



AGENDA

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

**Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 4:30pm
Service Center Conference Room**

REGULAR MEETING – 4:30PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PRESENTATION
 - A. Adventure Team
4. ANNOUNCEMENTS
5. PUBLIC COMMENT
6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. August 11, 2026 Park Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
 - B. August 11, 2026 Park Commission Special Meeting Minutes
 - C. June 8, 2026 Park Commission Regular Meeting Minutes Closed Session
8. COMMUNICATIONS
 - A. Meridian Conservation Corps Calendar
 - B. Harris Nature Center Events
9. DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - A. 5-year Master Plan Survey
 - B. 5-year Goals and Objectives
10. ACTION ITEMS
11. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
 - A. Park Commission Agenda Tracker
 - B. Upcoming Events
 - C. Cricket Update
12. PUBLIC COMMENT
13. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS AND LIAISON REPORTS
14. ADJOURNMENT

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.



MINUTES
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR
MEETING
Tuesday, August 11, 2026, 4:30pm
Service Center Conference Room

REGULAR MEETING – 4:30PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
 - A. Chair Nardo-Farris called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM.
2. ROLL CALL
 - A. Present: Chair Nardo-Farris, and Commissioners McDonald, and Stephens
 - B. Commissioner Lick arrived at 4:45 PM.
 - C. Staff present: Parks and Recreation Director Wisinski and Administrative Assistant Pachucki
 - D. Absent: Commissioner Phelps – excused
3. ANNOUNCEMENTS
 - A. There were no announcements.
4. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - A. An opportunity was provided for the public to speak. There was no public comment.
5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
 - A. Commissioner Stephens moved to approve the agenda. Chair Nardo-Farris seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.
6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. June 9, 2026, Park Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
 1. Commissioner Stephens moved to approve the June 9, 2026 regular meeting minutes as presented. Chair Nardo-Farris seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.
7. COMMUNICATIONS
 - A. Meridian Conservation Corps Calendar
 1. Director Wisinski reviewed the August Stewardship calendar and noted that the workdays for the month were focusing on invasive species removal, including bittersweet and Tree of Heaven. Director Wisinski also shared that one of the work days will involve kayaking out to the installed floating islands at Central Park South for trash removal and native planting, and the Green Fair will be held on Saturday, August 15th during the Farmer's Market.
 2. Director Wisinski remarked that all three of the part-time stewardship staff has secured full-time employment in their respective fields over the past few weeks. One of the seasonal maintenance staff has moved over to one of the part-time stewardship roles, and the position will be posted for another part-time stewardship role. With three staff members leaving, Senior Land Stewardship Coordinator Campbell is the only one certified in the department to apply herbicide. The new part-time employees will eventually also be certified.
 3. Commissioner McDonald noted that Saturday, August 15th is also the date of the Celebration of Life service for LeRoy Harvey at Woldumar Nature Center at 5:00 PM. Commissioner Stephens asked if the fence removal of the floating islands was for turtle habitat, and Director Wisinski confirmed.
 - B. Harris Nature Center Events
 1. Director Wisinski shared that last week was the final week of Summer Camp at Harris

Nature Center. Parks and Land Preservation Superintendent Adams reported to Director Wisinski that 501 children attended summer camp throughout the season. Upcoming events at Harris Nature Center include a sensory-friendly night on Friday, August 14, the fundraiser “A Night For Nature” on Saturday, August 29, and the Native Plant Sale pre-orders are open now through Wednesday, September 23. The Native Plant Sale and order pickup will be on Saturday, October 3.

- C. Commissioner Stephens moved to accept the communications received and place them on file. Commissioner McDonald seconded.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Parks & Recreation 5-Year Plan Public Meetings

1. August 13, 2026 – Towner Road Park
2. Director Wisinski reminded the Park Commission of the last 5-Year Plan Public Meeting on Thursday, August 13 at 6:00 PM at Towner Road Park. Director Wisinski also recapped the previous public meetings, and the stakeholder meetings for the Park Commissioners. The commissioners discussed the Township Board Listening Sessions, and a comment made at a recent one about downed trees, and woody debris.

B. Parks & Recreation 5-Year Plan Draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

1. Director Wisinski introduced the draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and stated that the 2027 budget requests for departments were due at the end of the month. The draft budget will go before the Township Board in early September. Director Wisinski requested preliminary feedback from the Park Commission on 2027 projects, and stated that years beyond 2027 are considered fluid, and can be moved based on the needs of the Parks and Recreation department, and Park Commission. She also reminded the Park Commission that most of the projects included on the proposed CIP have been there for several years, with only a handful of things added over the last few months. Two items on the Capital Improvement Plan for 2026 will need to be moved over to 2027 due to permitting, funding, logistics, and time (Wonch Park Canoe Launch, and Okemos Road Bike Trail Hub).
2. Director Wisinski explained the 2027 projects: Wonch Park Canoe Launch, Okemos Road Bike Trail Hub, Nancy Moore Park Playground Upgrade/Replacement, Farmer’s Market Electrical Upgrades, and North Meridian Road Parking Lot Expansion. The commissioners discussed the cost estimate for the Nancy Moore pavilion upgrade/replacement coming in lower than expected and working with Farmer’s Market vendors on a cost differential for those that use significant amounts of electricity. Part of the vendor fee could be spent on improvement funds specifically for Marketplace on the Green. The commissioners also discussed the use of solar panels for vendors at the Farmer’s Market.
3. The 2028 projects include Hartrick Park Parking Lot Expansion, Farmer’s Market Sunshades for the open area in the center, and Farmer’s Market Bathroom Expansion. In 2029, the Capital Improvement Plan will focus on Harris Nature Center Parking Lot Expansion and Harris Nature Center Outdoor Restrooms. One of the projects proposed for 2030 is a full replacement of pickleball courts at Hillbrook Park and at Towner Road Park. Projects for future years beyond 2030 include Hillbrook Park Restrooms, Nancy Moore Park Loop Trail, Central Park Splashpad, Meridian Riverfront Park Trail, Wonch Park General Improvements, Farmer’s Market Drainage and Access, Farmer’s Market Expansion, and Cricket Grounds.
4. The commissioners were agreeable to the projects as outlined, and discussion ensued whether the Red Cedar Water Trail should continue to be included in the Capital Improvement Fund. The Commission decided that in the future it should be included under construction/improvements in the budget.

C. Towner Road Plaque Discussion

1. Director Wisinski and Commissioner Lick described the history of the plaque recently installed at Towner Road Park, and that a resident reached out upset about the wording on the plaque honoring Greg Lemanski, as chosen by the family. Discussion by the park commissioners included reviewing the current process for

the naming policy, the level of fact-finding that the commission should do before approving plaque installations, and considerations of if the naming policy should even include plaques. Commissioners recommended reviewing the naming policy in 2027.

9. ACTION ITEMS

- A. There were no action items.

10. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Parks & Recreation 2026 Ballot Language

1. Director Wisinski shared the ballot language that the Township Board approved at their July 21, 2026 regular meeting. The park commissioners discussed how the language in the proposal emphasizes the renewal, and that the Park Commission should also emphasize that it is not a new tax levied. Chair Nardo-Farris asked the commissioners to consider how to conduct outreach to the community, as both community members and as park commissioners.

B. Upcoming Events

1. Director Wisinski reminded the Park Commissioners that upcoming events are listed in the Meridian Playbook, and compiled by the Communications department. There will be a food safety workshop at the Farmer's Market on Wednesday, August 12, and Movie Night in the Park on Friday, August 28 at Towner Road Park.

C. Cricket Update

1. Director Wisinski continues to meet with members of the cricket community, and plans to bring together three different groups of cricket players for a work group moving forward. After meeting with representatives from one of the groups, Director Wisinski decided to move forward with installing a cricket batting cage in one of the parks. The group members are excited, as similar facilities are limited to Metro Detroit. After meeting with the work group, Director Wisinski will continue to work towards a non-regulation field space for the players.

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. Chair Nardo-Farris reminded the park commission that the next regularly scheduled meeting would be Tuesday, September 8th, 2026 at 4:30 PM at the Service Center.

13. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Chair Nardo-Farris adjourned the meeting at 6:15 PM.

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

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MINUTES
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION SPECIAL
MEETING
Tuesday, August 11, 2026, 6:00 pm
Service Center Conference Room

REGULAR MEETING – 6:00 PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
 - A. Chair Nardo-Farris called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM.
2. ROLL CALL
 - A. Present: Chair Nardo-Farris, and Commissioners Lick, McDonald, and Stephens
 - B. Staff present: Parks and Recreation Director Wisinski and Administrative Assistant Pachucki
 - C. Guest present: Consultant Mike Hoffmeister from Mannik-Smith
 - D. Absent: Commissioner Phelps – excused
3. PRESENTATION
 - A. Meridian Township Parks & Recreation 5-Year Master Plan Draft Survey Results
 1. Consultant Hoffmeister from Mannik-Smith reviewed the masterplan process with the Park Commissioners and shared what steps had previously been completed, and then what still needed to be accomplished. The survey will continue to collect feedback through the end of August, and Mannik-Smith will compile the results in September. Consultant Hoffmeister then shared the preliminary results from the survey. Commissioners noted that the demographics of the survey were missing key insights from specific groups (families with children, those under the age of 25, etc.)
4. DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - A. Parks & Recreation 5-Year Plan Priorities
 1. Consultant Hoffmeister asked the Park Commissioners what their priorities were in the next five years. Commissioners discussed limiting land acquisition except in cases of connectivity to existing parks, preserves, and pathways; culturally reflective spaces that represent all members of the community; inclusive, accessible spaces in both design and programming; and continuing to maintain and grow partnerships with existing organizations and groups.

Commissioner McDonald left the meeting at 7:25 PM.
5. ADJOURNMENT
 - A. Chair Nardo-Farris adjourned the meeting at 7:33 PM.

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

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SEPTEMBER



STEWARDSHIP SATURDAYS | 9:30 AM - 12 PM
These workdays occur every other Saturday year round

- September 19th, Davis Foster Preserve (5120 Van Atta Road, Okemos)
- Join us to celebrate the start of fall with cider, donuts & native planting
- September 26th: Every year we partner with a MSU class to steward an area from 10 am to 4 pm. Feel free to join at any time to slay autumn olive, if you so desire, at Red Cedar Glen Preserve (we will meet at the end of Sylvan Glen Drive)

WEEKDAY WARRIORS: Occurs every other Thursday

- September 10th, Tihart Preserve, native planting
- September 24th, Heron Creek Preserve (End of Creekstone Trail, Okemos), native seed collection & invasive removal

VOLUNTEER THANKQUET | 6 PM - 8 PM
A celebration of our hardworking community!

- Join us at the Central Park Pavilion for a night of food, refreshments, lawn & board games, and good conversation! BYOB; alcohol is allowed in the park, just no glass please.



STEWARDSHIP

***ALL EVENTS ARE WEATHER DEPENDENT & MAY BE CANCELLED THE DAY OF**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5 LABOR DAY WEEKEND
6	7 TOWNSHIP OFFICES CLOSED	8	9	10 WEEKDAY WARRIORS 1-3 PM	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 VOLUNTEER THANKQUET 6 - 8 PM	19 STEWARDSHIP SATURDAY 9:30 - 12 PM
20	21	22 FALL	23	24 WEEKDAY WARRIORS 1-3 PM	25	26 MSU CSUS SERVICE DAY
27	28	29	30			

PLEASE CONTACT EMMA AT ECAMPBELL@MERIDIAN.MI.US, OR 517.897.3610

SEPTEMBER 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
Building Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 9 am- 3 pm						
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10 10 am Chipmunk Story Time	11	12
						4 pm Pavilion Rental
13 9 am Dogs & Coffee	14 10 am Nature for Toddlers 5 pm HNC Foundation Board Meeting	15	16 7-9 pm Gardening with Native Plants Class	17	18 5:30-8:30 pm Night Out in Nature	19
20	21 10 am Nature for Toddlers	22	23 ABNL Teacher Training Plant Sale Pre-orders Due	24 Buddy's Pizza HNCF Fundraiser (All Day)	25	26 7 PM Campfire: Under the Moon
27	28 10 am Nature for Toddlers	29 Williamston Elementary 3 rd Grade (all day)	30 Williamston Elementary 3 rd Grade (all day)			



MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP

2027-2031 Parks & Recreation Master Plan

SURVEY ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Meridian Township's Parks & Recreation Master Plan community survey shows broad support for maintaining and improving the existing parks system, strengthening trails and walking connections, and continuing environmental stewardship. Respondents generally value the variety, accessibility, natural character, programming, and upkeep of Township assets. At the same time, the results identify recurring needs related to aging amenities, restrooms and parking, trail continuity, public awareness, indoor recreation, aquatic features, and the future of Senior Center programming.

Overview

1. Reinvestment is the clearest systemwide priority. Maintaining and improving existing parks and facilities received the highest score (4.33 of 5), and renovating existing amenities received the highest capital improvement score (6.12 of 7).
2. Walking and nature-based recreation lead facility preferences. Sidewalks and walking trails were rated important by 84.5% of respondents, followed by nature areas with trails (74.3%).
3. Stewardship has broad support. Trash removal (86.6% important), invasive species removal (74.2%), and wildlife habitat management (69.0%) ranked especially high.
4. The most used Township destinations are Central Park, Nancy Moore Park, Harris Nature Center, and Central Park South. Smaller neighborhood parks and many preserves were unfamiliar or infrequently visited.
5. There is an awareness gap. Although 91.1% described themselves as very or somewhat aware of Department services, comments repeatedly indicated limited knowledge of individual parks, preserves, entrances, parking, and available activities.
6. Community events have strong visibility. The Farmers' Market (98.3%), Summer Concert Series (78.7%), and Celebrate Meridian (71.7%) were the best-known events.
7. Senior Center needs are prominent, but opinions differ. Many comments call for a permanent, accessible facility and expanded hours or meals, while others favor shared or multigenerational space and caution against new taxes or a standalone building.
8. Indoor and aquatic recreation recur as unmet needs. A pool/aquatic center, splash pad, indoor sports or recreation space, and a functional ice skating option appear repeatedly in open-ended responses.
9. Basic access and comfort matter. Respondents frequently cited paved or accessible routes, trailhead parking, restrooms, shade, signage, field maintenance, and safer bicycle connections.
10. The deer management program has strong support: 90.4% support continuation and 9.6% oppose it.

Survey Context and Interpretation

The final survey results show up to 310 submissions, including partial responses. Most closed-ended questions received approximately 299 to 307 responses; open-ended response totals ranged from 132 to 218.

This was an open, self-selected and voluntary community survey rather than a statistically valid sample. The findings are therefore a strong record of participating respondents' experiences and preferences, but they should not be interpreted as an accurate representation of all Township residents. Respondents could skip questions. These survey results should be used as one component of the master plan's needs assessment, alongside the park inventory, accessibility review, demographic analysis, recreation standards, staff knowledge, stakeholder and public input meetings, fiscal capacity and technical feasibility.

Question by Question Analysis

Q1. In the past year, how many times have you or a household member visited Township parks?

Responses: 307. Central Park (81.4% reporting at least one visit), Nancy Moore Park (76.9%), Harris Nature Center (67.4%), and Central Park South (59.0%) were the most widely visited. Nancy Moore Park had the largest share of frequent users, with 28.3% reporting more than 10 visits. Many smaller neighborhood parks had reported visitation below 15%, suggesting that proximity, specialized function, awareness, or access strongly shape use.

Park	Any visit	More than 10 visits
Central Park (Historic Village, Nokomis Learning Center, Large Dog Park)	81.4% (250)	20.5% (63)
Nancy Moore Park (Parks Office, Small Dog Park)	76.9% (236)	28.3% (87)
Harris Nature Center	67.4% (207)	13.7% (42)
Central Park South	59.0% (181)	14.3% (44)
Lake Lansing Marsh	46.6% (143)	11.4% (35)
Hartrick Park	45.0% (138)	11.1% (34)
North Meridian Road Park	43.0% (132)	5.5% (17)
Wonch Park	42.3% (130)	4.6% (14)
Towner Road Park	37.8% (116)	7.8% (24)
Legg Park	36.5% (112)	5.9% (18)
Ted Black Woods	34.5% (106)	6.5% (20)
Ferguson Park	31.3% (96)	1.6% (5)
Red Cedar Natural Area	30.0% (92)	5.9% (18)
Hillbrook Park	27.7% (85)	5.5% (17)
Eastgate Park	26.1% (80)	3.9% (12)
Sander Farm	21.2% (65)	3.6% (11)
Marshall Park	14.7% (45)	2.0% (6)
Towar Park	12.1% (37)	1.0% (3)
Indian Hills Park	11.4% (35)	1.3% (4)
Newton Road Park	10.7% (33)	0.7% (2)
Orlando Park	9.8% (30)	1.3% (4)
Forest Hills Park	8.5% (26)	0.3% (1)
Spengler Marsh	8.1% (25)	2.3% (7)
Cedar Bend Heights	5.5% (17)	0.7% (2)
Ottawa Hills Park	5.5% (17)	0.3% (1)
Schriener Park	3.3% (10)	0.3% (1)

Q2. In the past year, how many times have you or a household member visited Township parks and recreation facilities?

Responses: 306. Marketplace on the Green was the most widely used facility (87.9% reporting at least one visit) and the most frequently used (30.4% reporting more than 10 visits). Meridian Historical Village (68.0%) and Harris Nature Center (64.7%) also had broad reach. The Senior Center had a smaller but highly engaged user base: 10.1% visited more than 10 times. Snell-Towar Recreation Center and both dog parks registered comparatively low use among respondents.

Facility	Any visit	More than 10 visits
Marketplace on the Green	87.9% (269)	30.4% (93)
Meridian Historical Village (Central Park)	68.0% (208)	7.2% (22)
Harris Nature Center	64.7% (198)	11.1% (34)

Facility	Any visit	More than 10 visits
Nokomis Cultural Heritage Center (Central Park)	37.3% (114)	1.0% (3)
Senior Center	20.3% (62)	10.1% (31)
Red Cedar Water Trail	20.3% (62)	3.3% (10)
Small Dog Park (Nancy Moore Park)	9.8% (30)	2.6% (8)
Large Dog Park (Central Park)	6.5% (20)	1.3% (4)
SnellTowar Recreation Center	5.2% (16)	0.0% (0)

Q3. In the past year, how many times have you or a household member visited Township land preserves?

Responses: 299. Lake Lansing North Preserve was the only preserve visited by nearly half of respondents (44.8%). Interurban Wetland Preserve (25.4%), Okemos Road Preserve (22.1%), Davis/Foster Preserve (16.4%), and Red Cedar Glen Preserve (15.1%) formed a second tier. Most remaining preserves were visited by fewer than one in ten respondents. Comments repeatedly noted that respondents did not recognize preserve names or locations and that Tacoma Hills was omitted from the listed choices.

Preserve	Any visit	More than 10 visits
Lake Lansing North Preserve	44.8% (134)	9.7% (29)
Interurban Wetland Preserve	25.4% (76)	7.4% (22)
Okemos Road Preserve	22.1% (66)	4.0% (12)
Davis/Foster Preserve	16.4% (49)	4.0% (12)
Red Cedar Glen Preserve	15.1% (45)	3.0% (9)
Nemoke Preserve	13.4% (40)	3.0% (9)
Red Cedar River East Preserve	12.0% (36)	2.7% (8)
Tihart Preserve	10.4% (31)	0.7% (2)
Sumbal Preserve	10.4% (31)	0.3% (1)
Hubbel Preserve	10.0% (30)	1.7% (5)
Towar Woods Preserve	9.0% (27)	1.7% (5)
Towner Wetland Preserve	9.0% (27)	0.7% (2)
Cornell Wetland Preserve	8.7% (26)	1.3% (4)
Sower Woods Preserve	8.4% (25)	0.0% (0)
Foster-Crouse Preserve	7.4% (22)	0.7% (2)
Ponderosa Preserve	6.7% (20)	0.0% (0)
Heron Creek Preserve	6.4% (19)	1.7% (5)
Pike Crossing Preserve	6.0% (18)	1.0% (3)
Kuzma Preserve	5.0% (15)	1.0% (3)
Newman Equites Preserve	5.0% (15)	0.7% (2)
Serafine Preserve	4.7% (14)	1.7% (5)
Forest Grove Preserve	3.3% (10)	0.0% (0)
Tank Wetland	3.0% (9)	0.7% (2)
Sweetwood Oaks Preserve	3.0% (9)	0.0% (0)
Glacial Ridge Preserve	3.0% (9)	0.0% (0)
Mandenberg Woods	2.0% (6)	0.0% (0)

Q4. Prioritize the goals for the overall Township parks and recreation system.

Responses: 305. Maintaining and improving existing assets was the dominant overall goal: 55.4% ranked it first and 80.7% placed it in the top two. Natural resource management ranked second by weighted score, ahead of programming. Land acquisition and public art received lower systemwide priority, indicating a preference to care for existing assets before expanding the system or adding aesthetic enhancements.

Goal	Score (5 high)	Ranked 1st	Top two
Maintain and improve existing parks and facilities	4.33	55.4%	80.7%
Enhance natural resource management and stewardship	3.44	15.1%	49.5%
Provide high-quality recreation programming and special events	3.21	20.3%	41.0%
Purchase land for preservation or future park development	2.13	6.2%	15.1%
Provide public art in parks, along trails, and in facilities	1.91	1.6%	9.2%

Q5. Prioritize capital improvements to Township parks and recreation facilities.

Responses: 303. Renovating existing playgrounds, bathrooms, ball fields, courts, and other amenities was the clear capital priority: 50.5% ranked it first and 86.1% placed it in the top three. Harris Nature Center, Marketplace on the Green, the Senior Center, and indoor recreation formed a closely grouped middle tier. The Senior Center result is notably polarized: it received the second highest share of first place votes (21.5%) but also a substantial share of lower rankings. Improvements to Snell-Towar Recreation Center ranked last overall.

Capital improvement	Score (7 high)	Ranked 1st	Top three
Renovate existing park amenities	6.12	50.5%	86.1%
Improve or expand Harris Nature Center	4.42	5.6%	47.9%
Improve or expand Marketplace on the Green	4.02	4.6%	42.6%
Find a facility for existing Senior Center programming	4.00	21.4%	43.2%
Add indoor recreation programming and/or sports space	3.91	11.2%	38.6%
Improve Red Cedar River navigability and access	3.33	5.3%	27.4%
Improve or expand Snell-Towar Recreation Center	2.45	0.7%	8.2%

Q6. Select all special events that you are aware of or have attended.

Responses: 300. The Farmers' Market has near universal recognition (98.3%), followed by the Summer Concert Series (78.7%) and Celebrate Meridian (71.7%). Events at Harris Nature Center reached just over half of respondents. Red Cedar River Days, Puzzle Nights, Santa's Woodland Stroll, Santa Paws, and Conservation Corps Volunteer Days had substantially lower awareness or attendance, highlighting opportunities for targeted promotion, schedule adjustments, or clearer event positioning.

Event	Aware/attended	Responses
Farmers' Market (summer and winter)	98.3%	295
Summer Concert Series	78.7%	236
Celebrate Meridian	71.7%	215
Events at Harris Nature Center	52.7%	158
Meridian Pride	46.0%	138
Juneteenth Celebration	39.3%	118
Easter Egg Hunt	33.3%	100
Halloween Spooktacular	30.3%	91
Meridian Conservation Corps Volunteer Days	23.7%	71
Santa Paws	18.7%	56
Santa's Woodland Stroll	17.7%	53
Puzzle Nights	14.7%	44
Red Cedar River Days	10.0%	30
Other	7.7%	23

Q7. Rate the importance of recreation activities and facilities.

Responses: 303. Walking infrastructure and nature trails were the strongest preferences. Bike facilities, beaches/lakes, and playgrounds formed the next tier. Picnic facilities, ball fields, courts, and paddling received broad moderate support even when fewer respondents selected 'important.' Golf and skateboarding/BMX were least important to this respondent group, but open comments identify concentrated demand for a pool, splash pad, accessible paved trails, cross-country skiing, bocce, and improved neighborhood connections.

Activity/facility	Important	Somewhat	Not important
Sidewalks/trails for walking	84.5% (256)	13.2% (40)	2.0% (6)
Nature areas with nature trails	74.3% (225)	20.8% (63)	5.0% (15)
Bike lanes and bike paths	51.5% (156)	30.7% (93)	17.2% (52)
Beach and lake facilities	48.5% (147)	33.7% (102)	16.5% (50)
Playground structures	47.2% (143)	36.6% (111)	15.5% (47)
Ball fields	39.9% (121)	35.6% (108)	22.8% (69)
Picnic areas and pavilions	36.3% (110)	50.2% (152)	12.9% (39)
Sport courts	34.3% (104)	40.6% (123)	23.4% (71)
Canoeing/kayaking	28.7% (87)	49.5% (150)	20.1% (61)
Splash pad	27.4% (83)	29.7% (90)	41.6% (126)
Veterans Memorial	22.1% (67)	30.4% (92)	46.2% (140)
Dog park	17.2% (52)	35.6% (108)	46.2% (140)
Fishing	16.2% (49)	39.3% (119)	42.9% (130)
Public art	13.9% (42)	40.6% (123)	43.9% (133)
Golf	10.6% (32)	20.1% (61)	67.7% (205)
Skateboarding and/or BMX	4.6% (14)	27.1% (82)	66.7% (202)

Q8. Rate the importance of recreation programs.

Responses: 305. Broad program categories generally outperformed individual sports. Children's programs ranked highest, followed by concerts/shows/movies, special events, senior programs, exercise/fitness, and family programs. Adult and teen programs received substantial combined 'important' and 'somewhat important' ratings. The lower ratings for individual sports should be interpreted alongside the age and household profile of respondents and the open comments requesting more teen, adult, aquatic, indoor, and low-pressure recreation opportunities.

Program	Important	Somewhat	Not important
Children's programs	50.8% (155)	23.3% (71)	23.9% (73)
Concerts, shows, and movies	44.9% (137)	41.6% (127)	12.5% (38)
Special events	41.6% (127)	42.6% (130)	13.8% (42)
Senior programs	41.6% (127)	34.1% (104)	23.3% (71)
Exercise and fitness classes	41.3% (126)	38.7% (118)	19.0% (58)
Family programs	40.7% (124)	34.4% (105)	22.9% (70)
Summer camps	38.7% (118)	27.9% (85)	31.5% (96)
Adult programs	37.0% (113)	47.2% (144)	14.4% (44)
Teen programs	32.5% (99)	38.7% (118)	26.2% (80)
Soccer	31.8% (97)	26.2% (80)	39.3% (120)
Baseball/softball	23.9% (73)	30.5% (93)	43.3% (132)
Basketball	22.0% (67)	30.5% (93)	45.2% (138)
Tennis	18.0% (55)	32.5% (99)	47.2% (144)
Pickleball	16.7% (51)	36.7% (112)	44.6% (136)
Volleyball	14.1% (43)	33.1% (101)	50.5% (154)
Golf	12.1% (37)	21.6% (66)	63.9% (195)
Hockey	11.5% (35)	31.8% (97)	54.4% (166)
Figure skating	9.8% (30)	27.9% (85)	60.3% (184)
Cricket	2.6% (8)	18.0% (55)	76.7% (234)

Q9. Rate the importance of stewardship and land conservation activities.

Responses: 306. Stewardship activities received strong ratings across the board. Trash removal was nearly unanimous in importance, while invasive species removal and wildlife habitat management also ranked highly. Even the lowest item, stewardship education, was considered at least somewhat important by 86.3% of respondents. Comments added calls for native planting, reduced turf, cemetery habitat protection, full support for Harris Nature Center, and responsible management of fallen trees and fire risk.

Stewardship activity	Important	Somewhat	Not important
Trash removal from natural areas	86.6% (265)	12.8% (39)	0.0% (0)
Invasive species removal	74.2% (227)	21.2% (65)	3.9% (12)
Managing wildlife habitats	69.0% (211)	25.5% (78)	4.6% (14)
Wetland restoration	62.1% (190)	26.5% (81)	10.1% (31)
Added native plantings	56.5% (173)	31.1% (95)	11.8% (36)
Land stewardship education	46.4% (142)	39.9% (122)	12.8% (39)

Q10. What non-Meridian Township parks have you visited frequently, and what features did you enjoy most?

Responses: 165 answered; 145 skipped. Regional benchmarks most often referenced were Lake Lansing North/South, Hawk Island, McCormick Park/Williamston parks, Patriarche Park, Burchfield Park, and Fenner Nature Center. Respondents most valued trails, inclusive or large playgrounds, water and splash features, natural scenery, and support amenities such as accessible routes, parking, shade, and restrooms. Several respondents entered Meridian Township sites despite the question asking about non-Township parks, so placename totals should be treated as directional rather than exhaustive.

Frequently referenced benchmark	Mentions
Lake Lansing North/South or unspecified	41
Hawk Island Park	19
McCormick Park/Williamston parks	11
Patriarche Park	9
Burchfield Park	8
Fenner Nature Center	6
Brighton Recreation Area	5

Theme	Indicative mentions	Share of comments
Trails, walking, hiking, and connectivity	82	52.9%
Playgrounds and inclusive play	47	30.3%
Water, beaches, paddling, and splash features	41	26.5%
Nature, scenery, and wildlife	40	25.8%
Support amenities and accessibility	35	22.6%
Events, concerts, education, and exhibits	18	11.6%
Sports fields, courts, and active recreation	12	7.7%

Q11. Do you support or oppose continuation of the Township's deer management program?

Responses: 303. Support for continuing the highly managed deer harvest program was strong and decisive. Approximately 274 respondents (90.4%) supported continuation, while 29 (9.6%) opposed it. This result supports maintaining deer management as part of the Township's ecological stewardship and public safety approach, subject to continued monitoring and communication.

Response	Percentage	Count
Support	90.4%	274
Oppose	9.6%	29

Q12. What do you like most about Meridian Township Parks & Recreation?

Responses: 218 answered; 92 skipped. Respondents most often praised the variety and number of nearby opportunities, natural areas and green space, trails, youth and family programming, community events, and the overall condition of the system. Positive comments also recognized Township staff, the Senior Center, Harris Nature Center, the Farmers' Market, and the sense of community created through programs and events.

Theme	Indicative mentions	Share of comments
Variety, abundance, proximity, and access	62	28.4%
Natural areas, green space, and conservation	55	25.2%
Trails, pathways, and active transportation	54	24.8%
Youth, family, and recreation programming	42	19.3%
Community events, Marketplace, farmers market, and concerts	40	18.3%
Maintenance, cleanliness, safety, and condition	29	13.3%
Staff quality and responsiveness	15	6.9%
Senior Center and senior programming	12	5.5%

Q13. What would you like to see different at Meridian Township Parks & Recreation?

Responses: 182 answered; 128 skipped. Requested changes were diverse but clustered around improved maintenance and support amenities, better communication and scheduling, stronger stewardship, and safer or more continuous walking and bicycling connections. Facility requests included indoor recreation, a pool or aquatic center, a splash pad, functional ice skating, a permanent Senior Center solution, refreshed playgrounds, and improved fields/courts. Comments also emphasized fiscal restraint, partnerships with schools and neighboring communities, and enforcement of leash rules.

Theme	Indicative mentions	Share of comments
Maintenance, renovation, restrooms, and basic amenities	39	21.4%
Programs, events, communications, and scheduling	37	20.3%
Natural area stewardship and preservation	33	18.1%
Trails, sidewalks, bicycle connectivity, and access	32	17.6%
Indoor recreation, pool, splash pad, and ice	19	10.4%
Senior Center facility and senior services	17	9.3%
Sports fields, courts, and active recreation	14	7.7%
Playgrounds and inclusive play	9	4.9%

Q14. Is there anything else you would like the Township to consider?

Responses: 132 answered; 178 skipped. Final comments reinforced many earlier findings. Respondents discussed programming and partnerships, natural area stewardship, trail safety and access, indoor/aquatic recreation, maintenance capacity, and Senior Center planning. Several offered specific operational suggestions involving Towner Park fields, trailhead parking, park restrooms, communications, dog leash enforcement, school partnerships, and Marketplace expansion. A smaller group urged limits on new spending or opposed specific events or standalone facilities.

Theme	Indicative mentions	Share of comments
Programs, events, partnerships, and communications	32	24.2%
Natural area stewardship and land preservation	25	18.9%
Trails, bicycle connections, access, and safety	17	12.9%
Indoor recreation, pool, splash pad, and ice	16	12.1%
Maintenance, renovation, restrooms, and staffing	13	9.8%
Senior Center and age inclusive recreation	13	9.8%
Sports fields, courts, and active recreation	10	7.6%
Playgrounds and inclusive play	5	3.8%

Q15. How aware were you of the range of services provided by the Parks & Recreation Department?

Responses: 305. Overall department awareness was high: 39.0% were very aware and 52.1% somewhat aware. Only 7.5% were slightly aware or not aware at all. The contrast between this broad awareness and the low visitation/recognition of many individual assets suggests that communications should focus less on introducing the Department and more on explaining what each park or preserve offers, where entrances and parking are located, and how sites connect.

Awareness	Percentage	Count
Very aware	39.0%	119
Somewhat aware	52.1%	159
Not sure	1.3%	4
Slightly aware	6.2%	19
Not aware at all	1.3%	4

Q16. Are you a resident of Meridian Township?

Responses: 304. The response pool was predominantly local: 90.8% were Meridian Township residents and 9.2% were nonresidents. This supports using the findings to understand resident priorities while retaining the regional user perspective reflected in the nonresident share.

Residency	Percentage	Count
Yes	90.8%	276
No	9.2%	28

Q17. How long have you lived in Meridian Township?

Responses: 304. Longterm residents were the largest group: 45.4% had lived in the Township more than 15 years. Another 46.1% reported 15 years or less, and 8.6% identified as nonresidents. The mix provides both established and newer perspectives, though long-term residents carry the largest single voice.

Length of residency	Percentage	Count
Less than 5 years	16.8%	51
6 to 10 years	15.5%	47
11 to 15 years	13.8%	42
More than 15 years	45.4%	138
Nonresident	8.6%	26

Q18. In what ZIP code area do you live?

Responses: 305. ZIP code 48864 accounted for 53.1% of responses, followed by 48840 (28.5%) and 48823 (12.5%). Other ZIP codes collectively represented a small share. This distribution suggests the survey reached both major Township community areas, with stronger representation from 48864.

ZIP code	Percentage	Count
48864	53.1%	162
48840	28.5%	87
48823	12.5%	38
48824	0.3%	1
48825	0.0%	0
48895	1.6%	5
48854	0.3%	1
Other	3.6%	11

Q19. How old are you?

Responses: 303. The age profile was weighted toward older adults. Respondents age 65 and over formed the largest group (34.3%), followed by ages 35 to 44 (27.7%) and ages 45 to 54 (16.5%). Respondents under age 35 represented 10.2%. This distribution is important when interpreting the prominence of Senior Center issues and the comparatively lower ratings for some youth or action sport facilities.

Age	Percentage	Count
Under 25	1.3%	4
25 to 34	8.9%	27
35 to 44	27.7%	84
45 to 54	16.5%	50
55 to 64	11.2%	34
65 and over	34.3%	104

Q20. How many children under 18 live in your household?

Responses: 303. More than half of respondents (55.5%) reported no children under 18 in the household. Households with two children made up 21.8%, followed by one child (12.2%) and three children (7.9%). This helps explain why broad community programming and trails scored strongly while some individual youth sports received lower overall importance ratings.

Children under 18	Percentage	Count
0	55.5%	168
1	12.2%	37
2	21.8%	66
3	7.9%	24
4	2.0%	6
5 or more	0.7%	2

Cross Planning Considerations

The following considerations from the survey should be used for future discussions and use in the parks & recreation master plan. They are not final recommendations and should be evaluated alongside stakeholder input, park inventory findings, staff capacity, costs, accessibility assessments, and DNR planning requirements.

- **Adopt a reinvest first framework.** Prioritize lifecycle maintenance, accessibility, restrooms, fields, courts, playgrounds, parking, and other existing assets before committing to significant system expansion.
- **Make walking, trails, and connections a systemwide organizing principle.** Address gaps between neighborhoods, parks, preserves, schools, and regional trails, with special attention to protected crossings and routes usable by people with disabilities.
- **Pair preservation with active stewardship.** Continuing invasive species control, habitat management, native planting, wetland restoration, trash removal, deer management, and volunteer stewardship, supported by sufficient staffing and public education.
- **Improve asset level awareness and wayfinding.** Provide clearer maps, cross streets, entrances, parking information, photographs, trail lengths, accessibility details, and activity descriptions for parks and preserves.
- **Evaluate indoor and year-round recreation strategically.** Study demand, partnerships, operating costs, and regional alternatives for indoor recreation, and winter recreation before selecting a facility approach.
- **Resolve the Senior Center question through an inclusive facility strategy.** Continue to work towards a permanent location, expanded hours and meals, accessibility, multigenerational use, school or regional partnerships, and long-term operating costs.
- **Strengthening program reach across ages and schedules.** Balance strong youth and event offerings with teen, adult, older adult, low-pressure, evening, weekend, and winter opportunities.
- **Use regional benchmarks selectively.** Learn from Lake Lansing, Hawk Island, McCormick, Patriarche, Burchfield, and Fenner while tailoring improvements to Meridian's existing assets, fiscal capacity, and natural resource values.

Provide safe, accessible facilities and leisure opportunities for all persons regardless of their physical and socio-economic characteristics. (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

- a. Increase multi-use trails in parks and natural areas.
- b. Improve amenities for universal access in all park facilities including improved signage, more year-round restrooms, and benches along trails and pathways.
- c. Provide scholarship opportunities to help offset program registration costs when needed.
- d. Continue to make necessary program amendments to accommodate special need requirements for universal inclusion.
- e. Provide culturally diverse programs and events that celebrate the make-up of our community.
- f. Continue support of the Friends of Historic Meridian and Nokomis Cultural Heritage Center and their work to educate the community on cultural history and, language, and practices.
- f. Continue to provide regular and consistent facility maintenance to deter vandalism and keep park users safe.
- g. Provide regular programming or self-guided recreation opportunities to promote regular and consistent usage by the community.
- h. Continue partnership with Police Department to open and close each park daily providing an obvious presence.

Continue to focus on Environmental Sustainability, Education and Land Stewardship.

- a. Practice environmentally friendly maintenance practices in parks and land preserves.
- b. Utilize energy-saving opportunities for new construction and renovation projects.

- c. Promote recycling opportunities in park facilities.
- d. Improve and promote non-motorized transportation connections between parks and neighborhoods.
- e. Monitor and remove invasive species, encourage native plantings and educate the public about ecosystem health.
- f. Monitor and respond to early signs of erosion, disease, and facility deterioration.
- g. Support the continued popularity and growth of the Farmers Market.
- h. Support the continued success and environmental education opportunities provided by the Harris Nature Center operations.
- i. Support the Environmental Commission's "Protect Our Wetlands" initiative including "Build Back the Buffer," education, community outreach, marketing and restoration projects, in an effort to mitigate negative impacts of flooding.

Plan for the continued availability of financial, physical and personnel resources to support the parks and recreation system.

- a. Continue seeking partnerships and collaborative opportunities.
- b. Seek grants, sponsorships and donations to best leverage local tax funding.
- c. Based on increased park usage and the addition of new park facilities, evaluate the maintenance division's increased workload versus current staffing level to determine opportunities to employ new best practices and/or opportunities for increased staffing.
- d. Based on survey results requesting more events, arts and music programs, reinstate the Parks and Recreation Specialist position eliminated during the pandemic.
- e. Continue to encourage and utilize citizen volunteers.

Utilize recreation programs and events as a vehicle to educate and instill positive personal attributes such as ethics, values, citizenship, sportsmanship and leadership.

- a. Encourage and expand the use of parks for exercise and stress relief regimens

for all ages and abilities.

- b. Expand and seek opportunities for collaborations, partnerships and shared services.

- c. Seek grants and sponsorships to support recreation services and events.
- d. Provide healthy outlets for teens and adolescents.
- e. Provide programs and services during a variety of days and times to reach the greatest number of participants.
- f. Provide activities that focus on health, wellness and physical fitness and positive youth development.
- g. Provide recreational activities and programs to meet the diverse needs of the community.

Improve program registration software services, pavilion rental process, and dog park membership systems

The 2022 Master Plan goals are:

Provide safe, accessible facilities and leisure opportunities for all persons regardless of their physical and socio-economic characteristics. (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

- a. Increase multi-use trails in parks and natural areas.
- b. Improve amenities for universal access in all park facilities including improved signage, more year-round restrooms, and benches along trails and pathways.
- c. Provide scholarship opportunities to help offset program registration costs when needed.
- d. Continue to make necessary program amendments to accommodate special need requirements for universal inclusion.
- e. Provide culturally diverse programs and events that celebrate the make-up of our community.
- f. Continue support of the Friends of Historic Meridian and Nokomis Cultural Heritage Center and their work to educate the community on cultural history and, language, and practices.
- f. Continue to provide regular and consistent facility maintenance to deter vandalism and keep park users safe.
- g. Provide regular programming or self-guided recreation opportunities to promote regular and consistent usage by the community.
- h. Continue partnership with Police Department to open and close each park daily providing an obvious presence.

Continue to focus on Environmental Sustainability, Education and Land Stewardship.

- a. Practice environmentally friendly maintenance practices in parks and land preserves.
- b. Utilize energy-saving opportunities for new construction and renovation projects.
- c. Promote recycling opportunities in park facilities.

9.B.

- d. Improve and promote non-motorized transportation connections between parks and neighborhoods.
- e. Monitor and remove invasive species, encourage native plantings and educate the public about ecosystem health.
- f. Monitor and respond to early signs of erosion, disease, and facility deterioration.
- g. Support the continued popularity and growth of the Farmers Market.
- h. Support the continued success and environmental education opportunities provided by the Harris Nature Center operations.
- i. Support the Environmental Commission's "Protect Our Wetlands" initiative including "Build Back the Buffer," education, community outreach, marketing and restoration projects, in an effort to mitigate negative impacts of flooding.

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9.B.

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- f. Provide activities that focus on health, wellness and physical fitness and positive youth development.
- g. Provide recreational activities and programs to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- h. Improve program registration software services, pavilion rental process, and dog park membership systems.

Communication

- a. Maintain production of the Prime Meridian Magazine as an effective communication tool.
- b. Develop a marketing plan to be more efficient and effective with various methods of communication.
- c. Utilize various methods of promotion and advertising to effectively reach the broadest segment of the community as possible.

Meridian Township Park Commission Agenda Tracker - 2026

11.A.

				Televised			
		14-Jul	11-Aug	8-Sep	13-Oct	10-Nov	8-Dec
Presentations			Adventure Team	Nokomis			
Communications							
Discussion	CIP 2027 Plan	5Yr. P&R Master Plan	5Yr. P&R Master Plan - Goals & Objectives	5Yr. P&R Master Plan - Draft Review	5Yr. P&R Master Plan - Public Hearing and Final Approval		
						Memorial Policy	
Action	Ballot Language	CIP 2027 Plan-First Review		CIP 2027 Plan-First Review-Mike preferred date	Election of officers		
					Final Review and Recomendation to the Board for Approval		
Directors Report			Emily's Baby Gift				
Closed Session							