

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014  
6 PM – MERIDIAN SERVICE CENTER

Members Present: Julie Brixie, Frank Hatfield, James Kielbaso, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Margo Smith, Mark Stephens (arrived at 7:30 pm)

Members Absent: Steve Webster

Staff: Land and Management Coordinator Jane Greenway; Parks and Recreation Department Secretary Robin Faust; Park Naturalist Nick Sanchez

Others: Pat Witte, Parks Manager II, Ingham County Parks

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Kielbaso called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

2. Approve Agenda

Remove Agenda Item #8 c, Non-motorized vehicle use on land preserves; renumbering remaining items under #8.

BOARD MEMBER HATFIELD MOVED, BOARD MEMBER MAYES SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

3. Public Remarks

None

4. Approve Minutes for November 14, 2013

- Page 2, item #7a, first bullet, third line, replace word “is” with “was”
- Page 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, removed “d” from “Brixie”
- Page 4, 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, remove “\*” in the first line
- Page 5, last bullet to read “A parent encouraged signage because if a sign is up stating not to go in, then we cannot go in”
- Page 7 and page 8, change “John” to “Jon Mayes”
- Page 7, item #9d, change “4” to “\$”

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER MAYES SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 14, 2013 MINUTES AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

5. Communications

- From: Consumers Energy; RE: line clearing work on parcels in Meridian Township
- From: Gail Oranchak AICP, Principal Planner; RE: Rezoning #14030 (Fedewa)

Board Member Brixie distributed additional information on Rezoning #14030 and stated that since the neighboring parcel is a land preserve and the rezoning request is from residential to commercial, she asked if the LPAB would want to submit a communication on the request. She stated the applicant had previously submitted a rezoning request in 2004 and received approval to construct a mixed use development of one or two story office building and eight (8) one or two-story condominiums in two (2) buildings. The applicant is now asking for a commercial rezoning. The site shares wetland areas with the land preserve, located along M-78. When asked their options, Coordinator Greenway replied the LPAB could send their concerns to the Planning Department and that it would be considered during review of the rezoning request.

Discussion:

- Site is adjacent to a busy highway and there is commercial zoning on the Bath Township side and just down the road
- The houses on the site were previously rentals
- The setbacks for the commercial designation are not very wide
- What impacts could be expected to the wetlands from a commercial development; water amount and quality; water going in and out of wetland
- If approved as commercial, owner could develop up to a three story building
- Need to request the largest buffer possible
- Because the land preserve is near a possible zoning of commercial, worried about adequate buffering between the parcels (because the land preserve is also zoned commercial)
- Concerned about potential encroachment and impact to the wetlands and upland areas
- Need to have only a neutral impact to the wetlands at a minimum; some uses in commercial such as auto wash, gas station, restaurant, drive-thorough, etc., could cause problems
- Signage and visibility; concerned with tree removal and light pollution
- Would like to offer future comments if receive approval of rezoning request, before any construction begins on the site

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER SMITH SECONDED, TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO ADD NEW AGENDA ITEM #8 D, REZONING #14030 (FEDEWA). Voice vote. Motion passed.

6. Presentations

None

7. Old Business

a. Lake Lansing North – 2014 prescribed burn update

Nick Sanchez, Park Naturalist, stated in 2011 the LPA Board voted to support the Friends of Lake Lansing North Park's land stewardship efforts through the implementation of a prescribed burn within a portion of the 120-acre portion of the Park that is under a Meridian Township conservation easement, to help control invasive species growth in 2012 and 2013. Plans are underway to hold prescribed burns in spring 2014.

Pat Witte, Ingham County Parks Manager, stated they provided the staff for the three burn sites and made sure the burn was safe with proper burn brakes. The contractor was assisted by the Meridian Township Fire Department. Last year, the low bidder was Plantwise and their fee is \$5,990.

8. New Business

a. Approval of 2014 Meeting Calendar

The following resolution was offered by Board Member Brixie and supported by Board Member Mayes:

WHEREAS, the Land Preservation Advisory Board desires to announce the time, date and place of all meetings of the Land Preservation Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, the Land Preservation Advisory Board deems the 2014 regular meeting schedule sufficient to uphold the Township Board's Policies and Procedures and advancement toward the Board's Global Ends; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Land Preservation Advisory Board of the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County, Michigan, that the Land Preservation Advisory Board adopts its regular 2014 meeting schedule as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
January 9	Service Center	6 p.m.
February 12	Service Center	6 p.m.
March 12	Service Center	6 p.m.

April 9	Service Center	6 p.m.
May 14	Service Center	6 p.m.
June 11	Service Center	6 p.m.
July 9	Service Center	6 p.m.
August 13	Service Center	6 p.m.
September 10	Service Center	6 p.m.
October 8	Service Center	6 p.m.
November 12	Service Center	6 p.m.
December 10	Service Center	6 p.m.

1. The Land Preservation Advisory Board has set a schedule to meet on the second Wednesday of the month.
2. Each of the above meetings shall be held at the specified time in the lunch room of the Meridian Service Center, 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, Michigan (517) 853-4600.
3. Special meetings of the Land Preservation Advisory Board may be called pursuant to the statute thereto appertaining.
4. Regular meetings may be canceled, recessed or postponed by members of the Land Preservation Advisory Board pursuant to the statute thereto appertaining.
5. A summary of this resolution stating date, place and time shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Township, and a copy of this resolution shall be posted in the Meridian Municipal Building.

ADOPTED:

YEAS: Julie Brixie, Frank Hatfield, Robert Rusch, Jon Mayes, Margo Smith, Jim Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The resolution passed.

b. Election of Officers

The floor was open to nominations for the position of Chair at 6:56 pm

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE NOMINATED JIM KIELBASO AS CHAIR.  
Supported by Board Member Smith.

Jim Kielbaso accepted the nomination.

Hearing no other nominations, the floor was closed at 6:57 pm.

Roll Call:

AYES: Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Frank Hatfield, Jim Kielbaso, Julie Brixie, Margo Smith

NAYS: None

Motion passed with Jim Kielbaso elected as Chair.

The floor was open to nominations for the position of Vice Chair at 6:59 pm.

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE NOMINATED JON MAYES AS VICE CHAIR.  
Supported by Board Member Hatfield.

Jon Mayes accepted the nomination

BOARD MEMBER MARGO SMITH NOMINATED FRANK HATFIELD AS  
VICE CHAIR. Supported by Board Member Rusch.

Frank Hatfield declined the nomination.

Hearing no other nominations, the floor was closed at 7:05 pm.

Roll Call:

AYES: Margo Smith, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Frank Hatfield, Jim  
Kielbaso, Julie Brixie

NAYS: None

Motion passed with Jon Mayes elected as Vice Chair.

Former agenda item #8c. Non-motorized vehicle use on land preserves was removed from the agenda

c Davis/Foster Land Preserve – Prescribed Burn

Nick Sanchez reported in May 2013, the Township conducted a prescribed burn on 7.5 acres on the west side of the Davis/Foster Land Preserve. At the time, staff hoped to burn 14 acres of the restored savanna on the east side as well, but the burn was postponed due to the presence of the Henslow's sparrows. The 50+ acre grassland on the east side of Van Atta road has never been burned. The current request will discourage growth of woody plants and fire intolerant species, diversified grasses and forbs; increased nutrient availability and expose soil for better seed germination. The Henslow's Sparrow is a State endangered species and any habitat management from late April through late September will require an Incidental Take Permit from the DNR. The plan is to conduct the prescribed burn in March or October and will burn 5.5 acres on the west side of Van Atta Road and 14 acres on the east side of Van Atta Road. The project has been let for bids and the proposals are due February 13.

Discussion:

- How can the extra charges for the Fire Department be reduced (for the first burn, they required “all hands on deck” but for the control burn at the Davis/Foster Preserve, there were less personnel; there were no problems at either site; proposed costs is \$5,990 for the contractor and \$1,500 for the fire departments)
- Will the burn be conducted the same as last year (yes, neighbors will be notified, burn procedure will be same as before, HOM TV will cover)
- The burn will encourage new growth and help to maintain a healthy habitat
- For accuracy, we are not exactly creating a savanna or a prairie, do not believe there was ever one on the site; suggest using the word “grassland”; need to be accurate
- Two areas will be burned in spring (that is the plan but will depend on the weather; need to avoid late April)

BOARD MEMBER SMITH MOVED, BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE SECONDED, THAT THE LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO \$8,000 OF MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING TWO PRESCRIBED BURNS ON THE DAVIS/FOSTER LAND PRESERVE.

Roll Call:

AYES: Margo Smith, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Frank Hatfield, Jim Kielbaso, Julie Brixie

NAYES: None

Motion passed.

LPA Board Members asked to be notified of the burn dates.

d. Rezoning #14030 (Fedewa)

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER RUSCH SECONDED, TO HAVE STAFF DRAFT A LETTER TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION DETAILING THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD ON REZONING #14030 (FEDEWA) AS IT CONCERNS THE LAND PRESERVATION PARCEL; THE CONCERNS TO INCLUDE:

- BECAUSE THE LAND PRESERVATION PARCEL IS CURRENTLY ZONED COMMERCIAL AND THE REQUEST FOR REZONING IS FOR COMMERCIAL, CONCERNED ABOUT THE LACK OF A GOOD BUFFER BETWEEN THE PARCELS
- POSSIBLE ENCOARCHMENT AND IMPACTS TO THE WETLANDS
- THE APPROVAL OF SOME COMMERCIAL USES SUCH AS GAS STATIONS, CAR WASHES, DRIVE-THROUGHS, FAST FOOD, ETC.

- ACCUMULATION OF TRASH/DEBRIS FROM COMMERCIAL USES SUCH AS FAST FOOD DRIVE-THROUGH
- POSSIBLE LIGHT POLLUTION ISSUES.

Voice vote. Motion passed.

9. Land Management Coordinator Report

**a. Lake Lansing North Park**

- Prescribed burn – The update was given by Nick Sanchez and Pat Witte earlier in the meeting.

**b. Davis/Foster Land Preserve**

- Staff will conduct the prescribed burn and if necessary will apply for a DNR permit
- Site restoration plans underway
- Interpretive sign is being designed by staff
- Demolition work will be completed in the spring; two structures have been removed but a few items need to be completed
- Well abandonment/utilization is being reviewed and completed in spring
- Henslow's sparrow are on State endangered list and will protect their habitat
- Grand Learning Network project with Murphy Elementary; will conduct a planting at the Davis/Foster Preserve in the spring
- DNR Wildlife Habitat Grant, missed this year's date but hope to apply next year
- May want to include a memorial to Mary Helmbrecht on the Davis/Foster Preserve

**c. Red Cedar Glen**

- Sign update – staff is working with Layne Cameron on bicyclist's information to include on the sign; hope to have installed this spring

**d. Land Preservation signs (small signs)**

- Have been ordered and will be installed in the spring

**e. Deer 2013 Summary**

- Overall summary for the last three years:

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
Program hunters	25	50	60
Deer harvested	43	90	127
Venison donated (lbs)	300	1126	1300
Meals donated	1500	5630	6500
Deer/Car accidents	152	153	179
Properties hunted	7	17	21

**f. Mid-Michigan Stewardship Initiative**

- Nick Sanchez summarized what he learned at the MMSI meeting at Rose Lake and also at the Stewardship Network conference about invasive species management techniques
- Board Member Rusch summarized and distributed information from the MMSI conference.

**g. Southwest Meridian Uplands Land Preserve**

- Update on Fish and Wildlife Grant – waiting on the project agreement; Township will purchase and install seed mix; will be working with students from Bennett Woods school

**h. Northwest Land Preserve**

- Nick Sanchez reported on the deciduous tree planting and deer enclosure project he has been working on with Dave Caszatt; construction in March; will be working with individuals from the Grand Learning Network
- Board Member Stephens asked if the LPA Board would support paying for the bus transportation fees; was asked to include the funding request on the next agenda

**i. 2014 invasive treatment calendar**

- Nick Sanchez summarized the major projects and plans for February and March; this is a flexible document but a good start for the beginning of the year (included in the meeting packet)

**j. Green Road Acquisition – success!**

- The acquisition grant was approved; it needs to go through the financial steps at the State level; will need to obtain an appraisal after the grant project agreement has been accepted by the Township

**k. Sower Woods – Tree Removal**

- Received email from resident with concerns about the number of trees that are down and/or falling down in the preserve; there are obvious “leaners” that could pose a threat and a work order has been put in with maintenance staff but currently priority is being given to storm damage cleanup; discussed harvesting the wood for later use on projects such as a dock in Central Park South; heard there was a notice on Craig’s List about firewood for sale and wonder if neighbors are removing wood from the preserve and selling it (will turn over to Code Enforcement)

**l. Mary Helmbrecht**

- Donations – to date have received \$650
- Memorial ideas – wondered about doing something at the Davis/Foster Preserve; asked to have ideas forwarded to staff

m. **Joint Meeting Announcement** – February 18, 2014, 6 pm, Town Hall

- asked Board Members to let staff know who will be attending for seating purposes

10. Other

None

11. Public Comment

None

12. Closed Session

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

Roll Call:

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

NAYES: None

The Land Preservation Advisory Board entered into closed session at 8:05 pm.

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER SMITH SECONDED, TO MOVE INTO OPEN SESSION.

Roll Call:

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

NAYES: None

The Land Preservation Advisory Board returned to open session at 8:25 pm.

13. Adjournment

Hearing no objections, Chair Kielbaso adjourned the meeting to 8:26 pm.