

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD**

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

7:00 p.m. Meridian Service Center

**Members Present:** Tom Woiwode Chair; Mary Helmbrecht, Vice-Chair; Members Dave Caszatt, Frank Hatfield, Jim Kielbaso

**Members Absent:** Margo Smith, Mark Stephens, Steve Webster

**Staff:** Jane Greenway, Parks and Land Management Coordinator

**Public Present:** Daniel Bronstein, Leona Bronstein, Erik Furseth, Larry Harb, Helen Tanner, Howard Tanner

**1. Call meeting to Order**

Chair Woiwode called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm., Land Manager Greenway requested the following items be added to the agenda: 7.a, Deer Management and 8.a., Terms of Office. Hearing no objections, Chair Woiwode accepted the changes to the agenda and moved item 7.a., Deer Management to the next item on the agenda.

**3. Approve Minutes for August 17, 2011**

MOTION was made by Dave Caszatt, seconded by Jim Kielbaso to approve the minutes of August 17, 2011 Land Preservation Advisory Board. MOTION carried unanimously.

**7. New Business (taken out of order)**

A. Deer Management: Land Manager Greenway gave a presentation on the status of the deer harvest program.

Features of the program include:

- Deer Management Plan developed as a response to increased resident's complaints, disruption to ecology of township property, and reports of deer vehicle accidents.

- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has presented the township with information on addressing suburban/urban overpopulation issue. PowerPoint is available on township website.
- DNR does not allow trapping, transporting, birth control, surgical sterilization
- A deer management plan is required by the DNR for an out-of-season hunt
- Township mailed letter to residents of large parcels, encouraging hunting on private property
- Pilot program, but anticipate on-going management
- Safety is the top priority
- Proficiency testing at MSU Demmer Center and DNR Rose Lake office
- Hunting will occur on designated weekdays during the regular bow and firearm seasons
- Antlerless only
- Survey for residents available online, to measure support of a managed hunt
- Meat may be donated through Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger
- Number of deer harvested will be reported to DNR
- There are five land preservation areas proposed for the program.

**B. Land Preservation Advisory Board comments on deer management:**

1. Mary Helmbrecht: Feels that we should keep the pilot program small for the first year. Concerned that the deer are eating the new growth trees, and that eventually that will affect future forests.
2. Tom Woiwode: Commented that everyone in the public appears to be in support of the managed harvest. Although the residents' complaints and threats to public safety are a concern, the role of the LPAB is to protect the health of the land preserves. The deer are adversely affecting the reason that the land preserves were acquired.
3. Frank Hatfield: Our preserves have lost wildflowers and plants, hardwood seedlings. Strongly supports deer management program. LPAB does not have anything to do with residential landscaping or car accidents.
4. David Caszatt: Supports deer management program. Feels that we should go slow and be smart during the pilot year. Concerned about attracting the wrong kind of attention. Suggested the importance of keeping records of the deer harvested.

**2. Public Remarks**

- a. Howard Tanner, Green Road
  - Mr. Tanner is the retired director of the Department of Natural Resources, also a former MSU professor

- Feels that we should encourage the DNR to allow us to trap the deer. Jordan Burrows, MSU, has trapped and studied deer.
  - Population estimate is 40-70/square mile. Feels that we need to harvest half of them.
  - Is in support of a deer harvest, but does not think that it will fix the problem.
  - Township should consider allowing crossbows, because it is more effective.
  - Encourages township to involve a maximum number of interest groups; have them build deer traps. Use stun gun to kill deer; it is the most humane method.
  - Donated venison program should be emphasized
  - People need to be protected too – increased car/deer accidents are a threat to public safety
  - Hunting season should be expanded
- b. Helen Tanner, Green Road
- Offered support of deer harvest
  - Founding member of Meridian Garden Club
  - The Garden Club cannot use landscape plants appropriate to the era of the historical buildings, because the deer eat everything (hollyhock, etc.)
  - Friends of Historic Meridian are developing a cookbook, and it will include venison recipes
- c. Dan Branstein, Sylvan Glen Road
- Dr. Branstein is a Natural Resources professor at MSU
  - Strongly supports deer harvest program
  - Described extensive deer damage in their yard
  - Would like hunting to be allowed in the Sylvan Glen Natural Area (private property located south of Sylvan Glen Road, north of railroad tracks)
- d. Erik Furseth, 5082 Park Lake Road
- Supports deer harvest program
  - Performs his own deer management, feels that the most important thing to do is to lower the number of does
  - Deer have small territories, but bucks travel quite far during the rut
  - Feels that the township should lease land preserves and parks to hunters to raise funds
  - Proposes that we include the Lake Lansing North park in the harvest this year (the section with the Land Preservation conservation easement)
  - Estimated that 500 deer were shot in Meridian Township during 2010.

- e. Larry Harb, 3973 Shoals
- Strongly supports deer harvest, applauds Township Board, Park Commission, and Land Preservation Advisory Board for addressing this issue
  - Has collected many signatures from neighbors, allowing hunting within 450 feet of their residence.
  - Mr. Harb is also an insurance agent, stated that the estimate for each car/deer accident is \$3,100, plus potential loss of life
  - Has witnessed herds of 40-50 deer, at one time, in Red Cedar Natural Area
  - Has four neighbors interested in participating in harvest; feels that it is important to involve neighbors rather than outsiders.

MOTION was made by Frank Hatfield, seconded by Jim Kielbaso, that the Land Preservation Advisory Board support the Township Board's efforts toward deer management within Meridian Charter Township, recognizing that controlled hunting in land preserves and parks may help control the overpopulation of white-tailed deer. The managed hunts will take place on designated days, during the regular bow and firearm seasons in five land preserves, as determined by the Land Manager. MOTION carried unanimously.

**8. Other (taken out of order)**

a. Terms of Office

Vice-Chair Helmbrecht briefed the LPAB on the limits of the terms of office (per section 22-86, b, in zoning ordinance). There is also information in Rules of Procedure, stating that someone cannot serve on two boards or commissions at the same time. Suggested that the second sentence be removed, and rewritten to read, "Members appointed by the township board, environmental commission, or park commission shall serve only so long as they remain a member of the township board, environmental commission, or park commission. Once that appointment to the Land Preservation Advisory Board, from another board or commission, is terminated, such individuals are eligible to be appointed as resident members.

MOTION was made by Jim Kielbaso to make ordinance recommendations to the township board, as noted by Vice-Chair Helmbrecht.

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>	<b>YEAS:</b>	Caszatt, Helmbrecht, Woiwode, Kielbaso
	<b>NAYS:</b>	Hatfield

LPAB discussed re-wording the zoning ordinance:

Frank Hatfield: Does not want to become insular and re-writing the words could prevent progress.

Dave Caszatt: Would like to keep current leadership, feels that it is important to keep the experts that we used to have, and that things have changed since they are no longer on the board. Feels that continuity is important.

Tom Woiwode: Feels that term limits are important.

Jim Kielbaso withdrew the MOTION, Dave Caszatt seconded. It was decided to work on the language before bringing it back to the LPAB.

**4. Communications**

None

**5. Receive new property submissions**

Will be received during Closed Session

**6. Land Management Update**

(Deer Management Program – Land Manager Greenway, moved to 7, New Business)

**11. Closed Session**

MOTION was made by Frank Hatfield, seconded by Jim Kielbaso, to enter into closed session to discuss the possible purchase of real estate.

**Roll Call Vote: YEAS:** Woiwode, Helmbrecht, Hatfield, Kielbaso, Caszatt

**NAYS:** None

9:30 p.m. Return to Open Session: MOTION was made by Dave Caszatt, seconded Mary Helmbrecht, to end the closed session and return to open session.

MOTION was made by Frank Hatfield, seconded by Jim Kielbaso to take such action as was discussed during closed session.

MOTION carried unanimously.

**12. Adjournment**

Hearing no objection, Chair Woiwode adjourned the meeting at 9:35 pm.