

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2015

PRESENT: Commissioners: Deschaine, Jaramillo, Stephens, Wilson
Staff: Parks and Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner; Parks and Land
Management Coordinator Jane Greenway; Parks and Recreation
Administrative Assistant II Robin Faust

ABSENT: Commissioner McDonald

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Wilson called the regular meeting to order at 7:03 pm. He introduced new Commissioner Philip Deschaine.

2. Approval of Agenda

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER DESCHAINE SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

3. Presentations

a. Eagle Scout Candidate Steven Harrelson,

Eagle Scout Candidate Steven Harrelson distributed a picture of his proposed project of constructing a prairie fence behind log cabin in Meridian Historical Village. He is proposing to construct a 75' prairie fence behind the log cabin with red oak timbers. The stacked split-rail fence was suggested by Education Director Jane Rose and will aid in the Historical Village's efforts to educate the community about how early pioneers lived and plotted their land. The proposed location is directly east behind the log cabin along the brush line as they were in early pioneer period. For safety purposes, he is proposing to attach the logs in the corners with bolts as discussed with staff.

Discussion:

- He plans to raise funds by collecting permission from store owners to create and sell store coupon sheets.
- The lumber is reclaimed and is purchasing them from an individual who has them in 10 foot lengths and ready to use for fencing.
- He hopes to complete the project by mid-May depending on the weather.
- Long-term maintenance - a treated board will be placed on the bottom rung closest to the ground to keep the fence boards from resting on the ground.

4. Public Comment

None

5. Commissioner Reports and Comments

Commissioner Jaramillo spoke about signage she had seen that may be useful in our parks. She will forward the information to staff.

Commissioner Stephens spoke about information he had seen on pond maintenance and habitats on PondBoss.com and will be sharing information with staff. He encouraged everyone to attend the Michigan Recreation and Park Association Conference at the Lansing Center this week. He will be staffing the live fishing tank in the exhibit hall.

6. Approval of Minutes

- a. January 13, 2015 Work Session Minutes
- b. January 13, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO MOVED, COMMISSIONER STEPHENS SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 13, 2014 MINUTES AS WRITTEN. Voice vote. Motion passed.

7. Communications

A. Items to/from the Public

None

B. Commission Information

1. February Calendar of Events for Parks & Recreation
2. Towne Courier: **Jan 11:** Nature center hosts story time for kids; **Jan 18:** Construction of Pedestrian bridge on Okemos Road begins; Meridian Township will host kickball tournament; Meridian's deer hunt yields 1,500 pounds of venison to food banks; **Jan 25:** Harris Nature Center to host Winter Wonderland
3. State Journal: **Feb 1:** Howl at the Moon, Moonlight skiing and snowshoeing; Winter snowshoe night hike; Wonderland of dog sledding, ice sculpture
4. City Pulse: **Feb 4:** Winter Wonderland

C. Staff Inquiries/Response

None

D. Distributed at meeting

1. 2014 Annual Report

2. Harris Nature Center Foundation Board Minutes from December 8, 2014 and January 19, 2015
3. To: Township Board, From: Director Kieselbach, RE: Wayne Beyea, MSU School of Planning, Design & Construction – Sustainability Assessment; this item will be presented at future Township Board meeting and will furnish information at next meeting.

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO ACCEPT AND PLACE THE ITEMS OF COMMUNICATION ON FILE. Voice vote. Motion passed.

8. Director's Report

Director Maisner offered the following information:

- Family Winter Weekends – Prior years, this event was held on the last weekend in January, but this year was expanded to include events every weekend in January and February
 - Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk in Central Park – January 25 (225 runners)
 - Saturday, January 31: **Winter Wonderland** at Harris Nature Center – Snow Shoeing, Cross-County Skiing, dog sled demonstrations, ice sculptures, bon fire, games and more! (Free) - 600
 - Winter Kickball Tournament 6 teams @ Nancy Moore Park Feb 8
 - Moonlight Sledding (Free) approximately 400 participants Feb 8
 - Saturday, February 14: Meridian Ice **Fishing Derby**, Central Park pond (Free)
 - Many have been enjoying cross country skiing in Ted Black Woods, Meridian Riverfront Park, Central Park, all of the parks.
- Deer Management - Six (6) deer have been taken during extended harvest; Program will continue through February 28. Properties are posted. Deer are donated to local food banks in Okemos and Haslett. Coordinator Greenway is presenting on our deer management program at the MRPA Conference tomorrow. 150 deer were harvested during the regular hunting season.
- Highlighted numerous items from the 2014 Parks and Recreation Department Annual report (included in communications)
- 72 volunteer hunters in deer management program, harvested 150 deer, 1,600 pounds of venison (8,250 meals)
- Over 1,354 volunteers donated 37,751 hours in parks, recreation, Harris Nature Center, Meridian Historical Village, Land Preservation programs, Meridian Senior Center and Deer Management Program for a total value of \$835,430
- Economic impact of teams sports: 3,757 youth and adult players for estimated local expenditures of \$453,989 (numbers based on program evaluation reports)
- Chinese New Year – Meridian Township facilitates this annual event with 16 different Chinese groups in the Greater Lansing area; held at the Meridian Mall; scheduled for Saturday, February 21 from 1:30-6 pm; this year includes

- a dragon parade at 1:30 pm and booths/tables set up at 2 pm; family friendly event
- Family Fun Guide – 64 pages of fun covering the entire year; mailed out to residents first week of January; available on township website as pdf
 - Central Park RFQ for planning services
 - Received five (5) bids on February 4; scheduling interviews on Friday, February 20
 - Assisting the township with defining their program and goals for central park
 - Facilitating public meetings
 - Providing conceptual plans and color renderings for the central park master plan
 - Providing an opinion of cost for future construction
 - Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Bridge – work continues on bridge crossing over Red Cedar River on Okemos Road. Scheduled to be completed in April; plans to have a joint grand opening ceremony for bridge and Wonch Park pathway in Spring

9. New Business
PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Eagle Scout Project Approval

Chair Wilson stated Eagle Scout Candidate Steven Harrelson proposed to construct a split rail prairie fence behind the log cabin in the Historical Village.

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSION JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FENCE PROJECT IN THE MERIDIAN HISTORICAL VILLAGE PRESENTED BY EAGLE SCOUT CANDIDATE STEVEN HARRELSON. Voice vote. Motion passed.

b. Sander Farm Natural Area Lease and Open Space Easement Renewal

Director Maisner stated in February 1995, Meridian Township entered into the first ten year Open Space Development Rights Easement and Lease Agreement with Dr. Maureen Sander for 31.9 acres located adjacent to Dr. Sander's home at 4275 Dobie Road, Okemos.

For the past 20 years, this agreement with Dr. Sander has allowed public access for passive recreation purposes. Also, Tacoma Hills resident, Larry Hennessey monitors, repairs and replaces (when necessary), the bluebird boxes placed in various locations along the existing nature trail.

Dr. Sander met with Director Maisner to convey her desire to renew the Open Space Development Easement and Lease Agreement with the Township until February 5, 2025.

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE SECONDED, THE RECOMMEND TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT EASEMENT AND LEASE AGREEMENT WITH DR. MAUREEN SANDER FOR 31.9 ACRES OF NATURAL AREA FROM FEBRUARY 5, 2015 THROUGH FEBRUARY 5, 2025 FOR PARCEL #33-02-02-27-177-007. Voice vote. Motion passed.

When asked about trail development, Director Maisner reported there are informal trails and deer runs on the property and Dr. Sander is in favor of trail development and providing accessibility.

c. 2015 Grant Projects – Set date for Public Hearings

The Commission is interested in submitting grant applications for three projects to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. As part of the application process, the projects must be open to a public hearing to gain community input. The projects include: during its March 10, 2014 televised meeting date at 7 pm in the Town Hall Room of the Meridian Municipal Building for three grant submissions as discussed during prior Commissions meeting and as listed below:

- **North Meridian Road Park, 5191 N. Meridian Road, Williamston** – pavilion construction project
- **Hillbrook Park, 1747 Lake Lansing Road, Haslett** - tennis court renovation project
- **Meridian Riverfront Park/Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road, Okemos** -pavilion construction project

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR GRANT FUNDING REQUESTS ON TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2015, 7 PM, TOWN HALL ROOM, MERIDIAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 5151 MARSH ROAD, OKEMOS, MI. FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS: PAVILION IN NORTH MERIDIAN ROAD PARK; TENNIS COURT RENOVATIONS AT HILLBROOK; AND A PAVILION IN MERIDIAN RIVERFRONT PARK/HARRIS NATURE CENTER. Voice vote. Motion passed.

d. Schedule interview meeting date for Central Park Master Plan RFQ

Chair Wilson reported five (5) proposals for the Central Park Master Plan were received and as briefly discussed during the work session; interviews will be scheduled for Friday, February 20 from 2-5 pm. Since there may be a quorum of Park Commissioners, a special meeting is being called.

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, CHAIR WILSON SECONDED, TO SCHEDULE A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PARK COMMISSION TO CONDUCT CENTRAL PARK MASTER PLAN RFQ FIRM INTERVIEWS ON

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20 FROM 2-5 PM IN THE TOWN HALL ROOM OF THE MERIDIAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING. Voice vote. Motion passed.

10. Unfinished Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

11. Other Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

12. Discussion Items

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

13. Final Comments

None

14. Announcements

- a. Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2015, Town Hall
- b. Farmers' Market: Saturdays; February 21 and March 7, 10 am-2 pm; Meridian Mall
- c. Family Weekend Winter Fun Events:
 - February 14: Meridian Youth Ice Fishing Derby
 - February 20, 21 & 22: Target Practice at MSU Demmer Center
 - February 22: Wildlife Identification: Reptiles at Harris Nature Center
 - February 28: Moonlight Ski and Shoe at Harris Nature Center
- d. 2nd Annual Meridian Township Snowman/Snow Sculpture Contest picture deadline, March 5
- e. Chinese New Year Celebration: Saturday, February 21; 2-6 pm in Meridian Mall

15. Public Remarks

None

16. Closed Session

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROPERTY CONSIDERATION.

Roll Call

AYES: Mark Stephens, Philip Deschaine, Todd Wilson, Melanie Jaramillo

NAYS: None

The Commission moved into closed session at 7:49 pm.

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO
SECONDED, TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.

Roll Call

AYES: Melanie Jaramillo, Philip Deschaine, Mark Stephens, Todd Wilson,

NAYS: None

The Commission returned to open session at 8:07 pm.

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, DESCHAIINE SECONDED, TO DIRECT
STAFF TO TAKE SUCH ACTION AS DISCUSSED DURING CLOSED
SESSION.

Roll Call

AYES: Melanie Jaramillo, Philip Deschaine, Mark Stephens, Todd Wilson,

NAYS: None

Motion passed.

17. Adjournment

COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO MOVED, COMMISSIONER DESCHAIINE
SECONDED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm