

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2016

PRESENT: Commissioners: Deschaine, McDonald, Wilson
Staff: Parks and Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner; Parks and Land
Management Coordinator Jane Greenway; Parks and Recreation
Administrative Assistant II Robin Faust

EXCUSED: Commissioners Jaramillo, Stephens

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Wilson called the regular meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE MOVED, COMMISSION MCDONALD
SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED. Voice vote.
Motion passed.

3. Public Hearings

**a. Footbridge and Restroom Facility, Meridian Historical Village – Grant
Application**

- Chair Wilson declared the public hearing open at 7:10 pm.
- Staff presents project overview

Project Description

The Gateway Bridge and Accessible Restroom Building project proposes to develop an accessible restroom building and replace the footbridge bridge within Central Park-Historical Village, a popular community park in Meridian Township.

Justification

- When surveyed, restrooms and paved pathways received the highest priority by our residents.
- New restroom location will better serve visitors to the Historical Village and Central Park. The existing restrooms attached to the farmers' market pavilion are forty-two years old and have outlived their useful life.
- New Gateway Bridge will replace a wooden 6' wide Eagle Scout bridge that was built numerous years ago and has outlived its useful life.
- New bridge will open up the views and become the "Gateway" to the Historical Village and improve its identity and visibility.

Project Design

- The restroom will have two handicapped accessible unisex stalls with baby changing stations making them family friendly.

- The restroom building will be located in the Historical Village area of Central Park adjacent to the Chapel and Plank Road Toll House.
- Building will be designed in a style to complement the historical character of the Village.
- Bridge will be 14' wide with decorative railings
- New accessible drinking fountain with bottle filler

Project Cost:

Estimated project cost: \$300,000

Required local match: 50% (\$150,000) Park Millage Funds

LWCF Grant amount: 50% (\$150,000)

- Staff acknowledge received items of communications
 - ✓ Legal notice was placed in the Towne Courier on February 28, 2016 and March 6, 2016
 - ✓ Residents within 500 feet were sent a notification of the public hearing
 - ✓ From: Judy Linn, Re: communication of support
 - ✓ From: Park Commissioner Mark Stephens, RE: communication of support
- Public comment
None
- Commissioners comment
 - ✓ Appreciate the character of the restroom building that will fit with the rest of the historical building in the Historical Village
 - ✓ The bridge and restroom building are great additions and primary to implementation of the Central Park Master Plan.
- Chair Wilson declared the public hearing closed at 7:19 pm.

b. Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector, Central Park – Grant Application

- Chair Wilson declared the public hearing open at 7:20 pm.
- Staff presents project overview

Project Description

The Central Meridian Regional Trail Connection Project proposes to develop a 2,500 lf 12' wide accessible pathway with an accessible fishing platform in Central Park, a 279-acre community park located in the heart of Meridian Township. A trail head at the parking area in Central Park will provide a bicycle air pump/fix-it station; charging station for electric wheelchairs; and signage.

Justification

- ✓ Trail will provide a vital east-west accessible connection that is part of a regional trail plan that will connect Michigan State University to Lake Lansing

- ✓ Recreation survey revealed paved pathways and restrooms as the top desires of the community
- ✓ The Central Park Master Plan was developed in 2016 and trails are the backbone of the plan
- ✓ Grants allow us to better leverage our millage funds
- ✓ Paved trails meet our desires to design park amenities for the aging population and for persons with disabilities. Currently wheelchair users are not able to access this beautiful route through the park as it is seasonally wet and does not meet ADA standards.

Project Design

- ✓ This 12' wide pathway will be comprised of paved surface and boardwalk.
- ✓ A trail head at the parking area in Central Park will provide a bicycle air pump/fix-it station; charging station for electric wheelchairs; and signage.

Natural Resource Access

- ✓ Trail will provide opportunities for bird watching; fishing; and the enjoyment of many other park amenities.
- ✓ Accessible Fishing Platform will be located on the east side of the Central Park Pond. The fishing area will be fully accessible and will include lowered railings for wheelchair access, rod holders, and benches with room for companion seating. We plan to stock the pond to ensure a successful fishing experience.

Project Cost

Estimated project cost: \$395,000, Park Commission approved local match: 31% (\$122,450) Park Millage Funds; grant request (\$272,550)

Director Maisner stated this trail will connect Central Park from the Meridian Mall to Lake Lansing to MSU. This will be a wide open, safe, universal, hardscape for access for fishing off a deck. This is a warm water fishing area with bass, pike, perch walleye, blue gills, etc. A future feature is trail will access is the amphitheater. Staff has met with representatives from the Ingham County Drain Commissioners Office (ICDC) on improving the water quality and installation of hardscapes and baffle boxes to assist with water filtration. This is the potential of a joint water quality grant with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and a letter of support from the ICDC Office is forthcoming.

- Staff acknowledge received items of communications
 - ✓ Legal notice was placed in the Towne Courier on February 28, 2016 and March 6, 2016
 - ✓ Residents within 500 feet were sent a notification of the public hearing
 - ✓ From: Park Commissioner Mark Stephens, RE: communication of support
- Public comment

Chris Worst, Okemos, Michigan, an MSU Student support in support of the project and looks forward to using the trail connector.

- Commissioners comment
 - ✓ Support the project and look forward to working with the Drain Commissioner's Office on improving the water quality of the pond.
- Chair Wilson declared the public hearing closed at 7:40 pm.

4. **Presentations**

None

5. **Public Comment**

None

6. **Commissioner Reports and Comments**

Commissioner Deschaine reported the Love a Park Day is scheduled for April 23 and volunteered to write the letter inviting the volunteer groups to participate.

7. **Approval of Minutes**

- a. February 9, 2016 Work Session Meeting Minutes
- b. February 9, 2016 Regular Minutes

COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE MOVED, COMMISSIONER MCDONALD SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 9, 2016 MINTUES AS PRESENTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

8. **Communications**

A. Items to/from the Public

1. From: mParks 2016 Conference Committee; To: LuAnn Maisner; Re: Thank you for speaking at conference

B. Commission Information

1. Towne Courier: **Feb 7:** Nature center to host Valentine's Day program; 'The Birds of the Winter' at Harris Nature Center; **Feb 14:** "The Birds of the Winter" program at Harris Nature Center; Night ski or snowshoe Feb 20; **Feb 21:** Native plants available through April 29; "The Birds of the Winter" program at Harris Nature Center; "Brilliant Bats" at Harris Nature Center; **Feb 28:** Qigong classes at Harris Nature Center; Nature program and walk March 13; "Brilliant Bats" at Harris Nature Center; Native plants available for sale through April 29

C. Staff Inquiries/Response

None

D. Distributed at Meeting

1. March/April Calendar of Event

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE SECONDED, TO ACCEPT AND PLACE ITEMS OF COMMUNICATION ON FILE. Voice vote. Motion passed.

9. Director's Report

- ✓ Hartrick Park: vandalism during the recent snow storm, approximately \$1,200 damage, a police report was filed.
- ✓ Ingham County Trails Millage Meetings: At the last Task Force meeting, the board adopted the report that was developed by Mannik and Smith and Associates and will be moving forward with implementation.

10. New Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Grant Application - Footbridge and Restroom Facility, Meridian Historical Village

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner McDonald and supported by Chair Wilson:

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 Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the Park Commission is interested in 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 Land and Water Conservation fund for \$300,000 of improvements to Central Park consisting of a universally accessible restroom facility and gateway footbridge to improve and expand recreation opportunities and accessibility for visitors of all abilities and ages; and

WHEREAS, this project is identified and supported in the Central Park Master Plan and in the 2011-2016 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 the 2016 Goals and Objectives; and

WHEREAS, this grant request was open to public review on March 9, 2016.

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 Land and Water Conservation Fund for construction of a universally accessible restroom building and gateway footbridge in Central Park-Meridian Historical Village with a total project cost of \$300,000. The fifty percent local match of \$150,000 will be funded by the Park Millage, with the remaining fifty percent (\$150,000) funded by the grant.

Roll Call:

AYES: Todd Wilson, Mike McDonald, Philip Deschaine, Mark Stephens
(emailed correspondence of support)

NAYES: None

The resolution passed.

b. Grant Application - Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector, Central Park

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner Deschaine and supported by Commissioner McDonald:

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 25% of the total project cost funded by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the Park Commission is interested in 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 \$400,000 of improvements to Central Park consisting of a Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector to improve and expand recreation opportunities and accessibility for visitors of all abilities and ages; and

WHEREAS, this project is identified and supported in the Central Park Master Plan and in the 2011-2016 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 the 2016 Goals and Objectives; and

WHEREAS, this grant request was open to public review on March 9, 2016.

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 the universally accessible Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector and accessible fishing deck in Central Park with a total project cost of \$400,000. The twenty-five percent local match of \$100,000 will be funded by the Park Millage, with the remaining seventy-five percent (\$300,000) funded by the grant.

Discussion:

- Staff is recommending changing the total project costs from \$400,000 to \$395,000 and increasing the local match from 25% to 31% (\$122,400)

CHAIR WILSON OFFERED THE FOLLOWING FRIENDLY AMENDMENT:

The total project costs will be amended to \$395,000 and the local match reduced to 31% for a total of \$122,400.

The Friendly Amendment was accepted by the maker and seconder of the Motion.

Roll Call:

AYES: Philip Deschaine, Mike McDonald, Todd Wilson, Mark Stephens
(emailed correspondence of support)

NAYES: None

The resolution passed.

c. Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Master Plan

The Meridian Township Pedestrian-Bicycle Master Plan is scheduled for review by the Township Board and the Park Commission has been asked to provide comments on the existing plan and make recommendations for

additions and/or deletions. A copy of the plan is included on your packet for review and discussion.

Staff has reviewed the plan with the following suggestions:

- Currently, a paved shoulder is indicated on the master plan for the stretch of Towner between Marsh Road and Saginaw Highway. Staff is recommending that the designation be changed to "Off-road pathway" on the south side of the road. This would better protect pedestrians and cyclists who are trying to access the park.
- Create a cross-country trail connection from Newton Road Park to Towner Road Park through Sierra Ridge subdivision.
- Add a connector trail from Tacoma Hills Natural Area, through the western edge of Sander Farm Preserved Natural Area, into MSU's Dobie Reserve.

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSION DESCHAIINE SECONDED, TO FORWARD THE FOLLOWING PATHWAY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT AND TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD FOR INCLUSION ON THE MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP PEDESTRIAN-BICYCLE MASTER PLAN:

- ADD AN OFF-ROAD PATHWAY ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF TOWNER ROAD BETWEEN MARSH RD AND SAGANAW HIGHWAY;
- ADD CROSS-COUNTRY TRAIL CONNECTION BETWEEN NEWTON ROAD PARK AND TOWNER ROAD PARK THROUGH SEIRRA RIDGE SUBDIVISION;
- ADD A CROSS-COUNTRY TRAIL THROUGH THE WESTERN PORTION OF SANDER FARM PRESERVED NATURAL AREA TO MSU DOBIE RESERVE.

Roll Call:

AYES: Philip Deschaine, Mike McDonald, Todd Wilson

NAYES: None

The motion passed.

11. Other Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. None

12. Discussion Items

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. None

13. Final Comments

None

14. Announcements

- a. Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 12, 2016, Town Hall Room
- b. Winter Farmers' Market – J C Penney Corridor, Meridian Mall, first and third Saturday, 10 am - 2 pm through April

15. Public Remarks

None

16. Closed Session

None

17. Adjournment

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE SECONDED, TO
ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm.