

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2015  
6 PM – SERVICE CENTER

Members Present: Roland Harmes, Frank Hatfield, James Kielbaso, Jon Mayes, Mark Stephens,

Members Absent: Julie Brixie, Robert Rusch, Margo Smith

Staff: Jane Greenway, Parks and Land Management Coordinator; Kelsey Dillion, Land Stewardship Assistant; Robin Faust, Administrative Assistant II

Others: Timothy Patrick, Karen Forton, Tom Forton, David Kidd, Jim Hewitt, William Morgan, Larry Gerhardt, Tom Valli, Shirley Dutton

Prior to quorum being present, the public offered comment:

Jim Hewitt, Okemos, stated he submitted a letter advocating for consideration for a parcel on the Meridian Township Greenspace Plan. It is a fragile link in the Greenspace Plan that needs to be protected. The parcel is located near the Southwest Meridian Uplands and it would be more visible and accessible than Southwest Meridian Uplands.

Larry Gerhardt, Okemos, asked the Board to acquire of the parcel under consideration. If acquire, this parcel would assist in keeping the ecological, fragile balance in this area and as a business owner, the parcel is not a good buildable area. Since the Land Preservation Millage was established to preserve land, this parcel is a good example of land to be preserved.

Tom Valli, Okemos, stated he submitted a letter of support for preserving the parcel under consideration because it is a buffer between two land uses, would like to see it protected from development, it is environmentally sensitive and the neighborhood supports preservation of the rolling land and water ways in this area. He did state there may be need for some tree restoration.

Bill Morgan, Okemos, asked for the parcel to be considered. It is an overlooked area but is close to another preserved area. It has diverse woodland in both wet and dry areas, has open unwooded area, is in the floodplain, has diverse wildlife and is a wonderful buffer between the two zoning areas.

David Kidd, Okemos, stated he supports everything the other speakers stated. He is an amateur naturalist and is very interested in preserving this area. He reported recent

homeowner purchasers stated they moved into this area because it is a quiet and has the natural area.

Timothy Patrick, Okemos, spoke in support of acquiring the parcel under consideration. He has lived in this area of the Township for 16 years and one of his reasons for purchasing is this natural area which is aesthetically pleasing and a gem. This land mass fits into this space, love seeing the wildlife and does not want it compromised.

Karen Forten, Okemos, stated they have lived in the area for 30 years. Their sons grew up exploring the parcel under consideration and love to watch the neighborhood children still exploring the area. It is a gem and is a great opportunity to enjoy nature and wildlife exploration and needs to be preserved for many years to come.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Kielbaso called the meeting to order at 6:28 pm and apologized for being so late.

2. Approve Agenda

BOARD MEMBER HATFIELD MOVED, BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

3. Public Remarks

Chair Kielbaso stated the previous public remarks will be considered part of the meeting minutes.

David Kidd, Okemos, stated the neighborhood is interested in preservation of this area and will volunteer to assist with preservation opportunities and activities and provide vegetation to enhance the property lines if the parcel is acquired.

Brianna Chamberlain, Okemos, support in support of preserving the wildlife and volunteers to assist with preservation opportunities.

Board Member Hatfield spoke about having a parcel owned privately versus publicly, that there is already dumping on this parcel and there may be more cars and visitors than what their neighborhood is used to, that would need to be addressed and appreciated knowing there are volunteers who want to assist with preservation opportunities.

When asked the rules about publicly owned land, Coordinator Greenway replied the area is open dawn to dusk, there is no dumping, and followings the same rules as other preserves and parks in the Township and would include identification as a publicly owned parcel.

When asked about providing fencing along the railroad tracks, Coordinator Greenway replied the Township has not fenced along tracks in the other preserves.

When asked about signage, Coordinator Greenway replied a sign such as the one across the street would be installed.

Tom Valli stated there are not many visitors to the Southwest Meridian Uplands and some of the issues there have been cleaned up. If this parcel is acquired, it would be watch by the neighbors and understandings about the dumping and reported the owner did not have a problem with it.

4. Approve Minutes
  - a. November 4, 2015
    - Page 1, change the meeting location to the Service Center
    - Page 7, item #11, have the last sentence end at "Southwest Meridian Uplands site." and remove the remaining portion stated.

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER HATFIELD SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 4, 2015 MINUTES AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

5. Communications
  - To: LPAB; RE: Garlic Mustard
  - From: Leslie Kuhn, To: LPAB; RE: The prairie project at Southwest Meridian Uplands/Sturk Land Preserve
  - To: LPAB; RE: Update on Southwest Meridian Uplands/Sturk Land Preserve
  - To: Township Board; RE: Recommendations to the Land Preservation Advisory Board
  - To: LPAB; 2016 Stewardship Network Conference Attendance (Margo Smith, Jane Greenway, Kelsey Dillon attending; asked other Board Members to contact staff if interested in attending)
  - To: LPAB; RE: Volunteer Event Saturday, December 5 at Towar Woods
  - To: Leslie Kuhn; RE: The Stewardship Network

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER MAYES SECONDED, TO ACCEPT AND PLACE THE ITEMS OF COMMUNICATION ON FILE. Voice vote. Motion passed.

7. Presentations
- None
8. Old Business

None

9. New Business

None

10. Land Management Report

Coordinator Greenway offered the following report:

- a. 2016 Management Plan
  - An updated 2016 Management Plan will be provided at the January 13, 2016 LPAB meeting
- b. 2015 Management Summary
  - Provided for your information
- c. 2016 Joint Meeting
  - January 12, 2016 at 6 pm in Town Hall Room
  - Staff is preparing a summary of 2015 activity and plan for 2016; will be emailing out for review by Board Members and asked to have any information changes to send back to staff before January 12
  - Copy of invitation distributed at meeting and emailed to Board Members
- d. Towar Woods Preserve, Management Update – Land Stewardship Assistant Dillon reported:
  - 11/5/2015: Towar Woods Buckthorn, Honeysuckle, and Autumn Olive Removal 9AM-12PM (3 hours): Volunteers (Dave Caszatt, Sandy Davis, and Don Dickman) moved throughout the property with two backpack sprayers and two markers (spray paint) treating Buckthorn, Autumn Olive, and Honeysuckle. Large and small plants were targeted especially around valuable hardwood saplings.
- e. Southwest Land Preserve/Sturk
  - Met with Vern Stephens to discuss the planting timeline (emailed to LPAB members)
  - Assessment of forest and floodplain area
    - ✓ Woody invasive will be easy to treat, reed canary grass infestation plan will take time to develop
- f. Mary Helmbrecht Pollinator Garden – Historical Village
  - Canada Thistle in plot treated with herbicide
  - Planted all 400+ native plugs in the new garden and filled in areas of the existing garden
    - New area measured 13 ft x 20 ft

- Students rotated stations between planting the garden, fishing exercise with Mark Stephens, a tour of the historical village, and a recreational program with Mike Devlin
  - Sign was modified and ordered – Question was raised about the flower being used on the sign and need to include and acknowledge the Grand Learning Network for their contributions.
- g. Davis/Foster Preserve
- Black locust treatment plan
  - Will prepare prescribed burn plans over the winter for a spring 2016 burn
- h. Deer Management Update
- 29 deer harvested
- i. Sylvan Glen
- The wildflower mix came up in the Spring but the deer ate it
- j. Communication Videos
- Will have Land Stewardship Assistant Dillon work on a list of topics and upcoming events and will work with promotional staff; if Board Member has an idea or topic, please email to staff
11. Other
- a. Joint Meeting with Boards and Commissions; January 12, 2016, 6 pm, Meridian Township Hall, attendance
- Coordinator Greenway reminded members to call or email Carol Hasse if attending.
- b. 2015 Summary
- Coordinator Greenway reported she will be preparing a summary of 2015 activity and plan for 2016. She will be emailing out for review by Board Members and asked to have any information changes to send back to staff by January 11
12. Public Comment
- None
13. Announcements
- a. LPAB Meeting; January 13, 2016, 6 pm, Meridian Service Center
- b. Agenda items for the January meeting include:

- Election of officers
- Joint Meeting with Park Commission, Environmental Commission & LPAB

Board Member Stephens reported an email went out to the current chairs with the suggestion of getting together in January to discuss an agenda and schedule the meeting for February.

Chair Kielbaso reported the Environmental Commission discussed this topic at their last meeting and one of the topics is the Michigan National Features Inventory. Associate Planner Harmony Gmazel is creating a map with an overlay of the green spaces, land preserves, parks, etc. From this map, you will be able to see where everything fits and then evaluate what is the next action step would be (more acquisition, stewardship, trail evaluation, desired links, education, etc.) Chair Kielbaso suggested the joint meeting be scheduled after the map has been completed by staff.

- Updated Management Plan for 2016

#### 14. Closed Session

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER MAYES SECONDED, TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS LAND ACQUISITION ISSUES.

Roll Call:

AYES: Frank Hatfield, Roland Harmes, Mark Stephens, James Kielbaso, Jon Mayes

NAYS: None

The meeting went into closed session at 6:25 pm.

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER MAYES SECONDED, TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.

Roll Call:

AYES: Frank Hatfield, Roland Harmes, Mark Stephens, James Kielbaso, Jon Mayes

NAYS: None

The meeting returned to open session at 8:07 pm.

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER MAYES SECONDED, TO DIRECT STAFF TO TAKE SUCH ACTION AS DISCUSSED DURING CLOSED SESSION.

Roll Call:

AYES: Frank Hatfield, Roland Harmes, Mark Stephens, James Kielbaso, Jon  
Mayes

NAYS: None

15. Adjournment

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER MAYES  
SECONDED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.