

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2017

PRESENT: Commissioners Baker, Lick, McDonald, Schaetzl, Stephens

EXCUSED: None

STAFF: Parks and Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner; Parks and Land Management Coordinator Jane Greenway; Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant II Robin Faust

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

Chair McDonald called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

**2. Presentations**

**a. Friend of the Park Ceremony**

The Park Commission recognized the 2016 Friends of the Park volunteers:

**Haslett Beautification Association**—Planted and maintained the Marshall Park and Haslett green spaces

**Meridian Garden Club**—Planted and maintained gardens in the Historical Village, the gardens in front of the Municipal Building and Claire Twohy Memorial Garden in Central Park; donated and planted an Arbor Day tree in the Village near the pond with a plaque;; broke ground for the Plant It Pink Garden

**Layne Cameron**—Provided stewardship activities in the Red Cedar Natural Area and Meridian Riverfront Park

**Martha Hentz/Chris Buck Family**—Donated and planted flowers at Hartrick Park around flagpole and sign and trash pick-up

**Steve DeBrabander**—Cleared and maintained trails in Brattin Woods Park

**Eckhart Dersch**—Provided reports on Ferguson, Wonch, Central Park, Meridian Riverfront Park, and North Meridian Road Park identifying maintenance needs

**Eagle Scout Clayton Carmichael**—Constructed boardwalk in North Meridian Road Park

**Eagle Scout Robert McQuaid**—Constructed concrete slab and privacy fence around the recycling area at the Harris Nature Center

**Eagle Scout Gage VanOrder**—Constructed handicap accessible overlook in Ted Black Woods

**Love A Park Day, April 23**—Nancy Moore - Haslett Scout Troop #265, Roger and Nancy Smith, and neighbors; Hillbrook Park - Haslett Kiwanis Club, Bobby Dubyne, neighbors and

Park Commissioner Phil Deschaine; Harris Nature Center – Okemos Kiwanis Club, Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club, Treasurer Julie Brixie, Meridian Democrats; Hartrick Park – Martha Hentz and Chris Buck; Sander Farm – Larry Hennessy; Forest Hills Natural Area – Forest Hills Neighborhood Association

**Ellen Passage**—Maintained Paul Peterson Memorial at Nancy Moore Park

**Larry Hennessey**—Cleaned and monitored the bluebird boxes in Sander Farm Preserved Natural Area and Tacoma Hills Natural Area

**Forest Hills HOA**—Cleaned Forest Hills Natural Area

**Bennett Woods Elementary**—120 students planted a Monarch Way Station at Hartrick Park and also removed the invasive species, Garlic Mustard

**Chippewa Middle School**—Hartrick Park: 75 students grew flowers in their greenhouse and planted them in the Monarch Garden; students also mulched, weeded and cleaned up park. Ferguson Park: students planted native, flowering trees

**Dave Reicosky & Julie Taliber**—Helped with the initial planting and maintained the Monarch Way Station at Hartrick Park throughout the summer

**Arlene Friedland**—Bench donation in memory of Judge Irvin J Friedland to be installed on pathway between Park Lake Road and Okemos Road

**Jennifer & Tom Taylor**—\$1,000 donation toward mural in memory of Sandra Machtel and \$2,000 donation toward the Doggie Playground in Central Park

**Mid-Michigan Republican Women's Club**—Donated tree and plaque in memory of Virginia White to be planted in the Meridian Historical Village

**Lansing Oar and Paddle Club**—Continued stewardship of the Red Cedar River.

**Maria Ibarra**—Planted mums and spread mulch at Ferguson Park and Okemos Library

**Shirley Smith**—Planted mums and spread mulch at Wonch Park

**Steve Thomas & Sower Woods Neighbors**—Regularly maintained Sower Woods Land Preserve by removing invasive species and planting native forbs

**Frank Hatfield & Sylvan Glen Neighbors**—Removed invasive Autumn Olive from Red Cedar Glen Land Preserve; Lisa and Phil Bonney, Kay Trosko, Margaret Frankhauser, Gerald and Barb Zuker, Larry Robbins, Margo Smith, and the Holland Family

**Murphy Elementary School & GRAND Learning Network**—Davis Foster Seed Ball Project: 90 5th grade students enhanced the grassland at Davis Foster by creating native seed balls

**Towar Woods Preserve:** Cleared invasive plants, planted trees, conducted activities to reduce deer damage to trees and cleaned up trash: Dave Caszatt, Donald Dickman, Nick Sanchez, Sandy Davis, Bobbie Davis Cathie and Max Lindquist, Dave Wearsch, Jim Kielbaso, Margo Smith, Frank Hatfield, Rick Loftus, Matt, Frank and Charlotte Jones, Haslett Scout Troop 265, Mary and Adriana Flores, David Dietz, Mary Fielding, Mark and Paula Frantz,

Hector, Paul, and Rick

**Leslie Kuhn and Jim Hewitt**—Treated invasive Phragmites and Japanese Knotweed across the township; Mapping, permitting, owner contact and treatments

**Deer Management Program**—Aaron Rustad, Alan Franklin, Andrew Taylor, Austin Cole, Ben Cummings, Billy Haskins, Brian Watts, Bruce Bussing, Cam Haskins, Casey Carnahan, Chad Cannon, Chad Houck, Charles Otlewski, Christopher Wilcox, Colan Adams, Dan Smith, Dave Hendersen, Glenn Thomas, Jack Shull , James Hurst Jr., Jay Graham, Jeff Neilson, Jeffrey Speer, Jeremy Kapalla, Jonathon Mayes, Justin Cook, Ken Phinney, Kenneth Plaga, Kent Brainbridge, Kim Emery, Kirk Schalau, Kyle Cook, Larry Harb, Layne Cameron, Lee Colony, Margaret Delong, Marvin Johansen, Matthew Cuthbert, Matthew Delong, Matthew Foreman, Matthew Prinz, Matthew Solit, Matthew Wesener, Max Miller, Michael Ellis, Michael McDonald, Michael Mead, Michael Pemble, Michael Reilly, Mike Kingsley, Mike Marinez, Nicholas Hallenbeck, Nicholas Jugan, Ray Nachreiner, Robbie Pairolero, Robert Alexander, Robert Fortino, Roger Cook, Ryan Brzak, Ryan Holem, Scott, Davis, Scott Goldammer, Scott Vercruysse, Steve Potvin, Steven Busch, Stephen Moore, Thomas Forton, Thomas Porter, Thomas Taylor, Timothy Swartz, Tom Cannon, Trevor Arnold, Zachary Archibald

**Gene Wasserman**—Maintenance, monitoring and reporting of Bluebird boxes in Meridian Riverfront Park and Hartrick Park

**Patrick & Michelle Allen**—Geocache liaisons for the parks - monitoring caches that have been placed in the parks

**Georganne Withey**—Fitness Over-50 Program Coordinator at the Meridian Mall

**MSU Educating Student Athletic Trainers In Medicine (ESTIM)** —Meridian Township Family Winter Sports Weekend Polar Bear 5K Race on January 24, 2016

**Kiwanis Club of Okemos**—Solicited gift cards from local businesses for the HNC Foundation and \$400 to Youth Recreation Sponsorship Fund

**Kelly Colflesh**—Assisted with maintenance around the Central Park pond to improve fishing access and provided assistance with annual fishing events

**Robert and Nancy Smith**—Trails and pathways trash removal

**Brian Van Order (Michigan Demolition and Excavation, Inc.)** —Contributions of time, expertise, equipment for many park projects

**Joe Pennoni (Rapid Tree Removal)**—Contributions of time, expertise, equipment for many park projects

**Harris Nature Center Foundation**—Fundraising efforts for the Harris Nature Center (Jim Buscetta; June Hicks; Barb Kissling; Julie Moore; Patty Robbins; Nora Thompson; Roxanne Truhn; Helen & Howard Tanner)

**Friends of Historic Meridian**—Outstanding efforts toward growth and sustainability of the Meridian Historical Village and for providing meaningful and educational programs

and community events for youth and families; (Jane Rose, Executive Director)

**Meridian Senior Center Advisory Board**—Provide direction and program support for the Meridian Senior Center (Peggy Frisch/President; Jack Whitmyer/Vice President; Betsey Bricker; Richard Fox; Gen Healy; Carol Rousch; John Wills)

**Edgewood Village**—2016 Towar Summer Playground Program (\$1,000)

**Fireworks Celebration** —Meijer - \$2,000 (Terry Cole, Cindy Nunn, Chris Wilson/Okemos Store); Meridian Plumbing - \$1,000 (Craig Phillipich); The Harkness Law Firm PLLC - \$1,000 (Cullen Harkness); Culvers Butterburgers & Frozen Custard - \$1,00 (Cory Chavala); Eastside Tax and Accounting, LLC - \$250 (Thomas Johnson); Okemos Animal Hospital - \$250 (Nydia Alfonso); Ingham County Medical Care Facility and Rehabilitation Center - \$250 (Karen Webster)

**Brian Beauchine**—Youth Recreation Sponsorship Program (\$407)

**Consumers Energy**—Donated \$1,000 for trees as part of their Right Tree Right Place Program

Commission returned to the regular meeting at 8 pm.

### 3. **Approval of Agenda**

Amend the following to read:

- Item #5, Public Hearing, a. Grant Applications: 1 – Riverside Accessible Pavilion at Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center
- Item #10, New Business, a. Resolution to Support 2017 Grant Application - Riverside Accessible Pavilion at Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center

COMMISSIONER LICK MOVED, COMMISSIONER BAKER SECONDED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

### 4. **Public Comment**

None

### 5. **Public Hearing**

- a. 2017 Grant Applications:
  1. **Riverside Accessible Pavilion at Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center** (HNC)
    - a) Chair declares public hearing open at 8:04 pm
    - b) Staff presents project overview

Director Maisner presented an overview of the grant application process, grant opportunities, applications are due April 1 and awards are granted in December. If funded, the project would not be built until 2019. Due to the number of children attending summer camps, the Nature Center rents a large tent every year to provide additional educational space. HNC is becoming a destination location and the addition of the pavilion would complement the other elements

offered along the Red Cedar River including the overlook and canoe launch and at youth nature exploration area.

Coordinator Greenway described the Accessible Pavilion project as follows:

- The shelter building will be fully accessible
- Size is approximately 30'x44'
- Located in the vicinity of the Harris Nature Center building, in the approximate location of the existing pole barn
- Would create a shelter to assist with expanding the environmental educational programs
- Would provide a vital amenity along the Red Cedar Water Trail
- Has a total project cost of \$100,000
- Has a proposed 50% local match from the Park Millage
- Will be applying to the Natural Resource Trust Fund

c) Staff acknowledge received items of communications:

- Advertisement of the public hearing in the local Towne Courier Newspaper on March 5 and March 12

d) Public comment

None

e) Commissioner comments:

- Appreciate being able to offer an amenity along the Red Cedar Water Trail
- There will be electricity inside pavilion and sensor lights on the pavilion
- This pavilion would be an additional element to existing HNC amenities
- Wayfinding signage along the Red Cedar River would be a future project for the Red Cedar Water Trail
- Project elements include: shelter, accessible path, electricity, suggested maybe adding USB plugs
- The proposed shelter will be designed to fit in with the natural environment
- Future additions could include interpretative displays with animal calls.
- Reviewed the local match amount; any costs over the submitted project cost of \$100,000 would be the responsibility of the Township.

f) Chair declared public hearing closed at 8:29 pm.

## 2. **Riverside Accessible Waterless Restroom at Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center**

a) Chair declared public hearing open at 8:30 pm.

b) Coordinator Greenway described the Accessible Waterless Restroom project as follows:

- The proposed project is supported by park visitors including children and parents attending HNC summer camps
- A restroom building has been highly requested for this area of the park in parks and recreation surveys
- It is a vital amenity for the area

- The total project cost is \$100,000
- Submitting application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Will have a 50% local match from the Park Millage
- Will be waterless composting – environmentally friendly

- c) Staff acknowledge received items of communications
- Advertisement of the public hearing in the local Towne Courier Newspaper on March 5 and March 12

- d) Public comment

None

- e) Commissioners comments:

- Security of building; will be very visible from parking area, the site is open at dawn and closed at dusk by the Township Police Department
- Will be a great feature to add along with the proposed accessible pavilion
- There is a need for an outside restroom due to the high number of visitors when the Nature Center building is open and closed, especially for school children during the school year and the summer camps
- An outside restroom has been in the master plan since the Harris Nature Center was first development
- Meridian Riverfront park is opened at dawn and closed at dusk by township police

- f) Chair declared public hearing closed at 8:44 pm.

## 6. Commissioner Reports and Comments

Commissioners thanked staff for preparing wonderful Friends of the Park event.

## 7. Approval of Minutes

- a. February 14, 2017 Work Session Meeting Minutes
- b. February 14, 2017 Regular Session Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER SCHAETZL MOVED, COMMISSIONER STEPHENS SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 14, 2017 MEETING MINUTES AS SUBMITTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

## 8. Communications

- A. Items to/from the Public

None

- B. Commission Information

1. Introduction to Vernal Pools, Saturday, March 25, 2017

- C. Staff Inquiries/Response

Director Maisner spoke about the article that appeared in the Lansing State Journal and in the Towne Courier about the park projects for 2017 and how the emphasis of the

article was supposed to focus on how well Meridian Township has been able to leverage their local park millage to obtain nearly 2,000,000 grant funding.

D. Distributed at meeting

1. Towne Courier: March 5 and March 12 advertisement for Public Hearing on 2017 Grant Submissions: pavilion and waterless restroom building in Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER LICK SECONDED, TO ACCEPT AND PLACE THE ITEMS OF COMMUNICATION ON FILE. Voice vote. Motion passed.

## 9. Director's Report

No report

## 10. New Business

### a. Resolution of Support for 2017 Grant Application - Riverside Accessible Pavilion at Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner Baker and supported by Stephens:

**WHEREAS**, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources accepts grant requests from local units of government to assist in the development and acquisition of recreation properties; and

**WHEREAS**, it is possible to have up to 75% of the total project cost funded by the Natural Resources Trust Fund program; and

**WHEREAS**, the Park Commission is interested leveraging local Park Millage Funds by obtaining supplemental grant funding for park projects whenever possible; and

**WHEREAS**, Meridian Township has prepared a grant application for submission to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for \$100,000 of improvements to Meridian Riverfront Park consisting of an accessible pavilion and sidewalks to improve and expand recreation opportunities and accessibility for visitors of all abilities; and

**WHEREAS**, this project is identified and supported in the Central Park Master Plan and in the 2017-2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan adopted by the Meridian Township Board and Park Commission, and is on file with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the grant request is outlined and justified in the 2016-2021 Capital Improvements Program adopted by the Township Board and Park Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, park development and improvements are supported by Township Board Policy and 2017 Goals and Objectives; and

**WHEREAS**, this grant request was open to public review on March 14, 2017; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PARK COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, as follows:**

**To support submission of a grant application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for development of a universally accessible pavilion in Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center with a total project cost of \$100,000. Fifty (50%) percent local match in the amount of \$50,000 will be funded by the Park Millage, with the remaining fifty (50%) percent (\$50,000) funded by the MNRTF grant.**

ADOPTED:

YEAS: Annika Schaetzel, Mark Stephens, Michael McDonald, Richard Baker, Amanda Lick

NAYS: None

The resolution passed.

**b. Resolution of Support for 2017 Grant Application - Riverside Accessible Waterless Restroom at Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center**

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner Baker and supported by Commissioner Schaetzel.

**WHEREAS**, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources accepts grant requests from local units of government to assist in the development and acquisition of recreation properties; and

**WHEREAS**, it is possible to have up to 50% of the total project cost funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund program; and

**WHEREAS**, the Park Commission is interested leveraging local Park Millage Funds by obtaining supplemental grant funding for park projects whenever possible; and

**WHEREAS**, Meridian Township has prepared a grant application for submission to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for \$100,000 of improvements to Meridian Riverfront Park consisting of an accessible waterless restroom to improve and expand recreation opportunities and accessibility for visitors of all abilities; and

**WHEREAS**, this project is identified and supported in the Central Park Master Plan and in the 2017-2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan adopted by the Meridian Township Board and Park Commission, and is on file with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the grant request is outlined and justified in the 2016-2021 Capital Improvements Program adopted by the Township Board and Park Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, park development and improvements are supported by Township Board Policy and 2017 Goals and Objectives; and

**WHEREAS**, this grant request was open to public review on March 14, 2017; and



**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PARK COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, as follows:**

**To support submission of a grant application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund for development of a universally accessible waterless restroom in Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center with a total project cost of \$100,000. Fifty (50%) percent local match in the amount of \$50,000 will be funded by the Park Millage, with the remaining fifty (50%) percent (\$50,000) funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.**

ADOPTED:

YEAS: Annika Schaetzel, Mark Stephens, Michael McDonald, Richard Baker, Amanda Lick

NAYS: None

The resolution passed.

**c. Nekoma Drain Easement Approval – Hillbrook Park**

Director Maisner stated the Ingham County Drain Office has been in discussions with the Park Commission since late 2015 regarding the necessary drain improvements to the Nemoke Drain through Hillbrook Park. The Drain Office staff has worked together with the Commission to clarify the drain easement location and the impacts it may have on the park's trails.

The drain easement has taken the Commission's concerns into consideration and has been reviewed and approved by the Township's attorney. The Drain Office will replace two trees for every one they need to remove in the park; plant native vegetation in areas that will be disturbed during the construction phase; and construct a footbridge over the drain to maintain the integrity of the existing trail system in the park.

**COMMISSIONER LICK MOVED, COMMISSIONER BAKER SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE ATTACHED "DRAIN EASEMENT FOR NEMOKA DRAIN-HILLBROOK PARK" WITH THE NEMOKA DRAIN DRAINAGE DISTRICT AS REQUESTED BY THE INGHAM COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE.**

Voice vote. Motion passed.

**11. Final Comments**

None

**12. Announcements**

- a. Park Commission Next Meeting – Tuesday, April 11, 2017
- b. Farmers' Market – Saturdays, 10 am-2 pm, JC Penny corridor (March 18, April 1 & 15)
- c. Introduction to Vernal Pools, Saturday, March 25, 2017, 10 – 11 am, Town Hall Room, Meridian Municipal Building

**13. Public Comment**

None

**14. Adjournment**

COMMISSIONER BAKER MOVED, COMMISSIONER STEPHENS SECONDED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.