

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2015

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

ABSENT: None

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Item 9, New Business, item A, Park Commissioner Candidate Recommendation will be moved to Closed Session. Also during Closed Session, the Commissioners will consider a land acquisition item.

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed

**3. Presentations**

a. Resolution of Appreciation – Teri Banas

Due to a meeting with her new position as County Commissioner, Teri Banas was unable to attend the meeting. Her spouse, John Foren, was present to accept the resolution. Chair Wilson and the Commissioners expressed appreciation for the time spent on the Commission with Ms. Banas, for her passion and support of the Commission, its activities, and this community.

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner Stephens and supported by Chair Wilson,

WHEREAS, Teri Banas was first elected to the Park Commission in 2004 and has served as a Park Commissioner for ten (10) years; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, Teri was the driving force behind many park projects including planning and development of Orlando Park, located at 1275 Orlando Drive in Haslett, that features a gazebo, play structure, paved loop walking path, bicycle rack, grill, game table, benches and butterfly gardens created in cooperation with Haslett area school children; and

WHEREAS, Teri provided leadership in development and adoption of the 2005-2010 and 2011-2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plans as well as site plans for the future development and improvements to Legg Park, Wonch Park and Towner Road Park; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Teri was instrumental in the passage of a new .667 mill Millage to improve funding for renovation, development, maintenance and acquisition of Township parkland for the next decade; and

WHEREAS, Teri gave generously of her time, talents and boundless energy in numerous ways and is held in high esteem by colleagues and citizens for her tireless efforts as a Park Commissioner and advocate for Meridian Township Parks.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PARK COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, THAT TERI BANAS IS PRESENTED WITH THIS RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR HER DEDICATION AND LEADERSHIP THROUGH SERVICE ON THE PARK COMMISSION THAT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO DEVELOPMENT OF A PARK SYSTEM THAT ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS OF MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP.**

ADOPTED:

AYES: Mark Stephens, Melanie Jaramillo, Mike McDonald, Todd Wilson

NAYS: None

Resolution passed

Mr. Foren thanked the Commission for the resolution and her name plate. He stated Teri is very passionate about parks and in her new role as County Commissioner, she will continue to support the Township, Park Commission and community.

#### **4. Public Comment**

Commissioner Stephens acknowledged the presence of five MSU students who were covering the Park Commission meeting for their class assignment.

#### **5. Commissioner Reports and Comments**

Commissioners asked the status of the ice Rink in Hillbrook Park? Director Maisner reported that the weather has not been consistent enough to maintain ice. Not sure if volunteer has succeeded in his efforts. Staff will report back at next meeting.

Commissioner McDonald stated the Commission has received a copy of the communication from LINC regarding their recommendation to construct mini-dog parks throughout the Township. He stated the Commission has not adopted this recommendation. This topic has been discussed at national and state level parks and recreation meetings and there is not a successful model of this type in any community he is aware of. Chair Wilson stated that the topic will be discussed at a future meeting of the Commission.

Commissioner Stephens announced that the Michigan Recreation and Park Association will be holding its annual conference and trade show at the Lansing Center February 10-13. During this event, professionals from around the state exchange information, ideas, present new products and network.

## 6. **Approval of Minutes**

### a. December 9, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER MCDONALD MOVED, CHAIR WILSON SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 9, 2014 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

## 7. **Communications**

### A. Items to/from the Public

None

### B. Commission Information

1. Meridian Township Parks – 2014 (distributed at Joint Meeting on 1/6/15)
2. 2015 Park Projects (distributed at Joint Meeting on 1/6/15)
3. January Calendar of Events for Parks & Recreation
4. Family Winter Sports Weekends Calendar of Events
5. Parks & Recreation Department December Monthly Report
6. Towne Courier: **Dec 7:** Christmas in the Village; Farmers Market in Meridian Mall; **Dec 14:** Chipmunk Story Time to be held; Meridian Township's Drive Thru Santa open Saturday; **Dec 28:** Registration set for annual Polar Bear run walk

### C. Staff Inquiries/Response

None

### D. Distributed at meeting

1. Press Releases: Meridian Township Park Commission looks to fill vacancy; Calling all Polar Bears: 5K Run/Walk registration now opens; Meridian Township Deer Management reports success; Meridian Township offers Family Winter Sports Weekends; Calling all Kickball Teams: Winter Tournament registration now opens

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

## 8. Director's Report

Director Maisner stated:

- a. 150 Deer have been taken October 1- January 1, 2015; program will continue with an extended harvest that will run from January 19 – February 28 at limited sites and with limited hunters; over 1,500 pounds of venison was donated to the local foods banks; the car/deer accident number is decreased from last year to 121
- b. Newton Road Park – the landscaping and fencing has been installed; staff is working on new sign design; the parking area was constructed to hold approximately 20 vehicles; Haslett Lacrosse teams will be practicing at the site in the spring; the Engineering Department was very helpful with this project
- c. Wonch Park – the 8 foot paved loop trail has been installed; there were people using the pathway as it was being constructed;
- d. The Engineering Department is in the process of supervising construction a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Red Cedar River adjacent to Wonch Park. This bridge will provide safer access to the park, schools, and the DDA District. The bridge will be completed in the spring; plans underway to hold a grand opening ceremony in April for both the bridge and the pathway.
- e. Farmers' Market – The winter market is indoors in the J C Penney Corridor at Meridian Mall on the first and third Saturdays December through April from 10am-2pm. Approximately 30 vendors enrolled each market day.
- f. Chinese New Year – will be held in the center court and J C Penney Corridor inside the Meridian Mall on Saturday, February 21 from 1:30-6 pm with a parade, entertainment, and family activities
- g. Christmas in the Village – Was held on Sunday, December 14, 2-5pm was well attended with over 300 visitors, Executive Director Jane Rose reported it was best one in years!
- h. Drive Thru Santa – held in December, hosted 24 cars with 60 participants.
- i. Family Fun Guide – has been prepared and should be in mailboxes today. There are 64 pages of activities covering the entire year
- j. Family Winter Weekends – something for everyone every weekend during the months of January and February
  - Saturday, January 17:

- Cross Country Ski Class (\$15/\$20)--FULL
  - Snowshoe Class (\$15/\$20);
  - Moonlight Ski and Shoe (\$3/\$9)
  - Sunday, January 18: Meridian Swim at Goldfish Swimming School (Free; pre-registration required/517-458-5555)
  - Saturday, January 24: Moonlight Sledding at North Meridian Road Park (Free)
  - Sunday, January 25:
    - Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk in Central Park (\$20);
    - Meridian Bowls at City Limits East Lansing Bowling Center (Shoe rental only, pre-registration required/517-337-7000)
  - Saturday, January 31: Winter Wonderland at Harris Nature Center –Snow Shoeing, cross-county skiing, dog sled demonstrations, ice sculptures, bon fire, games and more! (Free)
  - Friday, February 6: Howl at the Moon (\$3)
  - Saturday, February 7:
    - Cross Country Ski Class (\$15/\$20 );
    - Winter Kickball Tournament (\$75/team)
    - Snowshoe Class (\$15/\$20);
    - Moonlight Ski and Shoe (\$3/\$9)
    - Moonlight Sledding (Free)
  - Sunday, February 8: Meridian Swims at the Michigan Athletic Club (Free; pre-registration required/517-364-8888)
  - Saturday, February 14: Meridian Ice Fishing Derby, Central Park pond (Free)
- k. Central Park Master Plan Request for Qualifications – the RFQ has been prepared and will be mailed this week. Staff will forward a pdf copy of the RFQ to Commissioners
- l. Mini dog parks – Director Maisner and Parks & Land Management Coordinator Greenway met with Eckhart Dersch to discuss the recommendations contained in the LINC correspondence; she suggested this as a topic for a future Park Commission meeting
- m. Harris Nature Center’s December report: 261 drop in visitors, 147 students attended seven nature programs; two school outreach programs to 53 students, 9 adults attended an outreach at the Meridian Senior Center. Cross country skis and snowshoes available during open hours at the center.
- n. Free Christmas tree drop off will be at Nancy Moore Park only during open park hours through the end of January.
- o. Maintenance staff has been busy clearing snow and ice from parks, pathways, bus stops, libraries, and trails. With the passage of the new Millage, an additional staff member will be added to Parks and Grounds Maintenance bringing staff total up to five members

- p. Legg Park gate is closed for the season but there is new and improved front parking area near the front of the park. Also, Hartrick Park gate is closed but there is parking at the front of the Park there as well.
- q. North Meridian Road Park restrooms heating units is improved from last year and are operating well providing heated restrooms for park visitors. Sledding hill is open dawn to dusk.
- r. Basketball season underway. Haslett has 292 registered (kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade) Williamston has 303 registered (kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade) – not including travel teams.

**9. New Business**

PUBLIC COMMENT

**a. Park Commissioner Candidate Recommendation**

Commissioner Stephens stated the Commissioners interviewed four candidates for the vacancy created by Teri Banas being elected to the Ingham County Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners were impressed with the candidates and their passion and commitment for the community.

**b. Ingham County Trails Millage Meeting – January 26, 2015**

The Ingham County Parks Board will be conducting a meeting on Monday, January 26 to discuss the implementation and distribution of the millage funds for trails and parks through new Ingham County millage. Director Maisner will be attending this meeting and encouraged the Commissioners to attend as well.

Discussion:

- Would like to see if the previously proposed multi-use pathway connecting Lake Lansing to MSU through the Rysberg Land Preservation parcel constructed with these funds
- Boardwalk on Okemos Road south of Nancy Moore Park entrance
- According to email, a draft scope of work for a Trails and Greenway and Blueways Master Plan request will be sent prior to the meeting; Commissioners asked to have this forwarded to them when received
- Unclear on the guidelines for this millage; a lot of information is up in the air
- Chair Wilson stated he will be out of state; Commissioner Stephens and McDonald indicated they will be attending

**10. Unfinished Business**

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

**11. Other Business**

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

**12. Discussion Items**

PUBLIC COMMENT

**a. 2015 Park Projects**

Director Maisner distributed the 2014/2015 Parks Budgeted Projects List in graph form and summarized the 2015 Project Plan as follows:

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| ✓ <b>Hartrick Park roof structure for players benches</b>       | <b>\$4,000</b>   |
| ○ With Okemos Baseball Club Feb-April                           |                  |
| ✓ <b>Nancy Moore Park Pavilion residing</b>                     | <b>\$4,000</b>   |
| ○ April-May   |                  |
| ✓ <b>Nancy Moore Park Safety Fencing</b>                        | <b>\$9,600</b>   |
| ○ Bids received – installation Spring                           |                  |
| ✓ <b>Harris Nature Center engineer and rebuild island drain</b> | <b>\$4,000</b>   |
| ○ With Engineering Dept. – August-Sept                          |                  |
| ✓ <b>Harris Nature Center crack seal/stripe parking area</b>    | <b>\$5,250</b>   |
| ○ May   |                  |
| ✓ <b>Ferguson Park crack seal/stripe parking area</b>           | <b>\$5,250</b>   |
| ○ May   |                  |
| ✓ <b>Wonch Park Pavilion</b>                                    | <b>\$250,000</b> |
| ○ Proceed with construction without grant?                      |                  |
| ✓ <b>Wonch Park parking lot paving</b>                          | <b>\$100,000</b> |
| ○ Engineering Department – July                                 |                  |
| ✓ <b>Hillbrook Park accessible playground</b>                   | <b>\$90,000</b>  |
| ○ August- Sept  |                  |
| ✓ <b>Orlando Park swing/slide</b>                               | <b>\$35,000</b>  |
| ○ August-Sept   |                  |
| ✓ <b>Legg Park parking area, dog park, stewardship</b>          | <b>\$170,000</b> |
| ○ February Work Session   |                  |
| ✓ <b>Towner Road Park Phase I</b>                               | <b>\$224,000</b> |
| ○ March Work Session  |                  |

- ✓ **Central Park Master Plan** **\$16,000**
    - RFQ distributed (Firm Selection by March 15)
  
  - ✓ **Eagle Scout Projects** **\$1,500**
    - Ongoing – Jane/Kit
  
  - ✓ **Legg Park Footbridge Replacement** **\$5,000**
    - Dennis – August-Sept
- There are over 15 budgeted projects planned for completion in 2015
  - Greater details on the projects will be distributed at future Commission meetings
  - The entire amount of \$250,000 was budgeted for a new pavilion in Wonch Park. In December, we were notified that this project was not approved for funding through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Is the Commission in favor of moving forward with this project with local funds?

Discussions:

- Wonch Park has been waiting a long time for updating; although we support applying for grants, this would be a positive step forward for the community
- Support applying for grants every year to leverage local park millage funds. This year we are submitting grant requests of \$50,000 each for the construction of a pavilion in Meridian Riverfront Park, North Meridian Road Park, and tennis courts at Hillbrook Park.

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO CONSTRUCT THE PLANNED PAVILION UTILITIZING PARK MILLAGE FUNDING.

Roll Call:

AYES: Mark Stephens, Mike McDonald, Melanie Jaramillo, Todd Wilson  
NAYS: None

Motion passed.

**13. Final Comments**

None

**14. Announcements**

Chair Wilson announced:

- a. Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2015, Town Hall
- b. Farmers' Market – Saturday January 17, and February 7, 10am-2pm Meridian Mall



- c. Township Offices are closed January 19 in observance of Martin Luther King Birthday
- d. Family Weekend Winter Fun Events: January 17<sup>th</sup>: Cross Country Ski Classes; Snowshoe Classes; Moonlight Ski and Shoe; January 18<sup>th</sup>: Meridian Swims; January 24: Moonlight Sledding; January 25: Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk; Meridian Bowls; January 30: Winter Wonderland; February 6: Howl at the Moon; February 7: Cross Country Ski Classes; Snowshoe Classes; Moonlight Ski and Shoe; Winter Kickball Tournament; Moonlight Sledding; February 8: Meridian Swim; February 14: Meridian Ice Fishing Derby

**15. Public Remarks**

None

**16. Closed Session**

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER MCDONALD SECONDED, TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS THE PARK COMMISSION VACANCY RECOMMENDATION AND POSSIBLE LAND ACQUISITION ITEM.

Roll Call

AYES: Mark Stephens, Mike McDonald, Todd Wilson, Melanie Jaramillo

NAYS: None

The Commission moved into closed session at 8:26 pm.

COMMISSIONER MCDONALD MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.

Roll Call

AYES: Melanie Jaramillo, Mike McDonald, Mark Stephens, Todd Wilson,

NAYS: None

The Commission returned to open session at 8:53 pm.

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, CHAIR WILSON SECONDED, TO DIRECT STAFF TO TAKE SUCH ACTION AS DISCUSSED DURING CLOSED SESSION.

Roll Call

AYES: Melanie Jaramillo, Mike McDonald, Mark Stephens, Todd Wilson,

NAYS: None

Motion passed.

**17. Adjournment**

COMMISSIONER MCDONALD MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO  
SECONDED TO ADJOURN THE REGULAR MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 pm.