



To: Board Members
From: Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager
Date: August 9, 2021
Re: Manager's Semi-Annual Report

ASSESSING

The Township's Board of Review has completed the Board of Review meetings required by statute. The March meeting is an opportunity for property owners to appeal their assessment and apply for property exemptions. The Board of Review also meets one day in July and one day in December. The purpose of these meetings is to correct specific errors relative to the assessment of property and consider exemptions for poverty and veterans.

Currently, three Michigan Tax Tribunal (MTT) appeals remain to be resolved for 2020. Twelve appeals have been received for the 2021 tax year. The taxable value in contention for the 2021 appeals represents just 0.41 percent of the Township's total 2021 tax base. Efforts will be made to determine which of the pending cases can be resolved without a trial and which, if any, may need to be defended at trial.

With restrictions lifted earlier this year the appraisers have resumed field work, updating records to include new construction. Due to several staff changes within the Department, we did not hire interns to complete summer inspections this year. The intention is to hire interns to support the assessing staff with reappraisals next year.

COMMUNICATIONS

Upgrade and Refresh Township Website



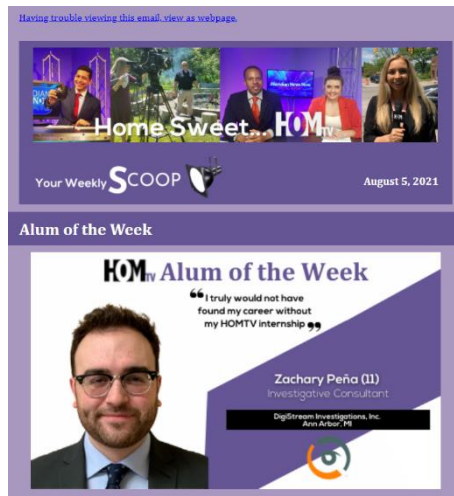
The Communications Team has been attending weekly project meetings for the Township website redesign project. The homepage wireframe has been approved, the main navigation sitemap has been completed and the full website design has been approved. The project is now in the third phase of the project which is the Development Phase. Content creator workflow changes, site development and content migration is included in this phase of the project. Once these steps are complete, the development site will be reviewed, the website will be transferred to staging and any additional training of the new site will be conducted. Currently, the estimated go live date is November 2021. Staff continues updating content on the current website to make for a smoother transition to the newly designed website. Staff also has been attending Granicus University training sessions on workflow management, new widgets and components, ADA compliance and content clean-up.

Marketing and Communications

The Communications Team has been training and working with key marketing contributors from various Township Departments to assist with flyers, social posts, photos and graphics. One tool that we have shared with other department teams is the Canva team collaboration software. This makes it very easy to assist other departments with brand standards (fonts, colors, etc.) for marketing pieces.

The Township's various social media platforms continue to be a great way to connect with the community and provide necessary information. Since January, our social media accounts for the Township have grown substantially, with our greatest communication platform being our NextDoor account. This account now reaches over 11,000 households which is over 50% of the residents in the Township and it is still growing. We are also building our audience by following the analytics closer and posting content that engages our target audience.

A new Prime Meridian Magazine was designed and printed in March. Another issue is expected to be printed and delivered to the community in September.



With the assistance of our summer social media interns, the Communications Department began sending out a HOMTV digital newsletter called Home Sweet HOMTV – Your Weekly Scoop. This newsletter is sent to a list of approximately 3,100 subscribers with an average open rate of 30% and a click rate of 10%, which is high when compared to the industry average.

T-shirt Fundraisers started by the Communications team, continue to be a success for the Township. Meridian Cares has raised over \$500, to date, and this year we added the HOMTV Supporter (community fundraiser) and HOMie4Life (HOMTV Alumni) t-shirt campaigns, which have both helped raise money for the HOMTV Internship program. We are hoping to add a Township campaign very soon.



The Communications Department celebrated our HOMTV Interns on National Intern Day, July 29. This year was the first year we opened the event up to the community. We provided a picnic luncheon, games, drawings and even a little dancing. We were joined by other Township Department interns, Township Board members, Management Staff and some community members.

As part of the new social media strategy, the Communications Team added new project management software. This software will allow for better team collaboration, task management and content organization.

HOMTV Operations & Equipment

HOMTV continues producing and televising both virtual and in-person Township Board and Commission meetings. HOMTV interns have been re-introduced into the production as crew and on-air talent for HOMTV's coverage of Township meetings. The live meeting coverage can be viewed live on the HOMTV channel, website, Facebook and YouTube. Meetings are also available on-demand at www.homtv.net.

Hybrid Township meetings have also been produced for the first time. Staff worked with the IT Department to ensure equipment was configured correctly in order to broadcast the hybrid meetings to the public, without issue.



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 as well as install new equipment. A new encoder for CAMTV was installed, as well as a new encoder for Swagit that provides live closed captioning for all Township meetings. The existing equipment and cabling are currently being labeled and organized, while continuing to remove any old equipment or cables as needed. Disposal of the outdated surplus equipment will occur this fall. Staff will attempt to sell the equipment that still has value and recycle or dispose of the rest of the equipment, once approved to do so.

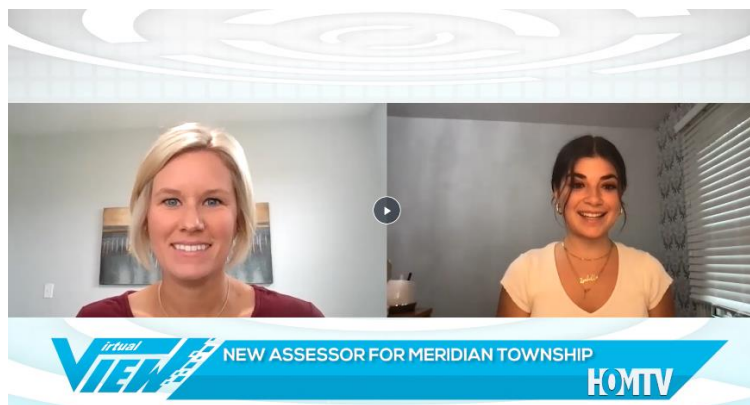


HOMTV Programming & Internship



HOMTV has resumed in-studio productions with the live newscast, Meridian News Now, produced weekly. Nearly 20 intern stories air in each weekly Meridian News Now show. Each month, HOMTV begins expanding program offerings on the channel of both returning and new shows: All About Animals, Your Choice 2021 May Special Election coverage, Meet Your Elected Officials and the Summer Concert Series.

Although many in-person programs, stories and interviews have returned, HOMTV staff and interns have adapted to also include virtual programming as well. Some virtual programs include Virtual View and a new Back to School series airing in August/September. Providing both in-person and virtual productions has expanded programming at HOMTV.



The Summer 2021 Semester of the HOMTV Internship Program started virtually at the end of May. The first three weeks of the internship were conducted virtually, so that staff could train the interns before returning to in-person. Once the interns started in-person, training increased and interns were given opportunities to shoot and edit their own stories in the field with HOMTV equipment. Due to the internship being in-person this semester, the interns have been able to gain more hands-on experience in the studio, field and control room than most of the recent

semester interns. This semester consisted of 14 new interns and 3 returning interns. The summer semester will end on August 20 and the fall semester will begin in early September.



COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

In the first half of the year, staff reviewed and approved an amendment to the Senior Living project in downtown Haslett and two amendments to the Village of Okemos project. The Downtown Haslett project is nearing Building Permit submittal. Staff has spent considerable time working with Neighborhoods and Economic Development Director Clark in reviewing the details behind the Village of Okemos project to bring the project closer to construction.

Finalize the Draft of the Form Based Code for the Western Portion of Grand River Avenue

Further work on the Form Based Code is on hold pending the discussion from the joint Township Board/Planning Commission meeting scheduled for August 9.

Begin the Review of the Future Land Use Map as Part of an Overall Review and Possible Update to the Master Plan

This is expected to be a 'carry over' goal for the Planning Commission going into 2022, which will bridge into the Comprehensive Plan update, expected to start in late 2022.

Revise the Sign Ordinance so it is Content Neutral

The Planning Commission subcommittee met with Staff in July to kick this process off. A draft is expected to be presented by Staff to the subcommittee in August, with an eye towards a public hearing at the Planning Commission level in October or November.

Continue to Assist the Planning Commission with the Review of the Mixed Use Planned Unit Development Ordinance

In June, the Planning Commission made a positive recommendation on an update to the Mixed Use Planned Unit Development Ordinance and the matter was forwarded to the Township Board. A joint meeting is scheduled for August 9th for the two groups to discuss the matter.

Provide the Rental Housing Inspectors with Tablets and Create an Interactive Inspection Checklist to Streamline Inspection Reporting/ Evaluate the Need for an Additional Rental Housing Inspector

Staff is working through a process mapping exercise to determine what changes need to be made to the rental inspection process. We have partially transitioned to having tablets in the field and are improving our renewal processes. The recommendation was made in early June to convert one of the part time inspector positions to full time in order to provide the Township with full coverage throughout the week, which was approved by the Township Manager. Thus far, this has been successful and we will continue to evaluate staffing needs going forward.

Provide the Building Inspectors with Laptops to Better Facilitate Working, Communicating and Meeting Remotely

The Building Inspectors have been outfitted with tablets that are effectively facilitating their field work. Further technology updates will be evaluated in the future.

Continue the Discussion with the City of Mason to Provide Increased Building Services and Evaluate the Cost and Staffing Needed for the Township to Provide Additional Services

The City of Mason's Community Development Director and Meridian Township's Community Planning and Development Director finalized an updated contract for building services in mid-June. The new contract would hold costs for Mason, while clarifying the extent of work expected by Meridian Township Staff. The contract is currently under review by the Mason City Attorney and once approved by the City Council, it will be brought back to the Township Board for final review and approval.

Work with the City of East Lansing on Improvements to Scheduling, Reporting Inspection Results and Communication Relating to Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing permits

A meeting is scheduled for August 19th with the East Lansing Building Official and inspectors to work through some scheduling and communication concerns. We hope to update our overall processes and streamline our administrative load as a result of this meeting.

Continue to Monitor and Update Permit Applications Used by the Department

This is an ongoing task that Staff continues to work on. In conjunction with the Township website update, we have already updated some forms and will continue to evaluate our forms for usability in advance of the website launch.

In addition to the Department's yearly goals, the following additional items warrant highlighting:

- Our new Code Enforcement officer started in July and is already making a positive impact in the community. He has started further work on Winslow Mobile Home Park, which continues to be the source for a number of code enforcement issues.
- The Buddy's on Grand River Avenue has commenced construction and the Haslett Marathon construction has begun vertical construction.
- The initial phases of the Elevation project have received occupancy and the owner is beginning to prepare for the final phase.
- Demolition of the former Donley Elementary is complete and the installation on the solar array on the property has commenced.
- The first homes have received occupancy in Copper Creek and several other homes are under construction. Permits have been issued for the first homes in the Silverstone Estates subdivision.
- Work continues on Joe's on Jolly, Red Cedar Manor, Chief Okemos Circle, and a number of other commercial projects.
- Special Use Permits have been approved for Sparrow Health Systems for a joint medical office/standalone emergency room building, EROP, LLC for a drive through carwash, Mr. R's Driving School for a driver's education course in a parking lot, Lansing Mart Associates for a retention pond in the floodplain, and for excavation in the floodplain at 4681 Nakoma Drive.
- A rezoning request was been approved for the Sparrow project at 2446 Jolly. Further requests are still being considered for the property at 1999 Saginaw and 5114 Jo Don. A request to rezone the property at the northwest corner of Grand River and Powell Road was withdrawn by the applicant.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ITEM	LAUNCH STATUS	COMPLETION STATUS	OTHER NOTES
Community Survey Cobalt Community Research	Monday July 21st after the board gave final approval for survey with no question related to Marihuana issued	Wave 1 for responses in mailboxes July 14 th and close of the survey August 24 th , analysis and draft report August 25 th	Currently with first wave we have 235 responses. Verification of ADA AA Compliance for different abilities of residents to respond. Only expected 350 total responses
Midwest Power Business Retention	Rezoning request if approved by Planning Commission would put Midwest Power out of business at that site	With the approved rezoning for the Sparrow project the property owner will leave the Township should the development continue forward. They will occupy a vacant space in Alaedion Twp. In the temporary with hopes to come back to Meridian.	How do we prepare in advance for the return of Midwest Power company or the like business?
Downtown Development Authority	DDA celebration is cancelled. DDA held a Joint study Session Monday August 2 nd with subcommittee members for Village of Okemos development. They continue to work through the approved amendments to the MUPUD as Director Schmitt gave partial approval. A public video will be prepared to discuss next steps of the project.	DDA will meet for a special meeting to confirm the support of the Village of Okemos project and establish incentive programs to push development forward in the DDA. The Township board will have final approval for the public assistance of the Village of Okemos.	The TruNorth Development team for the Village of Okemos LLC has until August 31 st to present a formal ask of public assistance for the project in relation to the DDA TIF and Brownfield TIF

Economic Development Corporation	EDC complete Celebrate Meridian Summer program with confirmed activities with the Meridian Motor Days contribution of \$3000. High Caliber Karting is the major sponsor and coordinator of the event to be set Sept 4 th . Over 200 cars and 15 category prizes to bring back activity to the Marketplace and Meridian Mall	This event is the end of “Celebrate Meridian” events the EDC will contribute time and funding to for 2021. With the growth of the local car enthusiasts club we hope to make Meridian Motor days an annual event.	High Caliber’s expansion at the Mall will follow on September 18, 2021. 25,000 sqft of renovations for entertainment.
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
House of Soles Community Collaborative Shoe Drive	House of Soles wants to partner with local nonprofit for gently used or new shoes to be donated at their event August 6 & 7 th . Meridian Township staff and Public Safety were in attendance to show communal support	Thanks to Meridian Township Police and Fire, thanks to local sponsors and WiLX for featuring the local business! Great way to show support to a MBE during Minority Business month.	
LEAP PAFC Art grant	Selection of the art piece has been established for Dane Porter the local artist selected for the LEAP PFAC. A committee of 5 members including a Township Trustee selected the artist through the RFP process. The selection of the piece was done administratively with the selection committees final vote/	First installment payments are to be presented to the artist by August 20 th 2021 to pay for the design and materials of the piece	Installation still on course for October 31, 2021.
Ribbon Cuttings	Lil Emil’s in Meridian Mall	Women owned business bringing traditional authentic Italian to the food court in Meridian Mall	Expected ribbon cuttings for: Williams Auto One Breakfast Skillet

FINANCE

2020 Township Audit

The annual audit along with the single audit has been presented and approved by the Board. All the required filings have also been submitted to the State of Michigan and other various agencies.

2022 Township Budget

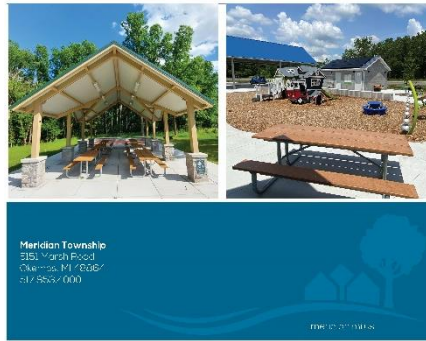
The Department is working on the final calculations for the 2022 budget and will have the budget distributed to the Board on August 27, 2021. The Board will have the first discussion on September 7, 2021.



2022

Budget

Charter Township of Meridian



State of Michigan Uniform Chart of Accounts

Finance is working with BS&A to get the existing account numbers changed over to the new recommended chart of accounts. This should be completed within the next month.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

10th Outdoor Warning Siren

Our tenth siren has been installed in the area of Lake Lansing Road and Park Lake.



Administrative Policies/Guidelines Update

All Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines (SOPs/SOGs) are being reviewed for content and updated. The following SOPs and SOGs have been completed:

- Restricted Duty
- Long Term Absence Return to Work Guideline
- Bloodborne Infectious Disease Exposure Control Plan
- Biohazard Waste Handling
- Advanced Life Support Medical Vehicle Equipment Removal Policy

We are currently working on the following:

- Knox Box Key Policy
- Lock-Out-Tag-Out Policy
- Leave Time Policies
- Complaints Policy
- Homeland Security Advisory and Station Lock Down Policy
- Three Station EMS Response Policy (Dispatch)

Fire Department Promotions

In 2020, five firefighters were promoted and their swearing in ceremony was delayed because of the COVID pandemic. In June, we were able to have a swearing in ceremony allowing family and Township employees to attend.

- Rudy Gonzales (Captain)
- Ryan Campbell (Captain)
- Jason Hillard (Lieutenant)
- Chris Johnson (Lieutenant)
- TJ Booms (Lieutenant)
- Tavis Millerov (Fire Marshal), promoted in 2021



Vacancies

As of July 30, we have filled all vacancies. We are expecting a vacancy in October and will be working on an application process in early August.

- Benjamin Haviland start date August 9th

Technology

In 2019, all of Ingham County Fire and Police were approved to move from our current radio system (MACOM) to the State MPSC 800 megahertz radio system. The start date was originally summer of 2020, but with COVID this was delayed. We have a go live date of September 8, 2021. All new radios have been delivered and system testing has been completed. Over the next two months, the mobile radios will be installed in all emergency response vehicles. Each firefighter is required to complete eight hours of training on the system prior to going live.

We have added CAD license to each of our EMS computers. This gives us important dispatch information such as patient dispositions, hydrant locations, Pre-incident plans, and more. Additionally, a map with directions will give us exact locations of each call. This also supports closest vehicle dispatching knowing exact location of each fire

truck or ambulance.

Training

We have spent 2021 planning required training that was canceled due to COVID. Additionally, we were able to send three individuals to the NFPA Inspector course. This is part of a new process to provide our Fire Marshal with additional trained firefighters that can support fire prevention activities during his absence.

Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV)

Our Polaris 2000 G Pro XD UTV was delivered in late June with other parts received in July. As of July 15, the UTV is fully functional and ready to respond to emergencies.



Fire Department Operations

As of July 23, we moved to a new dispatching process for EMS calls. Our 32 square mile Township fire response district was divided into three separate fire districts based on station locations and response drive times. Dispatch now sends the closest vehicle based on the location of the emergency. If that station is already on a call, the next closest will be dispatched. This replaces our previous process in which all three stations were activated during an emergency and the firefighters would have to determine which station was the closest.

HUMAN RESOURCES



COVID-19 Workplace Guidance

The Township's Safe Work from Home Program concluded on June 1st. Employees returned to the office, permitting us to resume more normal operations and regular interactions with our residents. We continue to monitor the latest information from MDHHS, MIOSHA, CDC, Ingham County Health Department and updates from the Governor's

office regarding best practices and requirements to get through the global pandemic as safely as possible. We appreciate employee compliance with the safety measures and expectations set for the Township.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Training

In January, our DEI Task force created its mission statement, *“To promote and support a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce through training, evaluation, and action.”* We united our MTEAM, and Trustees Wisinski and Jackson (the latter two also happen to be on our task force) to attend a 4-hour introductory session with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. We gathered via Zoom to learn about ourselves and each other on the topic of implicit bias. Training opportunities will continue with regularity through multiple trainers. Leaders and employees will be invited to attend training on various DEI-related topics.

Employee Traffic Report

- 28 Unique Job Postings (some were for multiple vacancies for a single job title), including 3 Promotional Processes have been completed since January
 - New Employees
 - 11 Regular full-time
 - 1 Regular part-time
 - 3 Board/Commission members
 - 18 Irregular part-time (15 seasonal & 3 cadets)
 - Separations
 - 5 Retirements
 - 12 Departures (8 FTE, 4 PTE)

Leaves of Absence

- 12 Family & Medical Leaves of Absence

Workers’ Compensation

- 10 Workers’ Compensation Claims (3 lost time)

Benefits Related HR Work

- June - Completed MML/Meadowbrook Township walk-through and Loss Prevention (We were fortunate to enjoy another excellent review by our Meadowbrook Workers’ Comp Loss Control Consultant, and for another year we have received a Modification Factor below 1.0. Thank you to all who contribute to this level of mindfulness in safety practices across the Township, which helps in keeping costs low.)
- July - Began 2022 Healthcare Renewal Process with Gallagher (Our annual strategy meeting with Gallagher Benefits Consultants was conducted through a virtual meeting. We will continue to monitor insurance claims reports as there is some return to normalcy in the reopening of all healthcare providers and elective medical procedures picking back up. Our healthcare consultants are closely monitoring statistical trends to provide the best predictors for 2022. We expect new rates and other bids to be available in late September for review with our Township Healthcare Coalition.
- July - Completed the MML Wage & Benefit Survey
- July - Completed the MML Workers’ Compensation Payroll Renewal

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SQL Server Replacement



In order to accommodate upgrades to our BS&A accounting systems, we have fast tracked the installation of a replacement Microsoft SQL server. The new server is expected to be online by mid-August.

Police Department New Devices



The technology team assisted the Police Department with the deployment of a new mobile device intended to give police personnel a tool to streamline the path to assistance with services not normally provided directly by our police department.

IPad & Email for all Full Time Workers (DPW & Grounds)



As the number of mobile devices used in the Public Works Department was beginning to approach the total number of employees, the decision was made to change the deployment model, and assign a device to each employee. This simultaneously increased accountability for the devices, and opened up a myriad of possible enhancements to improve employee communication and productivity.

Open Time Clock



IT Technicians assisted the Public Works & Grounds operations with an electronic alternative to the historically used physical time card system. While the purpose of the project was to replace the antiquated time clock, the system users are exploring use of many of the other features built into the system, such as leave management.

VSphere Environment Repair & Upgrades

After a certificate corruption error with the Township's virtual server infrastructure, the technology team solicited help from an outside vendor to rebuild the certificate infrastructure required to streamline access to Township servers. While completing this work, plans were made to assist with the replacement of the Township's three hosts providing virtual computing power. This work will continue through the fall.

Network Backup Infrastructure Rebuild

After problems with compression of file server backups, the data stores where the backups are housed were re-initialized, and the new technicians were instructed in design of backup systems and the execution of full and incremental backups.

Switch & Fiber Maintenance



IT staff continues to troubleshoot problems with the fiber connection between the Township Hall and the Service Center. While the circuit is performing at over 99% capacity, staff is working to restore it to the +99.99% capacity currently being observed on our other fiber connections.

IT Staff Training

With two new staff members with relatively little in-field experience, there were several important training initiatives that took place in the first half of 2021. IP networking & Computer System Administration were the focus of most of the trainings thus far.

Help Desk Knowledgebase

IT staff continues connecting local systems to a remote help desk service provided by Logicalis.

Exiting from Protocols & Procedures Enacted in Response to COVID-19

There were just shy of 100 public meetings hosted by the technology team in the first six months of this year, and fewer than 10 of those have been in the last 30 days. If public health conditions cooperate, we should be on track to eliminate virtual meetings before the end of the year. Unfortunately, with news on trends moving into the fall months, we remain prepared to move back to increased virtual operations across the organization.

HVAC System Integration

With the completion of a multi-million dollar HVAC project, we are working with buildings staff to make sure that the system is properly integrated and sending electronic notifications of any system conditions that require a hands-on response. Servers are accessible across the network, and email notifications seem to be working well at this time.

Workstation & Printer Replacements

Staff is about 50% of the way through deployment of workstations & printers planned for replacement in 2021 and on track to finish those over the third quarter.

Remote Access Activity

In the first half of the year, staff 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.

Telecom Review

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

PARKS & RECREATION

Recreation

- Youth sports returned this summer with successful soccer, baseball, softball and t-ball programs.
- Registration for fall soccer took place in July along with youth flag football. These programs will run in September and October with over 600 registrations received thus far.
- Adult sports programs also took place this summer for softball, sand volleyball and kickball.
- Mike Devlin created Sporties for Shorties in 2000 for children ages 3, 4 and 5 to provide fun activities that promote gross motor skill development and socialization. This program has been going strong for almost 21 years and shows no sign in slowing down! Since June, Mike has taught 22 classes with 20 students each. Classes will continue through the fall.

Harris Nature Center

- Summer Camp enrollment was at an all-time high of 526 participants
- Participated virtually in the MSU Science Festival in April and May – 12 schools/6 districts (including Bay City and a district in Missouri!) – presented virtual programs to 404 students
- New ADA compliant automatic doors were installed this summer along with a new concrete sidewalk approach at the building's entrance.
- The new pavilion/patio and restroom building projects were completed and opened to the public.
- The former wet lab was totally renovated into a more functional classroom with carpet and bench seating.
- Maintenance and improvements were made to the Nature Exploration Area.
- The new bird viewing deck was completed and opened along the blue trail. This project was funded by the HNC Foundation and the Capital Region Community Foundation.



Park Maintenance Special Projects

- Removed old boardwalk along the trails in Central Park and Legg Park and repaired the trails for better stability and accessibility.
- Installed a new trail in Hillbrook Park and surfaced with road millings for a durable surface.
- Transplanted the elm tree at the Historical Village away from the new restroom building. The tree is now flourishing!
- Custom built a collapsible bollard for emergency access at Nancy Moore Park that proved to be quite successful. We will continue to build and install more at appropriate pathway entrances.
- Structurally renovated the Gazebo in the Historical Village.
- Installed wind screens at the Towner Road Park pickleball courts.
- In conjunction with ReLeaf of Michigan, planted 13 trees in Central Park South.
- Replenished safety surface in all playgrounds.

Parks

- There have been 287 pavilion rental reservations from May through July this year. Our pavilions also receive a large amount of non-reserved use.
- Deer Management – Preparations are underway for the 2021 Deer Management Program. Hunter applications are streaming in! MSU's Demmer Center is still closed to the public. They will be sending staff to conduct on-site proficiency testing during the hunter orientation meeting in August.
- LEAP Art Grant – Working with selection committee and finalizing sculpture.
- 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update is underway. The Park Commission is finalizing the community survey and much of the base data has already been updated.
- John Grettenberger Memorial in the Historical Village – Jane Greenway is leading this joint project with the Friends of Historic Meridian to plant an oak tree and install a bronze plaque in the Village. Bill Cawood and his wife Julie are funding the cost of the \$1,500 plaque. The dedication is tentatively scheduled for September 18.
- Memorial Bench and Tree –Val Lafferty of Haslett funded three memorial benches and native trees for installation in Marshall Park.
- Memorial Bench – Resident, Carolyn Boegner donated a bench for placement at Nancy Moore Park basketball court because that is where her granddaughter plays.

Grant Coordination

Staff has been working diligently to finalize grant reimbursement requests to the DNR for the following projects: Historical Village Footbridge and Restroom Project; Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector; HNC restroom; and the HNC Pavilion Project.

Okemos Road Acquisition Grant

We are working closely with the DNR throughout this acquisition process and are awaiting approval of the updated appraisal. Once received, we will meet the property owner to present the formal purchase agreement.

Senior Center

- A new large umbrella was installed in the courtyard at the outdoor patio area. Smaller table umbrellas were also installed to provide shade for members utilizing the outdoor space.
- Prior to May 16, all programs offered were virtually.
- Seniors were welcomed back on June 16 with limited enrollment and spaced out programs to allow for cleaning between programs.
- In May and June, a total of 72 programs were offered with 185 participants.
- In July and August, 54 programs were offered with 15 participants (as of August 5).

Farmers' Market

- Saturday markets continue to be a popular destination for our residents and visitors from surrounding communities. Approximately 65 vendors participate each week with 3,000 visitors.
- Wednesday markets began on July 1 with an average of 30 vendors and approximately 600 customers.
- New this year is live music from 6:00pm-9:00pm on the Marketplace Stage in July and August. These concerts have become increasingly popular each week and are funded by a donation from Orthopedic Rehab Specialists on Marsh Road.



Stewardship in Parks and Preserves

- 2021 stewardship volunteer hours = 592 hours completed
- 19 workdays completed removing invasive species, planting native species, and cleaning up trash at preserves and parks.
- 2 new programs were launched in the "Summer Stewardship Series":
 - Wednesday Warriors: weekday workdays to remove invasive species
 - Trailside Ecology: 1st Tuesday of every month, to bring residents out in various parks and preserves and familiarize them with local flora and fauna as well as Township properties
- Upcoming Programs for release later this year:
 - Planting a Native Meridian - education and outreach on native plants and the benefit they bring to our local ecosystems
 - Waterways Watch - education and outreach on how to get involved in programs to clean and benefit our local watershed systems
- Presented educational programs to the Women's League of Voters (Lansing Chapter), the Meridian Garden Club, and the Green Coffee Sustainability Group
- Began updating stewardship & management plans for each preserve; designing and ordering rule signage, tick education signage and name signs.

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.

The Department has created four (4) new committees comprised of officers, supervisors and civilian staff to provide guidance to the Department. One of those committees sole purpose is recruitment and retention, the other three are for social media, uniforms, and wellness.

Several individuals attending college and universities have been invited to visit MTPD and conduct ride-alongs to establish if the Department and the individual would be a good fit.

The Department's current staffing level is 37 sworn officers. We have four officer positions open.



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

All officers attended Cultural Competency Training provided by Darnell Blackburn of PRATT LCC in April 15, 2021.

With the latest hires, the 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 Andrew Tobias will be attending MSU School of Criminal Justice First Line Supervision in September. A Sergeant will be attending the upcoming MSU School of Criminal Justice School of Staff and Command. Several officers are scheduled to attend training for Emergency Vehicle Operations (safe operation of vehicles), Child Passenger Safety Training (correct installation of child seats – service offered to residents and non-residents), and Mobile Field Force (multijurisdictional training in case of a civil disturbance).

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

The Department has received new handheld radios from the county. Officers are currently being trained for the implementation of the new countywide radio system.

PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING

Solar Project at Service Center

The 142 kW solar panel system has been installed and is operational at the Service Center. The new solar array has 355 panels located on the roof, and will offset 100% of the annual energy usage at the facility.



Local Roads Program

The streets west of Lake Lansing (Shaw, Potter, and Edson) have received their base paving. Once the Shaw Street pathway is completed, final paving will commence.

The Tacoma Hills neighborhood street paving is complete and restoration of the driveways and yards is expected to start next week.

Curb/gutter/sidewalk, base paving and milling work is underway on the remaining 2021 project roads. Road project updates are available on the Township webpage: <https://www.meridian.mi.us/government/township-goals-projects/2021-township-projects>



Pathways

Construction work has started on the Shaw connector and the Okemos Road widening (MSU-LL Phase IIb). Both of these projects are integral parts of the MSU to Lake Lansing Pathway.

The MSU to Lake Lansing Phase I and II will be bid this fall/winter with construction to start in the spring of 2022. Lots of work has been spent negotiating access and securing easements with the property owners along the route.

Two grants for the MSU to Lake Lansing Phase III grant have been submitted. One was to Ingham County and the other was a MNRTF grant to the State of Michigan.

The 2021 Pathway Master Plan has been approved by the Township Board and is now in use.

Drains

The consolidation of the Okemos Drain, Meijer's Drain and Grettenberger Drain was approved by the County Board of Determination at its July 29, 2021 meeting. Engineering and coordination with MDOT is underway.

The Daniels Drain project will commence in the next 60 days. We plan to hold a neighborhood meeting with our partners at the Ingham County Drain office and their consultants within the next few weeks. The history, need, construction plan and assessments will all be topics.

The Nemoka Drain project is 95% complete. Final paving and restoration work will be coordinated with our pathway and paving work on Shaw Street.



Gateway Sign Project

All sign design and renderings have been completed. Our engineering team is now working on location/easement work to site the new signs at the entrances to our community.

Broadband

Ingham County received six proposals for a county-wide broadband assessment consultant. They will be recommending Merit Network to the commissioners for approval this month. We look forward to collaborating with them on the assessment study.

Fall Recycling Event

The 2021 fall electronics-recycling event is scheduled for September 18 at the Chippewa Middle School from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.