



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Towner Road Park
Tuesday, August 10, 2021 4:30 pm

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael McDonald, Mark Stephens Stephens, Ami Van Antwerp, Mary Nardo-Farris, and Chair Amanda Lick

EXCUSED: None

STAFF: LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Lick called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Stephens MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED, with the addition of 7a. Fungi Collection Request from Jud Van Wyk. Seconded by Commissioner Nardo-Farris.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JULY 13, 2021

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER MCDONALD AND SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER STEPHENS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

5. COMMUNICATIONS

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2022-2026 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update

1. Review of current plan – Director Maisner provided an overview of elements of the current plan including the Goals and Objectives section; Overall Philosophy section; and the Action Plan.
2. Review of accomplishments since 2017 – Director Maisner reviewed the major park accomplishments but will work on updating this on a park-by-park basis.
3. Review of Community Survey Questions – An important element of the plan is receiving input from the community. This is accomplished through a community survey, focus group meetings, and community meetings. Staff will create a plan for Park Commission consideration for their next meeting.

7. ACTION ITEMS

A. Request to collect fungi in Parks - Judson Van Wyk, Michigan State University, Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences –

Jud is majoring in Environmental Microbiology and would like to continue his studies within the parks of Meridian Township. He is requesting permission for the Bonito Lab at MSU to collect fungi from Meridian parks year round. He has observed potential new species in the parks and some that would be valuable to the Bonito Lab projects. Collections will be accessioned to the MSU herbarium and would prove useful to future taxonomy work.

Motion by Commissioner Van Antwerp, supported by Commissioner McDonald to approve the request from Jud VanWyke to collect fungi in Meridian Township parks in 2021 and 2022 for use in his Phd Studies at MSU.

Voice Vote: Motion carried unanimously

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Parks and Recreation Department Department Update – August 4, 2021

Recreation

- **Youth sports** returned this summer with successful soccer, baseball, softball and t-ball programs.
- **Registration for fall** soccer took place in July along with youth flag football. These programs will run in September and October with over 600 registrations received thus far.
- **Adult sports** programs also took place this summer for softball, sand volleyball and kickball.
- **Mike Devlin created Sporties for Shorties in 2000** for children ages 3, 4 and 5 to provide fun activities that promote gross motor skill development and socialization. This program has been going strong for almost 21 years and shows no sign in slowing down! Since June, Mike has taught **22 classes with 20 students each**. Classes will continue through the fall.

Harris Nature Center

- **Summer Camp** enrollment was at an all-time high of 526 participants
- Participated virtually in the **MSU Science Festival** in April and May – 12 schools/6 districts (including Bay City and a district in Missouri!) – presented virtual programs to 404 students

- New ADA compliant **automatic doors** were installed this summer along with a **new concrete** sidewalk approach at the building's entrance.
- The new **pavilion/patio and restroom building projects** were completed and opened to the public.
- The former **wet lab** was totally renovated into a more functional classroom with carpet and bench seating.
- Maintenance and improvements were made to **the Nature Exploration Area**
- The **new bird viewing deck** was completed and opened along the blue trail. This project was funded by the HNC Foundation and the Capital Region Community Foundation.

Park Maintenance Special Projects

- Removed old boardwalk along the trails in Central Park and Legg Park and repaired the trails for better stability and accessibility.
- Installed a new trail in Hillbrook Park and surfaced with road millings for a durable surface
- Transplanted the Elm tree at Historical Village away from the new restroom building. The tree is now flourishing!
- Custom built a collapsible bollard for emergency access at Nancy Moore Park that proved to be quite successful. We will continue to build and install more at appropriate pathway entrances.
- Structurally renovated the Gazebo in the Historical Village
- Installed wind screens at the Towner Road Park pickleball courts
- In conjunction with ReLeaf of Michigan, planted 13 trees in Central Park South
- Replenished safety surface in all playgrounds

Parks

- There have been **287 pavilion rental reservations** from May through July this year. Our pavilions also receive a large amount of non-reserved use.
- **Deer Management** – Preparations are underway for the 2021 Deer Management Program. Hunter applications are streaming in! MSU's Demmer Center is still closed to the public by they are sending staff to conduct on-site proficiency testing during the hunter orientation meeting in August.
- **LEAP Art Grant** – Working with selection Committee and finalizing sculpture.
- **5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update** is underway. The Park Commission is finalizing the community survey and much of the base data has already been updated.

- **John Grettenberger Memorial in the Historical Village** – Jane Greenway is leading this joint project with the Friends of Historic Meridian to plant an Oak tree and install a bronze plaque in the Village. Bill Cawood and his wife Julie are funding the cost of the \$1,500 plaque. The dedication is tentatively scheduled for September 18.
- **Memorial Bench and tree** – Val Lafferty of Haslett funded three memorial benches and native trees for installation in Marshall Park.
- **Memorial Bench** – Resident, Carolyn Boegner donated a bench for placement at Nancy Moore Park basketball court because that is where her granddaughter plays.
- **Grant Coordination** – Staff has been working diligently to finalize grant reimbursement requests to the DNR for the following projects: Historical Village Footbridge and Restroom Project; Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector; HNC restroom; and the HNC Pavilion Project.
- **Okemos Road Acquisition Grant** - We are working closely with the DNR throughout this acquisition process are awaiting approval of the updated appraisal. Once received, we will meet the property owner to present the formal purchase agreement.

Senior Center

- A new large umbrella was installed in the courtyard at the outdoor patio area. Smaller table umbrellas were also installed to provide shade for members utilizing the outdoor space.
- Prior to May 16, all programs offered were virtually.
- Seniors were welcomed back on June 16 with limited enrollment and spaced out programs to allow for cleaning between programs.
- In May and June, a total of 72 programs were offered with 185 participants.
- In July and August, 54 programs were offered with 15 participants (as of August 5)

Farmers Market

- **Saturday markets** continue to be popular a destination for our residents and visitors from surrounding communities. Approximately 65 vendors participate each week with 3,000 visitors.
- **Wednesday markets** began on July 1 with an average of 30 vendors and approximately 600 customers.
- New this year is **live music** from 6-9pm on the Marketplace Stage in July and August. These concerts have become increasingly popular each week and are funded by a donation from Orthopaedic Rehab Specialists on Marsh Road.

Stewardship in Parks and Preserves

2021 Stewardship Volunteer Hours = 592 hours completed

19 Workdays completed removing invasive species, planting native species, and cleaning up trash at preserves and parks

2 new programs were launched in the “Summer Stewardship Series”:

- Wednesday Warriors: weekday workdays to remove invasive species
- Trailside Ecology: 1st Tuesday of every month, to bring residents out in various parks and preserves and familiarize them with local flora and fauna as well as Township properties

Upcoming Programs for release later this year:

- Planting a Native Meridian - education and outreach on native plants and the benefit they bring to our local ecosystems
- Waterways Watch - education and outreach on how to get involved in programs to clean and benefit our local watershed systems

Presented educational programs to the Women's League of Voters (Lansing Chapter), the Meridian Garden Club, and the Green Coffee Sustainability Group

Began updating stewardship & management plans for each preserve; designing and ordering rule signage, tick education signage and name signs.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

10. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

11. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objections, Chair Lick adjourned the meeting adjourned at 6:44 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 4:30 pm via Zoom.