

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 2015

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Deschaine

OTHERS: Eckhart Dersch, Victoria Voges, Chad Gruber, Angie Wilson, Madeline  
Masterson

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

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

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Under #3, Presentations, add new item #a. Eagle Scout Final Report  
Presentation from Eagle Scout Candidate Grant Porter and Central Park Master  
Plan Final Report becomes new item #3b.

Under #9 New Business, add #b Newton Road Parking Lot and #c. Central Park  
Sanitary Sewer System

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

**3. Presentations**

**a. Eagle Scout Final Report Presentation**

Eagle Scout Candidate Grant Porter reported on his project that entailed  
constructing and installing eight Aldo Leopold benches in Central Park  
(diagram included in the minute book). The benches are anchored in  
concrete and he raised enough funds to cover the project expenses. When  
asked what he learned, Candidate Porter replied "not to dig in clay if at all  
possible".

**b. Central Park Master Plan Final Report**

Project consultant Sandy Bliesener, O'Boyle, Cowell, Blalock and Assoc.,  
stated the public input and charette/design workshop meetings were very  
successful and from the comments, suggestions, input and mission for this  
project, the Overall Park Development Plan includes major entrance  
points/confluences with specific elements highlighting each portion of the park  
and 6'-16' wide barrier-free paved path or promenades, boardwalks,

sidewalks, and nature trails into the 279 acres of parkland. Highlights of each area include:

#### Historical Village:

- New 40'x60' pavilion landscaped and screened adjacent to parking lot between Village buildings and Nokomis Learning Center
- Town Square area with brick pavers, lights, benches, picnic area
- Small band shell with historic character
- Wide promenade around the Village and around the pond
- 20' wide bridge between the Village and park plaza
- New restroom building over bridge on Village side
- Removal of former Farmers' Market pavilion/restroom building
- Construction of a new pavilion
- Continuation of wide promenade around pond and from new pavilion over to Central Park Drive
- Play structure, splash pad, memorial garden
- Low brick retaining wall signage at entrance points and into the berm on Marsh Road/Central Park Drive

#### Nancy Moore Park:

- New entrance into the park with the continuation of Gaylord C Smith Drive around the east side of the Service Center entering by the existing ball fields
- Continuation of the wide paved pathways and boardwalk promenade along the drive connecting over the Land Preservation parcel on west side of Okemos Road
- Confluence entrance plaza including additional parking, signage, overlooks/observation area, benches
- New pavilion and restroom buildings

#### Central Park South/Ledebuhr parcel:

- Continuation of the wide paved pathways and boardwalk promenade from Central Park over to this area to a confluence entrance plaza
- Covered pavilion that could be used for basketball and ice skating
- Sculpture garden
- Canal through wetlands connecting the two ponds
- Additional parking areas
- Additional overlook shelter and picnic areas
- Storm water management features
- Fitness stations for all ages and abilities

#### New Farmers Market area:

- After researching possible improvements to the present pavilion for the Farmers' Market enterprise, it was decided to find a new location
- The proposed design is to move this enterprise over to the Meridian Mall adjacent to the Younkers Men's Store entrance

- Construction three open-air pavilions to allow farmers to back into the facilities
- On the green, constructing a new restroom building, performance platform, play area with picnic tables
- The promenade would continue from the Mall side of Central Park Drive over onto the Central Park/Ledebuhr side of the roadway
- Suggestion to construct a median on Central Park Drive to address pedestrian crossing issues

Ms. Bliesener stated the budget materials for the project has been created for phased development. She thanked the Commissioners, staff and residents for attending the public input and charette sessions.

Discussion:

- Thanked everyone for their involvement in this project
- Very impressed with information that was received to create this wonderful plan
- It is a great plan
- It will be an amazing project with a lot of diversity
- Very glad Wes Landon was brought into the development of this project- he was a great asset
- This final product includes everyone's comments and ideas into one plan
- The final cost might be 5 million but we can't be afraid of it. This project can be completed in phases and with partners and grants
- This project has created a vision for the community, this is something to get everyone exciting about, creating this destination park
- Thanked Ms. Bliesener and her team for all their hard work on this project and for developing the estimate of cost. It will be the mission of the Park Commission to determine how to move this project forward.

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

Victoria Voges, Education Director, Nokomis Learning Center, spoke about the new hours including Saturdays and Sundays and their new website. The Center received a permit to receive and display a Bald Eagles' Bole along with the remainder of the nest. This is the only one displayed in Michigan. The Center is has set a fundraising of \$5,000 to reconstruct the whole nest. The Bole can be seen in the gallery for a modest fee. Information can be found on the new website or on face book.

Eckhart Dersch, Butternut, Okemos, stated the Commission and residents will be astounded when the Central Park Master Plan is completed. He visited a similar project in Missouri. He suggested including a bike repair station where the tools are anchored to the site and an oversized bird house with a book library. He loved the promenades and trail connections throughout the park.

Angie Wilson, Mohawk Lane, Okemos, stated the Central Park Master Plan is an amazing plan and the consultant did a wonderful job of incorporating everyone's comments. She can't wait to see this plan come together and with community support is very excited for this project. She thanked residents, Commissioners and staff for their contributions to this project.

## 5. Commissioner Reports and Comments

Commissioner Jaramillo reported on the recent Grand Opening of the paved pathway loop in Wonch Park. The "victory lap" was conducted by an Irish piper. It was a wonderful event.

Commissioner McDonald spoke about a lighted pedestrian crossing in Allegan County that may be of interest to us. Their transportation plan is on their website. It has an alerting system with lights and reflectors which reduce vehicle and pedestrian accidents without a stop sign or stop light. He likes the boulevard median plan for the Central Park Master Plan project.

Commissioner Stephens spoke about the Red Cedar Salmon Run at MSU on October 18 and the funds from the race will support the "Salmon in the Classroom" program. Many of the salmon have been and will be grown and released in Meridian Township.

## 6. Approval of Minutes

- a. August 11, 2015 Work Session Minutes
- b. August 11, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 11, 2015 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

## 7. Communications

### A. Items to/from the Public

None

### B. Commission Information

1. September Calendar of Events for Parks & Recreation
2. Towne Courier: **Aug 2:** Kids two-day camps offered at Harris Nature Center; **Aug 9:** Expert to guide edible plant walking tour; **Aug 23:** Chinese Qigong exercises occur each Monday; Exploration of Red Cedar River water Sept 13; Delicious or Dangerous? Harris Nature Center walk teaches attendees how to spot safe edibles in the wild; **Aug 30:** Exploration of Red Cedar River water Sept 13; Preschool will focus on dragon flies Sept 10; Meridian Heritage Festival Sept 19 at Historical Village; Meridian Township's Wonch Park opens new paved pathway
3. Lansing State Journal: **Aug 17:** Delicious or Dangerous? Harris Nature Center walk teaches attendees how to spot safe edibles in the wild

4. DeWitt Bath Review: **Aug 30:** Meridian Heritage Festival Sept 19 at Historical Village
5. Press Releases: **Aug 10:** Meridian Township Hires Recreation Specialist/ New Employee Brings More than Eight Years of Experience; **Aug 24:** Meridian Township Takes Residents Back in Time/History Comes to Life at Annual Heritage Festival; **Aug 24:** Meridian Township Celebrates Grant Funded Project/Wonch Park Pathway Ribbon Cutting Event Scheduled; **Aug 31:** Teamwork and Timbers Return/History Comes to Life at Annual Heritage Festival; **Aug 31:** Meridian Township Celebrates Grant Funded Project/Wonch Park Pathway Ribbon Cutting this Wednesday

### C. Staff Inquiries/Response

1. From: Martha Wyatt, Associate Planner/Landscape Architect; RE: Site Plan Review#15-14-07 (Meridian Township Parks & Recreation); 4555 Okemos Road; remove existing and install new pavilion

The Edible Plant Walking Tour was well attended and covered in the newspapers. There is an app for identify and reporting invasive species of Michigan to "MISIN" (Michigan Invasive Specific Information Network).

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

## 8. Director's Report

Director Maisner reported the following

- **Wonch Park:**
  - Parking lot paving and striping has been completed
  - Loop Pathway Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting ceremony was held on Wednesday, September 2 at noon with approximately 50 people in attendance. The event had media coverage from TV 6, TV 10 and HOMTV. The event was also live streamed on Twitter. The universally accessible trail was funded by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (\$45,000); the Park Millage (\$15,000) and benches were constructed and installed by the Okemos Kiwanis Club members. Younes Ishraidi and Nyal Nunn from the Engineering Department were team leaders on the project. The loop measures 1/3 mile.
  - We are currently working on ordering a **new pavilion and drinking fountain** for Wonch Park. Our permit applications have been submitted to the Community Planning and Development Office and to MDEQ for work in a floodplain. The project is being funded by the Park Millage. We plan to have the site work completed this year. The pavilion construction will depend on delivery and end-of-year weather. The cut and fill for this project will result in no change to the 100 year floodplain.

- **Greenfield Outdoor Fitness Equipment Grant** – submitted grant application on September 1; it is a matching grant for \$40,000 and will be installed in either Wonch or Central Park. If successful, the equipment will need to be ordered by November 15. The award should be made at the end of September and it will then be up to the Commission if they will fund the 50% match amount.
- **New Lead Worker in Parks and Grounds** – Have awarded the position to Lawrence (Larry) Bobb. Larry has worked in the Public Works Department for 13 years. We are excited to welcome Larry to our team. He is a great thinker, organizer, mechanic and recently led the project to complete a **footbridge connection project** between Central Park/Historical Village and Nancy Moore Park.
- **Monarch Butterfly project at Hartrick Park** – Last fall, former Planning Commission member Dave Reicosky, lead a project that included third grade students and their teachers from Bennett Woods Elementary with a planting project in Hartrick Park to support vegetation for growing and attracting Monarch caterpillars. It has been exciting to read the numerous emails that have been sent this week regarding the wonderful activity taking place there now. The area is located along the south side of the entry drive. Commissioner Stephens reported last year as part of the Grand Learning Network, he worked with teachers to improve monarch way stations, tagging and following the Monarchs in Michigan.
- **Town Hall Paving Project** – started two weeks ago and the **Farmers' Market** was temporarily relocated to the Meridian Mall parking lot and will be there until after the **Heritage Festival** on Saturday, September 19 from 10 am – 3 pm. The lot between Nokomis and the Historical Village was repaved as well.
- **Harris Nature Center:**
  - Summer Camps concluded with a total of 440 participants. According to HNC staff, this was the largest camp numbers since the Nature Center opened in 1997 and was very successful.
  - The parking lot is scheduled for crack fill, seal and strip September 14 and three new doors have been ordered for the center as well.
  - The Nature Exploration Area has two new additions: a Spider Web and Gathering Circle. We hope to be successful in obtaining the grant for a new pavilion and will be notified in December.
  - HNC Foundation President Julie Moore has reported Tony Bauer has resigned from the Board due to health issues and it was suggested the Commission honor him at a future meeting.
  - Mary Lou Gifford representing **Mid-Michigan Republican Women** are donating a plaque and tree for the Meridian Historical Village in memory of former Township Clerk, Virginia White.

**9. New Business**

PUBLIC COMMENT

**a. Declaration and Notice – MNRTF Grant**

Director Maisner reported on a new requirement in the grant process with the Department of Natural Resources which entail communities to file a Declaration and Notice with boundary map with Ingham County to assure that the grant funded site remain in the public domain for the public use, confirming the Township's obligation to retain ownership of Wonch Park and its conservation for public outdoor recreation.

The following Declaration and Notice was offered by Board Member Stephens and supported by Board Member McDonald:

WHEREAS, the Charter Township of Meridian, governing body, hereinafter called Meridian Township, being the owner of all the property described as Wonch Park

A parcel of land in the E ½ of SW ¼ Section 21 and the W ½ of the SE ¼ of Section 21 bounded by the Red Cedar River, Okemos Road and the Grist Mill Trail Race to the Red Cedar River

Tax ID #33-02-02-21-451-004 / Wonch Park

Herein after referred to as the Property, attached hereto, located in the Township of Meridian, County of Ingham, Michigan, hereby makes the following declaration to which the Property may be put.

WITNESSETH:

This declaration contained herein is based on the following factual recitals:

- A. Meridian Township developed the Property, in part, through the grant money from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.
- B. As a condition of the grant by the DNR, Meridian Township has agreed to impose certain restrictions on the developed portion of the Property.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PARK COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, HEREBY DECLARES THAT THE PORTION OF THE PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS THE PROJECT AREA IS AND SHALL BE HELD, TRANSFERRED, SOLD, CONVEYED, LEASED, OCCUPIED AND USED SUBJECT TO THE OBLIGATION HEREINAFTER SET FORTH, ALL OF WHICH SHALL RUN WITH THE LAND.

THE LANDS INCLUDED IN THIS DEED DEVELOPED BY MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP WITH FUNDING ASSISTANCE FROM THE MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND PURSUANT TO PROJECT AGREEMENT TF-12-024, WONCH PARK PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT, BETWEEN THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP, EXECUTED ON JULY 2, 2013. THE PROJECT AGREEMENT DESCRIBES CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS TO ENSURE THE LONG-TERM CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY AND ITS USE FOR PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION. MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP IS PLACING THIS NOTICE ON RECORD AS CONFIRMATION OF ITS OBLIGATIONS AS SET FORTH IN THE PROJECT AGREEMENT, INCLUDING THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE CONSENT OF THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO THE CONVEYANCE OF ANY RIGHTS OR INTEREST IN THE PROPERTY TO ANOTHER ENTITY, OR FOR THE USE OF THE PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN CONSERVATION OR PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION.

ADOPTED:

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

NAYS: None

The resolution passed unanimously

**b. Newton Road Park Parking Lot**

The Ingham County Road Department is paving Newton Road and has already paved the portion from Lake Lansing Road to just past the entrance to the Park. There was a requirement to pave the existing gravel lot (which was constructed in 2014 within one year. The estimated cost for paving the existing gravel lot and new drop-off loop is \$46,000. After reviewing the budget and since the Wonch Park project is coming in less than originally budget, she believes there will be funds available without the need for a budget amendment.

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO APPROVE AN EXPENDITURE OF APPROXIMATELY \$46,000 TO PAVE THE NEWTON ROAD PARKING LOT LOCATED AT 6025 NEWTON ROAD.

Roll Call:

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed



**c. Central Park Sanitary Sewer System**

During the Central Park Master Plan public input and design charrettes in July, a new proposed restroom located in the Historical Village was discussed and as to where the best sewer connection would be located. It was suggested that the Park Millage could fund an extension of the sewer system from the new Aldi's construction site into the Central Park for with a ball park cost of \$15,000.

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSIONER MCDONALD SECONDED, TO APPROVE AN EXPENDITURE OF UP TO \$20,000 FROM THE PARK MILLAGE TO INSTALL A SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM EXTENSION FROM THE NEW ALDI FOOD STORE SITE ON MARSH ROAD, INTO CENTRAL PARK NEAR NOKOMIS LEARNING CENTER AND TO TALK WITH THE TOWNSHIP BOARD TO SHARE THE COST AT A LATER DATE.

Roll Call:

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed.

**10. Unfinished Business**

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

**11. Other Business**

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

**12. Discussion Items**

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

**13. Final Comments**

Chair Wilson spoke about his participation in the recent Dragon Boat Races on the Red Cedar River. It was a fundraiser for the Lansing Women's Shelter; it was a lot of fun but hard work.

Commissioner Jaramillo spoke about attending a Dragon Boat Race in Oregon.

**14. Announcements**

- a. Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 13, 2015, Town Hall
- b. Farmers' Market – Wednesdays and Saturdays, July 1-October 31, 8 am – 2 pm, Central Park Pavilion

- c. Meridian Arts and Crafts Marketplace, Sunday, September 27, 11 am – 4 pm, Central Park Pavilion
- d. Heritage Festival – Saturday, September 19, 10 am – 3 pm, Central Park-Meridian Historical Village

**15. Public Remarks**

None

**16. Closed Session**

This item was moved to the Work Session.

**17. Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.