To: Board Members

From: Frank L. Walsh, Township Manager

Date: March 11, 2022

Re: Manager's Report

ASSESSING

The Township's annual Assessor's Review was held February 28, March 1 and 2. Approximately 40 parcels were involved in the review this year. This review provides property owners with an opportunity to talk with Assessing Department Staff on an informal basis and to gain a better understanding of the assessing process. The Assessor's Review can also be helpful for bringing any errors in the data used to value property or specific issues affecting individual properties to the attention of the Assessing Department. Corrections can then be made without the need for a formal appeal to the Board of Review or the Michigan Tax Tribunal. The Assessor's Review enhances the transparency of the assessing process; it also results in more accurate property valuations and an efficient resolution of difficult valuation issues.

Board of Review appeals sessions are scheduled for March 14th, 15th and 16th.

There were 16 appeals filed with Michigan Tax Tribunal for the 2021 tax year. The Assessing Office is working to resolve the remaining eight, listed below.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
MTT Status Report - Entire Tribunal (ET) Appeals
March 9, 2022

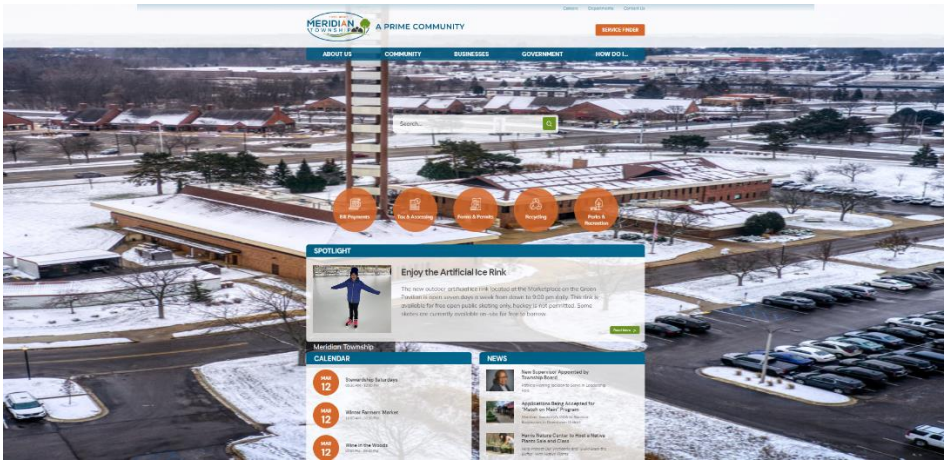
PARCEL	OWNERSHIP	DOCKET NUMBER	YEAR	SEV	TV	TV IN CONTENTION
33-02-02-15-276-005	JER/NHP SENIOR LIVING ACQUISITION LLC	20-001739	2021	3,122,400	2,791,802	1,166,802
33-02-02-20-326-011	HANNAH HOSPITALITY LLC	21-002018	2021	4,184,900	4,184,900	984,900
33-02-02-33-378-005	PHG LAND DEVELOPMENT, LLC	21-002593	2021	3,219,800	3,219,800	1,644,800
33-02-02-33-378-004	PENINSULA HOTEL GROUP, LLC	21-002598	2021	2,561,400	2,533,911	471,411
33-02-02-21-254-037	WALGREEN COMPANY	21-002717	2021	1,486,100	1,486,100	486,100
33-02-02-22-126-022	TKG MERIDIAN TOWNE CENTRE LLC	21-002756	2021	5,569,300	4,833,507	1,290,657
33-02-02-22-126-024	TKG MERIDIAN TOWNE CENTRE LLC	21-003253	2021	556,100	556,100	281,100
33-02-02-21-226-004	PANERA LLC	21-002765	2021	777,200	777,200	377,200

NOTE: Parcels highlighted in yellow, if any, are located in a capture district (e.g., DDA, etc.)

COMMUNICATIONS

Meridian Township Website

The Communications Department kicked off a series of virtual refresher training sessions for the new Meridian Township website which launched in November 2021. The first training was held on February 24 to provide guidance to Township employees who frequently update/manage aspects of the Township website. The first session covered specific details on uniformity, branding and consistency of website content. Ways to improve the website SEO (search engine optimization) and accessibility was also discussed including labeling and Meta tagging. The next training will be held in the summer months.



Staff has been putting together a campaign to highlight the new features of the Township website to encourage additional use of online services. Strengthening internal and external awareness of how to find and use the information on the website is key to continue success of the newly designed Township website as an effective communications and marketing tool.

Below is a list of the most recent webpages that has received significant design and content revisions on the Township website. Staff encourages everyone to share the friendly redirect URLs with community members to help them quickly find information on the website:

- Calendar - www.meridian.mi.us/Calendar
- Meetings - www.meridian.mi.us/Meetings
- Goals - www.meridian.mi.us/TownshipGoals
- News - www.meridian.mi.us/News
- Development Projects - www.meridian.mi.us/DevelopmentProjects
- Construction Projects - www.meridian.mi.us/TownshipProjects
- Recreation & Sports – www.meridian.mi.us/Recreation
- Election Information – www.meridian.mi.us/Elections

Broadband

Communications Manager Brandie Yates attended the first Ingham County Broadband Task Force Meeting on February 23 with Supervisor Patricia Herring Jackson (appointed member of the Task Force) and Communications Commission Chair Tunga Kiyak. At the meeting, the Task Force discussed the county-wide survey to be released this spring in order to gather data to identify broadband needs. Contact information for Meridian Township community leaders were added to the Community Partners List to prepare for the survey's release. Once the survey is available, the Communications Department will share the information across the Township's platforms to encourage residents to participate.

Town Hall Room A/V Upgrades Project

On February 24, a kick off meeting was held for the project to enhance the Town Hall Room audio and visual equipment. Smart Homes/Smart Offices of Mason was awarded the project. Engineers and staff discussed the project logistics and timeline. The final purchase order will be signed by mid-March and equipment orders will be placed. Due to supply chain issues, equipment is anticipated to arrive mid to late summer. The electrical work and equipment installation is anticipated to take place late summer/early fall.

Marketing and Communications

This year's issue of the Prime Meridian Magazine has been delayed until later this spring due to a limited quantity of paper available. As with other products, printing companies are seeing a shortage in paper type and quantity supply. Staff has received bids to print and have chosen the printing company, but are waiting for the paper to become available for the magazine to be printed.

During first quarter, the Communications Team met with staff from each Department to determine marketing needs and gather content to communicate to the public throughout 2022. Quarterly meetings

will take place to strengthen collaboration and strategize messaging and marketing priorities throughout the year.

On January 28, Global Community Engagement Day, staff launched a Community Engagement & Communications Survey to further assist with the Department's Communications Strategy. The community was asked questions like how they receive Township information, which social platform they use the most, the frequency of receiving information, etc. The survey received 241 responses in a two-week timeframe. Results are currently being tabulated and will be shared after the Communications Commission meeting in March.

Celebrating
HARRIS NATURE CENTER
HNC
25
YEARS

Harris Nature Center (HNC) is celebrating 25 years this year. The Communications Team created a 25th Anniversary logo, using the new logo as a base. Throughout the year, the Communications Team will share historical information about the HNC on social, in digital newsletters, at HNC camps and more. HNC staff, Parks & Recreation Director, LuAnn Maisner and the Foundation Chair were recognized at the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau (GLCVB) annual meeting. The Communications Team is invited every year to attend this meeting due to the Township's membership and staff's Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) certifications. Communications Manager Brandie Yates has seven years as a CTA and this year Marketing & Public Relations Specialist Andrea Smiley received her 5-year pin.

On February 2, World Wetlands Day, the Communications Team launched a Wetlands campaign (#BuildBacktheBuffer) to assist the Environmental Commission, Green Meridian Team and Parks & Recreation Department with building awareness of our land preserves and wetlands in the Township. This is a year-long campaign that will include information about native plants that help create a buffer around the wetlands. Information will be share via the Township's social platforms, digital newsletters, plant sales and more. A dedicated webpage has also been created – www.meridian.mi.us/Wetlands.

The Communications Team along with the Economic Development Department created monthly campaigns to highlight Black History Month and Women's History Month. For Women's History Month, local woman owned businesses are being honored with a certificate and photo shared on social.

In January, the Green Gazette launched with a new design. The Communications Team worked with Constant Contact designers to create a new design for this digital newsletter. It now is branded for the Township, but with a distinct identity. A new Green Meridian logo will be designed to add to marketing materials this year.

The Township's Instagram feed now has a new look. The Communications Team worked with our social scheduling provider, Social News Desk, to create a new look for links. The Twitter carousel is also a new feature from the Department's social scheduling provider that will allow multiple stories, photos and links in one post. This will increase engagement with the Township's Twitter account.

Communications Manager, Brandie Yates and Marketing & Public Relations Specialist, Andrea Smiley completed a week-long online course and are now Certified Digital Marketers.

HOMTV Operations & Equipment

One of staff's ongoing projects from 2021 into 2022, is the HOMTV Server Room Reconfiguration. Multimedia Production & Operations Specialist Diehl and local broadcast engineer met over seven times in 2021 to trace and properly label the varying cables in the HOMTV Server Room. This work will continue into 2022. On March 10, cable tracing will take place in the HOMTV Control Room into the Town Hall Room in preparation for the Town Hall Room A/V Upgrades Project to take place in 2022.

HOMTV's internet bandwidth is insufficient for the streaming capabilities needed to produce live productions. In order to address that issue, staff will be upgrading the internet plan with Comcast. A new issue with the Leightronix equipment has also come up recently. The UltraNEXUS-HD that allows for playback on the HOMTV channel has been experiencing issues displaying certain video files. Trouble-shooting will be the next step and if that doesn't resolve the issues, a new UltraNEXUS may need to be an emergency purchase. The current UltraNEXUS is no longer under warranty and can no longer be serviced by Leightronix.

At the March 2 Environmental Commission meeting, a new setup was implemented to accommodate more members than the dais could seat. Rectangular folding tables were setup in the middle of the room with a microphone at each. This also allows for better social distancing during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are still technical issues that need to be worked out before this option becomes available to other Boards and Commissions for televised meetings on HOMTV.

HOMTV Programming & Internship

In 2021, HOMTV was able to return to in-person productions, but still utilize virtual programs when needed. Some examples of these programs are Virtual View and HOM Entertainment.

2022 means the return of HOMTV's election coverage. Staff is working with the Clerk's Office to ensure "Your Choice 2022" election programming will help Meridian Township residents be aware of the upcoming 2022 election information, candidates and ballot proposals, as well as precinct and district changes in the Township. Primary election programs will begin in early summer.

In March and April, HOMTV will be producing new programs on topics not covered previously. A DEI forum with Haslett and Okemos schools will be filmed and available for playback to the community. Staff is also working on a Women's History Month feature with the Police and Fire to highlight the female staff from both departments. In April, a special feature will also be produced that highlights sensory-friendly activities available in both Meridian Township and the Lansing area.

HOMTV is working with the Parks & Recreation Department to produce a promo in regards to the Township's Wetland Campaign. Another promotional video is being produced for the Solarize Meridian group. HOMTV created a video for the Harris Nature Center that will be used for the MSU Science Festival. Later in March, HOMTV will film a HNC gardening and native plants class for playback. The class is being recorded on 3/22 and will exclusively air on HOMTV 4/5/22-4/19/22.

Awards season has begun and HOMTV will be submitting work to various awards competitions including the Hometown Media Awards for the national organization, Alliance for Community Media (ACM) and the Government Programming Awards for the National Association of Telecommunications Officers & Advisors (NATOA).

The Spring 2022 semester of the HOMTV internship began on January 18 and will run through May 6. This semester only has 5 returning interns and no first-time interns. Interns continue to be a valuable asset to the community by providing local news and information through interviews, programs, news stories, online articles, promos, meeting crew and more. Recruitment efforts have ramped up to hire more interns for the Summer 2022 semester. Staff is working on revising the structure of the HOMTV Internship Program to attract more prospect interns to apply.

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

On an opening note, the Community Planning and Development Department is fully staffed for the first time in over a year, thanks to the work of the Human Resources Department! With that full Staff, we have starting working towards streamlining processes and ordinances, to improve the way we serve the residents and businesses of the Township.

Building

Building Department highlights form the first quarter of 2022 include:

- Demolition permits were issued for the future Trader Joe's at Northwind and Grand River Avenue. Demolition work on the project is nearly complete as of this writing.
- Building permit has been issued for Nothing Bundt Cakes at Okemos and Grand River, which will fill the only vacant space at that important intersection in the Township.
- Building permits are under review for Trader Joe's and Hypershine Car Wash, at the site of the former Paul Revere's.

Additionally, we are making progress on the overall Department goal F: 'Investigate the Potential of Going Completely Paperless for all Permitting' and expect to have a plan to implement, at least on a trial basis, in the second quarter.

Planning

The Planning Department has begun work on modernizing the Zoning Ordinance. By the end of the quarter, the Planning Commission will have held public hearings and reviewed seven proposed ordinance changes on a variety of topics from residential setbacks and lot coverage in the Lake Lansing Overlay district, to the Zoning Board of Appeals review standards, which will meet Department Goal G: 'Update the standards of review for the Zoning Board of Appeals to be more in line with the State enabling legislation.' We will also have taken the first step in implementing Department Goal A: ' Consolidate the number of Single-Family Residential and Multiple-Family Residential zoning district', which is also a goal of the 2017 Master Plan, by proposing the elimination of an unused residential zoning district. The next quarter will see us start the Master Plan update process in earnest.

From a new/ongoing project perspective, Staff would highlight the Meridian Company's plans currently under review to build a new building adjacent to their current home on M78 at the north end of the Township and the site plan review that is in process for the Village of Okemos project.

Code Enforcement
Efforts continue to improve the overall conditions at the Winslow Trailer Park. Staff will continue to work with the Township Attorney's Office, over the course of the next several months, to plot a path forward for enforcement. Snow enforcement was not extensive this year, as the majority of residents appear to have properly cleared their sidewalks in a timely fashion.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Pine Village Project
Pine Village Developers have begun value engineering related to construction of the mixed used 55+ senior community at 1673 Haslett Road. Fall of 2021 the developers planned to demolish the building and instead held off due to the volatile market fluctuations in construction. 2022 did not show promise in the area of lumber, labor, supply and demand as prices for lumber soared to record highs. Gas prices are now at their highest in a little over a decade the pressure for the development to begin is increased. A proposal for 1655 Haslett Road could see the Pine Village Development Team push full steam ahead.

Village of Okemos Project
The Village of Okemos Development Project first approved in May 2019 has seen two amendments to the MUPUD to allow for the developer an ability to finance the project. A request in June 2021 to reduce the overall nonresidential space was partially approved to no less than 32,000 square feet of commercial space along Hamilton Road. The removal of the surface parking deck and reduction in the height of the building to four stories was approved July 2021. Forward progress on the project must be seen by EGLE, for the project to remain eligible for the approved grant and loan. The Village of Okemos Development Team submitted their second request for the use of the Meridian Redevelopment Fund (MRF) for about $3.3M for infrastructure improvements in the public right of way. These improvements will not be constructed until 2023; the recommendation from the Meridian EDC is not to exceed $1.25M for improvements in 2022 and to allow the developer another opportunity to request funding at a later date.

Business Development
The following businesses have recently opened their doors:

- Xavier DeGroat Autism Foundation Museum
- Charlotte Russe
- My Eye Candy Boutique

The following are businesses that will open soon:

- Evergreen Vet Clinic and Animal Rescue 4737 Marsh Road
- Nothing Bundt Cakes 2090 W Grand River Ave
- Buddy's Pizza

Business Retention Program
There are primary celebrations for businesses in Meridian Township. We have elected to provide free ribbon cuttings and promotion for any new business within the boundaries of the Township. We also provide promotional celebratory milestones for businesses should they desire. March is Women's History Month will feature women business leaders in Meridian Township with various themes. 2022 features nominated women of Meridian Township with celebratory promotions and a certificate provided by the Economic Development Department.

Match on Main Meridian Program
Happy to report the Match on Main Meridian was approved with full support of the DDA members at their meeting in February. This program is a $25,000 grant that assists a new or established business moving to or growing within a DDA. The DDA has proposed supporting two businesses annually with the 10% match ($2,500) to the MEDC for applicants of the Match on Main Program. Holding our RRC in eligible status grants us this opportunity and more.

FINANCE

2021 Audit
We are working on 2021 year-end audit with closing journal entries and preparing required schedules. The Township is required to have a single audit again this year due to the receipt of federal funds from grants and American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds received in 2021.

GFOA Award
The Township and the Finance Department has received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program. This was awarded on the 2020 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Pension and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)
Finance has received the actuarial reports back on the Meridian Township Pension Plan and our OPEB plan. The Township Plan is 110% funded as of 12/31/2021 and the OPEB Plan is 95% funded.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Update Meridian Township Support Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
The Emergency Operations Plan was updated with changes approved by the Township Board. The original copy has all required signatures and a copy was submitted to Ingham County Office of Emergency Management.

Damage Assessment Plan
The Damage Assessment Plan was presented to the Township Board earlier this year and has been approved. In March, the damage assessment team members will attend a two hour training session. Forms have been developed that will be used by the team. The next phase will be training first responders on how to complete damage assessment "Windshield Surveys."

Develop Township Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
The COOP Plan is still under development. The Main Plan is almost complete; Functional and Support Plans are still being developed.

Fire Department Accreditation
The Department has been in contact with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) issued by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS). Moving forward each program's requirements and costs will be evaluated.

Develop a Fire Department Standard of Cover Document
The Department's Standard of Cover document was started in late 2021 and development will continue throughout 2022.

Fire Department Strategic Plan
The orientation for this process has been developed and is under review. A committee will be formed in late spring or early summer to work through the planning process.

Continue with Emergency Siren Project by Installing Eleventh Siren
The eleventh outdoor warning siren has been ordered with a delivery date of late spring. This year's location will be on Cornell Rd. between Grand River and Tihart.

Recruiting and Succession Planning 2022
The Department is sponsoring one individual in paramedic school, Kayla Crim, who is currently halfway through her paramedic program and doing well. With Board approval, the Department hired two new paramedic/firefighters in February (going from 32 to 34 firefighters in suppression) and continues to seek qualified candidates to prepare for upcoming retirements in April and June. A new Training/EMS Chief will be starting in April.

Working with Lansing Community College and Ascension Hospital, the Department has been recruiting paramedic students to fill two vacancies in January 2023. Three students have been interviewed thus far, and the Department intends to continue the process and remain in contact with them as they progress through their training.

There are two promotional processes scheduled for this year. Testing for Captain will take place in April prior to a Captain retirement in June. Additionally, a Battalion Chief promotional process will begin in early fall for two vacancies in January 2023.

Apparatus Update
Shortages in parts and staffing and extended delivery times have caused many delays in the build time and delivery of the new vehicles.

- 2020 Ladder
  - Ladder is scheduled for delivery in June or July.
- 2022 Ambulance
  - Ambulance will be completed in late summer or early fall.
- 2022 Command Vehicle
  - Command Vehicle is scheduled to be built by Ford in March; final confirmation is pending.
- 2023 Pumper
  - The 2023 Pumper was ordered in December 2021 due to anticipated delivery delays and an increase in cost to order at a later date. The estimated savings from purchasing early is approximately $150,000. Currently the build time for a pumper is 21 to 24 months. The vehicle is expected to be delivered in late 2023.

Continue with Five-Year Replacement Schedule Required for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Other Required Equipment

- Structural fire gear has been ordered; delivery date is pending.
- Additional equipment will be ordered throughout the year.

HUMAN RESOURCES

COVID-19
On February 17, 2022, we sent out an all-employee email confirming updates to the Township's COVID policy and protocol. Masking for employees and visitors will be strongly encouraged, but not required, though it may still be required along with social distancing depending on unique circumstances or departments who have other requirements or are unable to socially distance. The process for those who test positive or come into close contact with someone who tested positive have also changed- the number of days required to be out of the office have been reduced, based on the latest local, state, and federal guidelines.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
Our DEI Task Force remains connected on initiatives that openly support *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* practices and principles. Regular training for leadership and staff are in place through local trainers including DEI subject matter experts at MSU and LCC's Business & Community Institute. The next training is tentatively scheduled for April 4th through LCC.

Employee Traffic
We are moving full steam ahead into the year for staffing among our departments. Despite losing 5 employees since January, (Including Derek, 3 police officers, and 1 of 2 security front desk officers), we have gained 8 (Including 2 police officers, 2 firefighter/paramedics, and our second administrative assistant has been filled in our Community Planning & Development). As winter finally makes way for spring, we are interviewing and making plans for the arrival of our temporary seasonal employees, many of whom are returning from previous years. Our EMS Training Chief will be retiring in April after more than 25 years of service with the Township. We had two promotions in the Fire Department- one to EMS Training Chief and one to Lieutenant. We are in the promotional process for Captain with the Fire Department, with the interview process to take place in April.

Health & Wellbeing
Employee Appreciation Day was last Friday, March 4th. Executive Assistant Michelle Prinz helped coordinate a phenomenal kickoff to the day by coordinating breakfast and dessert available for pickup in the Town Hall Room. Employees expressed sincere gratitude for the meal and acknowledgment of their great work.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Continued Work on IT Evaluation with Brightline IT
Technology Staff Members continue working with the third party company conducting our IT evaluation, Brightline IT. We believe this week's meeting was the last one prior to the delivery of their report that will lay out priorities for technology projects for the remainder of 2022. Based upon discussions thus far,

IT staff is identifying quick short-term projects that may be undertaken in order to jump-start the prioritized project list. Some projects, such as the upgrade of network connections at remote sites are already under way.

Upgrade of Deprecated Voice & Data Connections to Township Facilities
Township Staff continues work with AT&T to upgrade telecom connections to all of our remote facilities. This work is expected to be completed before the end of the first quarter of 2022.

Remote Access Activity
January and February saw increases in employees using Office 365, LogMeIn, and NetMotion Mobility to access Township resources from remote locations. This trend is reversing itself since the beginning of March, and over the past week, we have seen a marked drop-off in remote logins.

Security Events and Focus on Maintenance
Over the past 10 days, IT staff continues to see an increase in security incidents where attackers from distant locales have attempted to log into our various remote systems, including Office 365, and LogMeIn. In all but two cases, the attempts have been unsuccessful, and in those events, we have worked with the end-users to re-secure their accounts.

Testing FirstNet Devices in Police Cars.
IT Staff worked with the Police Department to deploy a test cellular modem for the FirstNet network in one of our police cars. This is the first network prioritizes Public Safety Connections and traffic over other uses. We expect these devices to be invaluable at events like MSU football & basketball games and this first phase of testing is to ensure that we have good coverage over our regular service areas in Meridian and Williamstown Townships.

Replacement Computers for Police Cars
IT staff has begun configuration of four new in-car computers received at the end of February. Based upon the success of the initial units installed last fall, identical devices have been ordered for the remaining six PD patrol units.

PARKS & RECREATION

Harris Nature Center
The Harris Nature Center (HNC) is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year and received a Certificate of Recognition from the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau last week during their Annual Meeting. The actual anniversary date is July 22. There is a plan in place to host a formal recognition on Friday, July 22 with elected officials and the media and then host an open house on Saturday, July 23 with a day filled with free activities, guided walks, and tours for the community and live music.

Harris Nature Center virtual field trips became a real hit during COVID-19 as they provided a distanced learning opportunity for teachers and students connect with the Nature Center for environmental education. HNC staff collaborated with our Communications Department to create a new program that coordinates the upcoming MSU Annual Science Festival. This program will be shared with schools all over the Mid-Michigan area.

The Harris Nature Center is currently taking orders for their Native Plant Sale that serves as a fundraiser for the Center. The deadline to place an order is April 29 with orders ready for pick up on May 7.

HNC Programs this month include:

- Annie's Big Nature Lesson – A week long, full-day program – next week:
- St. Martha's School 100 students
- Nature Tots
- Wine in the Woods
- Howl at the Moon
- Trail Talk
- Native Plants Class
- Chipmunk Story Time
- Work is underway in preparing for full-day summer camps. We experienced record-high participation in 2021 and looking forward to another banner year! Registration begins March 15.

Marketplace on the Green
The Farmers' Market continues to operate every other Saturday at Marketplace on the Green and has expanded their hours through April from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. The Spring Market opens on May 7, 2022 from 8:00 am-2:00 pm every Saturday. The Wednesday afternoon market is expanding to start in June and run through the end of October. Mike Devlin has scheduled bands to perform every Wednesday night in June, July and August along with other family friendly activities and food trucks each week.

Parks Programming Update
The Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt is back and will take place on Saturday, April 16 at Nancy Moore Park. Mike Devlin will soon be ordering 15,000 candy-filled eggs that will be distributed on the soccer field and baseball field for various age groups. Event registration will open soon! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Love a Park Day is a time for the community to pitch-in to help clean-up and spruce-up our parks following the winter season! The date for this event is Wednesday, April 20 from 5:00 pm-7:00 pm at various locations throughout the Township. The event will conclude with a volunteer pizza party at Marketplace on the Green. Promotion and volunteer registration will be available soon!

Planning is underway for the 2022 Celebrate Meridian Fireworks Celebration! The event will take place on Saturday, June 25. Mark your calendars!

Planning is also underway for the 2022 Meridian Heritage Festival in conjunction with the Friends of Historic Meridian and Nokomis Native American Cultural Center. The event will take place on Saturday, October 1, 2022.

The registration for the Youth Spring Soccer Season is closing soon with over 500 children. Practices and games run from April through June.

Registration for youth baseball, softball and tee-ball for Okemos, Haslett and Williamston children is underway for play beginning in May-July. Approximately 600 children will be participating.

Registration is also open for Adult Sand Volleyball, Adult Softball and Adult Kickball Leagues.

Stewardship Programming Update
Four Stewardship Workdays were conducted to remove invasive shrubs at Ted Black Woods Park (2), Tihart Preserve and Red Cedar Glen Preserve utilizing the help of 52 volunteers.

Two Wetland Walks were held at Nancy Moore Park & Tihart Preserve in February and March with 25 participants. This field series is part of the Wetland Restoration and Education Program.

Conducted an educational "Trailside Ecology" program at Red Cedar Glen Preserve with 9 participants.

Seeds collected by volunteers in our parks and land preserves last fall are currently being grown by two local native plant nurseries. We will receive half of the order at the end of May to plant back into Township preserves with volunteers with the other half in September. An extensive and illustrative native plant guide is currently being created to give residents the tools and resources they need to landscape with native plants. These plants are not just native to Michigan, they are native to Meridian Township!

Park Maintenance
The team has been busy with snow removal, Ice rink maintenance, trash removal, Christmas tree chipping, pathway maintenance and special projects such as:

- Completed the installation of all new trailhead signs in Central Park/Central Park South/Nancy Moore Park and that was the final touches to the trail project
- Securing summer staff for seasonal maintenance
- Installing new foul poles at Towner Road Park
- Installing windscreens at pickleball courts at Hillbrook and Towner Road Parks
- Installing a retractable windscreen at Marketplace on the Green to evaluate effectiveness.
- Renovating pole barn at new Okemos Road Property for temporary storage.

A second attempt is currently underway with a Request for Proposals to seek summer mowing and trimming maintenance contract along the pathway system. The bid deadline is March 15

PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING

Solar Project
The solar RFP to construct two 20 kW solar arrays on the carports at the Public Safety Building was published on February 28, 2022. This is the Township's fourth consecutive year of completing a solar project to help us meet our goal of 100% renewable energy use by 2035.

We held a pre-bid meeting with four different contractors on March 2, 2022 to walk the project site and answer question. Bids are due to the Clerk's office on March 18, 2022 by 11 a.m.

Okemos Library Roof
We have consulted with one of our contractors to determine the scope of work that is needed to repair the roof of the Okemos Library. The RFP to secure competitive bids for the Okemos Library Roof is being drafted.

Updating Township Signage
We received initial drafts from our consultant for the new welcoming signage and a complete sign update plan with corresponding draft RFP for the Municipal Complex, Central Park, Historical Village, Nokomis Cultural Heritage Center, and the Marketplace on the Green. We are reviewing the initial draft materials and working to get edits back to our consultant. We have 5 different locations selected for entrance signs. We own two, may acquire a third thanks to Director Schmitt, and are sending letters to the two private property owners requesting easements for the other two.

Chapter 20 Drain Conversion
Assistant Manager Opsommer has held two meetings with the Ingham County Drain Commission office regarding converting our Chapter 20 drains to Chapter 4 drains. We are waiting for deliverables from the Ingham County Drain Commission office to begin converting our six Chapter 20 drains.

Grand River Avenue Project
We began water main work in conjunction with the Grand River Avenue road project this week. We anticipate this work being completed early next week.

We coordinated a pre-construction meeting with MDOT for all Township staff who are impacted by the project. The meeting was held on March 7, 2022.

Getting to Know the DPW Union Members
Assistant Manager Opsommer held an initial meeting with the full Meridian Township DPW union on March 3, 2022. It was a productive dialogue with the union to get to know them all better and for them to get to know me better.

2022 Township Road Projects
We are working to get the 2022 road projects out to bid. Our engineering consultant, Mannik and Smith, is working on the draft RFP. Assistant Manager Opsommer has met with Mannik and Smith twice since joining the team less than a month ago.

Okemos Road Bridge Project
On March 2, 2022, the Ingham County Road Department informed me that the Okemos Road bridge project is one month behind due to delays caused by AT&T. We worked with the Ingham County Road Department on a plan to get the project back on schedule, which the Board approved. The plan allows work, only on this specific project, between 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. (i.e. the normal hours we permit construction work Monday through Saturday under our ordinance), on Sundays, but not holidays, until May 23, 2022.

This will help the contractor to meet EGLE's May 1 deadline for removal of old abutments and piers, as well as, installation of new abutments. It will also allow the bridge deck to be poured during the proper conditions for the concrete to cure.

North Water Tower Construction Project
We are working to schedule a pre-construction meeting with our contractor for the maintenance we are doing with the north water tower this year.

Meridian Township Recycling Center Update
We continue to work internally on a long-term solution to our transfer and recycling center and determine if we will pursue the grant opportunity with EGLE again. Assistant Manager Opsommer has met with many different Township staff and our consultant, Spicer Group.

MSU to Lake Lansing Trail Update
Finalized acquisition of the property on Dawn Ave to help complete the MSU to Lake Lansing Trail.

Daniels Drain Update
We conducted about 40 one-on-one meetings with residents regarding their prospective assessment for the Daniels Drain project. We are prepared to bring resolutions 3 and 4 to the Township Board on March 15 for their consideration. Resolution 4 will set the second public hearing date for April 12, after which, we will meet with residents again regarding their updated assessments before finalizing them officially with resolution 5 in May. The Township is paying 50% of the cost of the project from our general fund, which is by far the most the Township has ever contributed to a drain assessment project on a percentage basis.

Community Services Millage
In 2002, Meridian Township voters approved a .1 mill Community Services millage. The original ballot proposal sought to provide funding for recreation, senior center and human services. The 10-year millage expired in 2012. In 2012, the Township Board chose to seek an increase from .1 to .15 mill, with the additional .05 mill levy dedicated to supporting programing for senior citizens. Again, the voters supported the ballot proposal.

Twenty years have passed since the original millage was approved by voters. On December 31, 2021, the current levy expired and must be reauthorized for this year, December 2022. Manager Walsh asked our team members most affected by the millage (Parks & Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner, Human Services Coordinator Darla Jackson & Senior Center Director Cherie Wisdom) to meet and determine the current funding vs. future needs. The three leaders agreed to recommend a renewal. During the February 15, 2022 meeting, the Board decided to put the Community Services millage up for renewal on the August 2, 2022 ballot.

We have worked with our legal counsel to prepare the ballot language for Community Services millage, which will go before the Board on March 15.

Customer Service
The team has worked diligently to address all inquiries from residents, which ranged from 2 p.m. water main breaks to getting a "Do Not Block the Intersection" sign installed for the Sylvan Glen neighborhood off of Dobie Rd.