

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2014
6 PM – MERIDIAN SERVICE CENTER

Members Present: Julie Brixie, Roland Harmes, Frank Hatfield, James Kielbaso, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Margo Smith, Mark Stephens

Members Absent: None

Staff: Land and Management Coordinator Jane Greenway; Administrative Assistant II Robin Faust

Others: Bill McConnell

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Kielbaso called the meeting to order at 6 pm

2. Approve Agenda

Under item #8 New Business, add new item #b, 2015 Meeting Calendar Resolution

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

3. Public Remarks

None

4. Approve Minutes

Page 6, under item #9b:

Third bullet, change "trail" to "travel"

Fourth bullet shall state: "Board Member Rusch spoke about a canoe and kayak company in Williamston wanting to develop a jump off point on the Red Cedar River at the Harris Nature Center."

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER RUSCH SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2014 MINUTES AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

5. Communications

- a. From: Ben Holland; RE: thank you for funding assistance with his eagle scout project

- b. From: Rick Loftus, To: Dave Caszatt; thank you for organizing the Towar Woods cleanup and planting events
- c. From: Assistant Park Naturalist Sanchez; To: Rick Loftus; RE: thank you for correspondence on Northwest Land Preserve and interpretative signage for the site
- d. From: Bruce Little; RE: Deer Hunt and poaching concerns
- e. From: Carla Clos, RE: Sylvan Glen Road drain structure installation
- f. From: Camala Kinder; RE: hunting concerns on Raby Road
- g. From: Carla Clos; Red Cedar Glen planting
- h. To: Camala Kinder; RE: addressing her concerns on the deer management program
- i. From: Dave Caszatt; RE: report on Towar Woods clean up and invitation to Halloween event
- j. Township Focus Magazine, November 2014 issue; "Oh Deer! Townships, hunting and deer management
- k. To: Jule Stafford, Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management; RE: Meridian will not be proceeding with acquisition grant for Paul George property on Green Road
- l. From: Steve Brunner, RE: Support permanent bicycle access through Red Cedar Glen
- m. From: Layne Cameron, RE: Support permanent bicycle access through Red Cedar Glen

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE SECONDED, TO ACCEPT AND PLACE THE ITEMS OF COMMUNICATION ON FILE. Voice vote.
Motion passed.

6. Presentations

None

7. Old Business

a. Land Preserve Names

Coordinator Greenway suggested the Board may want to review the names assigned to the land preserves. Some of the current names do not have a meaning or make it easy to locate. One such change could be the Northwest Land Preserve to Towar Woods. She suggests the Board look at one or two preserves at a time, investigate their location, see what the neighbors call the preserve, investigate if the preserve has a significant element, etc. If the Board is agreeable, she will prepare a list of preserves that do not have a naming rights clause in the purchase agreement. The preserve names can be added utilizing a small plaque on the existing signs.

b. Land Preserves Rezoning

Board Member Brixie reported she attended the Planning Commission meeting on August 13, 2014 and reviewed the information provided by Parks and Land and Management Coordinator Greenway outlining the reasons why the Land Preservation Advisory Board is requesting that the Planning Commission not proceed with their proposed rezoning of the land preserves. After this discussion, the Planning Commission withdrew the request for rezoning the land preserves and will not proceed further with it in the future.

8. New Business
a. Red Cedar Glen – Permanent Bicycle Access

Parks and Land Management Coordinator Greenway reported it has been one year since the Board passed a motion to allow bicycle access in the Red Cedar Glen. She reported:

- A review of the site was conducted by herself and Assistant Park Naturalist Sanchez and no negative impacts were noted
- The Township has not received any complaints relative to bicycles in the preserve
- Signage has been installed and appears to be working, some needs to be tweaked
- Suggesting one of the foot trails along the river be re-routed
- Conducted a meandering survey of invasive species that need attention
- Recent construction of a split rail fence by an eagle scout candidate, Ben Holland, to separate the preserve from private property

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS SECONDED, THAT THE LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD PERMANENTLY ALLOW BICYCLES ON THE MAIN TRAIL, ONLY, OF THE RED CEDAR GLEN PRESERVE. THE ACTIVITY OF BICYCLING WILL CONTINUE TO BE CONTROLLED THROUGH SIGNS ALONG THE MAIN TRAIL TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO THE PRSERVE FROM BICYCLES. THE LAND PRESERCE WILL BE MONITORED AT LEAST TWICE PER YEAR TO ASSESS IMPACTS.

Discussion:

- who will monitor (Coordinator Greenway replied primarily staff but also the board members)
- Board Member Hatfield offered a friendly amendment to change the word “PERMANENTLY” in the motion to “CONTINUE TO”. The friendly amendment was accepted by maker and supporter of the motion.
- When asked if there is likely to be a problem between hikers and bikers on the trails, Staff replied no, trails are smooth and wide enough. Board Member Hatfield replied there are some issues where the trail connects into and going through Legg Park
- When asked about the liability, Staff replied that the site is covered through the Township and riding a bicycle is at the owners risk
- Board Member Hatfield reported the Sylvan Glen Neighborhood Association met last evening and they have not seen any damage, there has been no more or less increase in bicycle traffic, there has been some access before and after dark and dogs off leash and although there is signage, it is not enforced.
- Bill McConnell, 4676 Manitou, Okemos, stated he lives in Tacoma Hills adjacent to the Sander Farm Natural Area and he can now access off-road trails to the pump track in Eastgate Park. He has used the linkage trail numerous times and it is wide enough for both bikers and hikers. He has not come across or observed any negative impacts. He believes the Okemos High School cross country school team is using the trail connections.

Voice vote on the Motion including the Friendly Amendment. Motion passed unanimously.

b. 2015 Meeting Calendar Resolution

The following resolution was offered by Board Member Brixie and supported by Board Member Hatfield.

WHEREAS, the Land Preservation Advisory Board desires to announce the time, date, and place of all meetings of the Land Preservation Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, the Land Preservation Advisory Board deems the 2015 regular meeting schedule sufficient to uphold the Township Board's Policies and Procedures, and advancement toward the Board's Global Ends; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Land Preservation Advisory Board of the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County, Michigan, that the Land Preservation Advisory Board adopts its regular 2015 meeting schedule as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
January 14	Service Center	6 p.m.
February 11	Service Center	6 p.m.
March 11	Service Center	6 p.m.
April 8	Service Center	6 p.m.
May 13	Service Center	6 p.m.
June 10	Service Center	6 p.m.
July 8	Service Center	6 p.m.
August 12	Service Center	6 p.m.
September 9	Service Center	6 p.m.
October 14	Service Center	6 p.m.
November 18*	Service Center	6 p.m.
December 9	Service Center	6 p.m.

1. The Land Preservation Advisory Board has set a schedule to meet on the second Wednesday of the month; except November, which is the third Wednesday, due to Township Offices being closed in observance of Veteran's Day.
2. Each of the above meetings shall be held at the specified time in the lunch room of the Meridian Service Center, 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Ct., Haslett, Michigan, (517) 853-4000.
3. Special meetings of the Land Preservation Advisory Board may be called pursuant to the statute thereto appertaining.
4. Regular meetings may be canceled, recessed or postponed by members of the Land Preservation Advisory Board pursuant to the statute thereto appertaining.
5. A summary of this resolution stating date, place, and time shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Township, and a copy of this resolution shall be posted in the Meridian Municipal Building.

ADOPTED:

YEAS: Mark Stephens, Roland Harmes, Frank Hatfield, Julie Brixie, Robert Rusch,
Margo Smith, Jon Mayes, James Kielbaso

NAYS: None

Resolution passed.

9. Land Management Coordinator Report
 - a. Deer Management Update
 - Added Ingham County Farm to the program (100 acres) on Dobie road behind Campus Hills Apartments
 - As of today, 83 deer have been harvested
 - Board Member Brixie gave a great interview on Comcast
 - Sumbal Preserve will not be added because parents are parking in Ferguson Park and walking to the school to collect their children daily
 - b. Davis/Foster Land Preserve
 - Evergreens planted by Haslett schools are doing well
 - Staff walked the site, two of the hunters have had some damage to their stands and a trail cam is up to catch violators
 - c. Red Cedar Glen
 - Signs have been installed and the new trees look great, but there is evidence of deer damage (“buck rubs”)
 - Site restoration is proceeding as planned
 - Request to add sign where the “v” is for foot traffic
 - d. Mary Helmbrecht Butterfly Garden
 - 130 school children from Haslett planted 1,200 native plants near the Historical Village pond, during the planting, the children learned journaling, tree math, fishing and much more
 - Board Member Stephens reported most of the mulch was spread but more still needs to be spread around the plantings and asked for volunteers; once the plants are established, little future maintenance will be needed
 - Spent \$7,000 on this project to date; the school will be purchasing an additional \$1,200 for the spring planting and will utilize Grand Learning Network grant funds
 - Assistant Park Naturalist Sanchez is design the signage; will be getting the family’s input and do the dedication in the spring.
 - e. Northwest Land Preserve
 - Assistant Park Naturalist Sanchez prepared an update on the restoration efforts for an article in the upcoming Family Fun Guide
 - f. 2014 invasive treatment calendar and 2015 goals
 - The invasive treatment calendar is included in the meeting packet and the 2015 goals will be presented at the December meeting
 - g. Land Preserve Signs
 - Work orders have been placed to install six signs: Northwest Land Preserve; Central Meridian Wetlands (two signs); Central Meridian Uplands; Forest Grove and Northridge

h. Fisheries and Wildlife Services Grant

- Their investment was mowing and treating the area (and was paid for utilizing federal grant funding of \$1000) but area may need to be re-treated in the spring before planting
- Board Member Mayes reported the ground had a thick mat of thatch. Board Member Stephens stated the area may need to be burned to avoid seed regeneration before introducing new plantings

10. Other

Board Member Harmes asked about designated Cornell Road as a natural beauty road to avoid tree removal by the County. Board Member Brixie reported the Township Board submitted a requested for a permanent variance from the Road Department to protect the white oak and the request is going through the channels for approval. She attended a County Commission meeting and there is a new process for such requests and believes the Township's request is favorable. There is also another issue which is allowing for tree planting in right-of-ways on business roads. This would be a policy change or statement, will need review with respect to liability but this request also appears to be favorable.

Board Member Harmes asked about the liability of hunting from tree stands especially for the hunters who may fall. Coordinator Greenway reported the hunters do sign a liability release, have attended and received certification from the Demmer Center and hunters are encouraged to use certified tree hunting stands. Our legal counsel has reviewed all of the documents that are signed by the volunteer hunters.

11. Public Comment

None

12. Closed Session

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER SMITH SECONDED, TO ENTER INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSSION LAND ACQUISITION MATTERS.

Roll Call:

YEAS: Jon Mayes, Margo Smith, Robert Rusch, Julie Brixie, Frank Hatfield, Roland Harmes, Mark Stephens, James Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The Board entered into closed session at 7:06 pm.

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER SMITH SECONDED, TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.

Roll Call:

YEAS: Mark Stephens, Roland Harmes, Frank Hatfield, Julie Brixie, Robert Rusch, Margo Smith, Jon Mayes, James Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The Board returned to open session at 8:17 pm

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE SECONDED, TO DIRECT STAFF TO PROCEED AS DISCUSSED DURING THE CLOSED SESSION. Voice vote. Motion passed.

13. Adjournment

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER MAYES SECONDED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm.