

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2016

PRESENT: Commissioners: Deschaine, 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 regular meeting to order at 7:16 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Under #9, New Business, add #f. Towner Road Park Development Project
Funding

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

3. Presentations

None

4. Public Comment

None

5. Commissioner Reports and Comments

Commissioner Deschaine reported on hearing from the Kids N Dogs Store owner who has been very busy over the holidays and plans to present a proposal at the March meeting. He also reported the Kiwanis Club is interested in providing funding for the project.

Commissioner Stephens reported the annual Ice Fishing Derby scheduled for this weekend has been canceled due to the weather conditions.

Commissioner McDonald reported the trail link from Meridian Township to MSU was given a high priority for the Ingham County Trail Millage projects.

6. Approval of Minutes

- a. December 8, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes
- b. January 21, 2016 Work Session Minutes

COMMISSIONER MCDONALD MOVED, COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE SECONDED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 8, 2015 AND JANUARY 21, 2016 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

7. Communications

A. Items to/from the Public

1. From: Michigan House of Representatives, RE: Meeting Agenda to discuss Elections
2. From: United States Senator Debbie Stabenow; RE: Thank you for supporting conservation projects
3. From: Dr. Maureen Sander; RE: 2016 Michigan Barn Preservation Network Calendar – featuring The Maureen Sander Barn (March)

B. Commission Information

1. Towne Courier: **Nov 8:** Turkey campfire program set for Nov 14; **Jan 3:** Harris Nature Center has cross-country ski, snowshoe classes; Qigong exercise classes offered at nature center; Preschool Science Exploration Class; Snow Tales walk at the Harris Nature Center; **Jan 10:** Harris Nature Center has cross-country ski, snowshoe classes; Chipmunk Story time at nature center; Snow Tales guided walk at the Harris Nature Center; **Jan 17:** Meridian deer removal efforts resumes; Native plants available for sale through April 29; Photography class offered; “An Afternoon of Relaxation” event Jan 24; Chipmunk Story time at Harris Nature Center
2. 2016 Township Board Goals, Action Plan and Strategic Plan
3. Meridian Township 2015 Community Livability Report
4. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Newsletter; Winter 2016
5. Ingham County Parks & Recreation Commission – A meeting of the Planning and Community Outreach Committee of the Ingham County Park & Recreation Commission, January 19

C. Staff Inquiries/Response

1. Associate Planner Harmony Gmazel; RE: Special Use Permit #16031 (Fann)

D. Distributed at the Meeting

1. 2015 Parks and Recreation Annual Report

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

8. Director's Report

Director Maisner offered the following report:

- Central Park Master Plan – has been developed, received public input, held design charrettes which includes connections through Central Park (Town Hall, Public Safety Building, Historical Village, Central Park South, Ledebuhr parcel, Nancy Moore Park, Service Center), total project cost is \$5.5 Million
- Renewed our Open Space Easement with Dr. Maureen Sander which allows for public access on 30-acres of the Sander Farm Preserved Natural Area on Dobie Road
- Received two grants: \$50,000 MNRTF for Pavilion in North Meridian Road Park and \$17,000 from Greenfields Outdoor Fitness for 12 universally accessible outdoor exercise machines that will be installed in Wonch Park this spring.
- Nancy Moore Park – safety fencing, foul poles, siding, repaved driveway, gaga ball pit, 10 new trees flowering crabs, and 2 -red maple
- Footbridge repair in Central Park South and two in Legg Park
- Constructed two new sand volleyball courts in North Meridian Road Park utilizing Lake Michigan beach sand.
- Wonch Park – conducted ribbon cutting for Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant funded accessible loop pathway; repaved parking lot, new fencing along Okemos Road, removed old pavilion and began construction on new 40' pavilion (completed this spring), outdoor fitness equipment (spring installation).
- Harris Nature Center – Parking lot seal and stripe, erosion repair from parking lot drainage, three new doors on Nature Center building, “log jam” climbing structure, spider web climber, Haslett-Okemos Rotary Gathering Circle/outdoor classroom
- Historical Village – new fence around vegetable garden, landscape repair and maintenance. Special thanks to the Friends of Historic Meridian, Meridian Garden Club and staff for their great work.
- Other parking lots sealed and stripped: Brattin Woods Park, Ted Black Woods Park
- Deer Management – 57 hunters, 54 deer were removed, there was no baiting this year and the meat was not donated, 550 deer were tested for the Chronic Wasting Disease from sharp shooters and car-deer accidents. Over 1,000 deer have been taken in the last four years. Reported Car-deer stats: 2011-152; 2013 – 153; 2104- 137 and 152 in 2015.
- Harris Nature Center – 452 programs, two large special events; 46 building rentals; 7,541 drop-in visitors, 10,261 program participants; total participation/visitors 17,802. Expressed appreciation for the work and efforts by Kit Rich, Kati Adams and Interpretative Staff.

- Parks and Grounds Maintenance: Expressed appreciation for the great job the staff has done to keep the parks and athletic fields in great condition through this past year.
- 2015 Volunteer Totals: The value of volunteer support is calculated each year by the State and this year it is \$23.07/hour. The total number of volunteers from parks, recreation, Harris Nature Center, Meridian Historical Village, Land Preservation, Meridian Senior Center and Deer Management Program was 1,906. Total number of hours 31,708 for a total value of \$731,504. Special thanks to our volunteers who help to make the community a better place to live. We appreciate their involvement.
- Recreation Youth and Adult Sports Programs Economic Impact: Had approximately 4,000 youth and adult athletes participate in Meridian Township Programs which increased support to our local businesses by \$446,986. This figure comes from a survey questions and does not include registration fees.
- Proposed 2016 Projects:
 - ✓ Development of Towner Road Park
 - ✓ Install new playground equipment in Orlando Park this spring
 - ✓ Install new Pavilion in Wonch Park this spring
 - ✓ Install new fitness equipment in Wonch Park this spring
 - ✓ Construct Doggie Playground in Central Park
 - ✓ Update the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan (to be eligible for grants, the Master Plan needs to be updated every five years and this helps leverage millage dollars)
 - ✓ Construct roof structures over dugouts in Hartrick Park this spring
 - ✓ Trail surface and directional signage in parks.
 - ✓ Continue with stewardship activities including invasive plant removal, restoration projects and butterfly habitat projects
 - ✓ Proposed submission of two grant applications
 - ✓ Work with Ingham County to secure trail millage funds for projects in Meridian.

9. **New Business**

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. **Accessible Doggie Playground Proposal**

The Commission and staff have been researching the development of an off-leash dog park for many years. Staff is proposing to build a “Doggie Playground” to be located in Central Park on Gaylord Smith Court adjacent to the Meridian Service Center. This would be a specialty park for both large and small dogs, approximately 2-acres in size with trails and agility equipment. This would be the first off-leash dog facility in our community. This urban playground for dogs and owners would provide an opportunity for us to foster relationships with our pet owners to determine the “next steps” in creating other dog-friendly facilities in the community.

Points of Information

- There will be separate areas for small and large dogs
- To avoid muddy trails, stone dust will be used as the trail surface as it meets accessibility guidelines, is pervious, and is gentle on paws.
- Effective management and maintenance are important to the success of dog facilities so its proximity to the Service Center should be beneficial. Also, police and fire personnel regularly drive by accessing fuel pumps.
- Maybe area pet stores may wish to contribute to the facility.
- Opportunities for special pet events
- Pet waste will be addressed by signage; good dog owners tend to police other dog owners

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER MCDONALD SECONDED, TO BUILD A DOGGIE PLAYGROUND IN CENTRAL PARK ADJACENT TO GAYLORD C SMITH COURT, HASLETT, APPROXIMATELY 2-ACRES IN SIZE WITH BOTH LARGE AND SMALL DOG AREAS, TRAILS, AND AGILITY EQUIPMENT FOR AN ESTIMATED COST OF \$76,000 FUNDED BY THE PARK MILLAGE.

Roll Call:

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed.

b. Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) Request for Proposals of Public Art for Communities 2016

Director Maisner reported a few years ago, the Meridian DDA was awarded a grant to commission a sculpture for the round-about at Hamilton and Marsh Roads. LEAP is once again accepting proposals for public art. Associate Planner, Peter Menser is preparing another application and is proposing the location to be Wonch Park and is asking for a \$500 commitment from the Park Millage to use as a grant match. The grant award is \$10,000.

COMMISSIONER MCDONALD MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO SUPPORT THE SUBMISSION OF THE PUBLIC ART FOR COMMUNITIES GRANT PROPOSAL FOR WONCH PARK TO THE LANSING ECONOMIC AREA PARTNERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTE A LOCAL MATCH OF \$500 CASH FUNDED THROUGH THE PARK MILLAGE.

Roll Call:

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed.

c. Projects for 2016 Grant Proposals

The Commissioners reviewed the proposed CIP projects during work session and are recommending the following projects for grant submission for 2016:

- Restroom building and new footbridge in the Historical Village- estimated cost: \$300,000
- Promenade/pathway from the Historical Village, through to the Ledebuhr parcel, to the Central Park South pond and down to Central Park Drive with overlook/fishing platform. Estimated cost: \$370,000.

Staff will prepare the grant applications and discuss the proposals with DNR Staff to determine which projects fit best with each grant program.

COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE MOVED, COMMISSIONER MCDONALD SECONDED, TO HAVE STAFF PREPARE GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR TWO PROJECTS – RESTROOM BUILDING AND FOOT BRIDGE IN THE MERIDIAN HISTORICAL VILLAGE WITH AN ESTIMATED COST OF \$300,000; AND FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A PROMENADE/PATHWAY THROUGH CENTRAL PARK TO CENTRAL PARK SOUTH INCLUDING AN OVERLOOK/FISHING PLATFORM WITH AN ESTIMATED COST OF \$370,000. Voice vote. Motion passed.

d. Set Public Hearing Date for Grant Proposals

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE SECONDED, TO MOVE TO SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR THE PROPOSED GRANT SUBMISSIONS FOR A RESTROOM BUILDING AND NEW FOOT BRIDGE; AND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROMENADE/PATHWAY THROUGH CENTRAL PARK ON TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2016, AT 7 PM, AT THE CENTRAL FIRE STATION, HASLETT/OKEMOS ROTARY COMMUNITY ROOM, 5000 OKEMOS ROAD, OKEMOS, MI. Voice vote. Motion passed.

e. Nancy Moore Park Sand Volleyball Court Improvement

Director Maisner reported that the sand volleyball courts in Nancy Moore Park were installed in 1996. These courts have hosted Township and public leagues, tournaments and casual play for the last 20 years. Staff is recommending the sand be replaced at a cost of approximately \$12,000 for two courts. This recommendation requires a budget amendment.

COMMISSIONER MCDONALD MOVED, CHAIR WILSON SECONDED, TO APPROVE A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$12,000 TO

**PURCHASE NEW SAND FOR TWO SAND VOLLEYBALL COURTS IN
NANCY MOORE PARK IN 2016 FROM THE PARK MILLAGE FUND.**

Roll Call:

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

NAYS: None

The motion passed.

f. Towner Road Park Development Funding

Chair Wilson reported that in November, the Commission discussed and approved the delivery of work in a single piece verses in smaller pieces for development of Towner Road Park, and the costs associated with each method of development. With the current millage, there will be a need to borrow if the project is to move forward as one project. There will be an interest incurred on borrowed funding but this would be offset by the costs of developing in stages which would require additional staff time, document development, request for proposal process, etc. The major benefit for delivery in one piece is the park will be available sooner for the community's use. By approving the method of delivery, the Commission can proceed to formally discuss the project and its' funding with the Township Board.

Discussion:

- This is a large project and to build in phases would mean piecemealed infrastructure making it more difficult to oversee the project, and the finished product may not be a quality product
- Make better use of staff time, and present a finished product to the community
- Would there be a perception that by borrowing funds in the second year of a new millage that there would not be funds available for future park projects or maintenance?
- Support of loan option to get this project developed all at once because it would be available for the community much sooner than if developed in phases
- If developed as one project, will receive a better bid from contractors who can keep their crews busy throughout the work season

**COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE MOVED, COMMISSIONER STEPHENS
SECONDED, TO MOVE TO CONSTRUCT TOWNER ROAD PARK, IN ONE
PHASE, UTILIZING A CONSTRUCTION MANAGER, WITH THE
UNDERSTANDING THAT A LOAN WILL BE NECESSARY TO COMPLETE
THIS PROJECT. THIS LOAN WILL BE REPAID BY THE PARK MILLAGE.**

Roll Call:

AYES: Mark Stephens, Philip Deschaine, Mike McDonald, Todd Wilson

NAYS: Melanie Jaramillo

Motion passed 4-1

10. Unfinished Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. None

11. Other Business (cherry)

PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. **March meeting location change - Central Fire Station Haslett/Okemos Community Meeting Room**

Director Maisner reported the March meeting location needs to be moved to another location due to the upcoming elections.

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, CHAIR WILSON SECONDED, TO RELOCATE THE MARCH 8, 2016 PARK COMMISSION MEETING FROM THE TOWN HALL ROOM, MERIDIAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING, TO THE CENTRAL FIRE STATION HASLETT/OKEMOS ROTARY CLUB COMMUNITY ROOM AND THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 6 PM. Voice vote. Motion passed.

12. Discussion Items

PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. None

13. Final Comments

None

14. Announcements

- a. Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2016, Central Fire Station Haslett/Okemos Rotary Community Room, 5000 Okemos Road, Okemos
- b. Winter Farmers' Market – J C Penney Corridor, Meridian Mall, first and third Saturday, 10 am - 2 pm
- c. Meridian Ice Fishing Derby – Saturday, February 13, 9 am – Noon, Central Park South Pond / cancelled due to the weather
- d. Moonlight Sledding, Saturday, February 13, 6-8:30 pm; North Meridian Road Park, weather dependent
- e. Animal Valentine Campfire, Saturday, February 13, 7 pm, Harris Nature Center
- f. Howl at the Moon, Friday, February 19, 7 pm, Harris Nature Center
- g. Moonlight Ski and Shoe, Saturday, February 20, 6-9 pm; Harris Nature Center
- h. Family Special: Birds of Winter; Sunday, February 21, 3 pm; Harris Nature Center

- i. Meridian Swims, Sunday, February 21, 6:30-8 pm; Michigan Athletic Club, space limited - pre-registration is required

15. Public Remarks

None

16. Closed Session

None

17. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.