



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Township Service Center
2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court | Haslett, MI
Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 6 PM

PRESENT: Board Members: Steve Thomas, Kris Parnell, Kathy Fay, Yu Man Lee (Environmental Commission), Mark Stephens (Park Commission), Angela Demas (Township Board).
ABSENT: Jamie Hiller.
STAFF: Emma Campbell, Stewardship Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Vice Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

a. None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

a. April 9, 2025

Commissioner Stephens moved to approve the April 9, 2025 Agenda to place on file. Board Member Parnell seconded.

Voice vote: Unanimous

4. APPROVE MINUTES

a. March 12, 2025

Clerk Demas makes a motion to amend the March 12, 2025 to correct errors of absent board members to include Mark Stephens as present and Angela Demas as absent. Board Member Parnell seconded.

Voice vote: Unanimous

Board member Fay makes a motion to place the amended March 12, 2025 minutes on file. Board Member Parnell seconded.

Voice vote: Unanimous.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

a. None.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Sledding hill at Okemos Preserve (Exhibit A)

i. Board member comments:

1. It is difficult to change the ordinance in place, which currently prohibits

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- sledding in preserves unless posted
 2. There is water present at the bottom of both hills that could cause an issue with safety
 3. The Meridian Township Police Department has communicated with staff that there is a parking and emergency response issue at these locations proposed for sledding
 4. With ecological succession we would have to cut native trees and shrubs over time, which would conflict with current Land Preservation stewardship efforts
 5. Board members prefer the land preservation ordinance to remain as is for sledding and will not pursue the issue any further
- b. Acquisition Prioritization (Exhibit B)
- i. Part 1: Current Land Preservation inventory & management efforts
 1. As the land preservation and stewardship program change over time, the ecological inventory and screening of potential acquisition sites will need to evolve as well
 2. The criteria should reflect exactly what board members think about the value of the site for acquisition.
 3. Vice Chair Thomas demonstrates a scale that includes a numerical score as well as verbiage associated.
 - a. This would allow scoring that could be more moderate, with a larger scale for scoring
 - b. Commissioner Lee would like to include a scoring for protected species that are inventoried
 4. Board member Questions:
 - a. Does each board member need to individually score the site?
 - b. How will we determine how much weight the score of each category has?

Commissioner Stephens makes a motion to move into closed session. Board Member Parnell seconded.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Steve Thomas, Mark Stephens, Yu Man Lee, Kris Parnell, Kathy Fay, Angela Demas.

Nays: None.

(BEGIN CLOSED SESSION)

- c. Parcels for Acquisition Consideration
 - i. Parcel A
 - ii. Parcel B

Commissioner Stephens moved to end closed session. Board Member Parnell seconded.

Roll Call:

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Yayes: Steve Thomas, Yu Man Lee, Mark Stephens, Kris Parnell, Kathy Fay, Angela Demas.

Nays: None.

(END CLOSED SESSION)

7. REPORTS

- a. STAFF REPORT: Stewardship Coordinator, Emma Campbell
 - i. Davis Foster Preserve Prescribed Burn Update
 1. Roughly 17 acre burn successfully completed in early March
 - ii. Wetland Signage Installation
 1. All educational wetland signage installed at Hillbrook Park, Legg Park, North Meridian Road Park, Nancy Moore Boardwalk, and Hartrick Park.
 - iii. MCC April Stewardship Calendar (Exhibit C)
- b. ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION REPORT: Commissioner Yu Man Lee
 - i. Green Grant cycle: Residents and HOAs are interested in several initiatives ranging from invasive species management and removal as well as habitat restoration through tree planting.
 - ii. Climate Sustainability Funding; there is still more money to spend on educational signage. Board members should pass along any potential project ideas for funding. A potential project is a bio swale in Marshall Park.
- c. PARK COMMISSION REPORT: Commissioner Mark Stephens
 - i. Commissioner Stephens proposed a bio swale at Marshall Park for Climate Sustainability funding. Hillbrook Park currently has some issues with down dead woody debris. Residents are concerned that it is a fire hazard. Japanese Knotweed has been observed in the power lines on the south side of Knob Hill Apartments. Staff will look into these two issues.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

- a. None.

9. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Next Land Preservation Advisory Board Meeting: Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 6 pm at the Township Service Center, 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Okemos, Michigan 48864.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Parnell moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lee seconded.

Vice Chair Thomas adjourned the meeting at 8:11 pm.

Exhibit A



Outlook

Request to be on Land Preservation Advisory Board meetg agenda

From [redacted] <[redacted]>
Date Sat 3/8/2025 9:33 PM
To Emma Campbell <ecampbell@meridian.mi.us>

Hello Emma,

I'd like to request to have the following item put on the agenda of this week's Land Preservation Advisory Board meeting. Please let me know if it does get added to the agenda and if I can expect to hear any discussion by the board members.

Proposal to Establish & Maintain Two New Sledding Hills in the Township

This past January I explored the MSU to Lk. Lansing Pathway/ Trail on XC skis on a snowy day and discovered/ realized that the construction of the Phase 2 segment left behind 2 ideal sledding hills, one smaller and safer for younger kids and one larger for older kids. The only other sledding hill in the township that I'm aware of is the one in the N. Meridian Rd. Park which is a long way from the core of the township where these 2 hills are located.

I conducted an [informal poll](#) on the [Friends of Meridian Township Pathways](#) group to gauge community support for my proposal. It was posted on January 15th and as of March 8 there is 81% (29 people) in strong support, another 17% (6) who support and 2% (1) in opposition.

I grew up in this township and my backyard was the neighborhood sledding hill. I have many fond memories of sledding over the years of my youth and with my children and now grandchildren as well since I live next door to my childhood home. This is a very fun and wholesome activity which gives kids and adults good exercise along with the fun.

Since many people are concerned about getting our kids and young adults out of their bedrooms and off their smart phones to "feel the grass", reunite with reality, I believe these two hills are a classic example of "low hanging fruit" which are already built and only require ongoing maintenance (mowing) and some signage to explain things, list rules, etc. Sledding on an existing grassy slope will cause next to zero damage (and if it does, it's damage to common field grass).

Since these two hills are so close (walking distance) to the homes of many residents I don't believe car parking needs to be a concern; that can work itself out. The Twp. has many facilities for people to recreate outdoors that doesn't provide car parking for all the users, so I don't believe that should be a requirement.

Reference photos/ video /maps for proposed sledding hills:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/euL64dsWCXHsecgG7>

Official Land Preserve map for the exact location of this property (the Okemos Road Preserve, no. 9 on the map):

<https://www.meridian.mi.us/home/showdocument?id=14448&t=638393672447813602>

I understand the ordinance language (§ 22-110 Skating and sledding [Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]) , that sledding isn't allowed "Unless posted otherwise..." That exception gives me hope that you will give this proposal a fair hearing for a possible exception to this rule.

Thank you for the consideration for the health and recreational options for our youth and future generations. I plan to attend your Mar. 12th meeting to present this proposal and would appreciate hearing some discussion of it during the meeting if possible.

C

***** er



FW: Trail/Sledding Hill Question

From Courtney Wisinski <wisinski@meridian.mi.us>
Date Wed 3/12/2025 12:48 PM
To Emma Campbell <ecampbell@meridian.mi.us>



Courtney Wisinski
Director of Parks and Recreation
wisinski@meridian.mi.us
Work: 517.853.4604
2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court | Haslett, MI 48840

Subscribe to Parks & Recreation's E-Newsletter, *The Playbook*: <https://bit.ly/SignUpMTwpNewsletters>

From: Courtney Wisinski
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 1:14 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Trail/Sledding Hill Question

Chapter 54: Parks and Recreation: <https://ecode360.com/28777617#28777617>
Chapter 22: Environment: <https://ecode360.com/28776242#28776237>

Thanks



Courtney Wisinski
Director of Parks and Recreation
wisinski@meridian.mi.us
Work: 517.853.4604
2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court | Haslett, MI 48840

Subscribe to Parks & Recreation's E-Newsletter, *The Playbook*: <https://bit.ly/SignUpMTwpNewsletters>

From: [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12:59 PM
To: Courtney Wisinski <wisinski@meridian.mi.us>
Subject: Re: Trail/Sledding Hill Question

Courtney,

To prepare my proposal for upcoming meetings of the Parks and Land Preserve Commissions, would you please send me a link to the current ordinance for acceptable uses for our Land

Preserves. I'm having no luck finding it myself on the Twp. website.

Thank you,

Click Address Column headers
www.meridianmi.us

2025 Ride of Silence: Wed. May 21st, 7:00 PM

One day. One time. One world, world wide.

Let the silence roar!

On Wed, Jan 15, 2025 at 11:56 AM Courtney Wisinski <wisinski@meridian.mi.us> wrote:

Happy New Year

I was forwarded your message from this weekend from communications. We truly thank you for being our eyes and ears in our parks, preserves and trails/pathways. TI wanted to respond to your question below:

I think the parks dept. should consider promoting the 2 new hills along the Phase 2 section of this pathway to the community as a great wintertime activity for families with kids who want to take their kids sledding. These 2 hills are much more conveniently located for many more residents than the only other sledding hill in the township (N. Meridian Park hill). Here's a map I created to show where they're located. Yes, the township would have to get permission from the Campus Hill Apt. management to promote the one closest to that end of the path, but that shouldn't be impossible.



So glad to hear that you are using the Phase II MSU to Lake Lansing pathway. It is definitely one of my favorites at the moment. To comment on your question above, please note that the pathway extends through the Okemos Road Preserve (previously Central Meridian Uplands). Our land preservation ordinance does not allow for off-trail activities to ensure that we protect

all flora, fauna, and habitat within our preserves. Sledding activities off trail would not be permitted within the ordinance. To use the two areas that you have denoted, unfortunately we would need to develop the land as a park, not a preserve to allow for recreation activities, such as sledding. Although the Land Preservation Board and Park Commission are the authorized bodies to consider a land transfer, I would expect that many of the members would prefer to keep the land as a part of the preserve.

Again, we appreciate you and if you have further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.



Courtney Wisinski

Director of Parks and Recreation

wisinski@meridian.mi.us

Work: 517.853.4604

A Prime Community

2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court | Haslett, MI 48840

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[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

- (1) No unauthorized person shall willfully set or cause to be set on fire any tree, woodland, brush land, grassland, meadow or structure on land preservation property.
- (2) No person shall drop, throw, or otherwise scatter lighted matches, burning cigars, cigarettes, tobacco paper, or other flammable materials on land preservation property.
- (3) No fires shall be allowed on land preservation property except as authorized from time to time, by the land preservation advisory board and for the purpose of:
 - (a) Controlling or eliminating nonnative species;
 - (b) Controlling the overpopulation of species;
 - (c) Preserving public health; or
 - (d) Promoting or preserving the integrity, quality, and function of the ecological resources of land preservation property.

§ 22-105. Fireworks.

[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

No person shall fire, discharge, or have in their possession any rocket, firecracker, torpedo, squib, or other firework or any substance of an explosive nature within land preservation property. Any violation of this section is a municipal civil infraction punishable as provided by this Code.

§ 22-106. Swimming.

[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

No person shall swim or bathe in any drain or pond located entirely within land preservation property.

§ 22-107. Boating.

[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

No person shall bring, use, or navigate any boat, canoe, raft, or other watercraft upon any drain or pond located entirely within a land preservation property.

§ 22-108. Model airplanes.

[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

No person shall operate a motorized model airplane on land preservation property.

§ 22-109. Loudspeakers.

[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

No person shall use a loudspeaker, public address system, or amplifier on land preservation property.

§ 22-110. Skating and sledding.

[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

Unless posted otherwise, no person shall skate, walk, or go upon any ice on any drain or pond entirely within land preservation property. Unless posted otherwise no person shall sled, toboggan or coast with a hand-sled, bobsled, cart, or other apparatus on wheels or runners on land preservation property.

§ 22-111. Peddling and soliciting.

[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

No person shall peddle or solicit business of any nature whatsoever, distribute handbills or other advertising matter, post any unauthorized sign, anywhere on land preservation property.

§ 22-112. Unlawful obstruction.

[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

No person shall by force, threat, intimidation, unlawful fencing, or enclosing, or by any other means, prevent any person from using land preservation property consistent with the protection, preservation and enhancement of land preservation property. Protection, preservation and enhancement shall be defined in each individual property's stewardship implementation plan and the land preservation guidelines adopted by the land preservation advisory board. This section, however, shall not apply to any duly appointed law enforcement officer or fire official when carrying out the duties and responsibilities of their position.

§ 22-113. Installations, construction, or maintenance.

[Ord. No. 2007-15, 12-16-2007]

No installation, construction, or maintenance shall be made above or below ground, across or beneath Land Preservation property by any person, except duly authorized personnel, without the prior written permission of the land preservation advisory board through land management personnel for such installation, construction, or maintenance specifying in detail the work to be done and any conditions to be met.

§ 22-114. through § 22-115. (Reserved)

Exhibit B

DRAFT LAND PRESERVATION SITE SCREENING CRITERIA

AN ADVISORY REPORT FOR THE MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP BOARD

Submitted By
Meridian Township Environmental Commission

In July, 2000, the Land Preservation Task Force submitted a final report to the Township Board outlining a number of recommendations for preserving open space lands and natural features in Meridian Township. Included in the Task Force report was an evaluation system outlining site selection review criteria to identify, evaluate, and distinguish properties within the Township that represent important open green spaces or special natural features for potential preservation. The Task Force also recommended that the Township Board have the Environmental Commission review these criteria, and offer suggestions for refinement. This advisory report is submitted by the Environmental Commission pursuant to a request by the Township Board for that review and refinement of the criteria.

The suggested screening criteria as refined by the Environmental Commission were organized according to a cumulative weighted point system; and, were selected to reflect the general objectives outlined by the Land Preservation Task Force. The suggested criteria expanded on the three general criteria suggested by the Task Force:

- Criterion #1 Based on parcel size and relationship to adjoining properties.
- Criterion #2 Based on identifiable physical characteristics.
- Criterion #3 Based on percent of property within a designated category.

These criteria represent guidelines that can be used to assist the Land Preservation Advisory Board and Township Board in selecting candidate sites for acquisition. The criteria were developed through discussion and debate among Environmental Commissioners of the relative merits of various weighted factors that could be considered in assessing the ecological, open space, and functional value of land resources of the Township. The criteria primarily are environmental in content and scope and should be considered as advisory only. They can and should be modified as necessary in accordance with additional considerations of the decision makers, stakeholders, and citizens of Meridian Township. Some of these additional factors might include real estate value, purchase price and return on investment, willing seller-willing buyer, and liability concerns.

The criteria were selected to help decision makers identify and prioritize those land areas within the Township that represent the most important or valuable

open space or natural features that should be preserved for the enjoyment of both present and future generations of citizens. No attempt was made to exclude particular land use alternatives or interests. We assumed that the intention of the Land Preservation Task Force was to identify and protect the "best of the best" of our natural heritage.

We have also tried to identify various factors that could be used in the weighting process to better describe and provide rationale for selecting among a number of candidate sites. These were identified as categories and subcategories. Each category was assigned an overall value, expressed (and ranked as to relative importance) as a total number of points. Each category was then broken down into several subcategories, each of which received a weighted value. This ranking/weighting system is shown in the accompanying graphic. Total point value and weighting factors provide the ability to analyze site characteristics, assign points for each, and then provide a cumulative score for each property.

Suggested criteria that could be used in the evaluation process include the following categories, ranked in decreasing order of importance:

- (1) Ecological value. Sites that would rank highest include those that are of statewide or regional, as well as, local importance. Other sites of high ecological value would include areas that are known to contain endangered, threatened, or rare wildlife and plants that are protected by state or federal law, or those that have significant habitat resources for such species, and species that are of concern locally. Such areas are of critical importance in the protection of viable natural populations and communities. Areas that provide corridors for wildlife movement or for greenways are of lesser importance, but should be considered important nonetheless.
- (2) Natural or functional value. These sites are important because of the role they play in maintaining the functional integrity or to the overall diversity of ecosystems, both natural and human. Such areas might provide upland buffers for areas, including wetlands, already protected by state or local regulations. Other areas could contain unique features, including prime soils, woodlots, and recharge or flood control zones that help maintain stability over time.
- (3) Parcel size. This criterion recognizes the dwindling open space within the Township and the need to acquire properties of sufficient size to ensure protection of natural features and functions. The preference is to acquire larger land units or areas that are already contiguous to protected properties to increase the likelihood that the resultant areas would eventually function as a total unit. On the other hand, small parcels that contain unique natural values should also be considered.

Land Screening Criteria

Meridian Township Land Preservation Advisory Board

Revised June 2010

Property/Parcel:

Reviewer Name:

Date:

| Land Preservation Category | Subcategory | Weighting/ Ranking | Point Value | Partial Points | Total |
|---|---|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------|
| Ecological Value (100 points) | Contains potential populations of protected species or ecosystems of state or regional importance | 0.40 | 40.0 | | |
| | Contains overall high diversity of species or ecosystems of local importance | 0.30 | 30.0 | | |
| | Contains potential habitat for protected species | 0.15 | 15.0 | | |
| | Helps connect greenspace and wildlife corridors | 0.10 | 10.0 | | |
| | Other ecological values | 0.05 | 5.0 | | |
| Natural/Functional Value (90 points) | Important upland buffer to an area otherwise permanently protected (wetland, riparian area, or shoreline) | 0.35 | 31.5 | | |
| | Contains important woodlot or woodland to minimize habitat loss or fragmentation | 0.25 | 22.5 | | |
| | Contains prime/unique soils or agricultural values | 0.20 | 18.0 | | |
| | Provides ground water recharge and water quality enhancement; enhances flood and storm water control | 0.15 | 13.5 | | |
| | Important natural feature not protected by other means | 0.05 | 4.5 | | |
| Parcel Size (80 points) | Large land area (> 40 acres) with potential, through succession, to become important natural resource | 0.50 | 40.0 | | |
| | Parcel > 5 acres, contiguous to permanently preserved property or one which has PUD/PDR offered | 0.25 | 20.0 | | |
| | Parcel > 5 acres | 0.15 | 12.0 | | |
| | Parcel < 5 acres having important habitat value | 0.10 | 8.0 | | |
| Surrounding Land Uses (70 points) | Contiguous to protected property (e.g., wetland, riparian area, park) | 0.35 | 24.5 | | |
| | Open space value of property can be protected after purchase or low probability of encroachment | 0.25 | 17.5 | | |
| | Contiguous to agricultural area | 0.20 | 14.0 | | |
| | Contiguous to residential area | 0.15 | 10.5 | | |
| | Contiguous to mixed use area | 0.05 | 3.5 | | |
| Environmental Quality (40 points) | Contains no known environmental contamination | 0.80 | 32.0 | | |
| | Contains possible environmental contamination; can be remediated | 0.15 | 6.0 | | |
| | Contains known environmental contamination; remediation possible but potentially costly | 0.05 | 2.0 | | |
| Aesthetic Value (40 points) | Provides open greenspace to separate incompatible land uses or monotony of same uses | 0.55 | 22.0 | | |
| | Provides unique multiple use opportunities | 0.30 | 12.0 | | |
| | Aesthetic values exceptional for township | 0.15 | 6.0 | | |
| Special Considerations (Maximum of 40 points) | Subcriteria determined on a case-by-case basis | | | | |

Optional: Add property description, observations, and other notes (use reverse side for additional space).

Meridian Township
 - Proposal for Qualitative & Quantitative
 Rating System for New Property Acquisitions

↓ Examples: (Circle one, comment if desired) ↓

1) Size

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|--|----------------|---|---|--|-------------------|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 | 6 | | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
| ↑ | | | | ↑ | ↑ | | | ↑ | | ↑ | |
| under 1 acre | | | | 30-40 acres | | | | over 200 acres | | | |
| Comments: | | | | | | | | | | | |

2) Connectivity to Public Land

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 | 6 | | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
| ↑ | | | | ↑ | ↑ | | | ↑ | | ↑ | |
| > 1,000ft from public park/preserve | | | | 1 side adjacent to park/preserve | | | | Enclosed by park/preserve | | | |
| Comments: | | | | | | | | | | | |

3) Cost

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|----------|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 | 6 | | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
| ↑ | | | | ↑ | ↑ | | | ↑ | | ↑ | |
| Donation > \$200,000 per acre | | | | \$15,000 to \$20,000 per acre | | | | Donation | | | |
| Comments: | | | | | | | | | | | |

4) Diversity of Habitats

5) Habitat Quality ~~Getc.~~ etc.

Exhibit C



JUNE STEWARDSHIP

STEWARDSHIP SATURDAYS

- These workdays occur every other Saturday year round.
- June 14th: This workday will consist of a native planting at Lake Lansing North Preserve, IF our plants come in time! Otherwise we will be removing invasive species at Legg Park, pending flooding & mosquitoes!
 - 3900 Van Atta Road, Okemos



WEEKDAY WARRIORS

- June 5th: Davis Foster Preserve, Invasive purple loosestrife & Japanese hedge parsley removal
- 5120 Van Atta Road, Okemos
- June 20th: Okemos Capital Area Library, Native Garden weeding and volunteer training. We are looking to recruit a volunteer to help maintain their lovely native gardens!
- 4321 Okemos Road, Okemos

TEEN NIGHT & CELEBRATE MERIDIAN

- Teen night will be at Marketplace on the Green | Fun activities include gaga ball, food trucks, music, lawn games, & crafts!
- Check out the schedule of events & volunteer opportunities for Celebrate Meridian on our website at www.meridian.mi.us under the 'About Us' tab



*ALL EVENTS ARE WEATHER DEPENDENT & MAY BE CANCELLED THE DAY OF

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|----|----|----|----|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 WEEKDAY WARRIORS 1-3 PM | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 STEWARDSHIP SATURDAY 9:30 - 12 PM |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 JUNE TEENTH TOWNSHIP OFFICES CLOSED | 20 WEEKDAY WARRIORS 1-3 PM | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 TEEN NIGHT 6PM-9PM | 28 CELEBRATE MERIDIAN FESTIVAL |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

PLEASE CONTACT EMMA AT ECAMPBELL@MERIDIAN.MI.US, OR 517.853.4614

