



Spartans looking to fix 2nd-half woes

SPORTS, 1B

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WALK IN THE PARK



The paved walking path at Towner Road Park on Wednesday, Sept. 3, in Haslett. PHOTO S BY NICK KING/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

Towner Road Park offers pickleball, wetlands, trails

Nick King
Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

A Walk in the Park is an ongoing series from State Journal photographer Nick King, who intends to explore Lansing area parks one hour at a time. If you have a suggestion of a park he should visit, email him at nking@lsj.com.

Towner Road Park in Haslett is a vibrant community hub with diverse offerings and a serene atmosphere that makes it a great option for families, athletes, and nature lovers.

Located at 2055 Towner Road, this 24-acre park, which Meridian Township opened in 2018, has quickly become a cornerstone of outdoor recreation, urban accessibility and a nature-filled retreat.

Visitors to the park will find six dedicated pickleball courts for enthusiasts of the popular sport. There are two multi-use athletic fields perfect for football, soccer and for other activities requiring open space. The park also has two ballfields equipped with dugouts for baseball, softball and kickball. Plans for a new playground are in the works, promising even more fun for younger visitors.

For those looking for exercise and nature, there's a paved trail that stretches a third of a mile around the perimeter of the park. Patrons can enjoy a leisurely pathway that takes you past three different wetlands areas that are chock-full of plants, pollinators, birds and other wildlife. There are also a few nature trails in the mature trees to be explored. There are benches positioned along the trail loop.

A large pavilion, grills and various picnic areas offer ideal spots for family gatherings or quiet lunches outdoors.

Between the two ballfields are permanent bathrooms and easy access to an automated external defibrillator in case of medical emergencies. The park's open green spaces and trails create a dog-friendly environment. All dogs must be leashed.



A bumble bee lands on a blooming plant at Towner Road Park.



Phragmites blow in the wind at Towner Road Park.



The pickleball courts at Towner Road Park.



The large pavilion at Towner Road Park.

City charter changes coming to Nov. 4 ballot

Mike Ellis
Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

LANSING — Don Dean said he was strongly opposed to the proposed revisions to Lansing's city charter, essentially a constitution, until he heard from the elected officials who are making the revisions.

"I was dead set against it, but I'm going to relook at it now," Dean said Sept. 3 at the Foster Community Center, on the city's east side.

He was one of more than a dozen people who attended the first of four public meetings where Lansing City Charter Commission members are presenting their work: A series of governmental changes that will be on the Nov. 4 ballot.

The biggest changes would include the addition of a ninth council member and changing the election time period from half of the council every two years to a full council election every four years, starting in 2029.

Other changes would eliminate long-sought representation for neighboring communities like Delta Township and East Lansing on the board of the city-owned Lansing Board of Water & Light, spurred in part by the ice storm controversy more than a decade ago. And candidates with some felony convictions would be eligible to be on the city council.

Some of the changes, including hiring an independent internal auditor and creating a new online city tax and debt dashboard, would require Mayor Andy Schor's administration to make recommendations that would fund the additions. Additionally, the city

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Former Lansing city attorney Jim Smiertka dies

Mike Ellis
Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

LANSING — Longtime Lansing city attorney Jim Smiertka, who spent 18 of the last 30 years as the city's top attorney and worked for the last four mayors, died in late August at age 79.

Smiertka Greg Venker, the current city attorney, praised Smiertka as a longtime mentor and friend who had "an amazing legal career and an excellent life."

He said Smiertka took on the KKK as a city attorney and drafted the legal frameworks that made the General Motors Delta Assembly Plant and the Lansing Lignuts possible.

"He came to represent consistent, persistent legal work for the city of Lansing," Venker said. "He genuinely loved this city and worked constantly to make it better."

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