

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PARK COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2014

PRESENT: Commissioners: Banas, Jaramillo, McDonald, Stephens, Wilson (arrived at 6:21 pm)  
Staff: Parks and Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner; Parks and Land Management Coordinator Jane Greenway; Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant II Robin Faust

ABSENT: None

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

Vice Chair Banas called the special meeting to order at 6:16 pm

**2. Roll Call**

The following Commissioners were present: Teri Banas, Melanie Jaramillo, Mike McDonald, Mark Stephens and Todd Wilson (arrived at 6:21 pm).

**3. Approval of Agenda**

COMMISSIONER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER JARAMILLO SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

**4. Public Comment**

MSU Student Tony Garcia and Michelle Ghafari stated they were covering the meeting for the Meridian Times website magazine.

**5. 2014 Park Projects Update**

Director Maisner summarized the following:

- **Newton Road Park Parking Lot**
  - a. Gravel parking area, landscaping: Under construction
  - b. Fencing and signage: Scheduled for after parking area construction
  - c. Was contacted by Sierra Ridge Homeowners Association on the construction, including discussion on proposed play structure

- **Wonch Park Loop Trail**
  - a. Tree Removal: Completed (18 dead trees)
  - b. Paved Loop Pathway: Completed (people walking on it; will be planning a ribbon cutting ceremony; suggested adding benches)
  
- **North Meridian Road Park Sand Volleyball Court**
  - a. Request for Bid: Completed
  - b. Awarded contract: Completed (Michigan Demolition & Excavation)
  - c. Construction: October
  
- **Legg Park Improvements**
  - a. Entry & Small Parking Area Paving – Completed
  - b. Entrance Enhancement
    - clear area to improve sight distance: Fall
    - landscaping status: Need to plan
  - c. Enhancements
    - DNR Wildlife Habitat Grant/ \$50,000: will know about grant awarded October 1, 2014
  - d. Footbridges

**Additional Projects:**

- Legg Park Footbridge replacement                      \$ 5,000      Need to Plan  
 the new one is already on its side and staff had tried to reset it; discussed having an engineer look at site but it will be costly to install due to accessibility; hate to lose an Eagle Scout project; may need to close this portion of the trail
  
  - Towner Road Park Temporary Security Gate and Sign                      \$ 1,500      Completed
  - North Meridian Road Park Disc Golf and Gaga Ball                      \$ 6,000      In progress
  - Trail Improvements                      \$ 5,000      Need to Plan
  - Trail and Interpretive signage                      \$10,000      In process
  - Tables, benches, grills, trash containers                      \$14,000      Ordering now
  - Eagle Scout Support                      \$ 3,000      Ongoing
  - Harris Nature Center Expand Overflow Parking Lot                      \$ 5,000      Planning
  - Harris Nature Center Nature Playground                      \$10,000      In progress
  - Central Park Master Plan                      \$16,000      Need to Plan
- Suggest contracting with a facilitator to design the project; should this be a topic for future agenda to discuss how to engage public; the Commission's vision; need for connecting the different areas with an internal trail system; move Farmers Market to alternate location; Historical Village would like to add a pavilion and restroom facility; improve and enlarge the footbridge from Central Park to Historical Village with archway.

**Other Park Projects:**

- New Park Millage: passed 8/5/14
- Nancy Moore Park Garden renovations: underway
- Orlando Park Turf improvement program: completed
- Park Rules signs: underway
- Gaga Ball Pens: purchasing materials for construction this winter
- North Meridian Road Park Disc Golf: Have meeting scheduled with Capital City Renegades to discuss designing 9-hole disc golf course; will plan this year and construct in 2015; suggest placing on concrete pads at tee boxes.
- Ferguson Park: canoe landing needs repair; ramp has shifted and hand rails are gone. Repair is not budgeted for 2015 (may need budget amendment; need to access area to water to gain any "water trail points for grant; staff is working with Jeff Potter on creating a plan to identify and create ten (10) possible "put in" spots from Williamston to Lansing Commissioner Stephens suggested working with M-GROW
- Central Park Pond: evaluate condition of overlook and identify a renovation plan
- Friend of the Park Program improvements: in progress
- Complete GPS of all existing trails in parks: in progress (Central Park and Ted Black Woods completed)
- Add Park Trails to Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Master Plan: In progress
- Directional signage for park trails: In progress
- Develop a Water Trail Master Plan: First draft completed; next step add more launch areas
- Harris Nature Center New Canoe Landing: platform completed: maybe grant for handicap accessible launch
- Support fundraising efforts and construction of HNC Foundation for Natural Play Area: provided letters of support for Dart Foundation and Jackson National Life Foundation
- Invasive species removal and restoration projects in parks: in progress
- Deer management education: drafted informational poster; updating with additional informational; working with HOM-TV staff on promotional opportunities
- Community Outreach: worked with a number of civic and religious organizations on a variety of park projects

**6. 2015 Budgeted Park Projects**

Director Maisner summarized the following:

- Hartrick Park roof structure for players benches \$4,000  
Okemos Baseball Club has been fundraising for this project and staff will be working with them for construction in spring
- Nancy Moore Park Pavilion residing \$4,000
- Nancy Moore Park Safety Fencing \$6,000

- Harris Nature Center engineer and rebuild island drain \$4,000  
It was suggested the area could be developed as a rain garden, getting school children involved in growing and planting materials, there may be funding available through the Grand Learning Network
- Harris Nature Center crack seal drive and parking area \$5,250
- Ferguson Park crack seal drive and parking area \$5,250
- Eagle Scout Projects \$1,500
- Wonch Park Pavilion grant support \$250,000  
Staff was given preliminary scoring and will be preparing additional support documentation to submit for the Pavilion Grant; need to enhance the connection between the Pavilion and river
- Wonch Park parking lot paving \$100,000
- Orlando Park swing/slide \$35,000
- Legg Park parking area, dog park, stewardship \$170,000
- Towner Road Park Phase I \$224,000
- Hillbrook Park accessible playground \$90,000
- Total \$899,000

Commissioners and staff shared pictures of various park elements in park and recreation spaces in other communities. Director Maisner make the Commissioners aware that the planed work for 2014 and 2015 is an aggressive agenda and that staff is committed to working hard to keep projects on schedule but warned that Township "process" may slow some projects down. Commissioner Banas suggested that the Department improve communications with regards to park projects by posting their progress on Facebook and the Township website from time to time.

## 7. 2015 Grant Project Considerations

Parks and Land Management Coordinator Greenway summarized the following projects that could qualify under the grant process:

- a. Meridian Riverfront Park Trail Pavilion - \$250,000
  - Electricity
  - Water
  - Tree removal / landscaping / rain garden
  - Concrete pad and pathway
- b. Meridian Riverfront Park Restroom - \$200,000
  - Electricity
  - Water
  - Concrete pad and pathway
  - Tree removal / landscaping / rain garden

- c. Wonch Park Renovation – \$350,000
  - Pavilion
  - Water Trail Signage
  - Additional parking area improvements
  - Restroom building improvements
  - Entrance enhancement
  - Signage
  - Additional paved pathway access to pedestrian/bicycle pathway system
- d. Central Park North/South Access
  - Research best access points
  - Apply for grant (possible joint funding with Engineering for pedestrian/bicycle pathway improvement)
- e. Towner Road Park Development Phase I - \$722,407

**Grant Programs specifications:**

- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund – Minimum 25% local match, maximum request for development:\$300,000
- Land and Water Conservation Fund – Required 50% Maximum request for development: \$100,000

**Discussion:**

- Has staff considered applying for small grants from Sparrow Foundation, Jackson National Life or Harold Glassman Foundation
- The Meridian Riverfront Park trail pavilion would be located at the Harris Nature Center entrance in the current location of the barn; with the construction of the nature playground, overlook, proposed accessible canoe launch, access to the river
- Have not been successful with grant applications for Towner Road Park
- Staff had a meeting with developers about bringing community recreation to their Jolly/Okemos Road site; suggestions included a beach at the pond; indoor basketball courts in one of the current buildings; looking for partnerships especially with the expansion of Jackson National Life and extending a pathway connection to JNL; will be meeting with them again the future

**8. Park Naming – Newton Road Park**

Commissioners briefly discussed the name of Newton Road Park, naming policy, dollar amounts, etc. Commissioners were asked to forward their suggestions and ideas to Director Maisner for further discussion at the next meeting.

**9. Other**

**a. Central Park Master Plan**

After a brief discussion regarding the development of a request for proposals or a request for qualifications, staff was asked to prepare a request for qualifications for the next Park Commission meeting.

**b. Deer Management Educational Flyer**

Commissioners briefly discussed the driver awareness/education piece created by staff on deer. There was discussion by the Commission as to who should be creating this document, Police maybe? Commissioner Banas offered that the map should be enlarged to better understand location of hot spots for accidents. The Communications Department assisted with the flyer will be using the information in the upcoming Meridian Monitor. Parks and Recreation Department staff will no longer be involved in the flyer.

**c. October Meeting Date**

Chair Wilson and Director Maisner reported they would not be available for the Commission meeting scheduled for October 14. After a brief discussion, the October meeting has been rescheduled to Tuesday, October 21.

**10. Public Comment**

None

**11. Adjourn**

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

The special meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm.