

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2014

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

ABSENT: None

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Additions to the Agenda:

- Under item #5, Presentations, add #5b, Drain Commissioner presentation on Eastgate Park Log Jam Removal and Ember Oaks Drain Restoration Project in Legg Park and Red Cedar Glen Land Preserve
- Other Business, add #12a, Naming Policy

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

3. Public Comment/Moment of Silence honoring Mary Helmbrecht

The Park Commissioners asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of former Township Clerk and Park Commissioner Mary Helmbrecht.

Commissioner Banas stated she had known and worked with Mary for many years and Mary was in her glory on Election Days. She appreciated her enthusiasm for the community and was a very fine lady.

4. Presentations

- a. **Shade Trees - David Fisher**, Township resident, offered a slide show presentation on suggested shade opportunities throughout the Township
- b. **Eastgate Park Log Jam Removal/Ember Oaks Drain Restoration Project**
- Ingham County Drain Commissioner Pat Lindemann, Deputy Drain Commissioner Carla Clos, Spicer Group representative James Ensign and Anderson, Eckstein and Westrick representative Kyle Seidel offered the following (documents on file in the minute book):
 - The log jam area affected the water flow through 12 county drain sites
 - The large logs were used for revetment construction and bank stabilization
 - Used wooded wetland mix plus native plantings in the restoration areas to stabilize the soils.

- The logs that were chipped were used on the park trail.
- Enjoyed working with Township staff
- Project cost was \$40,000 and will be shared between 10 drains and watersheds

Ember Oaks Drain through Legg Park and Red Cedar Natural Area – the following information was presented through a slide show (documents on file in the minute book):

- A number of grade falls and holes in the river bank have been corrected and once the plant material matures over the next two or three years, the changes will hardly be noticed
- Improved two drain paths
- Tried to protect the native species and trees on the site but did plant an additional 50 trees to compensate for ones removed during construction
- Re-established the water flow rates to pre-development rates
- Corrected the slope failures and soil erosion areas
- Thanked Township staff and neighbors in the area for their assistance with the project
- Project cost was \$895,000; the Township will have a 4% assessment and the remainder will be divided between the railroad, developer and residents over the next twenty years

Commissioners thanked the Drain Commissioner, his staff and engineers. It was a wonderful experience and appreciated their sensitivity to the Township's concerns for this area.

5. **Commissioner Reports and Comments**

None

6. **Approval of Minutes**

- a. December 10, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER ARONOFF SECONDED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 10, 2013 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

7. **Communications**

A. Items to/from the Public

1. To: Sylvan Glen Residents; RE: trail between through Red Cedar Glen Land Preserve into Legg Park open for to bicycle traffic

B. Commission Information

1. January Calendar of Events for Parks & Recreation
2. Parks & Recreation Department Monthly Report – December
3. Towne Courier: **Dec 3:** Make nature crafts at HNC; Drive-Thru Santa available Dec 21

4. Kids' World News – December 2013 issues; Meridian Township Parks & Recreation Drive Thru Santa
 5. The Gatekeeper; January 2014
 6. Okemos Life Magazine January issue: Frosty Family Fun-Meridian Township Explores Winter Sports this Month; Create a Masterpiece in the Snow; Winter in Meridian Township offers Frosty Family Fun; A Growing Tradition – Family Winter Sports Weekend; A Look Back at 2013; Upcoming Calendar of Events
- C. Staff Inquiries/Response
1. From: LuAnn Maisner; To: Park Commissioners; RE: update on Aldi Store Site Plan
- D. Delivered at Meeting
1. Memorandum of Understanding between Tim Clark and Meridian Township on the construction of a temporary ice rink in Hillbrook Park

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

8. Director's Report

- **Hillbrook Park** – In December, Meridian Township resident, Tim Clark expressed interest in building and maintaining an ice skating rink in Hillbrook Park this winter for community use. A Memorandum of Understanding has been executed. The MOU was reviewed by our attorney and liability insurance company.
- **Deer** – to date 127 deer have been harvested, 1,300 lbs of venison donated to Okemos Community Church, Haslett Community Church, Lansing Rescue Mission, and Officer Gaelord Mankowski's Christmas Party at Central Elementary. Hunters were allowed to keep the second deer they shot. This is the third year of the program.
- **Snow sports** - North Meridian Road Park sledding hill has been busy and we have been receiving many favorable reports about cross-country skiing in our parks.
- **North Meridian Road Park Restroom** – has been temporarily closed due to frozen pipes. We still need to assess the damage.
- **Lots of storm damage:** Due to the wind storm in November, the ice storm before Christmas, and the snowstorm after Christmas, our crew has been working hard throughout the community. Being Meridian Township, a number of volunteers immediately stepped up to the plate (because they wanted to ski!) and have been clearing trails in Meridian Riverfront Park and Ted Black Woods Park (Layne Cameron, Dan Smith, Bryan Holland and sons, Frank Hatfield – to name a few).

- **Announcements**

- Joint Meeting with the Township Board and other Commissions - has not yet been rescheduled
- January 18: Farmers' Market at Meridian Mall; there are approximately 30 vendors; open from 10 am – 2 pm on the first and third Saturday of the month through to April.
- January 24 – 26: Family Winter Sports Weekend (Harris Nature Center, Saturday, from 10 am – 3 pm; North Meridian Road Park moonlight sledding, Saturday from 6-8:30 pm; bowling at City Limits East on Sunday from 12 noon to 4 pm (call for lane time); swimming at the Michigan Athletic Club on Sunday from 6:30-8:30 pm (call to reserve a spot), 7th Annual Polar Bear 5k Run on Sunday, at 10 am through Central Park (\$20 if pre-register by January 17); target practice at the Demmer Center, Friday from 4-6 pm, Saturday from 1-6 pm and Sunday from 1-6 pm (call to reserve a spot) and Curling at Central Park South on Saturday from 2-4 pm.
- February 1: Chinese New Year event at Meridian Mall from 1:30-6 pm. There will be a lion parade, musical performances and activities.
- February 15 – Ice Fishing Derby at the Central Park pond from 9 am – noon; kids free; awards from Dick's Sporting Goods and Family Moonlight Sledding at North Meridian Road Park from 6-8:30 pm.
- Snowman/Snow Sculpture Contest Deadline – February 28; have received a few entries.
- Sad to announce that Dan Ball, volunteer for Nokomis Learning Center, passed away over the holidays from a heart attack. He and his wife assisted with the Heritage Festival. Our condolences to his wife April Medicine Bear and their family.
- Longtime Township Clerk and former Park Commissioner Mary Helmbrecht also passed away over the holidays after battling a longtime illness. A memorial service is planned this Sunday, January 19 at 1 pm at the MSU Alumni Chapel. Donations are being accepted in her memory to the Land Preservation Program or MSU Forestry Program. She was very supportive of parks, natural areas and recreational opportunities.
- Michigan Recreation and Park Association Annual Conference – will be held next week. Director Maisner along with Parks and Recreation Specialists Devlin and Grothous will be attending.

9. Unfinished Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

10. New Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Land Preservation Appointment

Chair Wilson asked Commissioner Stephens if he would consider continuing as Land Preservation Advisory Board representative. Commissioner Stephens is an advocate for stewardship activities especially with school children. Commissioner Stephens accepted the appointment.

11. Other Business

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Naming Policy

Chair Wilson stated the existing policy is very vague, problematic and arbitrary and needs to be changed and amended.

CHAIR WILSON MOVED, COMMISSIONER BANAS SECONDED, TO ABANDON THE EXISTING POLICY STATEMENT FOR NAMING MERIDIAN PARKS ADOPTED BY THIS COMMISSION ON APRIL 15, 2008, IN FAVOR OF A MORE ADEQUATE POLICY TO BE DEVELOPED WITHIN THE NEXT TWELVE (12) MONTHS. Voice vote. Motion passed.

12. Discussion Items

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Tree Policy in Parks

Director Maisner stated under Township Ordinance #54-35, no person shall damage, deface, destroy or remove any shrub, tree, flower or natural resource from a Township park. When trees fall and obstruct trails in parks or natural areas, the Parks and Ground Maintenance staff (or volunteers) either move the tree or it is cut and moved to the side of the trail. If a tree falls in a park or natural area, the tree is only removed if it is necessary; otherwise, it is left at its location. Trees may be removed for being dead, diseased, declared hazardous or cleared for development or access purposes. A draft policy has been offered for initial review and discussion:

Discussion:

- Supports development of a tree management policy/plan
- Suggested a timber sale might be beneficial to the health of a wood lot or the timber could be milled to be used on future park projects
- Need to look at resources we have to assist with this issue (MSU, forestry experts, Land Preservation Advisory Board, Ingham County Parks, Leslie Kuhn with Mid-Michigan Stewardship Network, etc.)
- Thinning areas is natural to open up and offer light for good tree growth

b. Plan Revisions – Special Use Permit #13171 (Aldi/Eyde)

Chair Wilson reported he and Director Maisner attended the Planning Commission meeting to present the Commission's concerns with the proposed Aldi/Eyde development adjacent to Central Park, Meridian Historical Village and Nokomis Learning Center. Two weeks later, he and Director Maisner met with representatives from Aldi and the Eyde Company to address the concerns. It was a very productive meeting with an offer to correct the pedestrian pathway and add additional screening.

c. 2013 Friends of the Parks Volunteer Recognition

Director Maisner suggested moving the recognition ceremony to May and holding the event in one of the parks. The event would be a picnic together with a tree planting ceremony of one or two large trees with a plaque listing

the names of all of the volunteers. She suggested it could be held in Central Park since trees are needed in this area.

Discussion:

- Would want a park with a pavilion and restroom
- How will the 2013 Park Friend of the Year be acknowledged
- Like the idea of holding a group event in the park and tying it to reforesting the parks
- Could use Central Park Pavilion or use Barn or Chapel in Historical Village
- If choose Central Park, could use event to get ideas for the master plan we need for the Park
- Staff will check to see what other events are occurring in the Township to ensure it does not want to conflict with any major school events and Commissioners will bring ideas for next meeting

13. Final Comments

Commissioner Stephens spoke about the Crego Park development and its opening this spring.

14. Announcements

- a. Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2014; Town Hall Room, Meridian Municipal Building; 6 pm work session and 7 pm regular session.
- b. Farmers' Market – J C Penney Corridor of Meridian Mall; Saturdays, February 15 and March 1 from 10 am – 2 pm
- c. Family Winter Sports Weekend – Friday, Saturday and Sunday, January 24-26, 2014
- d. Bridge on Van Atta Road will be closed from Grand River south; January 15 - May 9; will need to access Harris Nature Center from Jolly Road
- e. Brush Removal from Storm – Curbside or can take to the Christmas tree drop area at Wonch Park or Nancy Moore Park.
- f. Special Meeting of the Park Commission has been called for Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at 6 pm, in the lunchroom of the Meridian Service Center.

15. Public Remarks

None

16. Closed Session

None

17. Adjournment

COMMISSIONER ARONOFF MOVED, COMMISSIONER BANAS SECONDED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 pm.