

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD -**APPROVED**-
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198 517.853.4000,
Township Hall Room
Tuesday, July 23, 2024, 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis,
Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

ABSENT: NONE

STAFF: Interim Manager Schmitt, Director Gebes, Manager Diehl, Fire Marshal Millerov

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Hendrickson called the July 23, 2024, Regular Township Board meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Hendrickson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board. Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, and Trustee Wilson present at 6:00 pm.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Eagle Scout Project

Manager Diehl introduced Nathan Bemer, Eagle Scout in Troop 125 from Okemos. Nathan's project will focus on assisting HOMTV with digitization of VHS and CD formats to make those items accessible to the public.

B. Introduction of New Full Time Firefighters/EMTs – Max Slabbekoorn and Benjamin Connors

Fire Marshal Millerov introduced Max Slabberkoorn and Benjamin Connors, both completing their Paramedic education and coming to Meridian Township with prior EMT experience.

C. Interim Manager's Semi-Annual Goals Update

Interim Manager Schmitt updated on the following goals:

- 1) Enhance Public Safety – as of Dec, police should be at full staffing, Fire is almost at full staffing and plans for gender neutral housing are under review

- 2) Community/Senior Center – public meetings are in progress and a survey will be sent soon. Funding is being obtained
- 3) Citizen Outreach and enhance Citizen Communication – listening sessions have occurred and more information will be provided regarding those sessions. Prime Meridian Magazine has been sent and is a popular item for people to take away.
- 4) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – great progress has been made, building upon community events. Policy review is making great progress.
- 5) Environment, Infrastructure, and Recreation Sustainability – RFP for North Fire Station is going out, staff is working on interpretive signage for wetlands, Central Park Pavilion is complete, MSU to Lake Lansing pathway is well underway and expected to be completed in 2026, water meter replacement program is underway, electric car charging station is planned.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Hendrickson opened comments from the public at 6:19 pm.

Julie Brixie, State Representative, gave an update of items she has introduced in Legislature to help residents, HB 5865 through HB 5868.

Vinod Singh, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Shivkumar Singh, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Harish Tekchandani, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Pushpa Tekchandani, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Tina Awokuse, Township resident, spoke in opposition to marijuana.

Neera Tewari-Singh, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

David Pawsat, Township resident, spoke in opposition to marijuana.

Suresh, State DHHS employee, spoke in opposition to marijuana dispensaries.

Raja Kalatturu, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Srinivasa Marpina, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Ravi Shankar Chihbomma, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Venkata Bonam, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Sunita Ojha, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Julie Brixie, State Representative, clarified that the resident who inferred that she opposed the SUP for the dispensary was incorrect and she does support the SUP.

Sanjay Ojha, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Narender Moluguri, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Kannan Seshiyer, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Siva Parupalli, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Tannu Arora, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Jamie Garmo, representative of SAANDS Meridian LLC, spoke in support of proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Jian Ren, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Debora Dantus, Township resident, spoke in opposition to marijuana dispensaries.

Siva Nadimpalla, Township resident, spoke in opposition marijuana dispensaries.

Marcos Dantus, Township resident, spoke in opposition to marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Clara Regal, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Bhanu Pratap Singh, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Ashim Aggarwal, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Sowmya Spiram Narayanan, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Supervisor Hendrickson closed comments from the public at 7:13 pm.

At 7:13 pm Supervisor Hendrickson called a 5-minute recess. The board reconvened at 7:18 pm.

6. INTERIM TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Interim Manager Schmitt gave updates about the following:

- Local road program is progressing. Two streets on hold for drain project.
- Promotions in the police department
- Change to new banking institution is almost complete
- Thanked IT team and Deputy Manager Opsommer for their quick response to the CrowdStrike outage

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer Deschaine gave the CATA report to the Board, and that he has been elected Secretary/Treasurer of the CATA board.

Clerk Guthrie noted that CATA will transport people to their precinct location for free on election day. Asked residents to return their absent ballots as soon as they are able. Gave times for early voting and election day voting. Met with Department of Homeland Security to have election security assessed.

Trustee Trezise gave an update about Policy updates. All of the general policy for employees has been reviewed, updated, and given to legal counsel. The Policy Review Committee is working on Board Policy review.

Trustee Wilson spoke regarding the Community Resource Commission's partnership with Kiwanis and Rotary to provide backpacks with school supplies to low-income students in the area. Invited residents to the July 24 meeting to see the proposed Community/Senior Center plans.

Trustee McCurtis updated the board regarding an upcoming ribbon cutting at Davis-Foster Preserve.

Supervisor Hendrickson attended the previous Community/Senior Center discussion and expressed his thanks to the community for their feedback.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Supervisor Hendrickson spoke about the changes that had been made on the agenda.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the agenda. Supported by Trustee McCurtis.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Hendrickson listed the items on the agenda and noted that the Liquor License Regulation Update has been reintroduced due to technical changes made by the attorneys.

Trustee Wilson moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Supported by Trustee Sundland.

ROLL CALL VOTE **YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson**

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

Clerk Guthrie noted an item that needs to be redacted and an updated packet will be posted.

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY

NONE

11. HEARINGS

NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Final Plat #19012 – Sanctuary 3

Interim Manager Schmitt gave an overview of the Plat process and explained the details of this Plat. Clarified that there will be no utility impact.

Trustee Trezise moved to approve the resolution for Final Plat #19012, Giguere Homes, for Sanctuary III, a single-family subdivision consisting of 7 lots located east of Hulett Road, north of Jolly Road, off of Robins Way. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE **YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson**

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Text Amendment #2024-04 – Local Prosecution of Marijuana Violations Ordinance

Chief Grillo and Attorney Cullin Harkness presented the ordinance. Attorney Harkness clarified that this is not tied to the dispensaries, that this is an item that has been in process for a while, and this was the most convenient time to present it.

Clerk Guthrie asked for clarity regarding what Township properties are covered by this Ordinance. Interim Manager Schmitt clarified that the language in the Ordinance does cover all township properties.

B. Special Use Permit #24-09 – SAANDS Meridian LLC – 3520 Okemos Road – Recreational Marijuana Retailer

Interim Manager Schmitt gave an overview of the process that has occurred to date and gave background information regarding the overall marijuana application process. He directed the Board to review the SUP regarding the nine standards listed in the Zoning Ordinance.

Supervisor Hendrickson clarified for residents that the Board must focus on the Special Use criteria set forth in Zoning Ordinance and cannot consider items outside of the scope of the nine criteria. He then asked for a review of the 2019 traffic study. Interim Manager Schmitt stated that for the purpose of a traffic study the study is based on traffic expected for a dispensary but does not differentiate between dispensary types, has been conducted for the addition of this specific business and that the questions surrounding the other development in the area since the study are not pertinent to this specific study. It is the responsibility of the Road Department to seek further information if they think there is a problem with the collective developments in that area.

Supervisor Hendrickson asked for clarity regarding the location of the dispensary. Interim Manager Schmitt clarified that the zoning ordinance allows a dispensary in this zone.

Supervisor Hendrickson asked the applicant to provide an overview of the odor control strategy for the facility. The applicant stated that HEPA air filters will be used, and all products will be packaged before arriving and remain packaged at the facility.

Trustee McCurtis and Clerk Guthrie asked for more information regarding the zoning criteria which state that the project will not adversely affect or be hazardous to neighboring uses and that the project will not be detrimental to surrounding properties or the community. Schmitt clarified that the property is retail use and neighboring properties are commercial which typically are not affected by an additional commercial use. There is no long-term study to indicate that there would be an adverse effect of this type of use on neighboring properties. There would need to be something in the application to indicate that there would be an impact on properties that are located further from the property in question. The location criteria were established in the zoning overlay district and is not in question in this SUP.

Clerk Guthrie asked how the SUP meets criteria six. Interim Manager Schmitt clarified that the criteria refers to public services being available for use and if the public services available are sufficient to serve the applicant, it does not refer to location. Location criteria are found in the zoning overlay district, not the SUP criteria.

Clerk Guthrie asked for more information about the applicant's ability to expand the facility. Interim Manager Schmitt clarified that the property is split in such a manner that it cannot be expanded without either being out of compliance with proximity to a church to the north or exceeding the setback area and parking area requirements.

Supervisor Hendrickson asked staff to construct two motions for the next meeting when this item will be brought to the Board for action.

- C. Ordinance 2024-07 – Rezone Two Parcels at 350 Haslett Road and the Adjacent Vacant Parcel from RR, Rural Residential, to RA, Single-Family Residential

Interim Manager Schmitt gave an overview of the rezoning request and the process as has occurred thus far.

Supervisor Hendrickson stated that the Board is exploring the possibility of changing the practice of three step process to allow the final action to be taken as part of the Consent Agenda instead of requiring it be an Action Item.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Hendrickson opened comments from the public at 8:45 pm

Allison Kochan, Township resident, spoke against people other than property owners speaking during Item 5. Citizen's Address, spoke against marijuana dispensaries

Venkata Bonam, Township resident, spoke in opposition to the SUP process.

Tina Awokuse, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads and spoke in opposition to the SUP process.

Jian Ren, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

David Pawsat, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Marcos Dantos, Township resident, spoke in opposition to proposed marijuana dispensary at the corner of Okemos and Jolly Roads.

Supervisor Hendrickson closed comments from the public at 9:01 pm

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

NONE

16. ADJOURNMENT

Treasurer Deschaine moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee McCurtis.

VOICE VOTE

YEAS: Supervisor Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee McCurtis, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm.

Scott Hendrickson
Township Supervisor



Deborah Guthrie
Township Clerk