



To: Board Members

From: Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager

Date: May 7, 2021

Re: Manager's Report

ASSESSING

Efforts are continuing to defend and resolve appeals to the Michigan Tax Tribunal. The value in contention for pending appeals remains a low percentage of the Township's overall taxable value. The 2021 appeal deadline has not yet occurred; appeals will be received by the Township into the summer months.

Preparations are also being made to adopt the computer-assisted mass appraisal (CAMA) data standards mandated by the State of Michigan. Virtually all municipalities in Michigan utilize BS&A Software's Assessing.Net as their assessing software. However, the setup of certain fields within the software has never been standardized and varies by municipality. This causes problems for Counties and the State. As a result, the State has required that all municipalities modify their assessing databases to adopt uniform standards. Work will be done to meet this requirement over the next several weeks.

COMMUNICATIONS

Upgrade and Refresh Township Website



The Communications Team has been attending weekly project meetings for the Township website redesign. The project is in the Discovery Phase where the website company, Granicus, is gathering metrics and analytics. Staff filled out an extensive survey about the goals of the new website, provided design feedback of sample sites and delivered Township branding materials. Granicus developers will now design a proposed wireframe of the new homepage and interior page stylings for staff to approve. Data and design findings will be presented to the members of the Township Website Redesign Work Group.

Staff is also attending Granicus University training sessions on workflow management, new widgets and components, ADA compliance and content clean-up.

Staff continues updating content on the current website to make for a smoother transition to the newly designed website. Recent Township webpages that have undergone significant design and content revisions include:

- Green Meridian – www.meridian.mi.us/GreenMeridian
- Meridian Cares – www.meridian.mi.uc/MeridianCares
- Harris Nature Center (Camps Subpage) – www.meridian.mi.us/HNCCamps
- COVID-19 Resources - www.meridian.mi.us/COVID-19
- Recreation & Sports - <http://bit.ly/MTwpParksandRecMainPage>

Marketing and Communications

The Communications Team continues to meet with staff from each Township Department to determine and fulfill marketing projects. Some of those projects include the following:



The Harris Nature Center Logo design was finalized and revealed to the community during a special Facebook LIVE unveiling. The new logo reflects the Township Brand Standards and highlights Tyco the Turtle, the original turtle of the center.

A digital version of the Meridian Conservation Corps newsletter was tested, and will be implemented with the next edition (<http://bit.ly/MCCFlipSnackNewsletter>). Staff is currently working with on a digital Farmers' Market newsletter to highlight vendors, products, etc. These new digital newsletters will be shared on social and added to their respective website pages on Meridian Township's website.



Meridian Cares T-shirt Fundraiser

Make a Difference &
Order One Today!



Scan the QR Code or visit
<https://www.bonfire.com/meridian-cares-fundraiser/>

Proceeds from sales will directly support
those in need in Meridian Township



A new fundraiser for Meridian Cares began in March 2021. Staff designed a t-shirt with the Meridian Cares logo and

promoted to the community, Township staff and Township Board and Commission members to purchase in support of the Meridian Cares program. In just 2 months, we have sold 84 t-shirts with a profit of \$476.71.

Staff is currently designing brochures for the Public Works Department to be inserted with the residents' utility bills.

Staff is also assisting the Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director with business/development marketing materials for upcoming meetings and events.



As part of the new social media strategy, the Communications Team evaluated all the social pages and will be combining content for pages that were under performing. The Meridian Cares Facebook page and the Green Meridian Facebook page will be shut down by the end of the first week of May and all future content will be posted to the main Township Facebook page. Content will be posted consistently under the themes "We Care Wednesday" for Meridian Cares and "Think Green Thursday" for Green Meridian.

HOMTV Operations & Equipment

HOMTV continues producing and televising virtual Township Board and Commission meetings via Zoom. The virtual meeting coverage can be viewed live on the HOMTV channel, website, Facebook and YouTube. Meetings are also available on-demand at www.homtv.net.

HOMTV also provided live event coverage for the Meridian Township Police Incident Investigation Press Conference on April 23, 2021.



Staff continues working on the HOMTV Server Room Reconfiguration Project with a local engineer and the Meridian Township IT Department. Significant progress has been made to remove old equipment. Remaining equipment is being re-routed to improve efficiency of station operations and provide needed maintenance to ensure proper functionality and longevity of the equipment.



During this process, staff discovered the encoder, which sends the CAMTV signal to AT&T, was no longer functioning. In order to comply with the AT&T Franchise Agreement and stream CAMTV to approximately 17 communities on the AT&T U-verse system, an emergency purchase was made to replace the HD encoder and restore the channel signal. Once all the equipment has arrived, the new encoder will be installed.

HOMTV Programming & Internship



Your Choice 2021 Election programs were produced for the May 4, 2021 Special Election. HOMTV reporters interviewed the Okemos Public Schools Superintendent about the two Okemos Public Schools proposals on the ballot. An interview was also conducted with the Meridian Township Clerk about important election information. HOMTV will soon launch a new program called Virtual View. This program series will provide an identity and will feature the full-length Zoom interviews staff and interns are conducting about various topics in and around Meridian Township.

HOMTV staff and interns were able to produce a couple Meridian News Now programs in March and April. One was in the studio and the other was produced via Zoom. Both episodes showcased all of the news stories interns were able to capture this semester. Staff hopes to produce Meridian News Now on a weekly basis this summer.

The Spring 2021 Semester of the HOMTV Internship Program ended on April 30. Most of the Spring Semester was conducted virtually with little hands-on training in the HOMTV Studio and Control Room. Most of the intern assignments were created remotely with some field shooting components. Interns continue providing community news to residents by conducting phone interviews, Zoom interviews, in-person videos, writing online news stories and promoting assignments on social media platforms.

Of the 16 interns from the Spring Semester, 4 plan to return for the Summer 2021 Semester. Staff hopes more in-person trainings and productions can be scheduled for the Summer 2021 Semester which begins on May 24 with 14 new interns participating.

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority

The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, at its meeting on April 29, 2021, reviewed and approved the distribution of the first EGLE Grant reimbursement for the Village of Okemos Phase I. The reimbursement included well abandonment, building demolition, backfilling and compaction of the site.

Building

The building permit for Buddy's Pizza, 2010 Grand River Avenue has been submitted and is under review. The building permits for Joe's on Jolly, 2360 Jolly Road and Haslett Marathon, 1619 Haslett Road should be ready to issue within the next week. Building No. 5 the last building in the second phase of the Elevation project at Jolly Road and Jolly Oak Road is near completion. An occupancy permit could be issued within the next two weeks. The demolition of the clubhouse and pool at Walnut Hills has been completed. Staff has had preliminary discussion with the contractor on the building permit for the new house. Framing of the four story building for the Red Cedar Manor development on Northwind Drive is completed thru the third floor. The first building (5 units) in the town house development on Chief Okemos Circle should be finished in June and the second building (8 units) finished in August.



Code Enforcement

The second phase of clean up at Winslow Mobile Home Park has been completed. The owner made the necessary repairs. The next phase of clean up must be completed by July 1, 2021. A total of 190 code enforcement complaints were handled thru the end of April. The main complaints were nuisance 61 and motor vehicle (inoperative or unlicensed) 31.

Planning

In March, the Planning Commission recommended denial of the rezoning of six acres at the northeast corner of Jolly Road and Kansas Road from I (Industrial) and RA (Single Family-Medium Density) to PO (Professional and Office). The Township Board will discuss the rezoning in May. Recently, the Planning Commission held public hearings for a special use permit for a carwash at the southeast corner of Grand River Avenue and Dawn Avenue and a rezoning of the 9 acres at the northwest corner of Grand River Avenue and Powell Road from C-2 (Commercial) to RA (Single Family-Medium Density). The Planning Commission is in favor of granting the special use permit for the carwash and recommending approval of the rezoning.

The Planning Commission completed its review of the proposed update to the mixed use planned unit development ordinance and initiated a zoning amendment. The public hearing on the amendment has been scheduled for May 24, 2021.

A rezoning application has been submitted to rezone five acres at 1999 Saginaw Highway from C-2 (Commercial) to I

(Industrial). The property owner had received approval in 2018 to rezone the property to C-2 but is now requesting to rezone the property back to industrial. The Planning Commission will hold a hearing on the rezoning at its meeting on May 24, 2021.

The developer for Pine Village, 1673 Haslett Road, has submitted an application to amend the site plan for the mixed use planned unit development. The proposed amendment is to have a separate covered entrance for the apartments on the east side of the building. Staff will be scheduling a hearing on the amendment in the near future. The site plan for Woodward Way, the 49 unit townhouse/apartment complex on Sirhal Drive will receive approval within the next week. The building permit and plans have been submitted.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ITEM	LAUNCH STATUS	COMPLETION STATUS	OTHER NOTES
Community Survey Cobalt Community Research	April 23 rd sent Cobalt department information and expected deadline for draft survey submission to board for approval to implement	May 18 th to be at Township Board for approval	Confirmation of Marijuana questions on survey regardless of ballot
Midwest Power Business Retention	Rezoning request if approved by Planning Commission would put Midwest Power out of business at that site	What do they need to relocate? What do we need to do to keep them in the Township	Industrial Zoned parcel of what size, other elements needed? Director Clark to speak with John 5/3/2021
Downtown Development Authority	DDA celebration October 9 th with adaptive plans for COVID and weather to promote a walkable Art Mural show in the DDA	Confirmation of all event details by June 7 th meeting to implement plans. Work with Communications on promotion	Director Clark will prepare a memo to ask the Township board for loan forgiveness
Economic Development Corporation	EDC complete Celebrate Meridian Summer program with confirmed activities	Confirmation of all event details by June 3 rd meeting to implement and promote Township Wide	n/a
Haslett/Okemos Community Development Virtual Firesides	Planning for Business and Economic Development Retention program began in March- with COVID-19 a best practices guide needs to be formed to keep a close relationship without compromising the business	The expected guide for Meridian Township's Business retention should be completed by June with strategies to progress forward in digitally and how to be adaptive as we move out of COVID-19	Both meetings will be held virtually with a short agenda to keep the flow of the meeting going in the right direction Q&A
Meridian EDC/MABA Business Awards	January 2021 Businesses were nominated by members of MABA and Meridian EDC the public was invited to vote on the listed businesses with a two week period for open voting	May 2021 The tally and announcement of winners were presented to MABA and the Meridian EDC for High Caliber Karting as established business with their planned expansion and Cheezy D's Deli and Dogs for new business of the year award!	Typically the annual awards are presented at the MABA end of year social event with businesses and members of MABA association present. Due to COVID-19 the virtual award ceremony will be conducted and pictures shared with the public on Friday May 7 th
SmartZone	October 2020	June 2021	Need agreement proposal between LDFA City of Lansing and East Lansing to move forward. Need clarification on which units are requesting Taxes from Jurisdictions

House of Soles Community Collaborative Shoe Drive	House of Soles wants to partner with Township to place bins around town to accept gently worn shoes for drive	Meeting with Chief of Police, Fire and Tavis for event coordination and approval	
LEAP PAFC Art grant	Submitted Contract signed in good order RFP submitted	Press Releases promotion of RFP and sent out ok no media outlets	

FINANCE

2020 Township Audit

The annual audit is the main focus for this week and next. Most of the testing is completed. The Department is working on schedules and footnotes for the audit. The 2020 Audit will be presented to the Board in June.

Utility Billing

Utility Billing (UB) is working short staffed with a maternity leave. We have a summer worker that started on Wednesday. She will be assisting the UB and Treasury Departments. UB staff is also working on getting water meter data for the water department. We have had a lot of meters failing in the last year.

Accounts Payable

Accounts Payable is working hard at clearing old stale dated checks. These uncashed checks will need to be sent to the State of Michigan by July 1st.

Township Awarded Excellence in Financial Reporting

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded the 2019 Certificate of Achievement (COA) for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Meridian Township.

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. When a Certificate of Achievement is awarded to a government, an Award of Financial Reporting Achievement (AFRA) is also presented to the individual or department designated as primarily responsible for earning this honor.



FIRE DEPARTMENT

10th Outdoor Warning Siren

We received the Ingham County Road Commission permit in April to install the Lake Lansing Road siren west of Park Lake. We are awaiting an official install date.

Administrative Policies/Guidelines Update

All Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines are being reviewed for content and updated. The Accident Investigation Policy and Employee Discipline Policy have been completed.

We are currently working on the following:

- Knox Box Key Policy
- Lock-Out-Tag-Out Policy
- Leave Time Policies
- Complaints Policy
- Restricted Duty
- Long Term Absence Return to Work Guideline
- Homeland Security Advisory and Station Lock Down Policy

Fire Department Fire Fighter Vacancies

Working with HR, we continue to look for qualified applicants to fill our vacancies.

- Hired Gavin Ulman in April
- Currently working on one vacancy

Technology

Installed Computer Added Dispatch (CAD) on all ambulance computers. This will allow the 911 dispatchers to have real time locations of all our ambulances.

Training

In April, the Fire Department and Police Department had a joint training on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. All Fire Department employees attended a three-hour session.

Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV)

With many brush fires early this year, and lacking the ability to respond on our many Meridian Township trails, we determined a UTV was essential to protect our residents and Meridian Township employees. The UTV will have a water tank, pump, and hose to use on brush fires. This unit will also have a stokes basket and first aid kit giving us the ability to access injured residents on off road trails. We have ordered Polaris 2000 G Pro XD ATV and expect to be fully functional in June.

Fire Department Operations

In March, we started working with Ingham 911 on a three-station response plan for all EMS calls. Currently, when dispatched all three stations are activated (lights on and tones), then the firefighters determine, based on location, which vehicle(s) will respond. Working with dispatch, we divided our fire/EMS service area into three districts based on drive time. Instead of all three stations being activated during an emergency only the closest station will be activated. If that station is on a call then the next closest station will be activated. We hope to start this process on a trial on May 17th.

HUMAN RESOURCES

1. DeKeea Quinney-Davis: Draft & mail welcome back/return to work letter (last medical noted May 24 return date)
2. OfficeTeam Temp, Jennifer Jones, working up in Planning to assist Debbie for the month of May and cover for Debbie's vacation.
3. Carol working with Brad and Mark to ensure smooth sailing for their respective retirements on May 14 and May 28. Will be working with Mary Ann regarding her anticipated July 2 retirement!
4. Working with Phil on Wellness program to help get people outside and moving together and start trying to reconnect as (outdoor) Covid restrictions gradually lifting. Brainstorming ideas with Sparrow, Playmakers, Yaymaker.com. Incentive ideas include weekly pair of shoes raffle, Twp logo gear, etc.
5. Postings/Recruiting/Hiring: Clerk Admin II, Planning Code Enforcement Officer, Assessor, Appraiser, Police Records Tech II, Assistant to Treasurer, Seasonal workers, Interns (Treasurer, Code Enforcement, Engineering). Kevin Reed not returning due to medical, Joe Wade xfer to PT Rental Insp.
6. Prep & plan for welcome of Tim Schmitt, Director of Community Planning & Development
7. Taking a collection for Mark Kieselbach's retirement party @ the Pavilion on May 25, 3:00-4:30
8. Working through election process Qs with Deborah: day after election staffing requirements, possible candidate with specialized qualifications & wondering if we can consider higher starting pay
9. Exit Interview with Kevin Harvey May 6 (Police Detective, Investigations Unit)
10. Overtime Q: Is there an amount of OT or comp time (like 10+?) that HR needs to know in advance?
11. Working with Chief Hamel on possible temporary agreement with Delhi to allow one of our Fire Dept Employees to help with inspections on hours when he is not scheduled to work here. Delhi working on a contract. Potential promotional process for Fire Marshal pending.
12. Rachel Day vs McDonalds, Civilian Civil Rights Complaint against PD- working on status for both Results still pending on MERC unit clarification for Accountant and no word yet on Forbes' Complaint.
13. NonSupps Union confirmed no further action will be taken regarding Wozniak Termination
14. Covid safety & vaccination updates (perpetually learning and adapting daily)
15. Wed Michigan Mgrs Meeting with police force guest speakers/ Thursday 10-11:30 Training Webinar: FFCRA, ADA, FMLA, EEOC updates/Thursday 6:00 Board Meeting
16. Safety Committee: Working on finalized newsletter and confirming muni safety maps updated
17. Reschedule Leadership Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Training through MDCS!!!

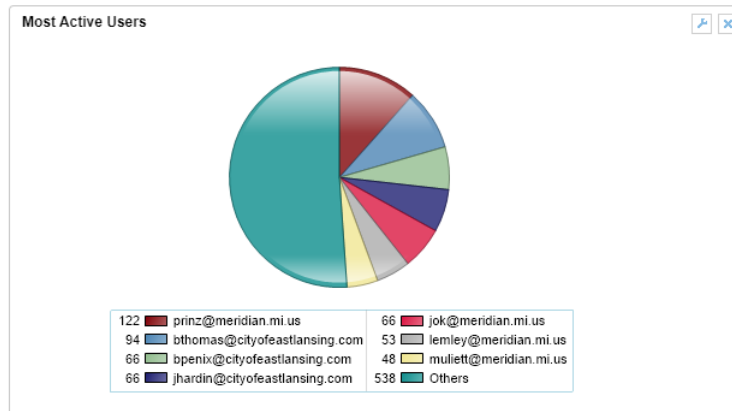
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Power Outage at the Municipal Complex

IT staff responded to a power outage at approximately 8:15 pm on Wednesday, April 28th. While uninterruptable power supplies kept most technology operational, the dramatic voltage spikes during the initial outage took down

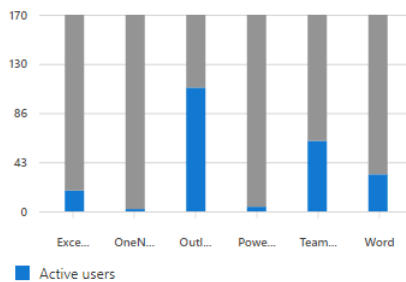
the primary connections to both the Public Safety Building and the Service Center. Service was restored by 9:00 pm, and the power event ended just prior to 10:00 pm.

Remote Access Activity



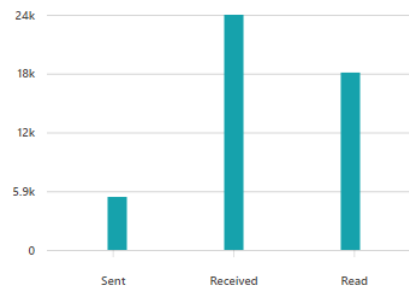
121 active users ▲ 4.3%

Total number of unique active users per Microsoft 365 App



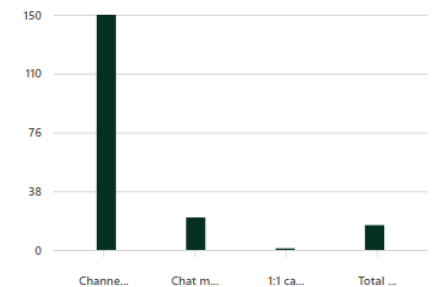
29.1K activities ▼ 8.6%

Number of send and receive actions over the selected time period



190 activities ▲ 41.8%

Total number of Teams activities over the selected time period



The Township continues to leverage remote access in conjunction with Microsoft Office 365 to allow more flexibility for end users in all work environments. IT continues support to scores of users with secure access to their PC's & data from their own devices that they use at home, and an increasing number of Township-issued devices. In addition to these comprehensive remote services, a significant percentage of users are now checking email and doing limited file access from their smart phones and/or other personal devices. Staff continues to assist end users with synchronization of local files to OneDrive, increasing access to information outside of the organization.

Zoom Meetings

In conjunction with the Communications & HOM TV staff, IT continues to facilitate Zoom and Microsoft Teams virtual events for internal staff, collaboration with regional partners, conduction of public meetings, and a host of other needs as they may arise.



Security Events and Focus on Maintenance

Over the past week, IT staff continues the foundation work to engage outside vendors to assist with security, service, and infrastructure improvements. This includes a variety of software & hardware projects, including PCs, network servers, and network switches.



Telecom Review

IT staff continues review of our telecommunication costs. The current focus is on review of our AT&T and FirstNet accounts.

New Users and User Modifications

It has been an active time for employees. We have many people leaving for a variety of reasons, promotions happening within the organization, and the hiring of summer help. This has resulted in dozens of permission changes for users across the network and culminated with five new user accounts in the past week alone. It's an exciting time to be working at Meridian Township.

PARKS & RECREATION

Current Collaborations

- Michigan Mountain Biking Association – Renovation, expansion and maintenance of the Eastgate Park Pump Track. Work in progress now.
- Towar Gardens Neighborhood Association (Formerly TC3) obtained a local grant and purchased 205 trees for planting in the Towar Woods Land Preserve. Emma Campbell and Dave Caszatt organized the planting in celebration of Arbor Day, on Saturday, May 1.
- April is Child Abuse Awareness Month – Small Talk Agency and volunteers planted blue pinwheel gardens on Township Properties for the month of April.
- Belinda Wilson, Graduate Student in Fisheries and Wildlife at MSU is working with Dr. Jean Tsao studying the emerging risk of ticks and tick-borne pathogens in Michigan. They are monitoring the invasion of black-legged (=deer) ticks, which are responsible for transmitting the Lyme disease pathogen.
- Toby Petrice, Ph.D., Research Entomologist, MSU and US Forest Service is continuing their long term EAB research at Legg Park, Harris Nature Center, Central Park and Nancy Moore Park.

- Forest Hills Neighborhood Association – Park Clean up – Cecelia Kramer and nine other residents on Saturday, April 24.
- Assisting Haslett Community Church with a playground replacement project
- Providing assistance to Williamstown Township on a new playground project
- Providing assistance with Tacoma Hills Neighborhood Association playground replacement project.
- Presented information to the City of Southfield Board about our Deer Management Program.
- Presented information to Cascade Township Parks Board about our Deer Management Program.
- Coordinated with Michigan Audubon Society to expand Purple Martin nesting sites on township property near Lake Lansing.
- Collaborating on a research project with MSU Forestry Field Studies course where students will study the effects of a controlled burn on Oak regeneration and recommending a management plan moving forward.
- Kiwanis Club installed 3 new benches in the large dog park.

Current Grant Projects

- Harris Nature Center Pavilion –MNRTF – This project has one more item on the punch list to fix and it will be ready to open to the public. Estimated opening: May 15. Estimated date to request final reimbursement: June 1.
- Harris Nature Center Restroom – LWCF – We obtained the Certificate of Occupancy this week so the restrooms are now open. Estimated date to request final reimbursement: June 1.
- Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector Project –MNRTF – This project has had its challenges for sure but completion is in sight. Final paving is scheduled for next week.
- Gateway Footbridge to the Meridian Historical Village – LWCF – This project is just awaiting a few final touches such as installation of benches, bike loops etc. The Meridian Garden Club will be utilizing the storage area for easier access to their gardening tools and equipment during the spring and summer months.
- New Trail and Pathway Map – Ingham County Parks and Trails Millage – To me, this is one of the more meaningful projects we are working on currently. Together, the Township has created an accessible non-motorized transportation system consisting of over 70 miles of paved pathway; acquired nearly 1,000 acres of beautiful parks; acquired over 1,000 acres of land preserves and we have lacked a good, usable map to promote, communicate and celebrate access to these community assets! When completed, it is our intention to mail this map to all of our residents, place them in multiple public places, and also have it in a digital format for the website. Unique to this map is the inclusion of historical features which are marked with icons on the map with a brief description in a text box. A second phase of this project includes placing interpretive signage at each of the sites highlighted on the map creating an historical walking tour throughout our community. Committee members include: Bob Wilson (local bicycle enthusiast and former Executive Director of the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance), Jane Rose (local historian and former Executive Director of Friends of Historic Meridian), and Township staff members Jay Graham, Jane Greenway, Cara Maney, Brandie Yates, Kati Adams, Derek Perry and myself. We have contracted with a mapmaker in Traverse City to get us to the finish line.
- LEAP/PNC Art Grant – Working together with our Director of Economic Development, Amber Clark, Jane Greenway drafted and submitted the application for an art installation at Marketplace on the Green. Two \$10,000 grants were awarded; one to us and the other to Delhi Township. The Request for Proposals to artists is currently being promoted to the local art community and is available on the Township website. Artists are asked to submit up to 5 concept plans for consideration. The total project completion deadline is October 31, 2021.
- Music at Marketplace on the Green – Mike Devlin secured a \$3,000 donation for music on Wednesday nights beginning in July in conjunction with the Farmers’ Market. The Farmers Market will begin

Wednesday hours in July but the musical entertainment is tentative based on COVID regulations in place at that time.

- Bird Overlook Deck at Harris Nature Center – The Harris Nature Center Foundation and Capital Region Community foundation provided funding for this amenity consisting of a handicapped accessible 12'x12' elevated platform with spotting scopes that can be used by the casual user or for organized classes. This project was completed earlier this year and we are looking forward to hosting a formal ribbon-cutting event and appreciation ceremony this summer.
- Towner Road Park Multi-generational, Accessible play/Exercise Zone – This application was submitted on April 1st. A new requirement of applications is to obtain an archeological survey of the project site. That work is underway currently.
- Okemos Road Property Acquisition (MSU-Lake Lansing Trail Hub)- we have been notified that the legislature will soon be acting on the bill authorizing the release of funds for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund approved projects. In preparation, staff has obtained a site survey and now securing required environmental testing and reporting documentation. Once we execute the grant agreement with the DNR, the final acquisition activity can begin.

Staff News

- Longtime Administrative Assistant in the Parks and Recreation Department, Robin Faust, accepted a position in the Township Clerk's office in the role of Deputy Clerk. Although we will miss greatly, we are very happy for her and her promotion.
- We are pleased to announce the hiring of Bridget Cannon as our new Administrative Assistant who begins with us on Monday, May 10th. Bridget has experience in both local and state government and will be a great addition to our team!
- Emma Campbell has been working hard in the township's parks and land preserves with treating and removing invasive plants, developing restoration projects, hosting virtual trainings, promoting the Meridian Conservation Corp programs, and managing and leading Stewardship Saturdays with an average participation on 25 community volunteers. To help her expand on this work, we have hired Stewardship Intern, Rebecca Fisher from MSU.
- Other positions we are interviewing for currently are Assistant Naturalists at Harris Nature Center, Seasonal Maintenance Worker in Parks, and Park Ranger.

Harris Nature Center (HNC) welcomed a new Eastern Screech Owl at named Eclipse.



Programs:

- Love a Park Day/Month – In order to better accommodate people’s schedules, as well as, to respect COVID precautions, we will soon be posting projects in parks that potential volunteers can select to do and do them within their own time schedule.
- Youth Sports are Back!
 - Youth Soccer registration took place over the last few weeks with a total of 480 youth participating. Mike created rosters, confirmed coaches, finalized schedules, conducted coaches meetings and we are finally back in action with practices.
 - Registrations for youth Baseball, Softball and Tee Ball are also completed with work toward getting that program up and in running in a couple of weeks.
 - Adult sports registration is currently open for softball, sand volleyball and kickball.
- Our Senior Exercise Group is meeting outdoors in the Central Park pavilion on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings with 30-50 participants.
- Deer Management Program ended with record numbers! Our volunteer archery program culled 176 deer and the extended cull lead by our Police Department culled an additional 150 for a total harvest of 326 deer. Our final report is attached.
- HNC is accepting registrations for summer camps with great success!
- HNC virtual Programs have gone National! – Kati and Allison conducted a virtual science lesson to a classroom of students from an elementary school in Missouri! Talk about taking your show on the road!
- The Farmers Market is now open every Saturday from 8am -1pm at Marketplace on the Green starting May 1. We have “70” booth spaces rented for opening day! This is definitely a record!
- Our Maintenance Team has been going full tilt preparing and opening the parks, park restrooms, mowing, and preparing fields for play. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated staff!
- HNC conducted their Native Plant Sale event that concluded May 1st with record gross sales of over \$6,000.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Maintain accreditation and meet newly added standards through the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police and the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission while preparing for our 2022 onsite assessment.

The Department continues to work at maintaining accreditation with regular review of policies and procedures as well as providing approximately 700 proofs of compliance annually.

Work diligently toward full staffing (41) and provide opportunities that promote employee retention.

- On May 24, 2021, the Department will swear in four new officers: Megan and Maggie Cole who graduated from the Lansing Community College Police Academy (May 17th), Bryant Martin who graduated from Kalamazoo Valley Community College Police Academy (May 6th) and Taya Catherwood, a graduate of Mott Community College Police Academy.
- The Department is celebrating the retirement of Assistant Chief Brad Bach on May 14, 2021, after his 25 1/2 years of service to Meridian Township. His wife, Lynne Bach is also retiring as the Records Supervisor for the police department. Heidi LaFargue has been promoted to Records Unit Supervisor.
- Officer Kevin Harvey is leaving the law enforcement profession after 10 years with Meridian Township and moving to Traverse City to pursue other career options.
- On May 7, Lieutenant Rick Grillo was promoted to Captain and Sergeant Bart Crane was promoted to Lieutenant.
- The Department’s current staffing level is 38 sworn officers. We have three officer positions open and one police records technician position currently open.

Continue collective efforts to foster an environment that is welcoming, diverse and inclusive.

All Meridian officers attended Cultural Competency training provided by Darnell Blackburn of PRATT LCC in April

2021.

With the latest hires, the police department is at 23.7% female officers. The national average is 12.5% of sworn officers are women. We continue to work toward a more inclusive and diverse department.

Prepare staff for succession due to retirements or promotions through training and mentoring.

Sergeant Brian Canen completed first line supervisor training through Michigan State University. Officer Megan Klein has recently been assigned to the Investigation Unit. Officer Klein will focus mostly on fraud crimes.

Four officers are currently attending Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) this week. CIT is a 40 hour class that instructs officers on how to manage people who are in mental health crisis. Approximately half of our officers are trained in CIT.

Implement new technology to improve our ability to operate remotely during an emergency or pandemic situation.

The Department deployed a new in-car computer in one of the patrol cars. We are testing this new technology in hopes it will improve our ability to attend meetings and training remotely from our patrol cars.

Implementation of the Mental Health Telehealth program and policy has exceeded expectations as a pilot program. Patients in crisis can speak to a mental health professional remotely using an iPad provided by our officers. The system has been used eight times in less than two months with three of those patients not being transported and receiving the care they need remotely.

Work toward implementation of the new countywide public safety radio networks to enhance communication and operations.

Several officers are attending training on the new radio system. These officers will teach department personnel how to navigate and operate the new system that is projected to go live this fall.

PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING

Solar Project at Service Center

Absolute Environmental Solutions has advised us that they will be starting the installation of the rooftop solar panels at the Service Center on Monday July 12th. They anticipate that it will take 2 weeks to install all the panels. We should be fully operational and generating electricity by early August.

Local Road Program

The initial concrete pre-work for the 2021 Local Road Program will start the week of May 10th. KMI Road Maintenance will be performing all of our concrete work for us this this year. The first public notice will be going out this week to advise the impacted residents of the upcoming work. Consumers Energy is also coordinating gas lines replacements in concert with our local roadwork.

The resurfacing work is planned of start the first week of June following the initial concrete and gas line replacements. The following 8.87 miles will be resurfaced this year: Skyline, Pine Hollow, Mereford, Fenwick, Overglen, Kingcross, Shaw, Potter, Edson, Colby, Park (Lake Lansing), Cliffdale, White Ash, Buckingham, Sapphire, Sequoia, Comanche, Cochise, Tomahawk, Tomahawk Circle, Lagoon, Wausau, Osage, Seneca, Ivywood, Mistywood, Spicewood, Silverwood, Shortwood, Oakwood, Indian Glen Mojave, Farm Meadows, Cherrywood, Butternut, Conifer Circle, Autumnwood, Timberview, Fairhillsand Rainbow Court. Michigan Paving and Materials will be the contractor for the 2021 program.

As in the first year of the program, we will have a fulltime inspector on the project to respond to resident concerns and to verify that the work performed by the paving contractor meets our specifications.

Powell Road Paving SAD

The Powell Road Paving Project and associated special assessment is substantially complete. The most difficult part

of the project, excavating the poor soils and building the new road base, has been completed. The installation of the curb and the start of paving is expected to start in the next few weeks.

The original construction estimate was \$460,000 for the project, but they did encounter additional organic soils that had to be removed beyond what was originally estimated. This additional work resulted in an increase of \$44,269.71 for a new total of \$504,269.71. The proposed property assessments will reflect the new cost, and are distributed by frontage amongst the parcels in the SAD.

Resolution #4, which sets the required final public hearing, is before the Township Board on May 6, 2021.

Okemos Road Community Project Funding

We received word this week that our Okemos Road Project submittal was not selected by Representative Slotkin to advance to the full U.S. House of Representative Committee for consideration. This was our joint \$5.58 Million request with the Ingham County Road Department to completely reconstruct and improve Okemos Road from Grand River to south of Clinton. Although it had significant economic development and stormwater elements, it was construed as a road project that was not identified in the current Tri-County Planning Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and therefore less competitive to the other applications. Our next step is to work with the County and get the Okemos Road project identified and approved in the upcoming TIP, so it is eligible for normal Federal and State road funding opportunities and future earmarks.

MSU to Lake Lansing Pathway

Acquisition work continues on phase I of the MSU to Lake Lansing pathway. Securing the easements along the back of several properties has been difficult. Environmental contamination on several parcels has also slowed the process and required the need to environmental assessments to protect the Township. We are on target to complete the process and be ready to bid late this summer, with construction beginning this fall.

The necessary agreement with DTN has been secured, and we are proceeding with preparing the project for bid. We are planning a summer construction of this phase. This portion of the pathway will connect Park Lake/Grand River with Okemos Road.

A subset of this phase is IIb, which is the widening of the existing pathway along Okemos Road from Gaylord C Smith Court to the Inter Urban Pathway. Work on this portion of the project is expected to start in June.

Phase III preliminary work has started with input from the Ingham County Park Department. This phase will connect the eastern end of the Inter Urban to both Lake Lansing Park north and south. The envisioned route will go under the Marsh Road Bridge along the north side of the tracks and head in a northeast direction to the Green Road RR crossing. From that general area, it would loop back along Green Road and connect to the existing pathway.

One portion of phase III that will be constructed this summer is the short connector between Lake Lansing Park South and Haslett Road. This will be constructed in conjunction with the Ingham County Nemoka Drain project to limit disturbances. Bids for this portion are due on Tuesday, May 18, 2021.

Pathway Master Plan Update

The Meridian Township Pathway System was started in 1974, and currently encompasses over 70 miles of pathway and 36 miles of paved shoulders. The program is funded by a dedicated pathway millage consistently approved by the voters of the Township. The current millage (0.3308) approved in 2016, annually provides approximately \$600,000 to maintain, leverage grant funding and construct new pathways throughout the community as identified in the Pathway Master Plan.

Our most recent update to the Pathway Master Plan was in 2016, and we aspire to have a formal review and affirmation every five (5) years to keep it current and reflective of the needs of the community. To accomplish this review, we present the existing plan to various Boards and Commissions to solicit input from the membership and the community at-large, and ultimately have the Township Board formally adopt the vetted Master Plan update.

The update has two parts, and includes a recommended 5-year priority plan identified by the Department of Public Works (DPW) and a list of additions recommended for inclusion in the revised plan. These recommendations originate from a variety of sources including the public.

After we present the Master Plan to various Boards and Commissions this month, we plan to have the item on for discussion and the setting of a public hearing for your June 1st meeting. The holding of the public hearing and consideration for adoption would occur at your June 15, 2021 meeting.

RRFB Pedestrian Crossings

As pathway safety enhancements, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) were installed at the pedestrian crossing on Central Park Drive, that services the Farmers Market and Central Park, and the pedestrian crossing at Haslett and Van Atta Road. Both are operational and ready to assist pedestrians with crossing both of these busy roads.



Gateway Signage Plan

Our signage consultant, Corbin Design, is currently preparing the final sign plan for the Township using our current branding standards and logo. We should have the final document for our review next week. The sign master plan will provide designs, sign types, guidelines and locations for our future Township signage.

The plan will identify designs for the new gateway signs at the community entrances, monument and wayfinding signs for the Municipal complex, and sign types for the park identification signs.

Once we finalize the plan, they will assist us with cost estimates, fabrication specifications and the installation of the new signs at our identified locations.

Broadband

Last week we met with the Ingham County Administrator, Gregg Todd, and a representative from the Connect Michigan organization. The Connect Michigan organization has provided broadband consulting services to many communities throughout the State of Michigan and they provided us with an overview of their services.

As we have discussed, utilizing a survey to determine the community needs and receiving recommendations based on the responses is a critical first step that needs to be undertaken for us to move forward. Connect Michigan has strong experience in providing both of these services, and it appears likely that the County is willing to fund a study that we can use for our community and that will fit our needs for our goal.