



Meridian Monitor

Winter 2004-05

'Design Meridian' Community Forum Produces Results



(Top) "Downtown Okemos" shops as they appear today. (Bottom) MSU Landscape Architecture's vision for the same district based on input from participants in the 'Design Meridian' Forums.



A vision of what the commercial sections of Meridian Township could look like was recently unveiled at the third and final 'Design Meridian' forum.

With input from Meridian residents, business owners, and township officials at previous meetings, representatives of the Small Town Design Initiative Project (STDI) of Michigan State University's Landscape Architecture program generated simulations, photographs, and drawings of how the township's core commercial areas could be transformed and improved. The five areas are:

- "Downtown" Okemos
- "Downtown" Haslett
- Meridian Mall area
- Okemos/Jolly Road area
- W. Grand River Ave. area

The goal of the STDI is to help Michigan towns develop vision and

direction, build consensus, and create images of environmental design projects.

Sponsored by the Meridian Economic Development Corporation, the well-attended forums began last spring with STDI representatives gathering ideas about what kinds of improvements might make the township's business areas more distinctive and aesthetically pleasing.

In a follow-up project currently underway for the "Downtown" Okemos area, an MSU class is developing three models for public comment. With sufficient community support, Meridian officials may engage professional consultants to refine the STDI enhancement ideas.

More information on 'Design Meridian' is available on the township's web site at www.twp.meridian.mi.us.

Directly Dial Township Officials and Staff

Beginning Jan. 14, you'll be able to contact most township officials and staff members directly by phone, thanks to a new system that allows for individual phone numbers.

The upgrade to Meridian's office telephone system is expected to provide better reliability, efficiency, and cost savings, as well as handle a larger call volume to better serve township residents.

The system will require new telephone extensions for everyone, so callers will be greeted by a new menu of options allowing look-ups by department or last name, or requesting assistance from the switchboard operator.

The new phone numbers and extensions will also be posted on the Web at www.twp.meridian.mi.us, and on HOM-TV (Comcast Cable Channel 21).

The main township numbers listed below can still be used after the Jan. 14 implementation date:

Municipal Building:	349-1200
Police Administration:	347-5060
Crime Line:	349-1372
Fire Administration:	347-5055
Service Center:	349-4640
Utility Billing:	349-1400
Public Service After Hours:	349-0010
HOM-TV:	349-1232
Burning Permits:	349-1742

Major Okemos Road Improvement Project Begins in 2005

A project to improve the mid-to-southern section of Okemos Road in Meridian Township will begin in 2005. The Ingham County Road Commission plans to widen Okemos Road and add a fifth lane from Jolly Road to Mt. Hope Road at a cost of \$2.3 million. According to road commission officials, the improvements will be paid for with a mix of federal, state, and county funds.

The road commission expects the project will be substantially completed by September 2005.

"In the early stages of this project, Meridian Township urged that certain design and public safety enhancements be included," noted Gerald Richards, township manager.

"Our staff sought funds for that purpose, and as a result, the Ingham County Road Commission, in partnership with the township, will receive \$560,000 in federal funds for roadway improvements." The funding announcement was made in November by Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm.

Consequently, changes to Okemos Road are expected to include a new gateway entrance to Meridian Township, as well as landscaping and roadway safety enhancements. As soon as details of the project are finalized, more information on the Okemos Road improvements will be publicized.



Park Commission Plans for Future

The Meridian Township Park Commission is nearing completion of the 2005-09 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Required for grant eligibility with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the five-year plan sets the framework for improvements to Meridian's 877-acre park system.

The park commission has previously won grant support for projects that included the acquisition of property for Harris Nature Center and Eastgate, Hillbrook and Marshall Parks, as well as for the renovation of Ferguson Park and the development of Harris Nature Center, Legg Park, Nancy Moore Park, and Hartrick Park.

"The master plan identifies the park and recreation needs of our community, and serves as a blueprint for meeting those needs," says LuAnn Maisner, director of Parks and Recreation. A key element of the plan is its in-depth evaluation of current community resources and facilities, and their usage.

To gain information for the plan, the park commission conducted a number of community meetings and a community survey with the assistance of Dr. Dwayne Baker from Michigan State University. Input was also gathered from township staff members, boards, and commissions.

The recent renewal of the park millage by voters enables Meridian to maintain the park system, and provides funds to help secure grants to enhance the quality of life in the township. "We appreciate support from township residents for the park millage because of the positive impact it will have on our community landscape," says Maisner.

A draft of the proposed 2005-09 Parks and Recreation Master Plan is available online at www.twp.meridian.mi.us/parksandrecreation.

Transfer Station Moves to Winter Hours

Winter hours are in effect at the Meridian Township Transfer Station until March 31, 2005. The transfer station is open Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Located at 5976 E. Lake Drive in Haslett, the transfer station offers free recycling of magazines, newspapers, cardboard, and a variety of cans and bottles (however, green bottles are not accepted.) For a fee, lawn and garden waste, as well as household goods—including large items such as appliances, carpeting, and scrap building materials—are also accepted.

Please Clear a Path for Meter Readers

In order to issue accurate utility bills, Meridian Township water meter readers must be able to access outdoor home meters. Township officials ask that residents trim back shrubs, and clear away snow, rocks, or other obstacles that may interfere with a reader's access to these outdoor units. For more information about the location of your meter, or the meter reading schedule, contact the Utility Billing Department at 349-1400.

Meridian Monitor is published by the Meridian Township Board
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Visit us on the Web: www.twp.meridian.mi.us

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Notice of Wetland Inventory Map

Under the provisions of Part 303 of Act 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, as amended, the Charter Township of Meridian is required to notify each recorded owner of property on the property tax roll that the Township has an ordinance regulating wetlands and there have been amendments to the wetland inventory map. Part 303 of Act 451 also requires the Township to advise all owners of property in the Township that their property may be designated as a wetland on the inventory map, and that the inventory map does not necessarily include all of the wetlands within the Township that may be subject to the Wetland Ordinance. Finally, please be advised that the wetland map does not create any legally enforceable presumptions regarding whether property that is or is not included on the inventory map is or is not in fact a wetland. The Wetland Inventory Map is available for inspection during regular business hours in the Department of Community Planning and Development located at the Meridian Municipal Building, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864. For more information, please call (517) 349-1200.

Property Assessment Data Available Online

As part of an ongoing effort to provide current property and tax assessment data, Meridian Township is making assessment and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) information available online.

Because of this new service, the Property Assessing Line (PAL) will be discontinued early in 2005, and residents who request information by phone will be directed to the township's web site.

To retrieve assessment and GIS information online, visit www.twp.meridian.mi.us. Click on either "Assessing Info" or "Assessing GIS

Parcel Map," and you'll find useful information about thousands of properties in Meridian Township.

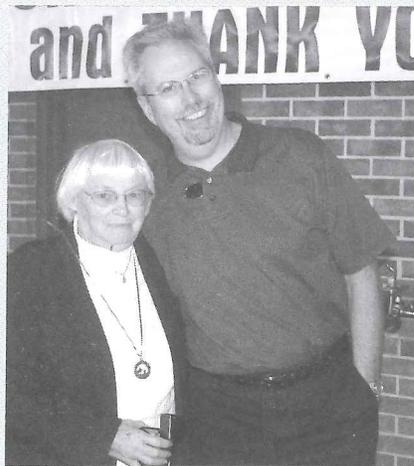
While information available on the web site is extensive, not all property information is included yet. As the database is being completed, residents who are interested in this data are encouraged to keep checking for updates.

An announcement will be made on the township's web site and HOM-TV, Comcast Channel 21, once a date has been set for the discontinuation of the PAL service.

2004 Winter Tax Payment Reminder

All residential and business property owners should have received a winter tax bill by December 10. If you did not receive your bill, please call 349-1200 for a duplicate bill. Your mortgage/escrow company (if one is listed on your bill) will receive a copy of your bill.

Please remember that payment must arrive in the Meridian Township Treasurer's office by 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 14, 2005, in order to avoid a 1 percent interest charge. On March 1, additional charges will apply. Taxpayers who plan to mail payment must allow sufficient time for delivery, as postmarks are no longer accepted. A white, curbside drop box is also available outside Meridian Township Hall for the convenience of township residents. Tax payments may be placed in the box 24 hours a day.



Meridian Township honors the service, commitment, and loyalty of its employees at an annual Employee Recognition Luncheon. At left, Geraldine Snell, who will retire in February, and Larry Ondrias were recognized for 30 years of service. Employees who achieved five, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years of service were also honored at the September event.



Meridian Police Chief Dave Hall was sworn in by Clerk Mary Helmbrecht in September, replacing Gary Gibbons, who resigned to take a position with the federal government.

The first Meridian Police Department employee ever to be promoted to the position of chief, Hall began his Meridian career as a patrol officer in 1978. He advanced through the ranks of sergeant (1981), lieutenant (1992), and captain (1998). He holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Michigan State University and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

CATA and Meridian Township Encourage Bus Use

One of the newest CATA bus stops was installed in 2004 on the west side of Marsh Road, near the intersection with Lake Lansing Road. The new shelter is the result of a joint effort by CATA and Meridian Township to encourage bus riding. It includes the purchase of three bus shelters, refurbishing an existing shelter, and installing accessibility pads at two

stops. The three new shelters are located on the north side of Grand River Avenue near Brookfield Street (near Coral Gables Restaurant), near Campus Hill Apartments, and at the intersection of Grand River & Okemos Road. The accessibility pads were installed on Times Square near Wal-Mart. Two additional bus stop benches will be installed in 2005.

HOM-TV Original Programs Schedule*

Meridian Magazine (new weekly)
Daily at 11a.m., 5:30 p.m. & 11:30 p.m.

Community Connection (new bi-monthly)
Daily at 11:30 a.m., 6 p.m. & 11 p.m.

Beyond the Badge (new monthly)
Daily at 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

On the Agenda
Daily at 10 a.m., 4:30 p.m., & 10:30 p.m.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

- *All Access: Meridian Sports*
- *Golden Tape Awards: HOM-TV Interns*
- *Giveaway: Local Band Documentary*
- *Meridian Business Review*
- *Year in Review Features*

Meridian Township Meetings Schedule*

Planning Commission
(LIVE 2nd and 4th Monday of the month)
Sun. 5:30 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Mon. 12 a.m., 6:30 p.m. LIVE, or 7 p.m. REPLAY
Tues. 12 a.m., 5:30 a.m. & 12 p.m.
Fri. 5:30 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Sat. 12 a.m. & 12 p.m.

Zoning Board of Appeals
(LIVE 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month)
Mon. 5:30 a.m. & 12 p.m.
Wed. 7 p.m. LIVE, or REPLAY
Thurs. 12 a.m. & 12 p.m.

Park Commission
(LIVE 2nd Tuesday of the month)
Tues. 7 p.m. LIVE, or REPLAY
Wed. 12 a.m. & 12 p.m.
Fri. 12 p.m.

Environmental Commission
(LIVE 3rd Wednesday of the month)
Wed. 7:30 p.m. LIVE, or REPLAY
Thurs. 12 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.
Fri. 1:30 p.m.

**Program dates and times are subject to change.*

Parks & Recreation Calendar of Events

- Jan. 9 – Hungry Birds at My Window
- Jan. 9 – Junior Racquetball Program
- Jan. 11 – Dog Obedience Class
- Jan. 12 – Fit Yoga
- Jan. 17 – School's Out Day Trip to Full Blast
- Jan. 18 – Become a Mystery Shopper
- Jan. 20 – Curiosity Club Nature for Preschoolers
- Jan. 21 – Owl Prowl
- Jan. 21 – Curiosity Club Nature for Preschoolers
- Jan. 22 – Cross-Country Skiing Class
- Jan. 22 – Snowshoeing 101
- Jan. 23 – Cross-Country Skiing Class
- Jan. 23 – Snowshoeing 101
- Jan. 24 – My Cub & I Nature for Toddlers
- Jan. 25 – Forest Scribblers: Discovering Art in Nature
- Jan. 27 – Hungry Birds at My Window
- Jan. 29 – Free Family Winter Sports Day: Winter Wonderland at the Harris Nature Center, Meridian Skates, Meridian Bowls
- Jan. 29 – Beginning Knitting at the Village
- Jan. 29 – Adult & Junior Winter Golf Camp
- Feb. 2 – Photography Class
- Feb. 5 – Cross-Country Skiing Class
- Feb. 5 – Snowshoeing 101
- Feb. 5 – Girl Scout Frosty Fun Badge
- Feb. 6 – Cross-Country Skiing Class

- Feb. 6 – Snowshoeing 101
- Feb. 8 – Dog Obedience Class
- Feb. 9 – OAKS Spring Soccer Registration Deadline
- Feb. 10 – Share Your Skills & Pay Your Bills
- Feb. 12 – Webelos Geologist Badge
- Feb. 13 – Snow Tales
- Feb. 18 – School's Out Day Trip to Whirlyball and the "Fridge"
- Feb. 19 – Brownies Science Wonders Try-It
- Feb. 22 – School's Out Day Trip to Cannonsburg Skiing
- Feb. 23 – Fit Yoga
- Feb. 25 – Howl at the Moon
- Mar. 12 – Brownie Animal Try-It
- Mar. 13 – Pick Your Distance Guided Hike
- Mar. 19 – Cub Scouts Wildlife Conservation Academics Pin
- Mar. 19 – OAKS Spring Soccer games begin
- Mar. 25 – Howl at the Moon
- Mar. 26 – Girl Scout Earth Connections Badge
- Mar. 26 – Cadette/Senior Girl Scout Birds Badge
- April 1 – School's Out Day Trip to Craig's Cruisers

For more information on Meridian Parks and Recreation activities, call 349-4640, ext. 305 before January 14th. After January 14th, call 853-4608

*****EJCRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER

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