



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Central Park, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI
Wednesday, July 8, 2020 6 PM

PRESENT: Board Members: Jamie Hiller; James Kielbaso; Yu Man Lee; Mark Stephens; Steve Thomas
ABSENT: NONE
STAFF: Emma Campbell, Land Stewardship Coordinator; LuAnn Maisner, Parks and Recreation Director
TOWNSHIP: Trustee Dan Opsommer
OTHER: Director of Public Works, Deputy Township Manager Derek Perry

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

BOARD CHAIR KIELBASO MOVED TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:04 PM.

B. APPROVE AGENDA

Board member Hiller moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. SECONDED BY MEMBER LEE.**

VOICE VOTE (show of raised hands): Motion carried unanimously.

C. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

1. Jon Doyle present to speak during New business on Foster-Crouse Preserve issue.
2. Derek Perry to present the possibility of using Central Meridian Uplands (C.M.U.) and/or Hubble Preserve for a wetland mitigation project.

D. APPROVE MINUTES

E. Chair Kielbaso to change date on minutes from February 12, 2020 to March 11, 2020. Board member Stephens moved to **APPROVE THE AGENDA.** Seconded by Board Member Hiller.

VOICE VOTE (show of raised hands): Motion carried unanimously.

F. COMMUNICATIONS

- G. Chair Kielbaso gives Deputy Township Manager, Derek Perry, a chance to speak about his issue in order to leave at timely manner. Derek presents the possibility of using Central Meridian Uplands (C.M.U.) and/or Hubble Preserve for a wetland mitigation project.
- A. Road intersection at Grand River and Okemos is being resurfaced and raised to mitigate flooding – 15.5 acres of wetland mitigation is required for this project. The project is in preliminary stages – public works is turning to preservation board to get input on a potential candidate throughout township preserve system.
 - B. Chair Kielbaso questions if there is enough suitable land to do the entire mitigation on C.M.U.? Member Hiller asks what other preserves are available as options. Discussion follows about content of flora and fauna at C.M.U. and its associated value, and the suitability of this preserve for wetland mitigation. Board discusses meeting out at the preserve for LPAB August meeting to decide appropriate use.

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H. OLD BUSINESS

NONE.

I. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Parks and Recreation Director, LuAnn Maisner presents on the Land Preservation Millage Renewal

Discussion:

1. Director Maisner presents the current financial report on land preservation funds. 4 million is available in the fund. Current yearly maintenance and stewardship of preserves costs roughly \$200,000/year. The recommended 0.10 reduced millage rate would generate approximately \$192,000 annually. In addition to the endowment interest which accrues \$35,000 - \$40,000 per year, there would be \$232,000 available for maintenance and stewardship yearly.
2. Board Member Stephens leads a discussion on what the long-term goals and expenses of the stewardship program are. Is the \$232,000 enough to hire interns? Discussion of interns, how many, pay rate, job responsibilities ensues. Board member Hiller questions if we are able to ask for a higher rate before the next 10 year millage renewal. Board Member Opsommer replies that we can in small increments. The biggest question asked is whether or not we can acquire more land if necessary – the LPAB has met its land acquisition goals, but there could be more that becomes available. The board discusses intern/supplemental staff, invasive removal contracts and prescribed burns will be our biggest expenses moving forward – in general everyone agrees we can achieve this with the reduced millage rate as long we prioritize and organize projects by cost and urgency.

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED 0.10 MILLAGE RENEWAL RATE. BOARD MEMBER HILLER SECONDED.

VOICE VOTE (show of raised hands): Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Financial Statement Update: Discussed fully during item A in New Business

- C. Foster-Crouse Preserve

1. Trail Maintenance Discussion: Jon Doyle is a resident who lives near Foster-Crouse to speak on behalf of the issues he brought up to Land Stewardship Coordinator Emma Campell.
2. Trail Maintenance: There is about a 400 foot section of trail that remains wet through most of the year. The trail runs between two wetland areas and cannot be re-routed. Jon Doyle and Coordinator Campbell ask what kind of trail maintenance can be done. A boardwalk made of natural items? Board member Thomas recommends that no fill (mulch, stones) be added because of the trail being a possible wetland itself. The board discusses that a boardwalk allowing flow of water unperturbed would be the best route. Member Hiller mentions that the township lawyer should possibly be involved to find any liabilities that we may need to be aware of.
3. Proposed bicycle allowance: Jon Doyle with Coordinator Campbell recommends the allowance of bicycles on Foster-Crouse Preserve. There is a safety issue of residents riding their bike on the side of the road to get to North Meridian Rd. Park: the speed

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limit is 50mph on Meridian Rd. and there is no shoulder making it unsafe for neighborhood kids to bike – allowing bikes on Foster-Crouse would give a direct pathway from several neighborhoods to North Meridian Rd. Park. Member Thomas recommends we think carefully on this and perhaps propose just walking bikes on the path due to the sensitive nature of the preserves and the negative affects biking can have on wetland areas. Coordinator Campbell suggests tabling the discussion and holding the next LPAB meeting at Foster-Crouse to walk the trail and discuss the issue further.

BOARD MEMBER HILLER MOVED TO TABLE DISCUSSION AND MEET AT FOSTER-CROUSE FOR THE NEXT LPAB MEETING. MEMBER STEPHENS SECONDED.

VOICE VOTE (show of raised hands): Motion carried unanimously.

D. STAFF REPORT

- a. Stewardship Coordinator Campbell
 1. Meridian Conservation Corps update
 - a. Communications will only launch the first 3 programs along with our mission statement for the time being; summaries and flyers have been finalized to go into the creation of the Conservation Corps website; promotional material for social media awaiting approval.
 - i. MCC mission statement
 - ii. Forest Watch
 - iii. Clean Up Crew
 - iv. Invasive Species Strike Team
 - b. Volunteers have been trained on an individual/group basis with strict COVID guidelines in place to protect everyone involved. Volunteer work has consisted mainly of invasive removal and trash pickup in the parks and preserves.
 2. Wetland Banking – Tihart Preserve Update
 - a. There has been no word from Mike Pennington.
 3. Forest Grove Preserve Update
 - a. Ingham County Drain Commission is required to fix or completely pull out old pipeline that runs through Forest Grove.
 - b. Mike Nurse is their appointed wetland delineator. During the walkthrough it was found that there is diverse array of native wetland species with little invasive species present.
 - c. Invasive species present were mostly buckthorn and reed canary grass. Vegetation growing along pipeline in questions is mostly reed canary grass – the drain commission wants to use wetland as a buffer, avoiding changing the hydrology in the area as well enhancing the surrounding wetlands.
 - d. The Ingham County Drain Commission will give a full presentation with available options at a later date (August or September meeting).

E. COMMENT FROM THE PUBLIC

NONE.

F. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

1. LPAB vacancies: Not all members were aware of Kirk Lapham stepping down creating two

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vacancies to fill. Board discusses possible candidates. Everyone is encouraged to reach out to potential candidates and let them know of the vacancies.

2. Board Member Thomas discusses the prospect of a prescribed burn at the Lake Lansing North Conservation easement. The last burn was in 2012, but since then native woodland flowers and oak and hickory regeneration has greatly increased compared to the adjacent sections that did not receive a prescribed burn. Member Thomas suggests doing a burn this fall to keep back the growth of invasive species as well as more aggressive understory species. Coordinator Campbell suggests we need to reach out to Coe and Ian who are the managers at Lake Lansing and we will need to partner with them on burn management. Board members also discuss a burn to take place at Davis-Foster.

MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED TO BRING MAPS TO NEXT MEETING AND DETERMINE PRESCRIBED BURN PRIORITY AREAS OF MANAGEMENT. MEMBER HILLER SECONDED.

VOICE VOTE (show of raised hands): Motion carried unanimously.

G. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Next Land Preservation Advisory Board Meeting: Wednesday, August 12, 2020, 6 pm, Foster-Crouse Preserve.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kielbaso **ADJOURNED THE MEETING** at 8:45 PM. **SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER HILLER.**

VOICE VOTE (show of raised hands): Motion carried unanimously.