



**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Central Fire Station
5000 Okemos Road, Okemos, MI 48864
TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2023 4:30 PM**

PRESENT: Chair, Mary Nardo Farris; Vice Chair, Ami Van Antwerp; Commissioner, Amanda Lick; Commissioner, Mark Stephens; Commissioner, Mike McDonald
ABSENT: None
STAFF: LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation; 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 park commissioners present.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Lick moved **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**. Seconded by Commissioner Stephens.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

NONE

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner McDonald moved **TO APPROVE THE MAY 9, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED**. Seconded by Commissioner Lick.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

NONE

7. ACTION ITEMS

NONE

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Commissioners decided to move Director's Report up to Item 8. and move Discussion Items to Agenda Item 10.

A special thank you to the Meridian Community Band for their performance in the sun and heat on Saturday, June 24. Also, a thank you to the Meridian Historical Village for opening to the public for tours and for their sold out ice cream social at the Celebrate Meridian Festival.

Director Maisner announces her retirement effective January 3, 2024. She will stay on to consult if needed, through June, 2024. The position will be open to both internal and external candidates. Director Maisner has created a great foundation for the Parks and Recreation Department over the last 24 years of service to our community. She wishes the new director to continue the great relationship that has been established between the Township Board and the Park Commission.

The Saturday Farmers' Market and the Summer Concert Series, in conjunction with the Wednesday Farmers' Market, continue to be very successful and the concert series has really grown in popularity this summer.

The Senior Center Task Force is currently on hold. They have made good foundational groundwork, but the funding aspect still is in question.

Snell Towar Recreation Center re-open to the public July, 2024. Prior to this opening, the Center had been closed for five years due to limited staffing. The goal of the reopened Center is to provide programming and activities for residents in Meridian Township. The calendar of events for the recreation center is found on both Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Facebook and Instagram.

A new roof was put on the Barnes House and the Gretenberger Farm House in the historical village recently. New electrical was also put in the barn.

Upcoming event at Marketplace on the Green – Country Night at Marketplace
Saturday, July 15 – 7:00 – 10:00 pm
Upcoming singer/songwriter Jessey Adams to perform

9. LAND PRESERVATION REPORT – Commissioner Stephens

Possible land acquisition presented to Township Board this evening for final decision.

10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2024 Budget Request

Director Maisner completed the draft budget request for 2024 with the exception of capital improvements. The list below are suggestions for Park Commission consideration:

2024 Proposed Projects for Consideration:

Central Park Pavilion Replacement

The Park Commission budgeted \$100,000 in 2023 to replace the pavilion in Central Park. Our original plan was to utilize the existing pad, demo the structure and construct a new pavilion over the pad. After further review of the project, there is much more that needs to be done to prepare

the site for construction including: demolition of restroom building, replacing pumps in the lift station that serves the Historical Village, grading to improve site drainage, sidewalk replacement, landscaping, electrical and water service, retractable windscreens and pavilion install. The anticipated project cost is \$500,000. Central Park serves as the front yard of our Township Hall and welcomes many youth sports families utilizing the soccer field, pavilion users, visitors to the Historical Village and trail users as well. This site sets the tone for what residents and visitors can expect with the quality of our park system. -- \$400,000

Accessible Canoe and Kayak Launches at Harris Nature Center and Wonch Park

In collaboration with our Okemos/Haslett Rotary Club, Williamston, and Williamstown Township Rotary Clubs, they are funding kiosks along the Red Cedar River with one at HNC and another at Wonch. I met with a representative from E-Z Dock Systems at each site to determine suitability. He estimates the cost installed for each site at \$100,000. It is anticipated that our Rotary Club will fund half of the cost. \$50,000 - \$100,000 should be included in the 2024 budget request.

We are also working on applying to become a recognized Water Trail with the MDNR. Representative Brixie has said we would also be awarded \$50,000 for improvements if we receive this designation.

Design of MSU-LL Trail Hub/Nancy Moore Park Entrance Project

In 2022, the Park Commission acquired, with assistance from the MNRTF, a 3.5-acre parcel on Okemos Road adjacent to Nancy Moore Park. The now-vacant land is being maintained by our maintenance staff until designs and plans are created and approved. No work toward this project has been started at this time, therefore, there is no need to allocate funds for this in 2024.

New Park Signs Phase III

A new signage project began in 2022 with new signs at the Township Hall, Central Park South, Marketplace on the Green and Towner Road Park. In 2023, signs have been ordered and will be installed at the following locations: Hartrick Park, Harris Nature Center, Wonch Park, Ferguson Park Hillbrook Park, Brattin Woods Park, Red Cedar Natural Area, and Orlando Park. More signs are needed to complete the overall project. -- \$100,000

Remove dirt hill from Marketplace on the Green

During construction, dirt from the pavilion development area was relocated to the west side of the property. Marketplace on the Green has proven to be an amenity for community enjoyment. . This site offers existing parking, restrooms and playground. A plan should be created for future development of this site with amenities such as two or three small pavilions, a sidewalk, and a fountain with benches, trees and other landscaping. The fountain can be flat with water spouts for people to engage with on hot days. -- \$30,000 (dirt removal)

The Commissioners discussed all these proposed projects at length as approximately \$400,000 is available from annual tax revenue for capital improvements. Once all the budget figures for staffing, benefits, and other fixed costs are confirmed for 2024, Staff will return with additional information for further discussion at the August meeting.

B. Chief David Hall Recognition

Former Chief of Police, Dave Hall passed away on June 18, 2023 at the age of 70. He led our Police Department until his retirement in 2018 and managed his department with heart and honor. He will always be remembered for his kindness and empathy towards others. Commissioner Lick suggested a memorial garden for former Chief David Hall in the township.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

NONE

12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

NONE

13. ADJOURNMENT - Chair Nardo-Farris adjourned the meeting at 5:51 pm.

The next scheduled meeting is **August 8, 2023** at Central Fire Station, 4:30 pm.