



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
July 8, 2020 6 PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. APPROVE AGENDA
3. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS
4. APPROVE MINUTES
 - A. March 11, 2020 Minutes
5. COMMUNICATIONS
6. OLD BUSINESS
7. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Land Preservation Millage Renewal
 - B. Financial Statement Update
 - C. Foster Crouse Preserve
 1. Bike Trail
 2. Trail Maintenance
8. STAFF REPORT
 - A. Stewardship Coordinator
 1. Meridian Conservation Corps
 2. Wetland Banking – Tihart Preserve
 3. Forest Grove Preserve Update
9. COMMENT FROM THE PUBLIC
10. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS
11. ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - A. Next Land Preservation Advisory Board Meeting: Wednesday, August 12, 2020, 6 pm,
Meridian Service Center
12. ADJOURNMENT

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Land Preservation Advisory Board by contacting: Director LuAnn Maisner, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4600 - Ten Day Notice is Required.

Meeting Location: 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Ct., Haslett, MI 48840

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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett
Meridian Service Center
Wednesday, February 12, 2020 6 PM

PRESENT: Board Members: Jamie Hiller; James Kielbaso; Yu Man Lee; Mark Stephens; Steve Thomas
ABSENT: Board Member: Kirk Lapham
STAFF: Emma Campbell, Land Stewardship Coordinator
TOWNSHIP: Township Trustee, Dan Opsommer
OTHER: None

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

BOARD CHAIR KIELBASO MOVED TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:03 PM.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Board Member Opsommer moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA**. Seconded by Board Member Hiller.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

3. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Citizens present solely to sit in on the meeting and listen.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

Board Member Opsommer moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2020 REGULAR MEETING**. Seconded by Board Member Stephens.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Land Preservation Millage Renewal

Coordinator Campbell introduced the 2020 millage recommendation of 0.1 from the current 0.33. With land acquisition goals met and a new focus on management and

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stewardship of acquired lands, the township believes these goals can be met with this recommended rate.

Discussion:

- A. Board members discussed recommending a higher rate in case acquisitions did come up.
- B. Board Member Opsommer explained available funds in addition to funds from millage.
- C. **BOARD MEMBER HILLER MOVED TO TABLE THIS DISCUSSION UNTIL NEXT MEETING.** Board Members also asked to have documentation of the Land Preservation budget and related resources during this meeting. **BOARD MEMBER THOMAS SECONDED.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

8. STAFF REPORT

- A. Stewardship Coordinator
 - 1. Meridian Conservation Corps
 - a. Coordinator Campbell updated Board on M.C.C. Logo creation and ideas for outreach at events for promotion of program.
 - i. Spartan day of service is April 18th
 - ii. Celebrate Meridian
 - 2. Wetland Banking – Tihart Preserve Update
 - a. Update of walkthrough that took place with Mike Pennington from EGLE on March 6th at 10 am.

Discussion:

- A. Mike Pennington conveyed a couple different options for the site.
 - a. Wetland banking grant funded through the state: If this is pursued we will have to monitor the site and prove that the site is lacking in hydrology consistent with a wetland. Grant funding cannot be provided to a site that is already an established wetland.
 - b. Wetland restoration completed through township funds: This was an option laid out for the scenario that we cannot prove a lack of hydrology.
 - c. Stream banking, which is a new concept within Mike's department on which he will be sending the township more information on and whether or not we would qualify.
 - d. Mike said to hold on for now and he will send us more information on how to proceed while we discuss the options.
- B. Discussion by Board Members:
 - a. There were approximately 3-4 drains found on the site. Members requested a map of all the drains for next meeting. One of the drains is a large one connecting to Mud Lake, called the Mud Lake Drain.

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- b. The soil shows that it is mostly made up of organic matter and was a historically wet soil before the drains were put in.
- c. Members suggested looking for other grant/funding opportunities in the case that we are not able to prove lack of hydrology.
- d. The option was discussed of breaking up drain tiles that exist and possibly filling in one or so drains to bring the water table back up to its normal level. We would need to start the process of figuring out what impacts to surrounding area would be and what legal processes we would need to go through.
- e. **MEMBER KIELBASO MOVED TO TABLE THE DISCUSSION UNTIL EGLE RESPONDS ON HOW TO PROCEED.** Members asked to provide aerial and drain maps at next meeting as well as requesting Mike Pennington's presence. Board Member Hiller seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

3. Stewardship Work Days Update

A. Ted Black Woods

- a. Removed invasive honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, and common buckthorn from site surrounding wetland on the North end of Ted Black Woods.

B. Towar Woods

- a. Worked with local volunteers and Meridian Township Police to remove common buckthorn and dead trees from trailhead.

C. Harris Nature Center

- a. Worked on removing large, seed producing oriental bittersweet vines. Created a management plan targeting that area.

D. Additional updates were added:

- a. Legg Park will be the location of the next workday on March 21st from 9:30am – 12 pm, removing autumn olive from the open field.
- b. Board member Stephens suggested doing stewardship garlic mustard pulls during salmon release at Legg Park this spring.
- c. Possible Eagle Scout Project at Tihart Preserve removing Autumn Olive from open field. Board Members Stephens and Hiller suggest other possible projects:
 - i. Mandenberg Woods Ramp off Hamilton Rd.
 - 1. Also cleanup of barbed wire, old farm equipment.
 - ii. Wood duck nest boxes at Nancy Moor Park

9. COMMENT FROM THE PUBLIC

Both commented that they were excited to hear about work being done throughout the parks.

10. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

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None.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Next Land Preservation Advisory Board Meeting: Wednesday, April 8, 2020, 6 pm,
Meridian Service Center

12. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Chair Kielbaso **ADJOURNED THE MEETING** at 7:34 PM. Seconded by Board
Member Hiller.

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Jane Greenway

From: Emma Campbell
Sent: Wednesday, June 03, 2020 3:09 PM
To: Jamie Hiller; kielbas3@msu.edu; Yuman Lee (leeyum@msu.edu); Dan Opsommer; Stephens, Mark; stevet16@att.net
Cc: Jane Greenway; LuAnn Maisner
Subject: LPAB Moving Forward in 2020
Attachments: Land Stewardship Plan - Moving Forward in 2020.pdf; Home Work Schedule 5_27-6_30.pdf

Hello all,

I hope this email finds everyone well and enjoying this awesome weather! It was very nice to see some of you out and about at the farmer's market, what a treat to see some familiar faces!

As of yesterday we have officially started back to full time work in the service center. The buildings are still closed to the public until further notice. Our hours are Monday-Friday (Saturdays to run the Farm Market) from 9:00am - 4:00pm. As far as board meetings go we are still not sure exactly how they will happen, but we would also like your opinion on this. Now that we are able to meet in groups, with social distancing protocols in place, I suggest that we meet outside the service center at the picnic tables. The weather is finally nice enough to do this and outside is the safest place to be at this time. We would of course have to follow all guidelines that we as township employees must adhere to, wearing a mask when we are within 6 feet of each other as well as keeping at least 6 feet of distance. I am not yet sure whether we will be able to meet next month, but let's all remain flexible and we will update you as soon as possible.

That being said I have attached my work plan for the rest of the year as well as my monthly work plan (this was designed for working from home, but everything is still applicable to office work) - I want you all to know what I am working on and how I am adapting our programs to meet COVID guidelines. Our first priority is the safety of our staff and residents, all while allowing the community to come together and make a difference. Preserve management is also the main goal this year - residents have expressed strong interest in volunteering, mostly to remove invasive species, but also to take part in planting native gardens. People are ready to get out and do their part, and we will be here to help them do that safely.

I did not go over Land Preservation priorities in my plan - I would like us to discuss this over our next meeting. Currently what we have on our list from the last meeting in March is the following:

1. Land Preservation Millage Renewal
2. Election of Officers - 2 seats need to be filled at this time
3. Continued development of Meridian Conservation Corps
4. Wetland banking update (I have not heard anything from Mike yet)
5. Community Forest Grant - decision in late summer to buy corner parcel or use money toward preserve management
6. Installation and development of necessary educational and rule signage
7. Progression and development of stewardship and management of preserves
8. Increased volunteer engagement in the preserves

If you see that anything is missing from this list, please let me know. I will type up a formal plan for this once we have discussed everything. Once again, I hope you are all doing well and I can't wait to be working with you again! Take care.



Emma Campbell
Land Stewardship Coordinator
Parks and Recreation
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W 517.853.4608 | F 517.853.4099
2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court | Haslett, MI 48864
meridian.mi.us



To: Land Preservation Board Members
From: LuAnn Maisner CPRP, Director of Parks and Recreation
Date: July 8, 2020
Re: Land Preservation Millage Renewal, 2020

Land Preservation Millage Rates and Acquisition & Management Goals

The Land Preservation Millage was first approved by voters in November, 2000 at a rate of 0.75 mils. The millage was renewed in 2010 at a reduced rate of 0.33 mils for ten additional years and is set to expire in 2020. Annual revenue at this rate has been approximately \$590,000. The Township Board is interested in requesting a renewal, but at a lower rate. A reduced mill of 0.1 would generate approximately \$192,000 annually. The program currently has a fund balance of \$3,600,000 and an endowment over \$7,000,000 which generates approximately \$35,000 - \$40,000 per year.

Land Preservation Statistics

- Acres of Current Land Preserves: 968 acres
- Total Preserves: 24
- Total Acquisitions: 44
- The goal of the program was to acquire 600 acres, or 10% of available land.
- With the new land preserves added in 2018 for a total of 968 acres the land preservation program will have preserved 16.1% of the "suitable land" as identified in 2000. (The Land Preservation Program has exceeded the original goal of acquiring/protecting 10% of the available, desirable open space in the Township.)

Description of the Land Preservation Program

- The lands and waters found within the preserves provide valuable habitat for native plants and animals, protect air and water quality, add aesthetic value, and enhance public enjoyment of the outdoors. Although the preserves are not part of the park system, they complement the parks and add to the overall quality of green space in Meridian Township.
- Preserves are distributed throughout the township and represent upland and wetland areas, woodlands, former agricultural areas, and increasingly rare, sensitive, and disappearing habitats once common in mid-Michigan.

2020 Millage Recommendation

The focus of the LPAB is moving toward an emphasis on land management and stewardship, rather than acquisition. As such, it is recommended to renew the land preservation millage in August, 2020 at a lowered rate of 0.10 mills.

LAND PRESERVATION FUNDS
Preliminary Financial Statements
3/31/2020 (Unaudited)

	(209) Land Acq Fund	(210) Land Pres Rsrv Fund	Combined
BALANCE SHEET			
ASSETS			
Investments			
Cash	1,792,025.76	288,592.04	2,080,617.80
Savings	261,518.39	0.00	261,518.39
Certificates of Deposit	150,000.00	0.00	150,000.00
Agency Funds	0.00	2,711,981.27	2,711,981.27
Allowance For Investments	1,227.00	(45,227.25)	(44,000.25)
Accrued Interest Receivable	1,773.11		
Money Market	1,702,323.95	214,244.90	1,916,568.85
Other			
Taxes Receivable	0.00		
Due from Trust & Agency	0.00		
Prepaid Expenses	302.37		
Cash, Investments & Other	<u>3,909,170.58</u>	<u>3,169,590.96</u>	<u>7,076,686.06</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>3,909,170.58</u>	<u>3,169,590.96</u>	<u>7,076,686.06</u>
LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	4.59	0.00	4.59
Credit Card Payable	927.97	0.00	927.97
Accrued Liabilities	653.64	0.00	653.64
Due to General Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00
Deferred Revenue	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL LIAB	<u>1,586.20</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,586.20</u>
FUND BALANCE			
Restricted - Land Preservation activities	3,907,584.38	462,290.96	4,369,875.34
Restricted - Acquisitions	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nonspendable - Endowment	0.00	2,707,300.00	2,707,300.00
Nonspendable - Prepaids	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	<u>3,907,584.38</u>	<u>3,169,590.96</u>	<u>7,077,175.34</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	<u>3,909,170.58</u>	<u>3,169,590.96</u>	<u>7,078,761.54</u>
INCOME STATEMENT			
Millage	584,547.44	0.00	584,547.44
Investment Income	13,492.83	13,446.92	26,939.75
Sale of Assets	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grant and Donation Revenue	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<u>598,040.27</u>	<u>13,446.92</u>	<u>611,487.19</u>
EXPENDITURES			
Land Acquisition	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unrealized Loss on Investments	0.00	7,645.50	7,645.50
Transfer Out	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wages & Benefits	20,799.17	0.00	20,799.17
Professional Services	0.00	0.00	0.00
Maintenance and Supplies	3,020.91	49.18	3,070.09
	<u>23,820.08</u>	<u>7,694.68</u>	<u>31,514.76</u>
2020 YTD Net Income	<u>574,220.19</u>	<u>5,752.24</u>	<u>579,972.43</u>
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE	3,333,364.19	3,163,838.72	6,497,202.91
ENDING FUND BALANCE	3,907,584.38	3,169,590.96	7,077,175.34

Land Preservation Funds
Activity Since Inception

REVENUES	Land Acqisition Fund	Land Preservation Reserve Fund	Combined
Tax Millage			
2001	867,898.27	0.00	867,898.27
2002	926,816.07	0.00	926,816.07
2003	974,659.48	0.00	974,659.48
2004	1,016,234.48	0.00	1,016,234.48
2005	1,064,951.09	0.00	1,064,951.09
2006	1,109,563.89	0.00	1,109,563.89
2007	1,163,061.47	0.00	1,163,061.47
2008	1,226,272.10	0.00	1,226,272.10
2009	1,245,269.77	0.00	1,245,269.77
2010	1,247,983.38	0.00	1,247,983.38
2011	531,631.49	0.00	531,631.49
2012	529,030.85	0.00	529,030.85
2013	506,676.00	0.00	506,676.00
2014	502,823.03	0.00	502,823.03
2015	513,389.80	0.00	513,389.80
2016	531,818.05	0.00	531,818.05
2017	539,384.11	0.00	539,384.11
2018	552,756.51	0.00	552,756.51
2019	575,252.89	0.00	575,252.89
2020		0.00	0.00
	15,625,472.73	0.00	15,625,472.73
Grant Revenue			
2009	0.00	16,901.26	16,901.26
2013	0.00	7,613.47	7,613.47
	0.00	24,514.73	24,514.73
Donations			
2014	0.00	1,315.00	1,315.00
Loan Proceeds			
2005	800,000.00	0.00	800,000.00
Investment Income (net)			
2001	35,035.27	0.00	35,035.27
2002	73,171.30	0.00	73,171.30
2003	43,202.32	0.00	43,202.32
2004	27,213.95	25,142.17	52,356.12
2005	68,551.14	22,107.97	90,659.11
2006	43,409.83	60,875.50	104,285.33
2007	51,757.03	123,595.31	175,352.34
2008	35,107.15	80,618.23	115,725.38
2009	9,847.08	18,362.05	28,209.13
2010	35,088.80	119,653.31	154,742.11
2011	23,728.22	55,450.38	79,178.60
2012	2,435.58	21,043.25	23,478.83
2013	7,475.37	22,267.46	29,742.83
2014	9,296.93	33,100.08	42,397.01
2015	10,948.81	33,625.53	44,574.34
2016	15,077.53	34,992.10	50,069.63
2017	32,167.69	47,392.29	79,559.98

Land Preservation Funds
Activity Since Inception

	Land Acquisition Fund	Land Preservation Reserve Fund	Combined
2018	49,130.56	71,792.42	120,922.98
2019	64,849.68	74,635.41	139,485.09
2020			0.00
2021			0.00
	<u>637,494.24</u>	<u>844,653.46</u>	<u>1,482,147.70</u>
Transfer In			
2001	0.00	0.00	0.00
2002	0.00	0.00	0.00
2003	0.00	712,708.89	712,708.89
2004	0.00	254,000.00	254,000.00
2005	0.00	265,420.00	265,420.00
2006	0.00	277,400.00	277,400.00
2007	0.00	291,000.00	291,000.00
2008	0.00	306,150.00	306,150.00
2009	0.00	310,630.00	310,630.00
2010	0.00	312,700.00	312,700.00
2011	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2,730,008.89</u>	<u>2,730,008.89</u>
Rentals			
2001	0.00	0.00	0.00
2002	0.00	0.00	0.00
2003	0.00	0.00	0.00
2004	0.00	0.00	0.00
2005	0.00	0.00	0.00
2006	0.00	12,015.00	12,015.00
2007	0.00	8,725.00	8,725.00
2010	0.00	950.00	950.00
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>21,690.00</u>	<u>21,690.00</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>17,062,966.97</u>	<u>3,622,182.08</u>	<u>20,685,149.05</u>

Land Preservation Funds
Activity Since Inception

EXPENDITURES	Land Acquisition Fund	Land Preservation Reserve Fund	Combined
Land Acquisition			
2001	0.00	0.00	0.00
2002	10,193.13	0.00	10,193.13
2003	79,070.16	0.00	79,070.16
2004	384,281.81	0.00	384,281.81
2005	1,686,241.92	0.00	1,686,241.92
2006	3,120,809.07	0.00	3,120,809.07
2007	343,223.82	0.00	343,223.82
2008	26,090.98	0.00	26,090.98
2009	8,600.00	0.00	8,600.00
2010	2,262,261.14	0.00	2,262,261.14
2011	737,738.74	0.00	737,738.74
2012	32,927.49	0.00	32,927.49
2013	35,834.19	0.00	35,834.19
2014	13,146.99	0.00	13,146.99
2015	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00
2016	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00
2017	801,769.00	0.00	801,769.00
2018	1,146,423.53	0.00	1,146,423.53
2019	4,829.10	0.00	4,829.10
2020			0.00
2021		0.00	0.00
	10,700,441.07	0.00	10,700,441.07
(Gain) Loss on Investments			
2013	19,873.50	84,857.00	104,730.50
2014	-11,100.00	-65,472.15	-76,572.15
2015	-2,830.00	-14,923.65	-17,753.65
2016	-6,929.50	23,296.80	16,367.30
2017	762.00	15,784.30	16,546.30
2018	-276.00	11,557.50	11,281.50
2019	-2,107.50	-16,000.95	-18,108.45
2020			0.00
2021			0.00
	19,873.50	84,857.00	104,730.50
Debt Service			
2005	300,000.00	0.00	300,000.00
Transfer Out			
2001	0.00	0.00	0.00
2002	0.00	0.00	0.00
2003	712,708.89	0.00	712,708.89
2004	254,000.00	0.00	254,000.00
2005	265,420.00	0.00	265,420.00
2006	277,400.00	0.00	277,400.00
2007	291,000.00	0.00	291,000.00
2008	306,150.00	0.00	306,150.00
2009	310,630.00	0.00	310,630.00
2010	312,700.00	0.00	312,700.00
2011	0.00	0.00	0.00

Land Preservation Funds
Activity Since Inception

	Land Acqisition Fund	Land Preservation Reserve Fund	Combined
2012	0.00	0.00	0.00
	2,730,008.89	0.00	2,730,008.89
Wages & Benefits			
2005	0.00	1,672.21	1,672.21
2006	0.00	2,555.30	2,555.30
2007	0.00	7,036.29	7,036.29
2008	0.00	15,022.01	15,022.01
2009	0.00	15,490.56	15,490.56
2010	0.00	11,708.25	11,708.25
2011	0.00	23,133.80	23,133.80
2012	0.00	32,779.34	32,779.34
2013	0.00	39,708.79	39,708.79
2014	0.00	44,397.03	44,397.03
2015	37,311.00	67.92	37,378.92
2016	58,233.69	0.00	58,233.69
2017	73,594.09	0.00	73,594.09
2018	80,022.66	49.93	80,072.59
2019	83,485.54	0.00	83,485.54
2020			0.00
	332,646.98	193,621.43	526,268.41
Professional Svs			
2001	2,879.70	0.00	2,879.70
2004	927.40	0.00	927.40
2009	500.00	0.00	500.00
	4,307.10	0.00	4,307.10
Maintenance			
2004	0.00	15,204.95	15,204.95
2005	0.00	5,985.81	5,985.81
2006	0.00	29,029.80	29,029.80
2007	0.00	13,777.51	13,777.51
2008	0.00	17,267.99	17,267.99
2009	0.00	49,467.01	49,467.01
2010	0.00	6,525.08	6,525.08
2011	0.00	17,498.51	17,498.51
2012	0.00	38,260.73	38,260.73
2013	0.00	18,701.55	18,701.55
2014	0.00	0.00	0.00
2015	8,765.57	0.00	8,765.57
2016	29,188.48	0.00	29,188.48
2017	20,172.71	0.00	20,172.71
2018	44,431.67	0.00	44,431.67
2019	52,869.15	78.30	52,947.45
2020			0.00
2021		0.00	0.00
	155,427.58	211,797.24	367,224.82
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	14,242,705.12	490,275.67	14,732,980.79
NET REV AVAILABLE	2,820,261.85	3,131,906.41	5,952,168.26

Land Preservation Funds
Activity Since Inception

	Land Acquisition Fund	Land Preservation Reserve Fund	Combined
2001	900,053.84	0.00	900,053.84
2002	989,794.24	0.00	989,794.24
2003	226,082.75	712,708.89	938,791.64
2004	404,239.22	263,937.22	668,176.44
2005	-318,159.69	279,869.95	-38,289.74
2006	-2,245,235.35	318,705.40	-1,926,529.95
2007	580,594.68	402,506.51	983,101.19
2008	929,138.27	354,478.23	1,283,616.50
2009	935,386.85	280,935.74	1,216,322.59
2010	-1,291,888.96	415,069.98	-876,818.98
2011	-182,379.03	14,818.07	-167,560.96
2012	498,538.94	-49,996.82	448,542.12
2013	458,443.68	-113,386.41	345,057.27
2014	510,072.97	78,689.93	588,762.90
2015	478,092.04	48,481.26	526,573.30
2016	462,402.91	13,010.30	475,413.21
2017	-324,746.00	31,607.99	-293,138.01
2018	-668,714.79	60,184.99	-608,529.80
2019	1,301,026.28	90,558.06	1,391,584.34
2020	0.00	0.00	0.00
	2,394,682.41	2,958,336.69	4,764,256.20



Land Stewardship Plan - Moving Forward in 2020

Mission Statement:

This year has been a milestone, with many having to endure extreme hardship, anxiety, and loss. With obstacles still on the horizon, as we move forward in 2020, it is necessary to take stock of what is important in a community. At a time like this, when we are advised to keep our distance, wear masks, don't shake hands, don't hug, and stay in our homes, it is more important than ever to create inclusion for our township. A stewardship program that brings communities together not only creates this sense of inclusion, but it also improves the physical and mental health of our residents as well as improves the health of our land. We know through several studies that spending time in nature is detrimental to our mind and body. These programs do not have to come at a huge cost to our department - they are based solely on volunteers; utilizing their talents, knowledge, dedication and hard work. Even though we face a tough year ahead, I am confident that we can bring the community some much needed hope and inspiration as we collaborate to find purpose in a natural setting - all while staying safe and following guidelines. Volunteering and stewardship may look different in 2020, but with creative problem solving and technology as a platform for virtual programming and data entry, I feel it will thrive even more than before. If followed, this plan will help our department achieve these goals.

Objectives for 2020:

- 1. Continue to develop Meridian Conservation Corps Programs (Reference MCC program outline on page 4)**
 - a. Develop programs as planned with website development, resource toolkits and online sign-up. Adapt a strategy for social distanced volunteer trainings, workdays, and workshops.
 - i. In addition to planned online resources, work on virtual data entry for volunteers to submit
 1. Create data sheets for each program that can be filled out online and submitted in order to reduce paper use as well as direct contact (collaborate with communications for options)
 - b. Work with the communications department to set a date to launch programs on township website

- i. Strategize to release programs in steps - some programming will take more hands on training - come out with those first that can be done almost completely online and with little face-to-face interaction.
- c. Start designing merchandise, volunteer/participation gear, and lawn placards for Planting a Native Meridian and Waterways Watch programs
 - i. MCC logo is already designed and can be used for t-shirts, stickers, bookmarks, patches, etc.
- d. Continue to develop all social media and flyers for marketing
 - i. Generate a new list of where to distribute flyers - will be changed due to current state regulations

2. Grow volunteer recruitment, engagement, and training

- a. There are several residents ready to engage in volunteer activities ranging from invasive species removal to native gardening and trash pickup - the priority is to keep these volunteers engaged throughout COVID program adaptation
 - i. Continue to train volunteers on an individual basis, using PPE such as a face mask and social distancing during meetups
 - ii. Develop program training and workshops as larger groups of people are able to gather - 10 people or less (including me) can be arranged if there is enough interest in one area (as the policy and stay at home order changes, adapt program guidelines).
 - 1. Currently enough residents are interested in invasive removal to conduct a training
- b. Create a contact list of current volunteers to update them on MCC program development and when programming will be available on the website
 - i. Email contact list with information pertaining to MCC to keep them engaged and looking forward to workdays, workshops and trainings
- c. Continue to use social media to highlight work of volunteers being done
 - i. A good use of social media to update the community of ongoing work through COVID-19
- d. Continue precise record keeping, entering the following data:
 - i. Date
 - ii. Time
 - iii. Location
 - iv. Number of volunteers
 - v. Hours worked
 - vi. Quantifiable numbers of work being done (i.e. invasive removal work = pounds of invasives pulled/acres of brush cleared)

3. Identify priority areas of management within the parks and preserves

- a. Utilize both myself and volunteers to identify and document areas that will be considered priority management in the parks and preserves for invasive species removal, trash pickup, trail maintenance, erosion control, and species protection.
 - i. Map out using GPS and file into the management plan for that specific area - this can also be a volunteer job
 - b. Implement this as part of MCC programs such as, Trail Blazers, Bioblitz Squad, Invasive Species Strike Team, Waterways Watch, Cleanup Crew, Vernal Pool Patrol
- 4. Develop and implement management plans for each park and preserve**
- a. Use findings from bullet point 3 to develop management plans
 - b. Implement management based on priority level, cost/budget, level of volunteer interest in that specific area, and level of success
- 5. Design and implement necessary signage at preserves**
- a. Some of the preserves need more attention on this than others - identify those
 - i. Priority signage:
 - 1. No motorized vehicles
 - 2. No bicycles allowed
 - 3. Tick education and awareness
 - 4. Sensitive species education in certain areas
 - 5. Native vs. invasive plant education
 - a. Boot brushes at trailhead are on wish list
- 6. Continue to meet with Land Preservation Board**
- a. Begin meeting outside as soon as is possible and safe to do so - adjust meetings as the year progresses keeping safety a top priority.
 - b. Update members on plan going forward and get feedback and input
 - c. Identify priorities for the year such as the millage renewal, program development, and priority signage to place at preserves
- 7. Expand social media presence on Meridian Parks and Recreation pages**
- a. Topics of interest will include anything relevant to MCC programs, volunteer highlights, community engagement, stewardship within backyards and township land, such as invasive species and native plant education.
 - b. The Parks and Recreation Facebook page should highlight projects and volunteer work being done in the township to show our community how much we are doing and how they can join the movement!

(see next page for Meridian Conservation Corps outline)