



**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
Meridian Service Center
2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, MI 48840
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023 4:30 PM**

PRESENT: Chair, Mary Nardo-Farris; Vice Chair, Ami Van Antwerp; Commissioner, Amanda Lick; Commissioner, Mark Stephens; Commissioner, Mike McDonald
ABSENT: None
STAFF: LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation; Bridget Cannon, Administrative Assistant; Dan Opsommer, Assistant Township Manager/Director of DPW

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Nardo-Farris called the meeting to order at **4:30 pm**.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Nardo-Farris called the roll of the Commission. All park commissioners present.

3. PRESENTATIONS

A. Dan Opsommer – Update on the Okemos Road Bridge Project and MSU to Lake Lansing Trail
Dan distributed two memos outlining updates on both projects.

B. Shane Goodale – Tower Road Park Plaque

Will Goodale passed away on November 2, 2015. His family and friends had a plaque made to memorialize Will and would like it placed at a township park, as Will loved visiting the parks. Two main factors Will's family would like the Park Commission to consider for plaque placement are 1.) Visibility and 2.) Ease of access, preferably towards the front of a park or in a high traffic area. Shane displayed pictures of several options for the Park Commission to consider at Towner Road Park. He would like to have a dedication ceremony May 20, 2023. He is asking the Park Commission to have placement of the plaque finalized by this date.

The commissioners were moved by the Goodale family's courage and grateful they came to the meeting to share Will's story. Director Maisner suggests the commission discuss further and come up with 2-3 options for the plaque placement. She will also work with the township's maintenance department to find proper placement.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Nardo-Farris opened Public Comments.

Pete Govorchin, 1903 Oneida Drive, Okemos, spoke about Hillbrook Park pickleball courts and the desire for additional courts to meet the demand.

Beth Young, 6282 Porter Avenue, East Lansing, spoke about the need for programs at Snell Towar Recreation Center. She and other area residents are willing to volunteer and assist staff.

Chair Nardo-Farris closed Public Comments.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Lick moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**. Seconded by Commissioner McDonald.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Lick moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 15, 2022 REGULAR MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Van Antwerp.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

7. COMMUNICATIONS

Director Maisner requested Communications items to be integrated with Discussion Item 8A.

None to be placed in Communications file by Commission.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Pickleball Courts at Hillbrook Park

Director Maisner opened discussion by stating she loves the support, excitement and enthusiasm the pickleball players have for the game and she understands the need for additional courts in our community. However, she feels the facility is not desirable to expand on as the parking is already insufficient at Hillbrook Park. There is no room to expand and build additional courts and the wet soil is not optimal at the location. There are no restrooms at Hillbrook Park. Additionally, Hillbrook Park is the only township park with a tennis court. There is a sufficient budget to fill cracks and re-paint the existing courts, only. She suggests looking at other township parks for possible sites for additional pickleball courts.

The commission discussed and agreed a facility that allows for expansion and growth would be better. They also discussed fundraising efforts by the pickleball players, different court design ideas, and the current safety issue that is created by the excess people at Hillbrook Park.

Sandy Sweckard, 1715 Maple Ridge Rd, Towner Road Park pickleball instructor explained the pickleball schedule, the popularity of the sport, the varying intensity levels of play at Towner Road Park versus Hilbrook Park and the fundraising efforts by the pickleball community.

Anne Hansknecht, 2011 Lac du Mont, Haslett, plays regularly at Hilbrook Park and agreed a different facility would be optimal for additional pickleball courts.

Beth Hubbell, 1158 Woodside Drive, Haslett, is a proponent for the tennis court at Hillbrook Park. She emphasizes it is the only tennis court option in the township, as the courts at the schools are locked and not open to the public. She would like to see an additional tennis court at Hillbrook Park.

There was a five minute break. **Commissioner Lick excused from meeting at 6:38 pm.**

B. Snell Towar Recreation Center

The Parks and Recreation Department has been contacted recently requesting the return of programs for youth. The center has remained vacant for a number of years, but Director Maisner feels that some programming could return. At some point in the future, the park commission would like to engage with the neighborhood through a survey and on-site meetings to discuss future improvements.

C. Spark and Ingham Co Parks and Trails Grant Applications

The first round of SPARK grant applications took place in 2022 with two more rounds occurring in 2023. Also, the Ingham County Parks and Trails Millage Grant program announced that they will accept applications due May 1. The Commissioners will discuss this topic in-depth during their next regular meeting.

9. LAND PRESERVATION REPORT – Commissioner Stephens reported that the Land Preservation is reviewing a new parcel for acquisition.

10. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **Off leash dogs in parks** – Receiving numerous complaints. We are posting additional signage along nature trails and starting a new media campaign.
- **Architectural Review of Historical Village Structures** – Underway with a report expected by the end of January. The report will document necessary maintenance and repair items.
- **Celebrate Meridian Festival June 24, 2023**
- **Spark Grant Application submitted for the Loop trail and playground replacement project.** We should receive notification in February.
- **Farmers Market moved to the Mall for January - March** – J.C. Penney corridor from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm on the first and third Saturdays in January - March.
- **Working with Commissioner Stephens to stock both ponds this spring. Estimated cost: \$5,000.**

- **Haslett-Okemos Kiwanis Club donation for dragonfly play element in Nature Exploration area \$9,760.**
- **Donation for Summer Concert Series \$500 – School of Rock**
- **Volunteer Archery Program September – December -- 156 deer. Police cull underway to fill 200 tags.**
- **Rec Pro Program Registration Program started on January 3.**
- **Chinese New Year – January 29 Meridian Mall**

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Chair Nardo-Farris would like the Approval of Agenda to be moved to Item 3, directly after Roll Call. Presentations to follow Approval of Agenda at future Park Commission meetings.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Nardo-Farris adjourned the meeting at 7:53pm