

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 20, 2011

7:00 p.m. Meeting Room – Meridian Service Center

Members Present: Tom Woiwode, Chair; Mary Helmbrecht, Vice-Chair; Members Dave Caszatt, Jim Kielbaso, Margo Smith

Members Absent: Frank Hatfield, Mark Stephens, Steve Webster

Staff: Jane Greenway, Land Management Coordinator

Public Present: Willis Bennett, Director of Ingham County Parks
Patrick Witte, Lake Lansing Park Manager, Ingham County Parks
Leslie Kuhn, Mid-Michigan Stewardship Initiative
Marvin Nash Jr., MSU Journalism student
Cindy Harb, MSU Journalism student
Judy Linn
Joni Starr

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Woiwode at 7:10 p.m.
2. **Approve Minutes:** MOTION was made by Dave Caszatt, seconded by Jim Kielbaso to approve the minutes for the May 11, 2011 Land Preservation Advisory Board as written. MOTION carried unanimously.
3. **Public Remarks**
 - a. **Lake Lansing North Park Prescribed Burn**
 1. **Patrick Witte, Manager of Lake Lansing Parks, Ingham County
Leslie Kuhn, Mid-Michigan Stewardship Initiative**
 - Requested to hold a prescribed burn at Lake Lansing North Park, on the 120- acre property that was recently acquired by the County, with financial assistance from Meridian Township's Land Preservation Program. The burn will be held in spring 2012.
 - Meridian Township holds a conservation easement over the 120- acre property, and the easement requires approval from the LPAB prior to holding any invasive species management activities, including a prescribed burn.

- Invasive red maple saplings are the dominant vegetation in portions of the preserve. Other invasive species in the area include black cherry saplings, Japanese barberry and autumn olive.
- Some of the areas are surrounded by wetlands, therefore, very suitable for a burn. Other professionals have also recommended a prescribed burn to open the tree canopy to allow native plants to grow.
- The fee for a prescribed burn has not yet been determined, but the estimate is \$3,000 - \$5,000. The LPAB will be expected to pay for the prescribed burn that is performed on the 120-acre parcel.
- Native forbs cannot reproduce without sunlight. Most forbs are not vernal.
- Ingham County Parks is also addressing the issue of deer over-population.

2. Land Preservation Advisory Board Response

- The Nature Conservancy has been performing prescribed burns for over thirty years and none of the burns ever “got away”.
- Prior to performing any invasive species management activities, a stewardship and management plan must be developed.
- Jim Kielbaso, Professor Emeritus, Urban Forestry and Arboriculture, questioned the intervention of natural succession within the forest.
- The question of cost and who would be responsible for payment was discussed.
- The LPAB directed Jane Greenway to develop a stewardship and management plan prior to them approving the prescribed burn. Jane will work with Patrick Witte and Leslie Kuhn to develop the stewardship and management plans.

b. MSU Journalism Students

1. Marvin Nash Jr. and Cindy Harb, MSU Journalism students, introduced themselves and stated that they were assigned to attend a Meridian Township public meeting, as a requirement of their media reporting class.

c. Judy Linn

1. Requested that the township include the Davis name on the land preserve sign located at the Davis Foster Preserve.
2. Feels that residents who sell their property should have their wishes considered, even if it is not in the paperwork or if there has not been a donation.

4. Davis-Foster Preserve Sign

- The LPAB discussed the wording on the land preservation sign located at the Davis Foster Preserve.
- Larry Davis, the former owner of the property, passed away on May 24, 2011.
- The official name of the preserve is the “Davis Foster Preserve”, but because there was no full or partial donation, the name is not on the primary sign.
- The purchase agreement does not state that words “Davis Foster Preserve” be placed on the sign.
- All agreed that we should do a separate interpretive sign that includes information on the farm’s history and a description of the site restoration that is currently taking place.
- All agreed that the official names of the preserves should be included on all preserve signs, in the form of a small plaque, for the purpose of providing identification of each preserve.
- LPAB stated that there should be a significant donation if there is a name on the sign.
- The LPAB requested that Jane Greenway provide several design options for the name plaques.

5. 9:20 p.m. Closed Session

MOTION was made by Mary Helmbrecht, seconded by Margo Smith, to enter into closed session to discuss the possible purchase of real estate.

Roll Call Vote: **YEAS:** Woiwode, Helmbrecht, Kielbaso, Caszatt, Smith
 NAYS: None

9:50 p.m. Return to Open Session: MOTION was made by Jim Kielbaso, seconded by Margo Smith, to end the closed session and return to open session.

Roll Call Vote: **YEAS:** Woiwode, Helmbrecht, Kielbaso, Caszatt, Smith
 NAYS: None

Motion carried.

6. Land Management Report – Jane Greenway, Land Management Coordinator

Reported on the following items:

- a. Unusual bird sightings on land preserves, (white peacock in the Northridge Preserve, grasshopper sparrow and dickcissel on the Davis-Foster Preserve)
- b. Wangler Parcel – Ingham County Land Bank, possible acquisition by LPAB
- c. Catalpa saplings planted by former LPAB member, Mike Thomas, on preserves (Southwest Meridian Uplands/Sturk: three groupings near north and northwest boundaries; Lake Lansing South/Potter: open area close to western end; Hubbel: forest fringe and eastern open areas; Meridian Central Wetland/Winters: at

entrance). The trees were provided by Jim Kielbaso, and were grown by MSU from the seeds of the national champion catalpa, located at the State of Michigan capital building.

7. **Other**

a. **Ingham County Drain Commissioner – Drainage Easement on Red Cedar Glen Preserve**

1. There are no updates.

b. **Red Cedar Glen Preserve – Bicycle Access**

1. Jane Greenway read memo prepared by her dated July 8, 2011, recommending bicycle access on the land preserve, after the site is restored by the future Ingham County Drain Commissioner's project.
2. LPAB suggested holding a meeting with the Sylvan Glen neighbors to hear their thoughts on allowing bicycles in the preserve.

c. **Davis-Foster Land Preserve – Ranch House**

1. LPAB would like to get an opinion of cost and recommendations to bring the house up to a rental status.
2. Clerk Helmbrecht will obtain an opinion from a contractor for the rental house work.

8. **Public Comment**

None

9. **Adjournment**

10:30 p.m. Chairman Woiwode adjourned the meeting.