



## **CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN**

### **PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

**Meridian Service Center**

**2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, MI 48840**

**TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022 4:30 PM**

**PRESENT:** Chair, Mary Nardo-Farris; Vice Chair, Ami Van Antwerp; Commissioner, Mark Stephens; Commissioner, Mike McDonald  
**ABSENT:** Commissioner, Amanda Lick  
**STAFF:** LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation; Emma Campbell, Land Stewardship Coordinator; Bridget Cannon, Administrative Assistant

#### **1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Nardo-Farris called the meeting to order at **4:32 pm**.

#### **2. ROLL CALL**

Chair Nardo-Farris called the roll of the Commission.

All present other than Commissioner Lick. Commissioner Stephens arrived at 4:42 pm.

#### **3. PRESENTATIONS**

##### **A. Capital Youth Cycling Association**

Teresa DeLisle and Steve Rodgers, representing the Capital Youth Cycling Association, non-profit group, provided a summary of the club's summer bicycle program that meets at Eastgate and Burchfield Parks. The group has been tremendously popular with the area youth and registration sells out within minutes. The group maintains and develops various bike track features at Eastgate Park, with the assistance of Meridian Township Parks and Recreation staff. CYC is very appreciative of the support they have received from the Parks Department and were excited to present a generous donation check as a thank you for the trail maintenance and porta-jon facilities at the park. They request an additional water source to help maintain the track, an additional porta-jon, and additional signage. She then presented the Park Commission with a donation check in the amount of \$1,000 from the CYC Association.

Director Maisner remarked she is very appreciative of the support of the CYC and their sweat equity at Eastgate Park. She feels the group builds community. Unfortunately, an additional water source at the park would require a well to be drilled. There is no water line to the park. She can assist with an additional porta-jon. An additional porta-jon is scheduled to be delivered to Eastgate Park in June. Additional signage is also being looked at for the park.

Commissioners remarked how excited they are to have the CYC as part of our community programs and expressed their appreciation for the donation.

##### **B. Eagle Scout Project – Ethan Olds**

Ethan Olds, Haslett BSA Troop 97, proposed a Wetland Buffer installation project for Central

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Park South. Ethan, with the assistance of Emma Campbell, Land Stewardship Coordinator, will install native plants as a “wetland buffer” to filter the water runoff, provide habit for certain species, and reduce impacts of human disturbance. The project will help protect the greenspace at Central Park South and provide natural beauty to the park. He has been fundraising and has a goal of \$635 to fund the project. The Eagle Scout Project is slated to be complete June, 2022.

The commissioners were excited to hear Ethan’s enthusiasm and look forward to working with him.

#### 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Claudia Kerbawy, 1398 Hickory Island Drive, Haslett  
Susan Andrews, 6088 Columbia Street, Haslett

They stated that some residents are concerned about duck hunting on Lake Lansing. Duck hunting was observed in the fall of 2020 and again in fall of 2021. There is a small area greater than the 450 feet from homes near the south end of the lake that the hunters are utilizing to comply with the required isolation distance for hunting. Lake Lansing was established as a Wild Life Sanctuary in 1925. At one time, there were signs posted noting the Sanctuary Lake status, but signs have since been removed. Township police and the Michigan DNR said they cannot enforce without signs being posted to alert hunters that there is No Hunting. Residents have asked the DNR to re-post Sanctuary Lake/No Hunting signs. The DNR then asked for a review by the Attorney General’s Office. The AG’s guidance was to not re-post signs. However, the Sanctuary Lake status has not been revoked. The homeowner’s association is willing to raise funds for signage, if township is willing to deem as a park with no hunting with firearms.

Commissioners are requesting conversation with township police, attorney for further guidance with legality of hunting on Lake Lansing before making signage decisions. Director Maisner will follow up on this.

#### 5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Van Antwerp moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**.  
Seconded by Commissioner McDonald.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

#### 6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Van Antwerp moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 8, 2022 REGULAR MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Stephens.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

#### 7. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. The Power of Parks to Address Climate Change
- B. Letter to Local Horse Farms Regarding Trail Usage
- C. Resident complaint
- D. Meridian Conservation Corps Evaluability Assessment

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Commissioner Stephens moved **TO ACCEPT AND PLACE ON FILE THE LISTED ITEMS OF COMMUNICATION.** Seconded by Commissioner Van Antwerp.

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

### 8. ACTION ITEMS

**A. Eagle Scout Project by Ethan Olds** - Commissioner Stephens moved **TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT BY ETHAN OLDS OF DEVELOPING A NATURAL BUFFER AREA IN CENTRAL PARK SOUTH AND WORK UNDER THE DIRECTION AND ADVISEMENT OF EMMA CAMPBELL, STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR.** Seconded by Commissioner McDonald.

VOICE/HAND VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

### 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Roundtable Discussion on Various Topics

**A. Horses on Trails** – We have experienced numerous complaints over the years from park users and concerns from staff about horse damage and droppings left on the multi-use trails in Meridian Riverfront Park. Horses are allowed by Ordinance currently but posted trail advisories against use during wet weather conditions seem to be ignored by many. Letters were sent to adjacent horse farms on Meridian Road requesting that horse droppings need to be removed. A new horse farm owner has now begun to ride the trails of Meridian Riverfront Park with a horse and cart. We have received complaints from pedestrian users regarding safety concerns. The Land Preserves prohibit horses on trails currently. The Commissioners recommended placing new signage at affected trailhead areas to help deter usage. The next step would be to amend the existing ordinance.

**B. Inclusive Playground** – As we look forward to the 2023 budget process, an inclusive playground was identified need in the Parks and Recreation Masterplan 2022-2027 process. Visit this link for a great article on this topic: <https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/playgrounds-designed-with-accessibility-in-mind-make-play-fun-for-every-kid>. The Commissioners discussed the importance of this type of amenity and are interested in expanding discussions on location and amenities. Staff will return with a recommendation at a future meeting.

**C. Capital Improvement Program** – The Meridian Township Budget Process begins in June and the CIP is part of this process. Now is the time for its annual review for planning and implementation scheduling for the next six years. The Commissioners were provided with the current plan in their meeting packet for review. Vice-Chair Van Antwerp suggested this item be placed on the next agenda to facilitate a full discussion of future project planning. This item will appear again on the June 14, 2022 Regular meeting agenda.

**D. Marshall Park Proposed Wetland Enhancement Project** – Marshall Park, located adjacent to Lake Lansing, is wet and soggy for most of the year, which makes it difficult to maintain. This area used to be utilized as a practice soccer field. Over the years, had become too wet. Stewardship Coordinator, Emma Campbell is proposing a project to plant wetland plants that are supported by these conditions. Volunteer opportunities will be created with this project. Prior to implementation, Director Maisner suggested that a meeting be conducted with nearby neighbors to explain the project and to enlist volunteers. Our preliminary discussions with a

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few neighbors have been favorable. This project will proceed in the fall.

### 10. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. **Floating Islands** for Central Park South – In an effort to improve water quality in Central Park South pond, 5 islands (islands are 7.5 x 10') have been ordered for arrival in May. Each island will be planted with 54 native wetland plants to facilitate the filtration process. The Islands are scheduled to arrive in May. Volunteers will help plant in early June..
2. **Consumers Energy Ferguson Park bench donation** – this bench, made from recycled milk jugs was donated to the township in exchange for an easement in Wonch Park as part of the bridge replacement program on Okemos Road.
3. **Michigan Municipal League Community Excellence Award** for Marketplace on the Green – submitting project for consideration - due May 13.
4. **Trail Map** – Kati is getting a price for embellishment to the map from the trail map co that she works with. Jane will complete order once we consider the additional cost.
5. **5280 Okemos Rd/Nancy Moore Park Acquisition** – Demolition of the house took place the week of May 2, 2022. Site restoration is underway.
6. The Engineering Department is developing a plan for creating **recycling drop off area** off the Nancy Moore Park entry driveway adjacent to the Service Center.
7. **Hillbrook Park** – IDC owes us 40 trees after drain work in park. Some have been installed, more are coming this spring. The trees will be planted along Montebello Ave and along the edge of the woods (Dogwood, Spicebush, High Bush Cranberry, Winterberry, Sugar Maple, Red Maple, Serviceberry, Eastern Redbud, Flowering Dogwood, Red Oak, Swamp White Oak, Bur Oak, Sycamore, Tulip Tree, Basswood)
8. **Stewardship**
  - Vernal Pool Patrol launched with 12 new volunteer monitors. (two training days were held)
  - Earth Day Clean-up was held on April 22 where 18 volunteers picked up 250lbs of trash along Central Park Drive
  - Wetland Trash Clean-up took place at Central Meridian Uplands. Approximately 1,000lbs of trash removed with 20 volunteers.
  - Conducted first annual staff invasive species field training 8 stewardship workdays and/or educational opportunities conducted including wetland walks, stewardship Saturdays, Trailblazers workday, weekend warriors with 74 participants
9. **Recreation**
  - Haslett Prom at Marketplace - success
  - Flashlight Easter Egg hunt at Nancy Moore Park - 400 participants 50 volunteers
  - Mom to Mom sale-46 vendors May 1<sup>st</sup> – success!
  - 756 soccer players
  - 500 Baseball/Softball/T-ball players
  - 13 classes of Sporties for Shorties are full starting in June
  - Adult sports registration is open

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- Haslett and Okemos Baseball clubs are using Towner and Hartrick fields
- Haslett and Okemos Soccer clubs are using Towner-Hartrick-North Meridian-Nancy Moore fields
- Playmakers running club has 28 participants – Nancy Moore Park
- Planning underway for the **2022 Heritage Festival** on Saturday, October 1.

10. **Farmers Market** - **First day of Spring season was Saturday, May 7. 47 vendors with 2,400 visitors!**

11. **Celebrate Meridian** – Saturday, June 25, 2022 at Central Park and Marketplace on the Green

### 12. Park Maintenance

- Upgraded the pole barn at the Okemos Road property with a new roof and fixed the doors
- Installed one windscreen at Marketplace for demonstration purposes. More will be ordered this summer.
- Successful Love-a-Park Day with 20 volunteers in 4 parks
- Completed laying the pavers around the Gazebo at Historical Village
- All soccer fields prepped
- Baseball/softball fields groomed and ready
- All Park restrooms are open (except for Wonch and Ferguson) closed for the year.

### 13. Harris Nature Center:

- Annie's Big Nature Lesson in March for the entire month of April (5 schools, 8 classes, 189 students)
- MSU Science Festival Virtual Wildlife Programs: 11 classes, 264 students
- All staff is hired for Summer Camp
- Getting ready to pave the trail to the new observation deck this spring
- Planning for 25th Anniversary Event on July 23rd
- Annual Native Plants Sale, Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> \$8,000 gross sales
- Wildflower Wednesdays, all month long in May at 1 pm
- HNCF is interested in updated its By-Laws and Partnership Agreement. I will share their suggestions as soon as they are confirmed. The Park Commission will need to vote in favor of the amendments in order to approve.

### 11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

### 12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Stewardship chat with Emma Campbell, Land Stewardship Coordinator

- Trash removal (20+ tires from Central Meridian Upland)
- Invasive removal – garlic mustard and Dame's Rocket
- Planting of natives will start soon.
- Over 45 new MCC members this year.
- Wetland Walks have been great education opportunities for the public.

### 13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Nardo-Farris adjourned the meeting at 6:50 pm.

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The next scheduled meeting is **June 14, 2022** at the Meridian Service Center, 4:30 pm.

**14. SITE VISIT – 5280 OKEMOS ROAD** – Due to timing, the site visit was canceled for a date in the near future.