



MINUTES
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR
MEETING
Tuesday, June 9, 2026, 4:30pm
Service Center Conference Room

REGULAR MEETING – 4:30PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
 - A. Vice-chair Lick called the meeting to order at 4:36 PM.
2. ROLL CALL
 - A. Present: Vice-chair Lick, Chair Nardo-Farris, and Commissioners McDonald, Stephens, and Phelps
 - B. Staff present: Parks and Recreation Director Wisinski, Deputy Township Manager/Public Works Director Opsommer, Administrative Assistant Pachucki
 - C. Guests: Township Attorneys Beyea and Kuschel, Environmental Commission Liaison Richard Miksicek
3. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - A. There was no public comment.
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
 - A. Vice-chair Lick suggested moving Item 12: Closed Session to Discussion Items 7B. Commissioner Stephens seconded.
 - B. Commissioner Phelps moved to approve the agenda, as amended. Chair Nardo-Farris seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. May 12, 2026, Park Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
 1. Chair Nardo-Farris moved to approve the May 12, 2026 regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Phelps seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS
 - A. Meridian Conservation Corps Calendar
 1. Director Wisinski introduced the June Stewardship Calendar to the commissioners and highlighted the Rain Garden Workshop held in partnership with the Greater Lansing Regional Committee for Stormwater Management. The June 1st event was well attended by Meridian Township residents, and Land Stewardship Coordinator Campbell would like to move from individual yard consults to a workshop format. Weekday Warriors and Stewardship Saturdays continue throughout the summer season, and is focused on invasive species removal.
 - B. Harris Nature Center Events
 1. Director Wisinski reviewed the flyer for a July program at Harris Nature Center: All About Fireflies on July 18th. The summer camp season will begin next week at Harris Nature Center. This means that public programming will slow down, as the camps are four days a week and at almost full capacity for the summer. Public programming for both adults and children will continue in earnest in the late summer/early fall.
 - C. Commissioner Stephens moved to approve the communications and place them on file. Commissioner Phelps seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Flood Mitigation Assistance Swift Current Grant Agreement Discussion

1. Director Opsommer reminded the Park Commission of the historical background of the grant, dating back to 2023, when the application was submitted, and of the challenges of the existing parcels in the floodway and floodplain. Acquiring these parcels is consistent with best practices, and in line with the Township's history of other similar parcels. The grant includes funding to demolish the current home and detached garage. The parcel being considered is contingent with Schreiner Park and could potentially expand the park. If it is assumed as park land, there would be an increase in maintenance cost/mowing, It could alternatively be donated to the Ingham County Drain Commission office. Staff would like the Park Commission to consider the value of this park in the park system, and if it would be better served as a flood plain for the surrounding neighborhood. Commissioner Phelps asked Director Opsommer if the grant required the Township to maintain control of the land, and how the land transfer with the Drain Commission office would work. Chair Nardo-Farris asked about where the funding would come from, and Director Opsommer answered that non-federal share project amount would come from the park mileage. Chair Nardo-Farris considered the precedence that donating the land to the Ingham County Drain Commission would have, and the impact on the neighbors of the park. Commissioner Stephens inquired if this grant was public information, and Director Opsommer shared that it was included in Township Board meeting on June 2, 2026, and the Ingham County Drain Commission was aware that Township Staff applied for the grant during the application process. Director Opsommer also noted that the land surrounding the park and the new parcels are good candidates for encroachment issues in the future. Commissioner McDonald expressed a desire for strong deed restrictions that would supersede the recipient's wishes if the land was donated to the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's office and requested that the donation have an advantage for the Township, or at least no net loss. Vice-chair Lick commended the Park Commissioners for their questions that had been asked during the discussion and believed that the residents in the neighborhood should be consulted before a decision is made. Vice-chair Lick commented on the optics of removing the park from our park system and thought that there should be strong messaging. She also asked about the effect on property values of the neighbor's parcels. Director Opsommer will check with the appraiser to see if the question can be answered about the property values.

B. CLOSED SESSION - Motion for the Park Commission enter into closed session Section 8(1)(e) of the Open Meetings Act to consult with the Township Attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with ordinance enforcement litigation involving 5837 Carlton Street now pending in Ingham County District Court, namely case number 25M93588-ON because an open meeting would have a detrimental financial effect on the litigating or settlement position of the Township.

1. Commissioner Phelps motioned for the Park Commission enter into closed session Section 8(1)(e) of the Open Meetings Act to consult with the Township Attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with ordinance enforcement litigation involving 5837 Carlton Street now pending in Ingham County District Court, namely case number 25M93588-ON because an open meeting would have a detrimental financial effect on the litigating or settlement position of the Township. Commissioner Stephens seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

YEAS: Chair Nardo-Farris, Commissioners McDonald, Phelps and Stephens, Vice-chair Lick

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 5-0

At 5:13 PM, the Park Commission entered closed session.

At 6:08 PM, Commissioner Stephens motioned to return to open session. Commissioner Phelps seconded.

VOICE VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

At 6:08 PM, the Park Commission returned to open session. Director Opsommer and Township Attorneys Beyea and Kuschel left the meeting at 6:08 PM.

Vice-chair Lick called for a 5-minute recess at 6:10 PM. The Commission reconvened at 6:15 PM.

C. Parks & Recreation 5-Year Plan Priorities

1. Director Wisinski met with Mike Hoffmeister from the Mannik-Smith group, and Consultant Hoffmeister requested that the Park Commission develop some broad overview priorities to be included in the 5-Year Plan. Commissioner Stephens requested a charette style conversation in July, and the other Park Commissioners agreed. Commissioner Phelps and Vice-Chair Lick requested to review a draft summary of the public survey results prior to the July Park Commission meeting. The Park Commissioners also requested that the Communications Department share the survey link on social media and create a saved story on Instagram. Director Wisinski will reach out to Communications for social media postings and requested that the Commissioners come to the July meeting with ideas. For example, one priority could be moving away from development of new park projects, and into maintenance of existing park amenities. Vice-chair Lick reminded the Park Commission that this is a working draft. Commissioner Stephens commented that the survey results should shape the priorities, and Vice-chair Lick appreciated that the Park Commission would dedicate time to this task and make sure that every voice is heard during the process.

D. Parks & Recreation 5-Year Plan Public Meetings

1. July 9, 2026 – Central Park Pavilion
2. July 30, 2026 – Harris Nature Center
3. August 13, 2026 – Towner Road Park
 - I. Director Wisinski reminded the Park Commission of the upcoming 5-Year Plan Public meetings, and the additional virtual stakeholder meetings. Commissioner Stephens inquired about the time for the meetings, and Director Wisinski answered that they will be from 6:00 PM until 8:00 PM.

8. ACTION ITEMS

- A. There were no action items.

9. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. 2026 CIP Projects

1. Director Wisinski updated the Park Commission on the following projects: NRTF Trailhead, Nancy Moore Pavilion renovation, Farmer's Market windscreens, Ferguson Water Trail landing, and Harris Nature Center Water Trail landing. The funding for the Natural Resources Trust Fund grant has not been released by the state legislature. MParks, the Michigan Parks and Recreation Association, has created some advocacy materials to contact legislators. Commissioner McDonald stated that the delay is not uncommon in election years. Director Wisinski will work with Director Opsommer to create a Request for Proposal for the contractors, but will pause any work until the funding is secured. Director Wisinski noted that Parks and Land Preservation Superintendent Adams has a contractor scheduled to visit Nancy Moore park to estimate the cost of renovation. This is not bidding, but rather helping Township Staff determine the basis for the Request for Proposals. The windscreens at the Farmer's Market have been replaced, and Parks and Land Superintendent Adams added a rod to the bottom of the screen to help with severe wind. Director Wisinski will address the expanded column. The Water Trail Landing at Harris Nature Center has been installed, and the department will pay the

remaining balance once invoiced by the company. The Water Trail Landing at Ferguson is at a pause due to difficulties with the Department of EGLE and the permitting process. With the Ingham County Road Commission's change of leadership, Township Staff are potentially pursuing going back to Wonch Park for the landing with the Road Commission's approval.

B. Hillbrook – Pine Lake Outlet Drain Update

1. Director Wisinski shared that the contractor for the drain work has returned to the site and spread soil. The grass this year will be different from the grass in future years, and the rye grass holds the soil in place. Director Wisinski also noted that it is helpful to have both township residents and Park Commissioners comments when speaking with the Ingham County Drain Commission office and thanked the Commissioners for sharing their thoughts.

C. Upcoming Events

1. Director Wisinski highlighted the upcoming Juneteenth event on June 12th at Marketplace on the Green. Parks and Recreation does not host the event, but provides logistical support to Community Planning and Development. Director Wisinski recapped the Meridian Pride event, and shared that there was around a thousand attendees on the day of the event, with a lot of young families. Vice-chair Lick suggested incorporating a silent disco event next year, or live paintings. The Park Commission suggested marketing the first half of the event to families with young children, and the second half of the event towards adults and older teenagers. Finally, Director Wisinski reminded the Park Commission of the upcoming Celebrate Meridian event on July 25th and 26th. Friday, July 25th will be Teen Night.

D. Farmer's Market

1. Director Wisinski reported to the Park Commission that the Wednesday Farmer's Market season has begun, and will continue until the end of October. The Summer Concert Series runs in conjunction with the Wednesday Farmer's Market, and will host local bands and artists from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, and then from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM.

E. Reminders

1. Director Wisinski thanked the Commissioners for attending the first ever Red Cedar Regatta and summarized the event for those that were unable to attend. Director Wisinski shared that the Township Board inquired about making short videos about the park mileage, and that the Communications department intends to shoot these videos at the end of June and early July. WLNS has provided drone footage of our parks. Chair Nardo-Farris asked if Director Wisinski and Township Staff can develop talking points - similar to previous mileages that the Park Commissioners can use when speaking to residents, and other community members.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. Richard Miksicek, Environmental Commission liaison, commented on the activities of the Environmental Commission's June meeting, including a presentation, the Climate Sustainability Fund, Green Grants, pending open seats, and Michigan Green Communities. Cheryl Loudon of the TriCounty Regional Planning Commission presented on private well abandonment and groundwater contamination. The Environmental Commission is considering how to spend the remaining Climate Sustainability Fund, including ideas for addressing private well abandonment, wetland education signage, food compost initiative at the Farmer's Market, additional contributions to the Marshall Park bioswale project, signage at Reclaimed by Design, and replacing trees along Carlton Street. The Environmental Commission is interested in the Park Commission's input regarding the remaining funds. The Environmental Commission also finalized the Green Grant applications, recommending full funding for two of the projects, and the remaining four were partially funded. The Environmental Commission has two new members appointed by the Board of Trustees, and student representatives from both Haslett and Okemos High Schools. Finally, Meridian Township was once again recognized as a Gold member of the Michigan Green Communities for 2025. Township Staff have already submitted the application for 2026 and hope to be added to the Platinum category in the future.

11. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS AND LIAISON REPORTS

- A. Commissioner McDonald commented that there is a large public sentiment that wishes to honor the life of LeRoy Harvey, the former Environmental Programs Coordinator with the Township, especially within the Hillbrook pickleball community. He inquired if the Township had any formal memorialization plans, and Director Wisinski shared that the Township was waiting for direction from the family before making any decisions.
- B. Commissioner Stephens thanked the Parks department for the memorial plaque for Greg Lemanski at Towner Road Park.
- C. Chair Nardo-Farris reported that the Township Board is focused on elections, listening sessions, and appointees to open seats on boards and commissions.
- D. Commissioner Phelps did not have any additional comments.
- E. Vice-chair Lick expressed that she was glad that Chair Nardo-Farris was feeling well and apologized to the Park Commission for arriving later than expected due to an unforeseen circumstance. She also acknowledged sympathy to the Harvey family. Finally, Vice-chair Lick shared that a resident reached out about the wording on the Lemanski plaque and asked that the plaque be replaced. In the future, she recommends that the Park Commission approve the language on memorial plaques, and in 2027 pursue reviewing the naming policy.

12. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Commissioner Phelps moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stephens seconded.
- B. Vice-chair Lick adjourned the meeting at 7:18 PM.
- C. The next regular meeting of the Park Commission will be Tuesday, July 14th, 2026 at 4:30 PM at the Service Center.

All comments limited to 3 minutes, unless prior approval for additional time for good cause is obtained.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Parks & Recreation Director, Courtney Wisinski: 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, MI 48864 or 517.853.4600 - Ten Day Notice is Required.