

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

DISCUSSION NOTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2015
6 PM – MERIDIAN SERVICE CENTER

Members Present: Julie Brixie, Roland Harmes, Frank Hatfield, Jon Mayes,

Members Absent: James Kielbaso, Robert Rusch, Margo Smith, Mark Stephens,

Staff: Land and Management Coordinator Jane Greenway; Administrative Assistant II Robin Faust, Park and Land Management Naturalist Nick Sanchez

Others: Bill McConnell, Dave Caszatt, Leslie Kuhn, Laurie Kaufman, Patti McPhee

Due to the lack of quorum, the Land Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) was not called to order but the following items were discussed:

1. Management of Land Preserves

Leslie Kuhn, Mid-Michigan Stewardship Coordinator, distributed information on “Ensuring Continuity of Land Preservation Advisory Board Stewardship” and offered the following:

- Has been working with Laurie Kaufman since 2008 on stewardship activities in the Township
- Has also been working with Nick Sanchez on stewardship activities on the land preserves
- Discussed the importance of stewardship activities and need for a dedicated individual to continue the work of Nick Sanchez
- Wild Ones, Native Plants, Natural Landscapes newsletter lists the stewardship accomplishments for the last year
- Encouraged the LPAB to continue eliminating invasive species
- Three leaders, Jim Hewitt, Laurie Kaufman and Leslie Kuhn, have been working with different agencies on garlic mustard pulls; 15 events were held and over 15,000 pounds were removed by volunteers
- Approximately 120 sites of phragmites and Japanese Knotweed have been treated
- Been working with Ingham County Parks, MSU, Eyde personnel and Meridian Township on a regional approach to removal of invasives
- Acknowledged David Caszatt and his crew of volunteers for their work in the Northwest Preserve
- Offered to assist Township staff with the transition of duties and projects when staff is hired to replace Nick Sanchez

Open Discussion:

- Agreed there is a need for staff to help control invasives and catalog the different species in the Township; need to make a connection with the neighborhoods bordering the land preserves and get them involved and need experts who know what needs to be planted and treated.
 - Suggested the LPAB dedicate resources to three (3) land preserves, identify the targeted projects and Township staff lead the activities; suggested Board Member Hatfield could encourage the Sylvan Glen neighbors to work on removal of invasives and other stewardship activities in the Red Cedar Glen Preserve
 - Would like to see more done on wetland portions to reduce encroachment;
 - Would also like to see some work done on the Rysberg parcel; maybe encourage school groups to be more involved
 - Believes there is enough funds to have a stewardship person during the summer to get these projects started
 - Suggested contacting MSU and looking for an intern to assist with these projects
 - Suggesting using Sheriff work crews
 - Feel there is a need for a leadership person to provide continuity for LP projects; need a dedicated point person who is knowledgeable in preservation activities
 - Thanked Ms. Kuhn for her suggested focus areas with project ideas
 - Suggesting holding tours with LPAB and the public so everyone can learn about the land preserves, their threats, their habitats, etc.
- 2, Resident, Patti McPhee, Okemos, expressed concern about the Aldi development on Marsh Road and also the Eyde development next to Wal Mart and the loss of trees; the need to look at repurposing existing sites; to be more consistent with planning and development of sites with trees that need to be preserved such as Jimmy Johns proposed site.
3. Towar Woods Land Preserve Project
- Dave Caszatt distributed a funding request for \$4,000 for the 2015 operations at the Northwest Land Preserve and offers the following
- The main focus is to control the conifers, the deer enclosure/hardwood planting, invasive shrub removal and removal growth around hardwood saplings.
 - Have been able to save some great oaks and cherry trees and look forward to a great growing summer.
 - There is no issues with the 5,000 foot enclosure, the species are doing well except for the American Beech
 - has been able to get volunteers to help with trash clean up and with some invasive removals
 - Expressed concern about parties on the site because there have been damage to some of the trees and is suggesting posting cameras in the area
 - Nick has offered to continue helping at the site but his schedule is limited
 - Would like to expand planting to white spruce
 - Believes the deer harvest program is reducing the herd but more needs to be done
 - Would like to expand clearing to allow more light for the seedlings
 - Would like to plant the white and bur oak in tubes to protect them; approximately 50 4-foot tree in pipes; the Red Cedar had a lot of damage from the deer

- Suggest creating a donate a tree to the land preserve program; the donations could run through the TC3 since it is a 501(c)(3) and the donor would receive a tax deduction
- We need to be caretakers

4. Deer Management Update

Nick Sanchez reported:

- this was the best year yet for the hunters
- There were 150 deer taken resulting in 1,650 pounds equaling out to 8,250 meals.
- The Township hosted an end of season party for the hunters, it was well attended, a great community event with gift certificates and received very positive feedback from the hunters
- He and Jane Greenway will be presenting the Deer Management Program at a session at the Michigan Recreation and Park Association Conference
- There were less complaints about vegetation damage this year

5. Coordinator Greenway distributed a copy of the 2015 Work Plan designed by Nick Sanchez; 2015 Proposed Management Activities; Land Preserve Program page from the 2015 Parks and Recreation Family Fun Guide; 2015 Annual Report (Land Preservation Program on page 20); Invitation to the Chinese New Year Event at the Meridian Mall on February 21. Coordinator Greenway stated she was very sad to lose Nick and wished him well in his new position and will work on finding a new staff person to assist with land preservation activities

6. Adjournment

Members adjourned the discussion at 7:45 pm.