chipmunk Presents ‘Pout, Pout Fish’”
  - 7. Addition: Skate Park Planning Guide
- C. Staff Inquiries/Response
  - None

Commissioner Lick moved TO ACCEPT AND PLACE THE ITEMS OF COMMUNICATION ON FILE with the addition of item 7. Seconded by Commissioner VanAntwerp.

VOICE VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

## 7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- A. Pre-Construction Meeting was held on Monday, January 6, 2020 for Marketplace on the Green. Construction will begin on Monday, January 13. The pavilion will be delivered March 1-15 for installation.
- B. The Sander Farm Preserved Natural Area has been available for public use through an open space easement for over 20 years. Dr. Maureen Sander passed away in 2019 and left the 31.9-acre parcel to Parks to remain in its natural state in perpetuity. The property transfer occurred prior to the end of 2019. A thank you letter will be drafted for Park Commission consideration and sent to her family.
- C. Chris Buck, Economic Development Director, and I are looking at new Welcome to Meridian Signs and new Park Signs that coordinate/complement each other. We are also completing a grant request to LEAP for their Public Art Grant (due end of Jan). for Marketplace on the Green
- D. Friday, January 10 was a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new fitness room at Meridian Senior Center funded by the Rotary Club. Three pieces of equipment.
- E. New employee starting next Monday – Emma Campbell, Stewardship Coordinator replacing Kelsey Dillon.
- F. New Recreation Intern starting Tuesday, January 21. Lauren Fletcher CMU-30 weeks.
- G. In the process of completing contracts for development of the pavilion and rest room project at Harris Nature Center.
- H. Bids will go out by the end of January for the central Park Projects (Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector and Bridge/restroom projects for 2020 construction.

I. 2020 Work Plan for Parks

**8. ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Park RX Program:**

Park Rx America is a non-profit organization whose mission is to decrease the burden of chronic disease, increase health and happiness, and foster environmental stewardship, by virtue of prescribing nature during the routine delivery of healthcare by a diverse group of health care professionals. The process of using Park RX is outlined in Staff's memorandum.

Meridian Township parks are currently listed through the database at [www.parkrxamerica.org](http://www.parkrxamerica.org) which physicians can access to prescribe parks to patients. There are various promotional resources available on the Park RX America website that can be used to promote the program to physicians in the area. My goal to promote this program to area physicians and community members will be completed by creating a letter and informational brochure using the Park RX America promotional materials provided to give to area physicians to review for a potential partnership of this program. There is no cost to Meridian Township or physicians for this program. As we develop partnerships with local physicians, there could be potential opportunities available to host special events and programs that support these prescriptions.

The commissioners discussed the program and asked Director Maisner to research further the MOU language for possible HIPA and/or liability issues. No formal action was taken.

**9. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. Towner Road Park Parking Lot Use Request** –Removed from Agenda

**B. Acquisition Grant Status – MNRTF (Michigan National Resources Trust Fund) -**  
Director Maisner shared the results of the grant awards that were announced in December. The acquisition application for the Okemos Road Parcel was not approved for funding. The Commissioners requested to schedule a closed session to discuss next steps at their next meeting.

**C. Projects for 2020 Grant Consideration** – The Commissioners reviewed the items recommended by staff for possible 2020 grant applications. Items that were considered included: Towner Road Park Playground, Overflow parking at Towner Road Park, Skate Park in Central Park. The topic will be discussed again in February.

**D. Township Signs and LEAP Grant Applications** – Chris Buck, Director of Economic Development and I have been working on new signage for Welcome to Meridian as well as similar ones for Parks. We are in the process of obtaining cost estimates currently. Also, Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) is offering a grant program for community art. Chris has been working on the application for submittal in January. If awarded the sculpture will go to Marketplace on the Green. More to come later.

**10. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None

**11. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

A. Commissioner Comments

B. Events Calendar:

1. Meridian Skates, Saturday, January 18, 5-6;30 pm, Suburban Ice East Lansing

2. Meridian Moonlight Sledding, Saturday, January 25, 6-9 pm, North Meridian Road Park
3. Polar Bear Run, Sunday, January 26, race time 10 am, pre-registration at 9 am, Central Park
4. Chinese New Year, Sunday, January 26, 1-4 pm, Meridian Mall
5. Meridian Skates, Sunday, February 2, 5-6:30 pm, Suburban Ice East Lansing
6. Farmers' Market:
  - a. Winter Market, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday, December – April, 10 am – 2 pm, J. C. Penney Corridor, Meridian Mall

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair McDonald adjourned the meeting at 8:08 pm.

- 13. NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at the Meridian Service Center, 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, at 6:30 pm.

# Park Commission Meeting

## February 11, 2020

### 7. COMMUNICATIONS

#### A. Items to/from the Public

None

#### B. Commission Information

1. Joint Meeting Park Commission Report

2. Harris Nature Center Foundation updated Directors List

3. Press Releases:

a. Celebrate Century Old Traditions with Chinese New Year – Chinese Spring Festival Hosted in Meridian Township

b. Get an Active Step to 2020 with Annual Winter 5K – Township to Host 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk

#### C. Staff Inquiries/Response



# Joint Meeting

Park Commission Report January 28, 2020



## 2019 in Review:

**Overall, a lot of planning was conducted by the Park Commission and Staff in 2019 – which means 2020 will be filled with many exciting improvements to the parks!**

### **Marketplace on the Green**

This year the project was awarded to Gordon Construction Services for the site work and restroom/office facility. The pavilion portion was awarded to Mid-States Recreation/Coverworx. This facility, when completed will contain a large pavilion, music stage, playground, patio area, rain gardens, and open green space and will become our premier community event location as well as the new home for the Meridian Township Farmers Market. Construction will begin in January 2020 with completion in late spring.

### **Harris Nature Center Pavilion and Restroom Project**

The Harris Nature Center has proven to be a popular destination in our community for environmental education and accessible walks in the woods. Thanks to state and federal grants, a new waterless restroom building and picnic pavilion will enhance the usage of this township gem. The contract for construction was awarded in December 2019 with construction in spring of 2020.

### **Central Park Grant Projects: Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector and Gateway Walkway and Restroom in Historical Village**

This is another example of leveraging local Park Millage funds as grants were received from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund for these two projects. Bids for construction were received and rejected in 2019 due to higher- than- anticipated costs. Time was spent reviewing and reworking the plans and was re-bid in late December. Proposals are due in at the end of January 2020. Construction will begin in the spring of 2020.

### **DOGS –DOGS-DOGS!**

**Small dogs** in our community are very “yappy” (happy) with the new Small Dog Park that opened in 2019 in Nancy Moore Park. This fenced facility contains a welcoming area with a drinking fountain for pets and owners, dog washing station and benches. The control gate regulates use on a registration basis. Inside the fenced area is green grass, trees and fun agility equipment. Much of the installation work was done in-house by the Parks Maintenance staff. A total of 172 dogs are registered to utilize the park. Two special events took place there this year including a Howl-o-ween Costume Party and a Holiday Hounds party that included pictures with Santa!

**Large Dogs** have been patiently waiting for their new park. Their site in Central Park South was cleared of dead trees, graded and seeded in preparation for completion in the spring of 2020. This project will be completed in concert with the Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector Project.

### **Senior Center Outdoor Improvements Senior Center Outdoor Improvements**

Operation of the Meridian Senior Center is a joint collaboration between the Okemos School District and Meridian Township. With a current membership of 510, the Senior Center is an important facility for enrichment, socialization and fitness for our older adults. New to the Center, this year was the development of an outdoor courtyard space including a paved loop trail. The new courtyard contains multiple pieces of outdoor furniture, landscaping and raised plant beds. A ribbon-cutting event was held with school and township officials present in October.

### **New Fence at Riverside Cemetery**

The fencing in Riverside Cemetery had deteriorated to the point that repair was no longer an option. Therefore, new black aluminum fencing was installed this summer that closely replicates the wrought iron that existed there previously. Some portions of the old fence were saved for a future amenity in the Historical Village.

### **Parkland Additions**

Nearly 45-acres of parkland were added to the park system in 2019. A big THANK YOU to the following donors:

- T.J Acquisitions, LLC donated 9-acres adjacent to Hillbrook Park in Haslett.
- Marilyn Pinnavaia Trust donated a 2-acre parcel adjacent to Brattin Woods Park in the Sleepy Hollow neighborhood.
- Dr. Maureen Sander donated a 31-9 acre parcel on Dobie Road named the Sander Farm Preserved Natural Area.
- In preparation for development of Marketplace on the Green, Meridian Township acquired 2.5 acres of green space on Central Park Drive as part of a land transfer agreement with CBL Properties/Meridian Mall.

### **New Trailhead and Directional Signage in Parks**

This project began in 2018 and continued throughout 2019 of adding new trailhead and directional signage in multiple parks with the goal of making our parks more welcoming, informative and easier to navigate. All 20 miles of park trails were GPS marked and uploaded to a Google-based smartphone app called "All Trails". The remaining 15 parks will receive new signs in 2020.

# 2019 Park Commission Report



## Harris Nature Center Foundation Directors

### **Jim Buscetta**

517.899.5608

[jbuscetta@gmail.com](mailto:jbuscetta@gmail.com)

3898 Trailwood Drive, Okemos 48864

### **Christen Chappelle**

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4218 Jacob Meadows Drive, Okemos 48864

### **Bart Gorgoglione**

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East Lansing 48824

### **June Hicks**

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### **Barb Kissling**

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### **Rachel McDaniel**

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### **Martha (Patty) Robbins**

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### **Melissa Benbow**

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### **Roxanne Truhn**

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[roxanne.truhn@gmail.com](mailto:roxanne.truhn@gmail.com)

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### **Alexa Warwick**

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### **Evelyne Cudel**

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2777 Del Mar Drive, Okemos 48864

### **Kati Adams, HNC Coordinator**

517.349.3866/HNC

517.930.3838

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HNC 3998 Van Atta Road, Okemos 48864

### **Allison Goodman, Park Naturalist**

517.349.3866/HNC

517.391.8557

[goodman@meridian.mi.us](mailto:goodman@meridian.mi.us)

HNC 3998 Van Atta Road, Okemos 48864



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 13, 2020

CONTACT: Kayla Scelfo, Parks & Recreation Specialist  
517.853.4616 | [scelfo@meridian.mi.us](mailto:scelfo@meridian.mi.us)

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**Celebrate Century Old Traditions with Chinese New Year**  
*Chinese Spring Festival Hosted in Meridian Township*

**Meridian Township, MI** – The Greater Lansing Chinese Association and Meridian Township Parks & Recreation Department will host their annual Chinese New Year Festival with an afternoon of culture and family friendly fun.

**What:** Chinese New Year Festival

**When:** January 26th, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

**Where:** Meridian Mall, 1982 W Grand River Ave, Okemos

**Who:** Open to all ages

**Why:** The festival will focus on bringing the entire community together in celebration of the Chinese culture. Activities will include a parade, music, dancing, singing, games and more.

Chinese New Year, also called Spring Festival, has more than 4,000 years of history. It is the grandest and most celebrated festival of the Chinese tradition. People born in the Year of the Rat (1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008 and 2020) are known to be very industrious and thrifty, diligent and positive. The Rat is the first in the 12-year cycle of Chinese zodiacs.

For more information on the Chinese New Year event, contact the Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Department at 517.853.4600 or visit the Meridian Township website at [meridian.mi.us](http://meridian.mi.us).

###

The community of Meridian Township is in close proximity to the Michigan State Capitol and Michigan State University. The Township serves the community through exceptional services, beneficial amenities and an outstanding quality of life. It is a welcoming community that celebrates quality education, recreation and lifestyles.





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**January 13, 2020**

**CONTACT:** Kayla Scelfo, Parks & Recreation Specialist  
517. 843.4616 | [scelfo@meridian.mi.us](mailto:scelfo@meridian.mi.us)

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**Get an Active Start to 2020 with Annual Winter 5k**  
*Township to Host 13th Annual Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk*

**Meridian Township, MI** – Join Meridian Township for the 13th Annual Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk. Participants will enjoy a run/walk through scenic Central Park and Nancy Moore Park on a certified race course.

- What:** Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk
- When:** January 26th, 10:00 am  
Race day registration begins at 9:00 am
- Where:** Meridian Township Municipal Complex, 5151 Marsh Rd. Okemos, MI
- Who:** Open to all ages, runners and walkers
- Why:** To register go to <http://bit.ly/MeridianPolarBear5K>  
Pre-registration is \$20. Race day registration is \$25.

Race packet pick-up will be Saturday, January 25th from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at Playmakers (2299 W. Grand River Ave, Okemos) or on race day pre-registration at the Meridian Township Municipal Complex.

Medals will be awarded in 15 divisions for the top three male and female finishers. The event will take place in rain, shine or snow. Free parking and restrooms will be available.

For more information, contact the Parks & Recreation Department at 517.853.4600 or visit the Meridian Township website [meridian.mi.us](http://meridian.mi.us). Those interested in volunteering for this event can contact Meridian Township Parks & Recreation Specialist Kayla Scelfo directly at 517.853.4616 or [scelfo@meridian.mi.us](mailto:scelfo@meridian.mi.us).

###

The community of Meridian Township is in close proximity to the Michigan State Capitol and Michigan State University. The Township serves the community through exceptional services, beneficial amenities and an outstanding quality of life. It is a welcoming community that celebrates quality education, recreation and lifestyles.



PARK COMMISSION  
February 11, 2020

**8. ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. Election of Chair/Vice Chair
- b. Bid Results – Central Park Projects



**To: Park Commissioners**  
**From: LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation**  
**Date: February 6, 2020**  
**Re: Election of Officers**

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Chair opens the floor for nominations for **Chair.**

COMMISSIONER \_\_\_\_\_ MOVED, TO NOMINATE \_\_\_\_\_ AS CHAIR.  
COMMISSIONER \_\_\_\_\_ SECONDED.

Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_ accepted the nomination.

Hearing no other nominations, Chair closed the floor to nominations for Chair.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES:  
NAYS:

Chair opens the floor for nomination for **Vice Chair.**

COMMISSIONER \_\_\_\_\_ MOVED, TO NOMINATE \_\_\_\_\_ AS VICE CHAIR.  
COMMISSIONER \_\_\_\_\_ SECONDED.

Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_ accepted the nomination.

Hearing no other nominations, Chair closed the floor to nomination for Vice Chair.

Roll Call Vote:

AYES:  
NAYS:



PARK COMMISSION  
February 11, 2020

**10. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- a. CIP Review
- b. Park Videos

## Current-year CIP FOR PARKS

July 3, 2019

<u>Year</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
2019	Farmers' Market Relocation Plan, Playground/Landscape, Stage	\$400,000	\$200,000	Park Mill General Fund, Donations, Grants
2019	Central Park Footbridge/Restroom Construction Project	\$270,000	\$270,000	Park Millage, LWCF
2019	Harris Nature Center Pavilion and Restroom	\$250,000	\$150,000	Park Millage MNRTF, LWCF, CRCF, HNCF
2019	Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector	<u>\$355,000</u>	\$355,000	Park Millage, MNRTF
TOTAL		\$1,275,000		

## 2020-2025 CIP PROPOSAL FOR PARKS

### 2020

<u>Year</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
2020	Marketplace on the Green Playground, stage, Ice, site furnishings	\$300,000	Park Millage
2020	Parking Lot Expansion (Central Park South, N. Meridian Rd Park)	\$102,000	Park Millage
2020	Large Dog Park	\$ 25,000	Park Millage
TOTAL		\$427,000	

### 2021

2021	Towner Road Park Playground	<u>\$200,000</u>	Park Millage
2021	Ottawa Hills Playground	\$100,000	Park Millage, Grants
2021	Central Park Pavilion Renovation, Landscaping	\$250,000	Park Millage
2020	Harris Nature Center Parking Lot Expansion	<u>\$70,000</u>	Park Millage
TOTAL		\$620,000	

**2022**

2022	Hillbrook Park Restroom Building	<u>\$200,000</u>	Park Millage, Federal and State Grants
	TOTAL	\$200,000	

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**2023**

2023	Nancy Moore Park Playground, Pavilion	\$300,000	Park Millage
2023	Nancy Moore Park Loop Trail	\$80,000	Park Millage
2023	Marshall Park Playground Replacement	<u>\$100,000</u>	Park Millage
	TOTAL	\$480,000	

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**2024**

2024	Central Park Improvements-Splashpad	\$500,000	Park Millage, Federal or State Grants
2024	Wonch Park Improvements – Restroom, Streambank, launch, WiFi	\$500,000	Park Millage, Federal or State Grants
2024	Snell-Towar Recreation Center Improvements	<u>\$185,000</u>	Park Millage, Federal or State Grants
	TOTAL	\$1,185,000	

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**2025**

2025	Meridian Riverfront Park Trail Improvements	\$1,000,000	Park Millage, Pathway Millage, Federal/State Grants
2025	Newton Road Park Playground	<u>\$100,000</u>	Park Millage
	TOTAL	\$1,100,000	

## VII. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHIES

1. Provide accessible facilities and leisure opportunities for all persons regardless of their physical and socio-economic characteristics.
2. Efficiently employ Township resources, in concert with other public, private and volunteer resources, to provide a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities and avoid duplication of services where unnecessary.
3. Actively seek the most appropriate acquisition and uses of community open space and natural features to meet the community's needs for active, structured recreation, as well as passive enjoyment of the outdoors.
4. Plan for the continued availability of financial, physical and personnel resources to support the parks and recreation system.

### B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. **Accessibility**
  - a. Increased multi-use trails in parks and natural areas.
  - b. Improved trail maintenance and trail signage.
  - c. Improve amenities for universal access in all park facilities.
  - d. More year-round restrooms in parks.
  - e. More benches along trails and pathways.
  - f. Improve connectivity between parks.
2. **Safety**
  - a. Crime prevention through environmental design.
  - b. Safety through improved maintenance.
  - c. Safety through increased park usage.
3. **Environmental Sustainability**

- a. An emphasis on environmental sustainability (new buildings and renovations) – Energy saving opportunities.
  - b. Improved non-motorized transportation connections between parks.
- 4. Financial Stewardship**
- a. Increase partnerships and collaborative opportunities.
  - b. Seek additional grant support.
  - c. Seek additional seasonal staff for maintenance support.
  - d. Seek sponsorships and donations.
  - e. Continue to encourage and utilize volunteerism.
- 5. Environmental Stewardship**
- a. Monitor and remove invasive species, encourage native plantings and educate the public about ecosystem health.
  - b. Work cooperatively with the Land Preservation Advisory Board and Environmental Commission in stewardship planning and implementation.
  - c. Monitor and respond to early signs of erosion, disease, and facility deterioration.
  - d. Identify and protect rare and sensitive species in the parks where feasible.
- 6. Education**
- a. Utilize recreation as a vehicle to educate and instill positive personal attributes such as ethics, values, citizenship, sportsmanship and leadership.
  - b. Expand the educational outreach of the Harris Nature Center by adding interpretive signage at the entrance and along trails of our natural areas to facilitate self-directed and self-paced nature study.
  - c. Expand and encourage additional educational outreach of the Meridian Historical Village and Nokomis Learning Center by adding educational/interpretive signage to the grounds surrounding the buildings to facilitate self-directed and self-paced cultural education.

- d. Improve awareness regarding the qualities, benefits and diversity of the park system.
- e. Expand Harris Nature Center environmental programs and outreach throughout the entire park system.

**7. Recreation and Events**

- a. Encourage and expand the use of parks for exercise and stress relief regimens for all ages and abilities.
- b. Expand and seek opportunities for collaborations, partnerships and shared services.
- c. Seek grants and sponsorships to support recreation services and events.
- d. Provide healthy outlets for teens and adolescents.
- e. Provide programs and services during a variety of days and times to reach the greatest number of participants.
- f. Provide activities that focus on health, wellness and physical fitness and positive youth development.
- g. Provide recreational activities and programs to meet the diverse needs of the community.

**8. Parks and Facilities**

- a. Support Farmers' Market, Snell Towar Recreation Center, and Harris Nature Center operations and facility improvements.
- b. Provide diverse amenities in the park system to accommodate citizens' interests and needs.
- c. Provide information and facilities that will encourage self-directed recreation.
- d. Focus capital investment on existing facility renovation and improvement.

**9. Volunteerism and Community Engagement**

- a. Identify volunteer commitment level (short term vs long term) and create projects to address these groups
- b. Communicate with various methods to maximize amount of volunteer engagement

- c. Encourage passive volunteer efforts by providing information on projects and empowering volunteer leaders (self-directed stewardship)

**10. Communication**

- a. Maintain production of Family Fun Guide as an effective communication tool.
- b. Develop a marketing plan to be more efficient and effective with various methods of communication.

## VIII. Action Program

This section highlights a series of recommended actions that resulted from the process of preparing this Master Plan. The recommended actions are intended to guide the Park Commission and staff when making decisions regarding the priorities for the park and recreation needs of Meridian Township residents, businesses, and visitors for the next five years and beyond.

The action program was developed based upon input gathered from the community survey, public input meetings, township-wide planning efforts, demographic data, land use trends and efforts of adjacent communities. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP), developed by the Park Commission and staff for future park projects, outlines future development projects and their associated costs (Appendix D). Many of the top park or facility additions identified through the process are in alignment with proposed park improvement projects in the CIP.

It is the responsibility of the Department of Parks and Recreation to provide services and programs that meet the needs of residents. The Department must be alert to the population and demographic trends in the Township and adjust accordingly. Meridian Township not only has to be aware of the aging population trend, the large population of college aged residents, but also the active children and families in the community.

It has been demonstrated that the provision of restrooms, multi-purpose trails, open space, greenways, improved Farmers' Market facility, indoor basketball facilities, and athletic fields are important to the residents. The Department must continue to set common goals and form partnerships with other departments and community organizations in order to enhance the quality of life of all residents, businesses, and visitors.

The recommendations and actions are summarized below:

### A. Capital Improvement Program

To meet the recommendations and actions, the Park Commission and the Department of Parks and Recreation have identified a series of capital projects for the next six years. These projects will address the needs identified in this Master Plan and are reviewed every year. Additional public input is obtained prior to final planning of each project. Appendix D summarizes the capital projects that are detailed in the 2017-2022 Meridian Township Six Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). To keep connected to the most recent CIP Plan, visit [www.meridian.mi.us](http://www.meridian.mi.us).



**3. Parks and Facilities Improvement and Maintenance**

**a. Central Park**

The Farmers' Market is located in Central Park, which is also home to some of our most popular athletic fields, paved and unpaved trails, Nokomis Learning Center, and the Meridian Historical Village. Central Park has been called the "Heart of Meridian" and is well-loved and well-used by many residents. In order to continue to meet the recreational needs of the residents, a master plan will be developed to evaluate opportunities for:

- Universal accessibility
- Greater use of water features
- Multi-use trails
- Farmers' Market relocation
- Splash pad
- Restroom building
- Pavilion
- Bridge into Village
- Covered basketball, ice rink, and parking
- Sculpture garden
- Overlook shelter
- Playground
- Outdoor interpretation in the Historical Village and around Nokomis.
- Doggie Playground
- Other outdoor recreation facilities

**b. Towner Road Park**

A strong need for athletic fields in the northern portion of our community has been identified for a number of years in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and is supported by the large number of youth participating in sports programs. Plans include:

- Athletic fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, and baseball
- Pavilion and restroom
- Play equipment
- Accessible loop trail
- Interpretive signage
- Parking lot
- Pickleball

**c. Legg Park**

Plans are being created for the continued development of Meridian Riverfront Park, Legg entrance, 3891 Van Atta Road, Okemos, by designing and implementing a master plan for amenities including:

- Dog park
- Pavilion
- Driveway improvements
- Universally accessible trails

- Trail improvements
  - Habitat improvements
  - Footbridge replacement
- d. **Harris Nature Center**  
Enhance the Harris Nature Center by adding indoor and outdoor universally accessible activity space and amenities to meet growing demand, including:
- Pavilion
  - Outdoor restroom building
  - Natural playground
  - River access/launch
  - Outdoor interpretive signage and displays
- e. **North Meridian Road Park**  
Improvement plans include:
- Expanded parking
  - Trail improvements and signage
  - Shade structures
  - Landscaping
- f. **Wonch Park Improvements**  
Wonch Park is located on Okemos Road and the Red Cedar River within the Okemos DDA District. Implement the Master Plan which includes:
- Stream bank stabilization improvements
  - Fishing dock/canoe launch
  - New restroom facility
  - Landscaping
  - Connector trail to downtown Okemos
  - Wi-Fi connection
- h. **Hillbrook Park**  
Future plans include:
- Restroom building
  - Trail improvements and signage
- i. **Marshall Park**  
Plans include:
- Accessible loop trail
  - New Playground Equipment
  - Landscaping
- j. **Meridian Riverfront Park**  
Meridian Riverfront Park extends along the Red Cedar River for approximately 2.5 miles. Plans include:

- Universally accessible river trail including boardwalk and/or hard surfaces and bridges
- Trail and interpretive signage.

**k. Nancy Moore Park**

Future plans for Nancy Moore include:

- Addition of a second pavilion
- Accessible playground
- Paved loop trail
- Parking improvements

**l. Newton Road Park**

Future plans for Newton Road Park include:

- Playground
- Loop path around perimeter

**m. Ottawa Hills Park**

Future plans include:

- Playground
- Loop path around perimeter

**n. Eastgate Park**

Future plans for include:

- Pave parking lot

**o. Farmers Market Building Relocation**

Visiting the Farmers' Market is a very popular activity for residents. For the past forty-three years the market has been held at the pavilion in Central Park near the Town Hall. However, the successful market has outgrown the facility and should be relocated to an area that offers more parking and a larger pavilion for the vendors. Plans have been developed to relocate the Farmers' Market to the Meridian Mall, which lies just south of Central Park. This public/private partnership will utilize existing infrastructure as well as attract new visitors to the mall.

**4. Additional Considerations**

**a. Trails/Pathways**

A popular item identified during the public input process was the continued development of multi-purpose trails or pathways in existing parks and pathways that link the parks together. This will provide non-motorized access to parks and recreation facilities to satisfy the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and joggers, and to facilitate use of natural areas, including the Meridian Riverfront Park. Walking, hiking, and bicycling were identified as some of the most popular leisure activities in the community survey and during other public meetings. Enhancing the trails would also serve

persons with disabilities and bicycle commuters by providing much improved access through the parks. Also a priority is improved trail maintenance, better trail signage and more benches. The Township's non-motorized bicycle/pathway plan typically constructs paths alongside roadways, but there are many opportunities to extend these pathways into the park system to create a large network of trails.

- b. Watertrail/River/Fishing Access:**  
Residents identified the need for safe, clear river access for canoe and kayak navigation. The Watertrail in the Appendix plan identifies opportunities for access sites and signage that will provide a safe and enjoyable paddling experience.
- b. Sports Fields and Facilities:**  
There is a need to upgrade some of the existing sports facilities to ensure the safety and enjoyment of participants and spectators. Facilities should be developed or upgraded to provide a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities. It is also very important for the Parks and Recreation Department to recognize trends and to respond to our residents. Pickleball has recently become very popular and the plan is to develop four courts at Towner Road Park.
- d. Land Acquisition and Easement Agreements:**  
The long-term potential of the Red Cedar River corridor has yet to be realized. Future land acquisitions and easement agreements should be pursued with the goal of eventually providing a pedestrian/bicycle trail system that links the Harris Nature Center to the Bicycle/Pedestrian trail system in Meridian Township. It would also serve as a major attraction for new residents and tourists.

In order to maximize the potential benefits of open space and natural areas, it is necessary that there is increased coordination of efforts between the Land Preservation Advisory Board and the Park Commission. It is important that new developments in Meridian Township also be encouraged to incorporate parks and recreation amenities that complement the efforts of the Department and Park Commission. The benefits of these collaborations will enhance the potential for recreation, conservation and stewardship.

## **B. Programs and Services**

Based on the community survey, respondents were very satisfied with the programs and services being provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation. It is clear that residents value the potential benefits of leisure/free time activities, especially those related to wellness.

The results indicated that residents were appreciative of the Farmers' Market and the other special events/festivals offered by the Department. They also suggested that additional special events and festivals are needed that focus on local culture and history. Focus strategies for the next five years includes:

- Increase activities for families
- Increase activities for toddler and preschoolers during evening and weekends
- Additional programs that serve adolescents and teenagers.
- Because older adults are working longer, offer opportunities for active recreation for them in the evenings and on weekends.
- Foster greater cooperation and collaboration with schools, surrounding governmental units and business.
- Provide additional special events, also events during the week at lunchtime

## C. Communication

Effectively reaching our community and keeping them informed is a primary goal and need to be successful.

- Creatively promote all the parks in the park system.
- Meet with park neighbors to discuss stewardship and to identify future development opportunities.
- Continue to publish and distribute the "Family Fun Guide" to all residents in the community annually.
- Continue to utilize the website, Facebook and Twitter to promote programs and activities.
- Continue to utilize HOM-TV to promote parks and recreation programs throughout the community.
- Continue to operate quality programs to take advantage of the least expensive form of promotion – word of mouth.

## D. Funding Sources

Various grant opportunities and programs exist that are useful in leveraging funding for projects and property acquisition. A summary of some of the common funding resources for recreation in the state of Michigan include:

- **Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF)** – Provides funding assistance for the purchase of land (or interest in land) for recreation or protection of land because of its environmental importance or scenic beauty, and the development of

recreation facilities. This assistance is directed at creating and improving outdoor recreational opportunities and providing protection to valuable natural resources. The improvement grants are between \$15,000 and \$300,000 with a required minimum local match of 25%. Acquisition grants vary depending upon the value of property and local match amount; therefore there is not a minimum or maximum amount. This grant is ideal for implementing community park plans and for land acquisition in the future. Applications are due in April and September of each year for acquisition projects and April of each year for development projects.

- **Michigan Recreation Passport** – Provides capital improvement plans and development projects in communities throughout Michigan. Projects must be in public recreation use for the life of the project rather than perpetuity. Indoor recreation facilities and existing park locations are eligible for the grant. The primary focus is on improving and renovating existing parks. The application deadline is April 1<sup>st</sup>, with a November grant award announcement. Duration of the grant usually run 3 years. Minimum grant request must be \$7,500 with a maximum request of \$75,000 starting in 2017; there is a 25% match by the local municipality or organization. The 25% match can either be cash/credit (for locally assumed costs including labor and equipment) donations of goods and services from non-government entities, cash donations from non-governmental entities or repurposed land.
- **Aquatic Habitat Grant Program** – The Aquatic Habitat Grant Program (AHCP) began in October 2013 and will operate each year that funding is available. A total of approximately \$1,250,000 will be available for the second round of 2014 grand funding from the Game and Fish Protection Fund. The AHCP's purpose is to improve fish and other aquatic organism's populations by protecting intact and rehabilitating degraded aquatic habitat. Grant applications are due in November with award information available in April.
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** – LWCF provides funding assistance for communities to acquire and develop land for outdoor recreation. The minimum award is \$15,000 and the maximum of \$500,000 with a 50% local match. The eligibility criterion emphasizes preservation of natural resources such as waterways. This grant is ideal for implementing community park plans for land acquisition in the future.
- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)** – TAP is a competitive grant program that funds projects such as non-motorized paths, streetscapes and historic preservation of transportation facilities that enhance Michigan's intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. These investments support place-based economic development by offering transportation choices, promoting walkability and improving the quality of life. The program uses federal transportation funds designed by Congress for these types of activities. TAP grant funding requires matching funds of at least 20 percent of the eligible project cost.

- **Public-Private or Public-Public Partnerships** – Reduced funding at the public and private sector has created a need for various partnerships between public and private entities as well as between two or more public entities, to accommodate specialized large-scale recreation demands.
- **Donations** – Businesses, corporations, private clubs, community organizations and individuals will often contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefits the communities in which they are located. Private sector contributions may be in the form of monetary contributions, the donation of land, the provision of volunteer services, or the contribution of equipment or facilities.
- **Private Foundations** - There are various foundations and grant sources with specific criteria. Many can be identified through community foundations and other listings.

### **Conclusion:**

Meridian Township has been successful using a blend of various funding sources to leverage available resources. Each future project should be evaluated against the scope of each project and the limitations and conditions that some grant sources attach.