

# CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

## LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

7:00 p.m. Meeting Room – Meridian Service Center

**Members Present:** Tom Woiwode, Chair; Mary Helmbrecht, Vice-Chair; Members Mark Stephens, Dave Caszatt, Margo Smith

**Members Absent:** Frank Hatfield, Jim Kielbaso, Steve Webster

**Staff:** Jane Greenway, Land Management Coordinator  
LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation

**Public Present:** Park Commissioners Marilyn Aronoff, Teri Banas, Eckhart Dersch

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Woiwode at 7:10 p.m.
2. **Approve Minutes:** MOTION was made by Dave Caszatt, seconded by Mark Stephens to approve the minutes for the April 13, 2011 Land Preservation Advisory Board as written. MOTION carried unanimously.
3. **Public Remarks**
  - A. **Management of Natural Areas – Joint Meeting with Park Commission**
    1. LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation
      - Requested an open dialogue between the Park Commission and Land Preservation Advisory board to discuss the concept of sharing resources to provide stewardship on all township public lands
      - Wants to develop specific ways for LP and Parks to work together.
      - Acknowledged that the zoning ordinance states that Land Preservation funds are designated for the management of land preserves only.
      - Foster Crouse Preserve and North Meridian Road Park are adjacent properties and share similar problems with invasive species. If the problems are addressed by both groups, the effect will be greater.
      - Is there a value that can be applied to in kind services? Parks has many volunteers.
      - Stated that parks are not requesting money from the LPAB.
      - Stated that the township only has four full-time grounds maintenance staff to help manage the parks and preserves

- Requested that the LPAB keep the Park Commission in mind when considering future land acquisitions.
2. Teri Banas, Chair of Park Commission
- Requested that the LPAB and Park Commission hold a joint meeting once per year. Park Commission will choose a date at their June 14, 2011 meeting.
  - Parks department manages more than 700 acres of natural areas, with few resources, but many willing and able volunteers.
  - Many residents do not understand the distinction between parks and land preserves.
  - Suggested Red Cedar Natural Area for a trade (park property is located on the north side of the Red Cedar River, across from the Red Cedar Glen Preserve and Legg Park).
  - Referred to the memorandum sent to the LPAB from LuAnn Maisner (included in official meeting minutes for the May 11, 2011 LPAB meeting), that outlined points of discussion:
    1. What opportunities exist for Parks and Land Preservation to work together to provide care, maintenance and stewardship of all lands owned by the township? (Parks, Land Preserves, other Township properties).
    2. Do opportunities exist for trading sensitive park natural areas for parts of Land Preservation parcels that are better suited for public park use?
    3. When the Land Preservation Advisory Board is reviewing lands for acquisition in closed session, is partnering with Parks a consideration when appropriate?
    4. Red Cedar Glen – bicycle access to Meridian Riverfront Park.
3. Tom Woiwode, LPAB Chair
- Expressed interest in holding a joint annual meeting between the LPAB and Park Commission, perhaps to create a yearly strategy
  - Discussed “Applegate” acquisition as a cooperative effort between LPAB and Park Commission
  - Stated that the mission of the LPAB is that they are in the “nature business,” not the “recreation business” and that the focus is on the natural components of the land
  - It is imperative that the LPAB maintain the integrity of the process
  - LPAB and Parks already share staff
  - The work outlined in the LPAB management plans will primarily be performed by volunteer help
  - Referenced the Lake Lansing North Park acquisition, which was a cooperative effort between the LPAB and Ingham County Parks

- The agreement/conservation easement honored the integrity of the Land Preservation program
- Adjacent properties and shared issues should be identified (parks, land preserves, township lands)
- Red Cedar Glen Preserve: Design committee provided an outline for the site restoration; Jane Greenway is meeting with bicyclists to present the LPAB with a recommendation for bicycle access
- The zoning ordinance has a provision that allows the sale of Land Preservation property if the land no longer serves the purpose of the LP program. Trading is also allowable, as long as the property meets the criteria.
- If there were a trade, land preservation management funds could be spent on the land.

4.. Dave Caszatt

- Cooperation between Land Preservation and Parks has already begun. Park naturalists lead nature walks through the land preserves and parks recruits volunteers to assist with invasive species removal.

5. Mark Stephens

- Acknowledged that there are mutual interests between both groups (LPAB and Parks), and that the Land Preservation program could share money to make resources go further. Parks has hundreds of volunteers.
- There could be future opportunities to use land preservation funds as matching funds for future park acquisitions, similar to the Applegate acquisition, or the Lake Lansing North Park acquisition.

6. Marilyn Aronoff

- Parks has many volunteers. Can park volunteers assist with stewardship of the land preserves?

7. Eckhart Dersch

- Parks and LPAB need to be willing to change in order to stay viable
- Requested that everything done is in compliance with zoning ordinance
- Parks and LPAB should develop a memorandum of understanding to set the ground rules

B. **Jim Wood, Van Atta Road**

- Encouraged the land preservation to stay true to their mission of preserving natural lands

- Suggested that the area acquired by the Park Commission in 1994, adjacent to his residence, be considered for a trade, and believes that it would meet the criteria of the LPAB
- Stated that the LPAB and Park Commission sharing resources would look good to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board.

**4. 8:00 p.m. Closed Session**

MOTION was made by Dave Caszatt, seconded by Mark Stephens, to enter into closed session to discuss the possible purchase of real estate.

**Roll Call Vote:**      **YEAS:** Woiwode, Helmbrecht, Stephens, Caszatt, Smith  
                                 **NAYS:** None

8:30 p.m. Return to Open Session: MOTION was made by Mark Stephens, seconded Mary Helmbrecht, to end the closed session and return to open session.

**Roll Call Vote:**      **YEAS:** Woiwode, Helmbrecht, Stephens, Caszatt, Smith  
                                 **NAYS:** None

Motion carried.

**5. Land Management Report – Jane Greenway, Land Management Coordinator**

Reported on the following items:

- a. Red Cedar Glen: Meeting with bicycle group on May 12, 2011, 5 p.m., to discuss possible bicycle access routes through the land preserve
- b. Potter (Lake Lansing South): Site survey and location of property corner markers from KEBS, Inc,
- c. Garlic Mustard Pull: Invasive garlic mustard was removed on May 7, 2011 from the Northwest Land Preserve by neighborhood teens and also volunteers from St. Vincent Home for Children.
- d. Scheduled site visits to review potential land preservation properties

**6. Other**

**a. Invasive Species Removal at Northwest Land Preserve**

1. LPAB member Caszatt is planning to organize volunteers to remove buckthorn in the Northwest Land Preserve in the fall of 2011.
2. Caszatt has researched the topic and discussed methods with The Stewardship Network.
3. The invasive buckthorn is most prevalent on the “Walnut Hills” property.
4. Jane Greenway and Dave Caszatt will develop a plan for the removal, required chemicals, etc. and will present it to the LPAB at the July 13, 2011 meeting.

7. **Public Comment**  
None

8. **Adjournment**  
10:30 p.m. Chairman Woiwode adjourned the meeting.