

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014  
6 PM – MERIDIAN SERVICE CENTER

Members Present: Julie Brixie (left at 8 pm), Roland Harmes, James Kielbaso, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Margo Smith, Mark Stephens

Members Absent: Frank Hatfield

Staff: Land and Management Coordinator Jane Greenway; Administrative Assistant II Robin Faust

Others: None

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Kielbaso called the meeting to order at 6 pm. Chair Kielbaso acknowledged the resignation of Steven Webster, asked staff to draft a resolution of appreciation for former Member Webster.

2. Welcome new member, Roland Harmes

Board Members introduced themselves to new member Roland Harmes. Board Member Harmes offered a background history (see minute book).

3. Approve Agenda

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER RUSCH SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA AS PRESENTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

4. Public Remarks

None

5. Approve Minutes for February 12, 2014

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER MAYES SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 12, 2014 MINUTES AS SUBMITTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

6. Communications

- Updated Board Member List
- From: Steven Webster, RE: email correspondence of resignation from the Land Preservation Advisory Board

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE SECONDED, TO ACCEPT AND PLACE THE ITEMS OF COMMUNICATION ON FILE. Voice vote. Motion passed.

7. Presentations

None

8. Old Business

None

9. New Business

- a. Providing funds for public transportation for stewardship project at Davis/Foster Preserve

Coordinator Greenway reported 100 students from Murphy Elementary School in Haslett planted 250 white pine seedlings at the Davis/Foster Preserve within the open area along the east side of Van Atta road. The students learned the fundamentals of tree planting, participated in bird watching and identification, wrote in their journals and worked on “tree math”. The students greatly benefited from their learning experience in nature and the Township benefited by their hard work. Since this project was funded through a Grand Learning Network grant to the schools, Coordinator Greenway suggested the Land Preservation Advisory Board cover the minimal costs for this project thereby allowing the grant funds to be used for another project within the Township.

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER SMITH SECONDED THAT THE LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO \$500 OF MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF COVERING THE COSTS OF 250 WHITE PINE TREES AND BUS TRANSPORTATION FOR STUDENTS IN THE HASLETT SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE PURPOSE OF A TREE PLANTING PROJECT AT THE DAVIS/FOSTER PRESERVE ON APRIL 23, 2014.

Roll Call:

AYES: Julie Brixie, Margo Smith, Mark Stephens, Roland Harmes, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Jim Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The motion passed.

b. Rezoning classification for Land Preserves

Coordinator Greenway reported the memorandum outlining the concerns by the Land Preservation Advisory Board at their February 12 meeting to the Planning Commission is included in the meeting packet.

Board Member Brixie reported at the recent meeting of the Township Board, they initiated a down zoning of the adjoining land preserve to Residential with 100' setback and this same type of down zoning request could be initiated for the other land preserves.

Discussion:

- Should the land preserves have their own zoning which could result in withdrawal of residents supporting future land preserve millage requests
- Future Land Use Map shows the Fedewa parcel as residential although the Township Board rezoned it to commercial
- Concerned with rezoning the land preserve after a neighboring parcel receives an up zoning/rezoning request
- Question using the lowest zoning to get the largest setback requirements for land preserves
- Why is this being done after the fact
- Asked staff to send a communication that the Land Preservation Advisory Board would like to discuss setbacks for the Fedewa parcel and all other land preserve parcels
- Questioned leaving the land preserves in the zoning they were in when purchased
- Voiced concern with encroachments on other land preserves as well as setback issues
- We have more encroachment problems with the residentially zoning land preserves than the ones zoned commercial
- Do we want to fence a land preserve that would potentially disturb a wildlife corridor
- Mr. Fedewa talked about developing the site as retail or with climate controlled storage but did not commit to the type of development
- Since the Planning Commission has initiated the rezoning request, have staff send a memo stated the Land Preservation Advisory Board would like to meet to discuss this request because the LPA Board is neutral but may have concerns with specific land uses; any rezoning has impact on its neighbors and this action would not be the action of a good neighbor because it could limit land uses and development options for said neighbor
- Thought the current policy was not to initiate a rezoning unless the whole area is being rezoned

c. Lake Lansing North – Prescribed Burn

Coordinator Greenway summarized the prescribed burn project for the Lake Lansing North Preserve from 2011 to present (see minute book) as follows:

- In December 2011, the Land Preservation Advisory Board approved up to \$15,000 for the prescribed burn project, construction of four exclosures, educational interpretive signage and presentations on the project.
- To date, \$9,989.26 has been spent leaving a balance of \$5010.74.
- With the cost of the second burn in April 2014, the total spent to date will be over by \$1,839.26 – this does not include the proposed invoice of approximately \$2,000 from Meridian Township Fire Department)

COMMISSIONER SMITH MOVED, COMMISSIONER BRIXIE SECONDED, THAT THE LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO \$5,000 OF MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING THE 2014 PRESCRIBED BURN THAT WAS CONDUCTED AT THE LAKE LANSING NORTH PARK.

Discussion:

- Who is responsible for the invoices (Friends of Ingham County Parks)
- Why is our Fire Department charging us (It is part of the permit process and since Fire Department staff is required to be on site, they are not available to response to a fire in another area of the Township while the control burn is conducted)
- Are we burning every year because it seems costly and question if it is worth it (this is a restoration effort and two burns are required to evaluate the project)
- FRIENDLY AMENDMENT WAS OFFERED TO INCLUDE THE WORD “ADDITIONAL” BEFORE THE WORD “EXPENDITURE” AND TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT FROM \$5,000 TO \$3,000. The friendly amendment was accepted by the maker and supporter of the motion
- Staff was asked to speak with Township Manager Walsh about the proposed invoice from the Fire Department and asked to have it waived since it was so high for the first burn

AMENDED MOTION:

THAT THE LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE OF UP TO 3,000 OF MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING THE 2014 PRESCRIBED BURN THAT WAS CONDUCTED AT THE LAKE LANSING NORTH PARK

Roll Call

AYES: Julie Brixie, Margo Smith, Mark Stephens, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Jim Kielbaso

NAYS: None  
ABSTAINED: Roland Harmes

The motion passed.

d. Support for Northwest Land Preserve Clean-up

Coordinator Greenway reported former LPAB member Dave Caszatt and other neighborhood volunteers have been working for nearly ten years to help maintain the ecological health of the Northwest Land Preserve. Staff is recommending the LPA Board provide funding for a small “appreciation” pizza party for the volunteers.

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER SMITH SECONDED THAT THE LAND PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO \$80 OF MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF FEEDING HUNGRY VOLUNTEERS AFTER THEY HAVE HELPED THE TOWNSHP BY CONDUCTING A SPRING CLEAN-UP AT THE NORTHWEST LAND PRESERVE ON MAY 17, 2014.

Discussion:

- This is the first major reforestry project of the Land Preservation Advisory Board
- Have planted over 2,500 trees and 1,000 hard woods and this area will include a deer fence enclosure

Roll Call:

AYES: Julie Brixie, Margo Smith, Mark Stephens, Roland Harmes, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Jim Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The motion passed.

e. Support for US Fish and Wildlife Habitat Development Agreement at Southwest Meridian Uplands Preserve

Coordinator Greenway reported on the receipt of the \$1,400 grant from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a grassland habitat at the Southwest Meridian Uplands Preserve. This project consists of establishing seven (7) acres of native grass and wildflower habitat on ground that is currently in a fallow state. US Fish and Wildlife will be responsible for coordinating site preparation activities and the Township will be responsible for developing, paying and planting for the seed mix composition. The Township will also be responsible for controlling woody growth in the project area as part of the 10 year project agreement.

BOARD MEMBER MAYES MOVED, BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE SECONDED, THAT THE LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO \$4,500 OF MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF COVERING THE COSTS OF PURCHASING SEED AND PLANTING SEVEN ACRES OF NATIVE GRASSES AND FORBS AS PART OF A UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE GRANT.

Roll Call:

AYES: Robert Rusch, Jon Mayes, Roland Harmes, Mark Stephens, Margo Smith, Julie Brixie, Jim Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The motion passed.

10. Land Management Coordinator Report
  - a. Lake Lansing North Park
    - Prescribed burn – discussed earlier in the meeting
  - b. Davis/Foster Land Preserve
    - Prescribed burn – conducted in the spring
    - Site restoration – will have completed after the well issue is resolved
    - Henslow's sparrow – returned to the area and were not affected by the prescribed burn
    - Well abandonment /utilization – staff is working on this project with the contractor and State of Michigan
    - Grand Learning Network project with Murphy Elementary – discussed earlier in the meeting
    - Staff will be addressing issue about vandalism and making the red barn more secure
    - Suggested recycling the lights in the barn
  - c. Red Cedar Glen
    - Sign update – will be installed soon
    - Final walk of site scheduled for next week Wednesday
  - d. Southwest Meridian Uplands Land Preserve
    - Update on Fish and Wildlife Grant – discussed earlier in the meeting; will start project this spring.
  - e. Northwest Land Preserve
    - Naturalist Sanchez and volunteers planted 150 deciduous tree and constructed and installed a deer enclosure

- f. 2014 invasive treatment calendar
  - FYI for Board Members
- g. Green Road Acquisition Update
  - Included in the meeting packet is the motion and resolution for the Township Board's approval to authorize the grant agreement acceptance for the Green Road Land Preserve acquisition project for the next meeting.
- h. Sower Woods sign
  - Showed the Board Members the sign; it was noted the titled under the garter snake was incorrect; staff will correct it
  - The family has approved the sign
  - The sign was part of the sale agreement
- i. Red Cedar Water Trail
  - Staff is working on a grant and there will be additional points for the grant for promoting use of waterways
  - This trail is from Williamston to the Campus
- j. Financial Status Update
  - Staff asked to tabled this item for the next scheduled meeting

11. Closed Session

BOARD MEMBER KIELBASO MOVED, BOARD MEMBER SMITH SECONDED, TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS LAND ACQUISITION ISSUE.

Roll Call:

AYES: Robert Rusch, Jon Mayes, Roland Harmes, Mark Stephens, Margo Smith,  
Julie Brixie, Jim Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The Land Preservation Advisory Board entered closed session at 7:45 pm:  
BOARD MEMBER SMITH MOVED, BOARD MEMBER RUSCH SECONDED,  
TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.

Roll Call:

AYES: Robert Rusch, Jon Mayes, Roland Harmes, Mark Stephens, Margo Smith,  
Julie Brixie, Jim Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The Land Preservation Advisory Board returned to open session at 7:56 pm.

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE SECONDED, TO TAKE SUCH ACTION AS WAS DISCUSSED DURING CLOSED SESSION. Voice vote. Motion passed.

12. Other

Board Member Stephens spoke about the Park Commission's project to create a buffer area including a monarch butterfly way station along the Central Park pond bank area. He would like to have a discussion about the Land Preservation Advisory Board joining the Park Commission on the development of this project which will include use of wildflower seeds from other projects, will involve the school classes, and Meridian Garden Club. The estimated project cost is \$3,000 and each school classroom could receive a grant of up to \$400 for each classroom. He will have a formal type presentation for the next meeting.

13. Public Remarks

None

14. Adjournment

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER SMITH SECONDED, TO CLOSE THE MEETING.

The meeting closed at 8:08 pm.