

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2014

PRESENT: Commissioners: Aronoff, Banas, Jaramillo, Stephens, Wilson
Staff: Parks and Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner; Parks & Recreation
Administrative Assistant II Robin Faust

ABSENT: None

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

2. Roll Call

Chair Wilson called the roll and the following members were present: Marilyn Aronoff, Teri Banas, Melanie Jaramillo, Mark Stephens and Todd Wilson.

3. Approval of Agenda

Remove New Business #11b, Support – HNC Foundation Play Area Grant. This item will be on the next meeting agenda.

COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO MOVED, COMMISSIONER ARONOFF SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

4. Public Comment

None

5. Presentations

None

6. Commissioner Reports and Comments

Chair Wilson stated he attended the Winter Wonderland event at the Harris Nature Center that was attended by over 480 visitors and heard the silent auction was a success.

7. Approval of Minutes

- a. January 14, 2014 Work Session Meeting Minutes – no correction
- b. January 14, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes – page 6, change spelling to “Crego Park”

- c. February 4, 2014 Special Meeting Minutes – page 2, item #4, correct totals under 2014 General Fund to \$232,500 and Grant to \$342,500; page 2, item #5, change votes to: Towner Road Park – 5 votes; Central Park redevelopment – 5 votes; Legg park development – 4 votes; Playground improvements for all parks – 3 votes.

COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO MOVED, COMMISSIONER ARONOFF SECONDED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 14, 2014 WORK SESSION MINUTES AS PRESENTED AND THE JANUARY 14, 2014 REGULAR MEETING AND FEBRUARY 4, 2014 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES AS CORRECTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

8. Communications

A. Items to/from the Public

1. To: Clerk Dreyfus; RE: 2014 Park Commission Chair/Vice Chair Election Results
2. To: Planning Commission; RE: Special Use Permit #13171 (Aldi/Eyde)
3. To: Residents; RE: Land Preservation Advisory Board allowing bicycle access through Red Cedar Glen Land Preserve
4. To: Jane Greenway; From: Julie Johnston, Michigan Search and Rescue; RE: dog training in Central Park South

B. Commission Information

1. February Calendar of Events for Parks & Recreation
2. Parks & Recreation Department Monthly Report – January
3. Towne Courier: **Dec 8:** Terrific tree planting sustains land preserve; Drive Thru Santa; **Jan 2:** Historic bridge renewal; **Jan 26:** Family Winter Sports events this weekend, Meridian Farmers Winter Market, Meridian's deer harvest grows nearly 30 percent, Chipmunk Story Time at HNC at Feb 13, Chinese New Year celebration Feb 1
4. Kids' World News – January 2013 issues; Meridian Township Parks & Recreation Family Winter Sports Weekend
5. 2013 Park Accomplishments

C. Staff Inquiries/Response – None

Director Maisner distributed a copy of the Parks and Recreation Department's portion of the Township's Annual Report to the Commissioners.

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

9. Director's Report

Van Atta Road Bridge Replacement – Van Atta Road is closed now through June. Access to the Nature Center is from the south from Jolly Road. With the

new bridge construction, there will also be the construction of a canoe landing adjacent to the Harris Nature fire pit area.

Projects we are working on include:

- **Legg Park:** working on entry drive paving project
- **Newton Road Park:** working with Planning Department on the parking lot construction; construct in the spring
- **Wonch Park:** Township was awarded a MNRTF Grant to construct a paved loop trail; working on construction plans with Engineering Department; plan to construct this summer.
- **Maps:** Staff is working on updating park trail maps and including them on the Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Master Plan. The end goal is to create a user friendly/interactive map app for smart phones.
- **Family Fun Guide:** This next issue will cover programs and activities from March through December 2014. The following issue will become an annual publication coming out in January 2015. We plan to make greater use of target marketing, social media and utilize other Township communication resources as part of an effective marketing plan. The Family Fun Guide has become just as much a Township Resource Guide and a Parks and Recreation promotional brochure. This annual publication will continue to have a chronological listing of programs and events for easy reference and can be utilized by real estate companies in marketing our community.
- **Wonch Park:** writing a grant application for construction a new pavilion. The project cost is \$250,000 with a local commitment of \$62,500. The project will consist of a pavilion, handicap accessible tables, grills and shade trees. The application is due April 1.
- **Annual Report:** Staff just completed the department's portion of the 2013 annual report and a copy was distributed to the Commissioners. The Township's annual report will be available later this month. Director Maisner reported new this year was the inclusion of the "economic impact" of youth and adult sports in our community. This information was derived from survey responses on additional recreation spending from program participants. A total of 3,005 youth and adult sports participants created and estimated \$310,493 of additional commerce in our community in 2013. The 737 Williamston participants spent an additional \$126,095 on things such as equipment, gas, food and pre and post-game activities. There is also a list of all partnering individuals, groups, organizations and businesses who contributed to many successful programs and events in 2013. Also noted are the total number of volunteers in our parks and recreation programs last year. A total of 1,052 people volunteered 33,983 hours which had a value of \$701,069. Many thanks to our volunteers.
- **Ski and Snow Shoe Rental** is available at the Harris Nature Center during the day and weekend
- **Family Winter Sports Weekend Recap:**
 - 480 attended 15th Annual Winter Wonderland at Harris Nature Center
 - 60 attended Family Moonlight Sledding
 - 160 attended Meridian Bowls
 - 100 attended Meridian Swims

198 participated in the 7th Annual Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk
92 attended Meridian Target Practice Opportunities at Demmer Center

1,090 participants were engaged in recreation over the weekend

Curling at Central Park South was canceled due to the extreme cold.

No indoor ice skating this year due to availability

- **Joint Meeting:** Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at 6 p.m.
- **February 15:**
 - ✓ Farmers' Market at Meridian Mall; 10 am – 2 pm
 - ✓ Ice Fishing Derby at Central Park South Pond; 9 am-noon; kids free awards dicks sporting goods and Family Moonlight Sledding
 - ✓ Family Moonlight Sledding at North Meridian Road Park; 6-8:30 pm
- February 28:
 - ✓ Snowman/Snow Sculpture Contest Deadline; entries have been posted on facebook
 - ✓ Condolences to Senior Park Naturalist Kit Rich on the passing of her father
 - ✓ Administrative Assistant Robin Faust's birthday is on Valentine's Day

10. Unfinished Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

11. New Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. **Wonch Park Grant** – Set Public Hearing Date

Director Maisner stated

- The grant will include the following proposed improvements: New pavilion, 4- deciduous trees, electricity, water, and 2- universally accessible grills and 3-handicapped accessible picnic tables
- Estimated Project Cost: \$250,000
- Local Match from General Fund 25% \$62,500
- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) request 75% \$187,500
- March 11, 2014 – Hold Public Hearing
- March 11, 2014 – Park Commission may take action on resolution of support for the grant application
- March 18, 2014 – Township Board action for grant submission
- April 1, 2014 - Application Deadline
- The Township was awarded the paved loop trail for this site and construction is proposed to begin this summer
- The original pavilion was constructed by the Okemos/Haslett Kiwanis Club in 1979 and picnic participants have asked for electricity, water and better access to the pavilion
- A notice of public hearing will appear in the Towne Courier and letters will be sent to Wonch Park neighbors

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING ON TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2014 TO SOLICIT PUBLIC INPUT ON THE SUBMISSION OF A GRANT TO THE MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO WONCH PARK WHICH INCLUDES A PAVILION, UTILITIES, UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE GRILLS AND PICNIC TABLES.

Roll Call:

AYES: Melanie Jaramillo, Todd Wilson, Teri Banas, Marilyn Aronoff, Mark Stephens

NAYS: None

Motion passed

b. Support – HNC Foundation Play Area Grant

This item deleted from agenda.

c. ICDC Controlled Burn Request – Towar Park Rain Gardens

Director Maisner reported the Ingham County Drain Commissioners Office is requesting once again to conduct a controlled burn in the rain gardens in Towar Park. Controlled burning in those areas has been done on an annual basis since 2010. They are proposing the same program once again. They work in conjunction with our Fire Department and a licensed contractor who performed the burn last year and will be notifying residents.

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FROM THE INGHAM COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONERS OFFICE TO CONDUCT CONTROLLED BURNING IN THE RAIN GARDENS NEAR SNELL-TOWAR RECREATION CENTER AS AN EFFECTIVE WEED CONTROL MEASURE IN 2014. THE ICDC IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING REQUIRED PERMITS AND FOR FOLLOWING STANDARD SAFETY MEASURES AND WILL INFORM THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT OF THE EXACT DATE AND TIME OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY. Voice vote. Motion passed.

Commissioners asked to be notified of the burn date.

12. Other Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

13. Discussion Items

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Park Millage Ballot Proposal

Director Maisner offered the following history and summary of the Park Millage Ballot proposal:

- Residents currently pay a .317 millage to support the Meridian Township Park System. This amount has not increased since the millage was first supported by voters in 1984.
- The Park system has grown from 325 acres in 1984 to 904 acres today.
- On April 16, 2013, the Meridian Township Board unanimously approved placing a ballot proposal before voters on August 5, 2014 requesting a new park millage consisting of **2/3rds mill (\$0.6667 on each \$1000 of taxable value)** to fund activities that maintain and enhance community parks.
- **August 5, 2014 general election ballot** It would raise approximately \$1,042,000 to support necessary park improvements, renovation projects, maintenance, and operations
- The proposed millage would be levied for a period of twelve **(12) years, 2014 through 2025 inclusive**
- If approved, the owner of a home with a taxable **value of \$100,000 would pay \$66.67 per year** in property taxes for the next twelve (12) years.
- If approved, the existing .317 park millage would sunset in 2016 and not be requested for renewal.
- A total of over \$8,000,000 of park projects and improvements have been identified in the Capital Improvements and other necessary repairs.
- If approved, an estimated \$6,000,000 will be available for park development and improvement projects in the next twelve years.
- Planning and research is included in the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Capital Improvements Program.

Commissioner Stephens asked for volunteers to assist with the Park Millage Campaign. There are over 900 acres we are trying to manage with the same millage amount since 1984.

Commissioner Aronoff stated additional information on the proposal will be forthcoming and Commissioners will be visiting with the local organizations and community groups. The Commissioners will be asking for your support for this millage proposal and to join us in this campaign.

Director Maisner stated all of the supporting documents will be on the website. The Township will still be looking to leverage the Park Millage dollars through volunteers, donations and grants. Community engagement is important and this is a modest request.

Chair Wilson stated this request is not only for development but to also supplement ongoing and future maintenance issues. Our park system has grown since the last millage renewal with additional facilities and amenities that need attention. The Commission and staff have kept mindful of what is existing along with adding new as needed.

Commissioner Stephens stated this is a good investment of an additional \$67 per household in the Township and when supporting parks you are expanding your own "backyard".

14. Final Comments

Commissioner Stephens stated he attended the Ingham County Parks meeting where they awarded John Hessey with their Volunteer of the Year award. Mr. Hessey developed and runs the Dr. Bill Earl program in Ingham County Parks and is a member of the Mid-Michigan Salmon and Steelhead Fisherman's Program.

15. Announcements

- a. Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 Town Hall
- b. Joint Meeting of the Boards and Commissions Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2014, 6 pm, Town Hall
- c. Farmers' Market – J C Penney Corridor of Meridian Mall, Saturday, February 15 and March 1 from 10 am-2 pm
- d. Van Atta Road Closed from Grand River south to bridge, February 5 – May
- e. Ice Fishing Derby – Central Park Pond; 9 am – noon; Free for children
- f. Moonlight Sledding – North Meridian Road Park; 6 - 8:30 pm; Free
- g. Snow Sculpture/Snowman contest deadline is February 28
- h. Successful Winter Kickball Tournament on February 8 in Nancy Moore Park

16. Public Remarks

None

17. Closed Session

None

18. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.