

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

MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2013
6 PM – MERIDIAN SERVICE CENTER

Members Present: Julie Brixie, Frank Hatfield, James Kielbaso, Jon Mayes, Robert Rusch, Margo Smith (arrived 6:25 pm), Mark Stephens

Members Absent: Steve Webster

Staff: Finance Director Diana Hasse, Land Management Coordinator Jane Greenway, Parks and Recreation Department Secretary Robin Faust

Public Present: None

1. Call the Meeting to Order

Chair Kielbaso called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm

2. Approval of Agenda

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER RUSCH SECONDED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

Discussion:

Board Member Hatfield requested to add: Southwest Meridian Uplands Land Preserve (Sturk) Site Restoration Update and Access to Red Cedar Glen as discussion items under Old Business, and Status of Inactive Members under New Business.

Chair Kielbaso asked to add: Notification of Land Preservation Advisory Board Meetings.

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER HATFIELD SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

3. Public Remarks

Chair Kielbaso welcomed new board member Treasurer Brixie.

4. Approve of Minutes for December 12, 2012

Page 1, Under Members Present, delete James Kielbaso
Page 3, 31st line, insert “except the small at-large assessments” after “any assessment” (...paying for any assessment except the small at-large assessment...); 35th sentence, replace the word “not” with “require” (...it does require some...); 36th sentence, change “possible” to “possibly”, “bridge” with “crossing”, the sentence will read ...and possibly a crossing over the area; insert “there is still a concern regarding the necessity of a bridge over the outlets nearest the river; this area can be looked at when the final plan for the project is completed...”

BOARD MEMBER HATFIELD MOVED, BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 12, 2012 MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. Voice vote. Motion passed.

5. Communications

None

6. Presentations

- a. Financial status of Land Preservation Program, Diana Hasse, Director of Finance

Director Hasse summarized the distributed Preliminary Financial Statements as of December 12, 2012 as follows:

Balance Sheet:

Total Combined Assets:	\$4,466,306.28
Total Combined Liabilities:	\$69,914.56
Unreserved Ending Fund Balance:	\$1,349,750.11
Reserved Ending Fund Balance:	\$3,046,641.61
Ending Fund Balance:	\$4,396,391.72

Income Statement:

Millage and investment income	\$538,965.26
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Expenditures:

Land Acquisition	\$32,927.49
Wages	\$34,801.90
Maintenance	\$39,140.46

Net Income:	\$432,095.41
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Discussion:

- Need to look at the type of maintenance we need to perform; what do we want to preserve and how do we accomplish that
- What are our project activities
- What is life after the millage; will maintenance be covered by the endowment or do we need more money
- Need to look at the dollars as if the millage will not be renewed and plan accordingly
- Suggest looking at putting aside 25% during the length of millage for future maintenance
- Need to look at the properties we are still interested in, then look at the numbers
- We need goals and not be “need” driven
- Treasurer Brixie briefly described how the investments are being handled.
- What are the project priorities:
 - Restoration of Southwest Meridian Uplands(Sturk) parcel; Coordinator Greenway reported she had walked the site with Board Member Stephens and Vern Stephens, Designs by Nature, last week, Vern Stephens is preparing a preliminary plan and cost estimate for the site restoration project and we hope to have it for the next meeting
 - Red Cedar Glen access, suggest installing a gate, posting open/close sign, how to discourage bikers through the area, need to address existing trails maintenance, development of new trails, should We use hard surface to help deter people from going into sensitive areas, could talk with Engineering Department about using pathway funds to help with funding, need to address the connection issue
 - What are the big maintenance issues; suggested talking with Nature Conservancy about restoration of the ash trees; are there any potential tree replacement programs; native plantings; what are the encroachment issues; talk with Environmental Commission about how bad dumping leaves is (yard waste dumping issue), invasive species removal and control and need to develop educational materials to educate public about these issues (could work with local schools, Sabrina Jenkins & HOM-TV staff).
 - Removal of items from Preserves like fire pits, structures, invasive species
 - Establish neighborhood support groups like we have in Red Cedar Glen and Northwest Preserve areas
 - Have public work days
 - Hire a seasonal land manager/land steward/land ranger to walk the land preserves, talk with neighbors, look for encroachments and invasives, host work groups, etc.
 - General restoration with prescribed burns, erosion controls

- Signage and boundary markings, boundary fencing along sites where necessary, useful and appropriate such as sensitive areas we wish to protect

Coordinator Greenway will work with Director Maisner on the development of a budget for the next meeting.

7. New Business

a. Status of Inactive Members

Board Member Hatfield asked to bring this up because we need active, attending members to do the Board's business and if they are not attending, they are not contributing. He asked if there was something in the by-laws to address this. Staff was asked to research this issue and report to the Board at the next meeting.

8. Old Business

a. Southwest Meridian Uplands (Sturk) Restoration Update – This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

b. Access to Red Cedar Glen – This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

9. Land Management Coordinator report

- WHIP Grant - Coordinator Greenway reported the federally funded WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program) grant has been completed. This grant was received four years ago for \$25,000 and the funds were used to seed the savannah and to provide invasive species management. The Township received an additional \$2,500 because the work was in an urban area. Plans are underway for the final burning at the Davis/Foster Preserve in early spring
- Deer Management Program – At the end of December, it was reported that 89 deer were harvested (43 were harvested last year) and this occurred even after addressing the language concern in the Ordinance. 18 deer were harvested from the Sapphire Lakes private condominium natural area. When asked what the goal of this program is, Coordinator Greenway replied the Township Board began the program due to the number of deer/car accidents and complaints from residents. She can report there were less resident complaints this year than last year and will be verifying the accident number with the Police Department. When asked about a February harvest, Coordinator Greenway replied there is no justification for one and the wildlife consultant she spoke with at the DNR said that they typically do not approve harvests held outside of the hunting season. The Board briefly discussed the expenses and which account paid for them.
- Southwest Land Preserve (Sturk) Preserve – Coordinator Greenway reported the boundary for this parcel is irregular and the site needs to be posted. KEBS will be proceeding with this project in the near future installing

permanent marker posts and signage. She reported on the recent site visit and is excited about the opportunity to create a prairie using native upland plants and grasses. Board Member Stephens has suggested working with Bennett Woods Elementary to do an outdoor classroom with this restoration project. They will be working with Mr. Heinselman from US Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and there may be some cost sharing with this project. Soil testing will be needed and they plan to start with plug plants and some grasses. They will also be talking with the Drain Commissioners office about restoring the wetland on this site.

- Central Meridian Wetlands – Coordinator Greenway reported the boundary needs to be reposted due to problem that occurred during the deer harvest program with hunters and exact location of the property lines.

10. Other
a. Notification of Board Packets

Chair Kielbaso reported at the joint meeting, there were discussions on the posting of meetings. The Township Board is now posting agendas, meeting packet and minutes on the website and asked what is being posted for the Land Preservation Board. Secretary Faust reported the agenda is posted the Friday before the meeting and meeting minutes when approved. When asked about posting the meeting packet online, Secretary Faust replied at the current time, not all Boards and Commissions are posting their meeting packets online and this issue is being researched.

11. Public Comment

None

12. Closed Session

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

Roll Call:

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

NAYS: None

The Board entered into closed session at 8:30 pm.

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

Roll Call

AYES: Board Members Rusch, Brixie, Stephens, Mayes, Smith, Hatfield,
Kielbaso
NAYS: None

The Board returned to open session at 9:03 pm.

BOARD MEMBER STEPHENS MOVED, BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE
SECONDED, TO HAVE STAFF TO PROCEED AS DIRECTED DURING
CLOSED SESSION. Voice vote. Motion passed.

13. Adjournment

BOARD MEMBER BRIXIE MOVED, BOARD MEMBER HATFIELD SECONDED,
TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. Voice vote. Motion passed

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.