**MINUTES**

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR
MEETING
Tuesday, October 13, 2026, 4:30pm
Township Hall - Televised

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**REGULAR MEETING – 4:30PM**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
   A. Chair Nardo-Farris called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM.

2. ROLL CALL
   A. Present: Chair Nardo-Farris, Commissioners Lick, McDonald, Phelps, and Stephens
   B. Staff present: Parks and Recreation Director Wisinski, Administrative Assistant Pachucki, and Information Technology Director Gebes
   C. Guests present: Environmental Commission Liaison Richard Miksicek, and John Ostrander, the Executive Director at Nokomis Cultural Heritage Center

3. PRESENTATION
   A. Nokomis Cultural Heritage Center
      1. Director Wisinski introduced John Ostrander, the Executive Director of Nokomis Cultural Heritage Center. Director Ostrander presented on the history of the non-profit, including the partnership of the organization with Meridian Township, and current open-to-the-public programming that is offered. Nokomis has begun presenting in school classrooms, visiting 140 classrooms in 2025. The volunteers and staff also partner with the Meridian Historical Village when hosting school groups and creating dual field trips. Additionally, staff have begun to partner with both Michigan State University doctoral students, and students from Grand Valley State University to conduct research and provide volunteer opportunities. Nokomis has received a few grants over the past year, and those grants help sustain operations, and allow for expanded programming.
      2. The Park Commissioners asked Director Ostrander if there were any specific needs that could be addressed by the Park Commission. Director Ostrander replied that the best way to help is by sharing Nokomis' information with the community, and that the Communications department, along with Parks and Recreation is a great partner in it. Commissioner Lick suggested that if there was any need for letters of support in the grant-writing process, the Park Commission would be happy to assist.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT
   A. Richard Miksicek, Environmental Commission liaison, shared with the Park Commission updates from the September and October Environmental Commission meetings. The Environmental Commission is discussing using Climate Sustainability Funds to incentivize owners of private wells to permanently cap abandoned wells, and plans to move forward with this in 2027 with the newly adopted township budget. The Township Board also approved restoring the Green Grant program to $20,000 in 2027.
   B. Beth Betchel, Haslett resident, invited the Park Commissioners to attend the Meridian Conservation Corps event: Goat Browsing Demonstration on Saturday, October 17th at Towar Woods Preserve beginning at 9:30 AM. The event is co-hosted with Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy and the Wild Ones Red Cedar Chapter.

Commissioner Phelps left the meeting at 5:04 PM during public comment.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
   A. Commissioner Lick moved to approve the agenda. Commisioner Stephens seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
   A. September 8, 2026, Park Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
      1. The minutes of the September 8, 2026 meeting will be reviewed at the November 10, 2026 meeting.

7. COMMUNICATIONS
   A. Meridian Conservation Corps Calendar
   B. Harris Nature Center Events
   C. Deer Management Memo
      1. Director Wisinski noted the Goat Browsing Demonstration event on the Meridian Conservation Corps calendar on Saturday, October 17th, and commented on the amount of school groups for October at the Harris Nature Center. Director Wisinski also pointed out to the Park Commission the deer management memo and noted that the 2026-2027 program has already harvested 21 deer. Commissioner McDonald commented that he was grateful that the police cull was paused for this year's program.
      2. Commissioner Stephens moved to approve the communications and place them on file. Commissioner Lick seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS
   A. 5-year Master Plan Draft
      1. Joining virtually, Consultant Mike Hoffmeister from the Mannik-Smith group introduced the 5-year Master Plan draft to the Park Commission. Consultant Hoffmeister summarized what has been completed up to date, and what the Park Commission needs to complete for the next steps. The biggest priority is reading through the Master Plan Draft as presented and providing feedback. Following the November 10, 2026 Park Commission meeting, the Park Commissioners will make a recommendation to the Meridian Township Board of Trustees. The Meridian Township Board of Trustees will decide on the recommendation to approve the Park Master Plan through resolution at their December 15, 2026 meeting.
      2. Chair Nardo-Farris asked the Park Commission to review the draft 5-Year Master Plan and send comments directly to Courtney (either by email or a phone call) before the November 10, 2026 meeting. Commissioner Stephens asked if the photos could have captions in the second draft. Consultant Hoffmeister affirmed.

9. ACTION ITEMS
   A. 5-year Goals and Objectives
      1. Director Wisinski reminded the Park Commissioners that the draft Goals and Objectives were created after the September 8, 2026 Park Commission, using the five priorities the Park Commission identified: community partnerships, park maintenance and enhanced strategy development, accessibility and connectivity, stewardship and sustainability, and communication. Director Wisinski also noted that the draft goals and objectives has measures at the end of each goal. Director Wisinski left it up to the Park Commission if they wanted to include measures in the goals.
      2. Park Commissioners offered feedback on the content and grammatical structure of each of the goals and objectives. Commissioners also asked how the goals and objectives are currently being measured. Commissioners suggested working with the Communications department to create a Communications strategy specifically for Parks and Recreation that the Commission could review, and to move the Communication goal further up on the document. Finally, Commissioners suggested to review the measures annually.
      3. Commissioner Lick moved to accept the 5-Year Goals and Objectives, as amended. Commissioner Stephens seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

B. Updated Mission and Vision Statements
    1. Park Commissioners discussed the use of the word "diverse" in the draft mission statement, and suggested that the mission statement read "to enhance quality of life and serve our diverse communities by providing parks, facilities, and recreation opportunities that inspire people to learn, play, create, and connect in a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment."
    2. Commissioner Lick moved to approve the updated mission statement "to enhance quality of life and serve our diverse community by providing parks, facilities, and recreation opportunities that inspire people to learn, play, create, and connect in a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment." Commissioner Stephens seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

C. Updated Action Plan
    1. Commissioner Lick moved to place the Updated Action Plan on the agenda for the November 10, 2026 Park Commission meeting. Commissioner Stephens seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motioned passed unanimously.

D. Request Authorization to host a Public Hearing for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan at the November 10, 2026 Park Commission meeting.
    1. Commissioner Stephens moved to authorize a public hearing for the 2027-2031 Parks and Recreation Master Plan to be held at the November 10, 2026 Park Commission meeting. Chair Nardo-Farris seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

10. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
    A. Park Commission Agenda Tracker
        1. Director Wisinski will review the Park Commission Agenda Tracker at the November 10, 2026 Park Commission meeting.
    B. Upcoming Events
        1. Director Wisinski highlighted the following upcoming events: Farmer's Market continues through the end of October on both Wednesdays and Saturdays; Summer Concert Series has been extended through the end of October due to weather delays earlier in the summer, and the first Dark Sky event in partnership with Abrams Planetarium is upcoming on Friday, October 16 at North Meridian Road Park.
    C. Project Updates
        1. Director Wisinski updated the Park Commission on the renovations at both Nancy Moore Park and Tollgate House in the Meridian Historical Village. Additionally, Director Wisinski provided an update on the Request for Proposals of the cricket batting cages.
    D. 2026 CIP Update
        1. Director Wisinski mentioned that the Capital Improvement Plan has only been updated with two Projects: Nancy Moore pavilion/restroom renovation and Harris Nature Center Water Trail Landing. The Nancy Moore pavilion/restroom renovation will begin in the middle of October and is expected to be completed in November. The Harris Nature Center Water Trail Landing is completed. The remaining project (Natural Resource Trust Fund Grant – Okemos Road Trailhead) has been delayed due to state funding.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT
    A. An opportunity was provided for the public to speak. There was no public comment.

12. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS AND LIAISON REPORTS
    A. Commissioner Stephens announced that a fish release and celebration of life is planned for November 12, 2026 in honor of the life of Dr. Howard Tanner. Along with an extensive public

service career at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and Michigan State University, Dr. Tanner was a long-time Meridian Township resident and supporter of the Parks and Recreation department. The fish release will be at 3:00 PM along the Red Cedar River between the Kellogg Center and Jenison, along with a private Celebration of Life at 4:30 PM. If commissioners or the public are interested in attending, Commissioner Stephens asked that they reach out directly to him to coordinate.

B. Chair Nardo-Farris reminded the Park Commission that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Park Commission will be on Tuesday, November 10th at 4:30 PM at the Service Center.

13. ADJOURNMENT

A. Chair Nardo-Farris adjourned the meeting at 6:55 PM.

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All comments limited to 3 minutes, unless prior approval for additional time for good cause is obtained.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Parks & Recreation Director, Courtney Wisinski: 2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, MI 48864 or 517.853.4600 - Ten Day Notice is Required.