



**AGENDA**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
Wednesday June 8, 2022 6:00 pm  
Meridian Service Center  
2100 Gaylord C Smith Court, Haslett 48840

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1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC COMMENT
3. APPROVE AGENDA
  - A. June 8, 2022
4. APPROVE MINUTES
  - A. May 11, 2022
5. COMMUNICATIONS
6. DISCUSSION ITEMS
  - A. Horses on preserve property & ordinance
    1. Section 22-102 of Land Preserve Ordinance
7. OLD BUSINESS
  - A. Wetland Restoration & Education Program Update
    1. Wetland Buffer Project at Central Park South
  - B. Planting a Native Meridian
    2. Launch of annual programs review
- (CLOSED SESSION)**
  - C. Land Acquisition Site Visits & Scoring Review
8. REPORTS
  - A. STAFF REPORT: Stewardship Coordinator, Emma Campbell
  - B. ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REPORT: Board Member, Kendra Grassesschi
  - C. PARK COMMISSION REPORT: Board Member, Mark Stephens
9. PUBLIC COMMENT
10. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS
11. ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - A. Next Land Preservation Advisory Board Meeting: Wednesday, July 17, 2022 at 6 pm at the Township Service Center.
12. ADJOURNMENT

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Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Meridian Township Land Preservation Advisory Board by contacting: Director LuAnn Maisner, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4600 - Ten Day Notice is Required.

Meeting Location: 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Ct., Haslett, MI 48840

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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Township Service Center  
2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court | Haslett, MI  
Wednesday, May 11th, 2022, 6 PM

PRESENT: Board Members: Jamie Hiller, Steve Thomas, Kris Parnell, Yu Man Lee, And Kendra Grassesschi.  
ABSENT: Board Members: Mark Stephens  
STAFF: Emma Campbell, Stewardship Coordinator  
TOWNSHIP: Township Trustee, Courtney Wisinski

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

CHAIR HILLER MOVED TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:08 PM.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

A. NONE.

**3. APPROVE AGENDA**

A. May 11, 2022

**Chair Hiller moved to amend the May 11, 2022 Land Preservation Advisory Board agenda to add item 7B, Board Member Russ resolution of appreciation, as well as to remove item 8A and add discussion about boundary correction at Lake Lansing South Preserve.**

**BOARD MEMBER PARNELL MOVED TO APPROVE MAY 11, 2022 AMMENDED AGENDA.**  
Board Member Grassesschi seconded.

**VOICE VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. March 9, 2022

**Board Member Grassesschi moved to make a correction on Item 10 B to include Wetland Restoration & Education program update and move to Old Business on future board agendas. Township Trustee, Courtney Wisinski present for meeting.**

**BOARD MEMBER PARNELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE AMMENDMENTS TO THE MARCH 9, 2022 MINUTES AND PLACE THEM ON FILE.** Board Member Grassesschi seconded.

**VOICE VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously.

**5. COMMUNICATIONS**

A. None.

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### **6. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- A. Lake Lansing North Preserve site visit to survey ecological burn
  - 1. Vice Chair Stevens gives a summary of the controlled burn & site specific observations.
    - i. The fire went well. Interactions with neighbors were positive.
    - ii. The fire was not hot enough to burn back tree saplings and shrubs due the wet nature of the site at the time.
    - iii. The top leaf litter was burned, adding nutrients & improving native woodland flower habitat.
    - iv. Overall the spring flower population has been observed to be doing well.
    - v. Staff member Campbell also reported that four-toed salamanders have been observed and confirmed this spring. They are considered a species of special concern by the MDNR.

### **7. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Meridian Township Climate Sustainability Plan
  - 1. Board Member Grassesschi introduces the plan for board review, stating that input from all Township boards and commissions is welcomed and appreciated. Board member comments:
    - i. Apartment complexes should be included as recycling partners the plan. Recycling is often difficult for this demographic.
    - ii. The ordinance pertaining to tree protection could be improved to create better protection for younger, smaller trees.
      - 1. A native vegetation section could be implemented as well to protect smaller trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants.
    - iii. Wetland banking could be added as a way to add more valuable wetlands in the Township for mitigation purposes.
- B. Resolution of Appreciation for Board Member Chanelle Russ

**THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS OFFERED BY BOARD MEMBER PARNELL AND SUPPORTED BY BOARD MEMBER GRASSESSCHI.**

### **8. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Boundary Correction at Lake Lansing South Preserve
  - 1. Board members and staff discuss moving forward with a boundary correction involving a neighboring property adjacent to the land preserve. The board agrees to have staff move forward with legalities and formal process for boundary correction, the cost of which will be incurred by the property owners.

**VICE CHAIR STEVENS MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROCESS OF STAFF MOVING AHEAD WITH BOUNDARY CORRECTION AT LAKE LANSING SOUTH PRESERVE.** Board Member Parnell seconded.

**(CLOSED SESSION BEGINS)**

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**VICE CHAIR STEVENS MOVED TO START THE CLOSED SESSION PORTION OF THE MEETING.**

Board Member Grassesschi seconded.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Ayes: Steve Thomas, Jamie Hiller, Yu Man Lee, Kendra Grassesschi, Kris Parnell, Chanelle Russ.

Nays: None.

**B. (CLOSED SESSION BEGINS) Land Acquisition Update**

1. Discussion of Parcel F & Parcel C

**(CLOSED SESSION ENDS)**

**C. Priority areas for contractual land management**

1. Expansion of invasive phragmites treatment and review of areas identified for management. Contracts for phragmites treatment will ensure consistent treatment plans, and cover large areas that staff are not able to manage.

Board members comments:

- i. Locations suggested to add to the list: near Dobie Road Bridge, specific areas at Davis-Foster Preserve.
- ii. A notice for invasive phragmites treatment, and time of year for treatment is suggested to send out to neighboring communities and publish on social media.

**9. REPORTS**

**A. STAFF REPORT: Stewardship Coordinator, Emma Campbell**

1. Updates on Meridian Conservation Corps efforts and 2022 Spring stewardship highlights
  - i. Removal of over a 1,000 pounds of trash from Central Meridian Uplands
  - ii. Removal of herbaceous invasive species from Legg Park, Harris Nature Center, Eastgate Park, and Hartrick Park
2. Upcoming projects: Central Park South Pond wetland buffer restoration (Eagle Scout Project), floating island installation at Central Park pond, and wet meadow at Marshall Park in fall
  - i. Unifying projects for the Wetland Restoration & Education Program

**B. ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REPORT: Board Member, Kendra Grassesschi**

1. Wetland Restoration & Education Program updates
  - i. Davis Foster Preserve wetland feature in Meridian Prime Magazine
  - ii. Contractor Notice pertaining information to wetland ordinance in relation to landscape maintenance sent out to local landscaping companies
  - iii. Currently working on a residential notice for landscaping

**C. PARK COMMISSION REPORT: Board Member, Mark Stephens**

1. Board Member Stephens absent.

**10. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

- A. None.

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### **11. OTHER MATTER AND BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

- A. Board member Grassesschi requests to have the Wetland Restoration & Education Program included in Old Business on the agenda to allow for monthly updates.
  - 1. Unifying projects for all boards and commissions that will aid in increased collaboration and communication between boards and commissions.
- B. Site visits for land acquisition parcels will be scheduled for June.

### **12. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Next Land Preservation Advisory Board Meeting: Wednesday, June 8, 2022 at the Township Service Center, 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, Michigan.

### **13. ADJOURNMENT**

**BOARD MEMBER LEE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.** Vice Chair Stevens seconded.

**VOICE VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Hiller adjourns the meeting at 8:16 pm.

## LAND PRESERVATION SITE SCREENING CRITERIA

### *AN ADVISORY REPORT FOR THE MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP BOARD*

Submitted By  
Meridian Township Environmental Commission  
Adopted by Township Board January 9, 2001

In July, 2000, the Land Preservation Task Force submitted a final report to the Township Board outlining a number of recommendations for preserving open space lands and natural features in Meridian Township. Included in the Task Force report was an evaluation system outlining site selection review criteria to identify, evaluate, and distinguish properties within the Township that represent important open green spaces or special natural features for potential preservation. The Task Force also recommended that the Township Board have the Environmental Commission review these criteria, and offer suggestions for refinement. This advisory report is submitted by the Environmental Commission pursuant to a request by the Township Board for that review and refinement of the criteria.

The suggested screening criteria as refined by the Environmental Commission were organized according to a cumulative weighted point system; and, were selected to reflect the general objectives outlined by the Land Preservation Task Force. The suggested criteria expanded on the three general criteria suggested by the Task Force:

- Criterion #1 Based on parcel size and relationship to adjoining properties.
- Criterion #2 Based on identifiable physical characteristics.
- Criterion #3 Based on percent of property within a designated category.

These criteria represent guidelines that can be used to assist the Land Preservation Advisory Board and Township Board in selecting candidate sites for acquisition. The criteria were developed through discussion and debate among Environmental Commissioners of the relative merits of various weighted factors that could be considered in assessing the ecological, open space, and functional value of land resources of the Township. The criteria primarily are environmental in content and scope and should be considered as advisory only. They can and should be modified as necessary in accordance with additional considerations of the decision-makers, stakeholders, and citizens of Meridian Township. Some of these additional factors might include real estate value, purchase price and return on investment, willing seller-willing buyer, and liability concerns.

The criteria were selected to help decision makers identify and prioritize those land areas within the Township that represent the most important or valuable open space or natural features that should be preserved for the enjoyment of both present and future generations of citizens. No attempt was made to exclude

particular land use alternatives or interests. We assumed that the intention of the Land Preservation Task Force was to identify and protect the “best of the best” of our natural heritage.

We have also tried to identify various factors that could be used in the weighting process to better describe and provide rationale for selecting among a number of candidate sites. These were identified as categories and subcategories. Each category was assigned an overall value, expressed (and ranked as to relative importance) as a total number of points. Each category was then broken down into several subcategories, each of which received a weighted value. This ranking/weighting system is shown in the accompanying graphic. Total point value and weighting factors provide the ability to analyze site characteristics, assign points for each, and then provide a cumulative score for each property.

Suggested criteria that could be used in the evaluation process include the following categories, ranked in decreasing order of importance:

- (1) Ecological value. Sites that would rank highest include those that are of statewide or regional, as well as, local importance. Other sites of high ecological value would include areas that are known to contain endangered, threatened, or rare wildlife and plants that are protected by state or federal law, or those that have significant habitat resources for such species, and species that are of concern locally. Such areas are of critical importance in the protection of viable natural populations and communities. Areas that provide corridors for wildlife movement or for greenways are of lesser importance, but should be considered important nonetheless.
- (2) Natural or functional value. These sites are important because of the role they play in maintaining the functional integrity or to the overall diversity of ecosystems, both natural and human. Such areas might provide upland buffers for areas, including wetlands, already protected by state or local regulations. Other areas could contain unique features, including prime soils, woodlots, and recharge or flood control zones that help maintain stability over time.
- (3) Parcel size. This criterion recognizes the dwindling open space within the Township and the need to acquire properties of sufficient size to ensure protection of natural features and functions. The preference is to acquire larger land units or areas that are already contiguous to protected properties to increase the likelihood that the resultant areas would eventually function as a total unit. On the other hand, small parcels that contain unique natural values should also be considered.
- (4) Surrounding land uses. As in the parcel size criterion, sites that are contiguous to areas already protected would be considered important acquisitions as they help increase the amount and size of functional natural areas within the Township. A second factor of critical importance is the ability to protect the functional value of



acquired properties. Such properties would be less vulnerable to potentially incompatible activities taking place on adjacent properties. Following this would be protection of sites that are close to other land uses, the purpose of which is to add diversity to the landscape.

(5) Environmental quality. Sites that contain no known environmental contamination would be considered above sites with either potential or known contamination. The ecological and health risks of contamination and the costs of remediating such sites should not be borne by the Land Preservation Endowment Fund.

(6) Aesthetic value. Sites that add to the overall visual diversity and character of the Township would be most desirable. Other sites that provide multiple use opportunities or that help enhance the transition between different land uses should also be considered for acquisition.

While the above categories reflect the Environmental Commission's Suggested priorities when reviewing properties, a number of other important issues probably should be considered and given some weight from both a practical and economic perspective. While these issues should, and no doubt will influence the review of properties, they do not easily fit into a point system and will just be listed for the Board's consideration. This list is just a starting point for discussion, as there will likely be any number of other issues that will influence purchase decisions, which will have little to do with the ecological importance of the property.

- (1) Public Opinion
- (2) Seller/donor willingness to negotiate
- (3) Market/real estate value as a function of the budget
- (4) Maintenance costs as a function of budget
- (5) Liability
- (6) Access issues if indeed land will be determined to be open for public egress

In conclusion, the Environmental Commission commends the Township Board for its interest in protecting and preserving our remaining environmentally sensitive areas and significant green spaces. Efforts such as these will move the community toward leaving an important natural legacy for future generations in Meridian Township.



## LAND PRESERVATION CRITERIA

### Meridian Township Environmental Commission

Land Preservation Category	Subcategory	Weighting/Ranking	Points
<b>Ecological Value</b> (100 points)	contains ecosystems of state, regional, or local importance	0.40	
	contains protected wildlife or vegetation and/or overall high diversity of species	0.30	
	contains habitat for protected species	0.15	
	helps connect prime greenways and wildlife corridors	0.10	
	other ecological values	0.05	
<b>Natural/Functional Value</b> (90 points)	significant upland buffer to an area otherwise protected (wetland, riparian area, or shoreline)	0.35	
	contains significant woodlot or woodland	0.25	
	contains prime/unique soils or agricultural values	0.20	
	provides ground water recharge and water quality enhancement; provides flood and storm water control	0.15	
	important natural feature not protected by other means	0.05	
<b>Parcel Size</b> (80 points)	large land area with potential, through succession, to become significant natural resource	0.50	
	parcel > 5 acres, contiguous to permanently preserved property or one which has PDR offered	0.25	
	parcel > 5 acres	0.15	
	parcel < 5 acres having important habitat value	0.10	
<b>Surrounding Land Uses</b> (70 points)	parcel contiguous to protected property (e.g., wetland, riparian area, park)	0.35	
	open space value of parcel can be protected after purchase	0.25	
	parcel contiguous to agricultural area	0.20	
	parcel contiguous to residential area	0.15	
	parcel contiguous to mixed use area	0.05	
<b>Environmental Quality</b> (40 points)	site contains no environmental contamination	0.80	
	site contains possible environmental contamination	0.15	
	site contains known environmental contamination	0.05	
<b>Aesthetic Value</b> (20 points)	provides open greenspace to separate incompatible land uses or monotony of same uses	0.55	
	provides unique multiple use opportunities	0.30	
	aesthetic values average for township	0.15	