

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013  
6 PM – MERIDIAN SERVICE CENTER**

Members Present: Julie Brixie, Frank Hatfield, James Kielbaso, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Margo Smith, Mark Stephens, Steve Webster

Members Absent: None

Staff: Land and Management Coordinator, Jane Greenway

Others: Nick Sanchez, Dave Caszatt, Suzan Meadows Soderman

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Kielbaso called the regular meeting to order at 6 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA.

Commissioner Stephens asked to add under Other, Joint Meeting with the Park Commission.

Voice vote. Motion passed.

3. Public Remarks

None

4. Approve Minutes for March 13, 2013

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, COMMISSIONER STEPHENS SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 13, 2013 MINUTES. Voice vote. Motion passed.

5. Communications

- a. From: Willis Bennett, Ingham County Parks; RE: Support letter for Trust Fund Grant application for Green Road
- b. Tri-County Regional Planning commission meeting notice; Review of Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Applications; Green Road Acquisition
- c. From: Carla Clos, Ingham County Drain Commissioners Office; RE: Ember Oaks Drain – Coordinator Greenway reported staff will be meeting to review

the final plans on April 23 and staff will be meeting on site to map the sensitive areas at end of May. Board Members indicated their preference to attending the April and/or May meetings.

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

6. Presentations

None

7. New Business

None

8. Old Business

a. Northwest Land Preserve Buckthorn Treatment

Dave Caszatt distributed copies of the three bids received for clearing/treatment of the site. Nick Sanchez reported on current projects such as clearing of debris from the site, trail maintenance by volunteers, the removal of buckthorn by various volunteer groups and the ecological study of the site.

Mr. Sanchez presented their plans for the 25 acres adjacent to Walnut Hills, in the past, the area was clear cut and mowed when owned by Walnut Hills; since the site was sold, the buckthorn grew and expanded; he is suggesting to hire a contractor to clear a maximum of five acres utilizing heavy equipment; bids range from \$4,250 to \$9,000. Mr. Caszatt explained that the representative from Outdoor Expressions lives on Gossard; on previous occasions volunteered his equipment for trash removal events in the Preserve; he is committed to making this project successful; is a good neighbor to the Park. Mr. Sanchez reported they want to remove the stronghold the buckthorn has on that portion of the site and then plant with a high density foliage species; the plan is to shade out the invasive plants, add to the diversity of plant life and will bring in more wildlife onto the site (presentation contained in the minute book). Mr. Sanchez distributed the tree planting prices and offered his recommendations on options of varieties and sizes. He was asked to research the option of including white oak and white spruce trees to the site; verify the size of the trees that will tolerate the site; and suggested exploring the use of volunteers for planting to get buy-in to continue watering and tree care in the future. When asked if the deer protection fencing kits are reusable, Mr. Sanchez said yes. Mr. Caszatt outlined the areas and trees they plan to preserve and spoke in support of this buckthorn treatment plan and how this plan can be used on other

properties. They would like to proceed with the plan during late summer/early fall 2013 with the grinding/mulching; then spray the herbicide followed by tree planting and deer fencing enclosures and apply Roundup around the roadways at least twice. Once the trees have grown (2016), then only minimal herbicide and maintenance will be needed. Coordinator Greenway asked Nick and Dave for assistance in developing a letter to the preserve neighbors, working with HOM-TV on filming this process, and installing interpretive signage since this is a pilot site. When asked if plans have been made if Nick is not available, Mr. Caszatt replied yes, there is a core six member group and he plans to stay involved to see this project to completion. When asked if he has worked with the Edgewood Scholars, Mr. Caszatt replied yes, they have been assisting with the garlic mustard pulls and other activities. When asked if there is a plan for tree replacement due to mortality, Mr. Sanchez replied yes, especially if the original planting is intensive. When asked the size of deer fencing, Mr. Sanchez replied, the deer fence will enclose about 0.15 acres I believe. The fence itself is 7.5' x 330'. Chair Kielbaso suggested using two fence enclosures. Mr. Caszatt spoke about an area of hardwood that is already self seeding. Members discussed adding the American Chestnut for uniqueness but overall to have more diversity with reasonable plants.

BOARD MEMBER SMITH MOVED, BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS SUPPORTED, TO SUPPORT THIS PROJECT UP TO \$10,000.

Discussion:

- Is there a watering plan to make sure the trees are established (Mr. Caszatt replied they have a watering truck available that can go into the site along the established trail on the site)
- When is best time to plant, Mr. Caszatt replied in the fall, late September
- Suggest starting with first deer enclosure before adding second deer enclosure; like to see what we learn from the first enclosure such as which species would survive better, and then add the second enclosure
- Would like to see the tree mortality rate before investing in a second enclosure
- How does this impact the budget (under invasive species management set aside \$7,500 and prescribed burn we will not be doing for \$2,500 which makes the \$10,000)
- The plan can be phased in, the second enclosure can be purchased later the water can be paid for by the Township and collected at the Service Center

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE OFFERED A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT AS FOLLOWS: TO PURCHASE THE SECOND ENCLOSURE AND SECOND BATCH OF TREES AT A LATER DATE.

Board Members Smith and Stephens accepted the friendly amendment

Motion to read:

MOVED TO APPROVE MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN NORTHWEST LAND PRESERVE TO SPEND UP TO \$10,000 FOR INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP WORK WITH THE SECOND DEER FENCING ENCLOSURE AND TREES PURCHASED AT A LATER DATE.

Roll Call:

AYES: Board Members Kielbaso, Brixie, Stephens, Hatfield, Rusch, Mayes, Smith, Webster

NAYS: None

Motion passed.

When asked if this means the project will be awarded to the lowest bidder, Coordinator Greenway replied yes. Mr. Caszatt replied they did obtain three bids and the lowest bidder is the one who is the local resident. Chair Kielbaso suggested using a water holding gel that can be applied to tree roots before planting.

b. Lake Lansing South Preserve "Potter" Beehive Proposal

Suzan Meadows Soderman stated she is proposing to install beehives on the site (a copy of the proposal is contained in the minute book). There is a lot of interest in bee hiving but the main purpose is not for honey, but to pollinate the lake. The purchase price per hive is \$50-\$250 and it is suggested to have three of the same size that can be staked and interchangeable. The bees are \$75 per hive box and if used for educational purposes, the area would have to be fenced. The bees are disease-resistant. She is proposing the project cost would be \$2,500 to \$3,000 and would like to start the work in June to get the hives thriving. Equipment needed could include a scraper, smoker, helmet, sleeve covers or a full suit. She did inquire about used equipment and hives, but there are none available.

Discussion:

- When asked if she is a beekeeper, Ms. Soderman replied she is a steward to the property, believes the site could benefit from this project and it would help benefit the eco-system and pollinate the lake. The hives would need to be in the middle of the parcel and would not affect any of the homes in the area. There is a beehive on the roof of an adjoining neighbor to the Green Door in Lansing and there are no reported problems. When asked if this would be a hobby, Ms. Soderman stated she has a personal interest in this project and does not consider it a hobby
- When asked what the extra honey will be used for, Ms. Soderman replied the board members would get a jar. The honey and by-products are medicinal.

- Board members questioned how this request fits into our mission; voiced concern about an inexperienced beekeeper starting a new project on Township site and asking us to pay for it.
- When asked about the previous proposal for stewardship, Ms. Soderman replied she feels this proposal is part of stewardship and does have outside support to assist with maintaining the bee hive project.
- Is there a demonstrated need for pollination in the Lake Lansing area
- Is concerned about the number of people allergic to bees and having this on a public site; this may be seen as an attractive nuisance.
- Liked the previous proposal to plant native grasses and wild rice. Ms. Soderman replied wild rice would need water and would need to study the water flow to make sure there is enough to accommodate the planting.
- When asked if she lives nearby, Ms. Soderman replied she lives close by. She has talked to neighbors and Jim Graves, the adjacent neighbor, appeared to be supportive. She has support of business owners in the area such as Tom and Denise from Blue Gill Grill.
- When asked about placing on the neighbors property to avoid liability, Ms. Soderman replied that she wanted to place the hives in the lower center portion of the site
- Members voiced concern about the youths discovering the bees and this project creating an attractive nuisance and the Township would not want the Land Preservation Advisory Board to create a liability
- Suggested returning to the original presentation; obtain a dumpster for the trash and debris removal; to contact the person's responsible for dumping concrete and road cabling; organizing a clean-up day with the neighbors; Board Members Mayes stated he had students who might be interested in participating in the clean up
- Suggested drought-resistant rice could be purchased for planting
- Board Member Stephens volunteered to work with Ms. Soderman to clean up the site; work with Ralya Elementary School students through the Grand Learning Network to create/grow plantings for the site
- Ms. Soderman reported the site has become a party site; one of the neighbors is encroaching at the back of the site with his wood cutting enterprise and he is also driving his truck from Carlton Street through the Land Preservation parcel onto his property; the other neighbor is mowing areas around his property where it intersects the Township parcel; Coordinator Greenway replied she would contact Code Enforcement about these issues.

9. Land Management Coordinator Report

a. Southwest Meridian Uplands, Site Restoration Update

- In January, met with Board Member Stephens and Vern Stephens, Designs by Nature, LLC to develop a restoration plan for the burned 15

acre portion of the site; the proposed total project cost is approximately \$28,000

- Board Member Stephens shared information on the proposed project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and they have expressed an interest in cost-share on this project; Coordinator Greenway, Board Member Stephens, Vern Stephens will be meeting with Jim Hazelman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Jim Hudgins in two weeks and will provide update on the proposal at May LPAB meeting.
  - The proposal outlines preparing the site in fall 2013 and planting in 2014
  - A resident who lives just north of the Southwest Meridian Uplands Preserve has provided a box of acorns (Bur oak); it was reported that normally this type of oak germinates quickly and needs to be planted immediately; Board Members reviewed the acorns and found them unusable; Coordinator Greenway and Board Member Stephens mentioned looking for a project to help get the children involved in the restoration project
- b. Garlic Mustard Challenge
- Garlic mustard and Dame's Rocket weed-pulling events will be occurring state-wide
  - Asked Members to encourage friends and neighbors to participate and to report the number of bags pulled to Coordinator Greenway or directly to the Stewardship Network ([www.stewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.stewardshipnetwork.org)).
  - The Mid-Michigan Stewardship Cluster pulled over 25,000 pounds in 2013.
  - All bags should be labeled "Invasive Species" and set out to be picked up with your regular trash pick-up. Garlic mustard should not be included with regular yard waste.
  - Board Member Stephens mentioned that the Garlic Mustard Challenge is part of the "Annie's Big Nature Lesson" activities at the schools this year which should increase the numbers this year
  - Board Member Mayes reported on his visit to the Sower Woods and has designated an area of garlic mustard that needs to be pulled.
- c. July 10, 2013, 7 pm, Lake Lansing North walk instead of regular meeting
- Board Member Smith had suggested a return visit to Lake Lansing North area to see what has happened in a year and it has been suggested that an optional field trip to Lake Lansing North could be scheduled in place of the regular July LPAB meeting.
  - As part of the Mid-Michigan Stewardship Initiative Site Visit, they will be meeting at the neighborhood entrance to Lake Lansing North Park (at the intersection of Wild Ginger Trail and Woodwind Trail in Haslett) at 7 pm.
  - It was the consensus of the members to replace the July regular meeting with the Lake Lansing North Park walk.

- d. July 25, 2013, 9 am, Mid-Michigan Stewardship Initiative Meeting at Davis/Foster Land Preserve
- As part of their program, they will be held at the Davis/Foster Land Preserve on July 25, 2013 at 9 a.m. The savannah restoration project will be the featured topic.
- e. Green Road Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Application Update
- Submitted MNRTF (Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund) grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; will find out if we received a grant in December, 2013; funding is typically appropriated the following spring (April, 2014).
  - Have received the appraisal, which was very low; the information was shared with the property owner; the appraisal was reviewed by Board Member Mayes and it was noted that the comparison parcels were not located in our area; Coordinator Greenway asked the Township Assessing Department if there were comparables in the Township and they indicated there were not; a new appraisal will be required if the Township receives the grant; will need to wait for the results in December
  - Coordinator Greenway reported Ingham County Parks wrote a letter of support for the grant
  - When asked about a conversation about the number of grants being submitted by the Township; it was noted that there was only one acquisition grant and the others were development grants and the two areas do not compete and have no impact on each other
- f. Woodcock on Davis/Foster Land Preserve
- Chuck Riley, on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources, will continue banding program in 2013. He did not band any chicks in 2012.
  - Alan Jones, photographer, sent me photos of woodcock he sighted on preserve; pictures were taken on April 2, 2013.
  - At the time of the picture, the woodcock had not been banded
- g. Davis/Foster Demolition of brick house
- Working on the request for proposals (bids) for demolition work; is researching the option of keeping the well viable; it was noted the other well had not been properly abandoned and it will need to be addressed during the demolition work; concerns were expressed about the ground water protection program and staff will investigate the Home Assist Program
  - Is developing a site plan for site restoration which will include a sign, bench, and shade trees
  - Spoke with former owner Sylvia Davis and offered her the opportunity to remove any items she might want from the brick house before it is demolished; reported Ms. Davis' son Scott hunted the Preserve during the

Deer Management Program and greatly assisted another hunter, a Veteran, who was also hunting on the Preserve, with additional hunting gear and getting him to his hunting site when in the area.

- Paul Morrow has done some restoration work, cutting trees, clearing brush, will mow burn breaks

10. Other

a. Joint Meeting with the Park Commission

Board Member Stephens summarized a recent discussion at the Park Commission meeting about the grant submissions which lead to the suggestion to hold a joint meeting to discuss this topic and others such as future projects, land trades, etc. It has been suggested that the two bodies submit ideas and/or topics to Director Maisner who will compile the list to formulate the agenda for the joint meeting.

Members discussed possible topics and/or ideas:

- phragmites control
- stewardship plans and/or projects
- invasive species removal project
- future grant submissions especially if both bodies want to submit either an acquisition or development grant
- land trade such as Potter for Red Cedar Natural Area
- potential meeting dates (Board Member Smith replied she has a prior commitment on Tuesday evenings)
- Members were asked to forward ideas to Director Maisner and/or Coordinator Greenway

11. Public Comment

None

12. Closed Session

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, COMMISSIONER BRIXIE SECONDED, TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS LAND ACQUISITION OPTIONS.

Roll Call:

AYES: Board Members Webster, Smith, Mayes, Rusch, Stephens, Brixie, Hatfield, Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The Board entered into closed session at 8:18 pm.

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER WEBSTER SECONDED,  
TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.

Roll Call:

AYES: Board Members Webster, Smith, Mayes, Rusch, Stephens, Brixie,  
Hatfield, Kielbaso

NAYS: None

The Board returned to open session at 8:22 pm.

13. Adjournment

BOARD MEMBER RUSCH MOVED, BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE SECONDED,  
TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.