

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD JOINT MEETING - **APPROVED** -
PARK COMMISSION
PLANNING COMMISSION
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2014 **6:00 P.M.**

TOWNSHIP BOARD

PRESENT: Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus, Trustees Scales, Veenstra (6:07 P.M.), Wilson
ABSENT: Trustee Styka

CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

PRESENT: Chair Benenson
ABSENT: Vice-Chair Crowley, Members Kiyak, Lathrop, Seipel, Styka

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

PRESENT: Members Weaver, LeGoff
ABSENT: Chair Dale, Vice-Chair Fisher, Members Cawood, Hagen, Korrey, Lewis, Raynak, Spanos

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PRESENT: Chair Madle, Members Barr, Brixie, Buck, Dreyfus, Ledebuhr, Walsh, Tenaglia, White
ABSENT: Members Carlson, Rowlee, Singh

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

PRESENT: Chair N. Jackson, Vice-Chair Moran, Member Searl
ABSENT: Member Anderson, Kielbaso, Sarver, Scherbarth

LAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

PRESENT: Members Brixie, Mayes
ABSENT: Chair Kielbaso, Members Hatfield, Rusch, Smith, Stephens, Webster

PARK COMMISSION

PRESENT: Chair Wilson, Commissioners Aronoff, Banas
ABSENT: Commissioners Jaramillo, Stephens

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRESENT: Chair Jackson, Vice-Chair Deits, DeLind, Hildebrandt, Salehi, Scott-Craig
ABSENT: Commissioners Cordill, Honicky, Ianni

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

PRESENT: Chair Beauchine, Members Hershiser, Jackson, LeGoff, Ohlrogge
ABSENT: Alternate #2 Deschaine

STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Director of Community Planning and Development
Mark Kieselbach, Director of Public Works and Engineering Ray Severy, Fire Chief
Fred Cowper, Director of Information and Technology Stephen Gebes, Associate
Planner Peter Menser

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor LeGoff called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor LeGoff led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. SPECIAL RECOGNITION – Introduction of Fire Inspector Tavis Millerov and Firefighter Chris Dinsdale

Fire Chief Cowper introduced new Fire Inspector Tavis Millerov and new Firefighter Chris Dinsdale.

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Ann Alchin, 5972 Cypress, Haslett, outlined her recollection of the series of events regarding the fire station “fiasco.” She believed the Township Board is spending taxpayer money foolishly relative to this issue. Ms. Alchin requested the Supervisor conduct Board meetings in a professional manner.

Rx Harrington, 820 Piper Road, Haslett, spoke in opposition to the Township’s police forfeiture contract with Bodwin and Associates.

David Strobl, 1320 Cove Court, Okemos, spoke to the issue of the bond being attached to the November, 2012 ballot language location for the new central fire station. He voiced several concerns with the fire station as proposed. Mr. Strobl also spoke to the ballot language for the new central fire station which used the word “replacement”, and questioned whether it was mandatory for training facilities, classrooms and 61 parking spaces to be included.

Will Tyler White, 13630 Main Street, Bath, believed the Township Board of Trustees is being incorrectly referred to as the Township Board. He expressed concern with the process used to make recent Board appointments and the failure to make two reappointments of well-qualified individuals who had served for many years without explanation. Mr. White requested an explanation for those decisions.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, stated the pathway which services Murphy school-aged children in the Benson Hills neighborhood has become even more snow covered since he last spoke to the Board about this issue. He objected to the Resolution Approving the Consumers Energy Streetlight Contract being placed as an action item on tonight’s agenda, stating it should be placed on for discussion first.

Betsy Strobl, 2056 Central Park Drive, Okemos, expressed her continued opposition to SUP #13121, the proposed central fire station.

Lawrence Nolan, attorney for the Autumn Park Condominium owners, 4765 Nakoma Drive, Okemos, requested Board members listen to each other’s divergent opinions. He offered statistics on 2013 total fire and EMS calls for the existing central fire station, stating the percentage of fire calls is 2.05%, compared to 97.95% of EMS calls. Mr. Nolan requested the Township replace the fire station as stated in the ballot language, not add a training tower, training center, administrative

offices, etc. He believed the Township should simply replicate the recently closed central fire station.

Sue Simkin, 2032 Central Park Drive, Okemos, offered five (5) locations within the Township on which she believed the new central fire station could be located and which would alleviate the concerns of the Autumn Park Condominium owners.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, inquired as to why something wasn't done last fall to "tie over" the recently closed central fire station until the new station could be constructed. He noted 98% of calls out of the central fire station are EMS calls, believing there is not a need for a fire station as much as an EMS dispatch facility. He spoke to the SUP criteria and addressed his concerns with Township processes relative to the new central fire station.

Vance Kincaid, 4530 Nakoma Drive, Okemos, inquired as to why a fire station is being built when 98% of the central fire station calls are EMS related. He addressed the fact that a Section 61 Review of the proposed new central fire station has never taken place. Mr. Kincaid believed that statements made to the public by the Fire Chief constitute dereliction of duty and that the Fire Chief should retire.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT (Report was given prior to adoption of the Consent Agenda)

Township Manager Walsh yielded his time to Fire Chief Cowper to address the closing of the existing central fire station, the location of the temporary central fire station and the issue of an exact "replacement" station.

Board discussion:

- Appropriateness of discussing an item not on the agenda
- Residents were not aware this issue would be discussed this evening
- Residents have asked questions this evening which deserve a response from the Township and the Fire Chief is the most appropriate staff member to do so
- Request to have an update from the Manager, through staff, on the closing of the current central fire station and plans for the "make-shift station"
- Board member objection to now address citizens who present controversial topics when it has not been the Board's "normal procedure" to do so
- Preference to retain the Board's formal structure of an agenda and bi-monthly meetings designed to have an orderly due process
- Belief that allowing the Chief to speak at this time violates what the Board has been doing as part of its policy and is disrespectful to other citizens for different issues

The Fire Chief addressed the inability of the Township to replace the exact station due to its non-compliance with mandated regulations. He spoke to the issue of EMS calls v. fire calls, adding that Township firefighters do a stellar job of fire prevention which is the ultimate goal. Fire Chief Cowper spoke to training as a way to be prepared for fires and a method to avoid a potential fire fighter death in the line of duty. He gave an overview of the process which was used for site selection of the proposed new central fire station based, in large part, on response times and included poor soils at other locations. Fire Chief Cowper updated the Board on the "make-shift" fire station. He objected to earlier public comment regarding his alleged misconduct and call for his resignation. Fire Chief Cowper indicated the new central fire station was constructed in such a way that it can be expanded, if warranted, in the future.

Township Manager Walsh reported on the following:

- Meeting with the Autumn Park Condominium owners on February 19th at 4:00 P.M.
- Revised location for the new central fire station will be brought to the neighborhood
- Make-shift station location at the Meridian Service Center off Okemos Road and Gaylord C. Smith Court
- Heated bays available at the make-shift station to place an ambulance and fire truck

- Break room/lunch room will be converted into a dormitory and subsequently remodeled into office space
- Best low-budget approach to a make-shift station compared to renting space elsewhere

7. BOARD COMMENTS & REPORTS

A. Joint Meeting with Township Boards and Commissions (Cable Communications Commission, Downtown Development Authority, Economic Development Corporation, Environmental Commission, Land Preservation Advisory Board, Park Commission, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals)

Meeting participants discussed 2013 accomplishments, as well as the following goals, objectives, concerns and ideas:

Cable Communications Commission

- Survey of cable users in Meridian Township
- Challenge to have communication companies (AT&T and Comcast) provide consistent representation at the Cable Communication Commission meetings
- Suggestion to have the Township Board pass a resolution urging AT&T to participate in the process in order for the public to hear about them as a service provider
- Survey will ascertain what percentage of township residents are served by AT&T and Comcast, respectively
- Request for a question to be included in the survey which identifies residents who watch Township meetings
- Comcast no longer lists specific programs on its cable guide for PEG channels
- Suggestion for the Board to pass a resolution requesting Comcast provide a usable and informative guide for residents to view specific government programs

Downtown Development Authority

- DDA working diligently to improve the downtown shopping area
- Shortage of funds due to a tax refund to Meijer
- Looking for ways to keep citizens in the downtown area
- Continuation of annual Celebrate Downtown Okemos
- Continued meetings on the downtown streetscapes
- Necessity of dealing with power lines for any redevelopment at the four (4) corners
- Concern with the site of the abandoned central fire station
- Township needs more tax revenue which is achieved through incentivizing businesses to invest in the Township

Economic Development Corporation

- Recommended changes to the Township's Master Plan relative to economic development
- Active participation in the charette program for the Michigan Avenue/Grand River Corridor design
- Pilot Pop Up Grant Program for \$1,000 awarded to the Haslett Beautification Association
- Strengthened the relationship with Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)
- EDC has a partnership with Meridian Asset Resource Center (MARC) which was awarded a \$5,000 Regional Incubation Network Grants from LEAP
- Creation of a business liaison from the EDC, Dr. Christine Tenaglia
- Key focus for 2014 is to partner with other boards and commissions on the Grand River corridor to strategically prepare for the bus rapid transit (BRT) system
- Goal of breaking down barriers to have business development in the Township
- Business visits by a member of the Planning staff since August, 2013 to develop relationships with business owners in the Township and develop lines of communication
- Named as a Four Star and Best Practice Community through the University of Michigan's E-Cities Program
- Goal over the last year was to make it easier for business owners to retain a business in Meridian Township
- Appreciation for EDC's written report which included vision, mission, goals and strategies
- Attempts and successes of the EDC to improve communication between Boards and Commissions

- Each Board and Commission brings a different perspective to the Township
- EDC members have positive energy and bring an open mind to their meetings
- EDC efforts to overcome the “anti-business” sentiment associated with Meridian Township
- No market interest in the old L & L space in Haslett for future use as a grocery store
- Commissioner’s belief the Township spends approximately one-one hundredth to one-tenth of one percent of the overall general budget on economic development
- Economic development, especially in this time of transition, deserves more support from the Township’s general fund
- Continued intense EDC efforts to work on the Haslett area
- Appreciation for the EDC’s proactive approach to its mandate
- Request for a specific plan to work together with the Township Board and other Boards and Commissions to be redevelopment ready when the Grand River Corridor comes to fruition
- Several issues last year could have been rectified if the Township had redevelopment ready certification
- Not sufficient foot traffic at the four corner area in Haslett to keep a viable grocery store in business
- Goal of a walkable community is defeated if there is not sufficient customers who walk to do business at the four corner area in Haslett
- Board member belief a coffee shop would stop traffic at the four corner area in Haslett

Environmental Commission

- Importance of staff assigned to the Environmental Commission in the overall process
- Voters of Meridian Township value the environment as it is central to where they live
- Meridian residents have elected to pay for lands to be set aside that have special environmental features and will retain the value of our community
- Primary responsibility to review wetland permits and provide a speaker series on environmental education
- 2013 review of Cornell Road to provide input on its improvement project
- Late review of and comment on the process for the new central fire station
- 2014 goal to continue supporting the values of the community
- How to maintain and build on the land values within the Township
- Need for active promotion of the environmental assets of the community through signage
- Discussions on the interface between humans and wildlife
- Concern over light pollution
- Discussions regarding pervious pathways and solar panels which would require an initial investment
- Township underutilizes the Environmental Commission in its education of residents through the use of educational materials
- Need for a map of all pathways and trails for easy resident access
- Suggestion for educational signage about the wildlife on the interurban pathway
- Request for the Board to receive a list of the environmental education series
- Request for the Environmental Commission to be involved earlier in Township processes
- Township staff and Board member promotion of the educational speaker series to Township residents
- Part of the redevelopment ready certification process will require input by the Environmental Commission
- Board member request to include LED lighting in its educational series
- Board member belief that all new developments in the Township should include a requirement for LED lighting in redevelopment projects
- LED lighting is approximately equal to florescent lighting in efficiency but has nicer lighting
- Part of the educational process is hosting a yearly Environmental Stewardship Awards which pays tribute to either a business or an individual for showing sensitivity to our environment

Land Preservation Advisory Board

- \$99,200 grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in 2013 for possible acquisition of a parcel of land on Green Road which abuts Lake Lansing North Park
- \$1,288 grant from the U.S. Fisheries and Wildlife Service to improve a seven acre site at the Southwest Meridian Uplands Preserve which had burned

- Restoration of five (5) acres at the Northwest Land Preserve in which 3,000 evergreens were planted by 44 volunteers after the land was cleared of invasive species
- Helped facilitate a large drainage restoration project in the Red Cedar Glen Land Preserve
- Worked with 50 Murphy Elementary school children and the Ingham County Parks Department to start and install native plants on 120 acres of land at the Lake Lansing North Park
- Demolition of two structures at the Davis Foster Land Preserve as a public safety measure which provided additional wildlife habitat area
- Treatment of invasive grass and phragmites at the Towner Road Wetland Preserve and the Hubbel Preserve through a cooperative effort with the Mid-Michigan Stewardship Network
- Minor land swap which occurred at the Tihart/Cornell Wetland Preserve during the Cornell Road Improvement Project
- Wetland mitigation project at the Central Meridian Upland Preserve
- Two Mid-Michigan stewardship site visits to monitor previous improvements at Lake Lansing Park North for the 2012 prescribed burn and inspection of deer exclosures and deer resistant landscaping to monitor the impact of deer on vegetation
- Two sites visits conducted for parcels of land nominated for land acquisition
- 13 land preserve properties involved in the 2013 Deer Management Program to minimize ecological damage and car/deer impacts
- Land Preservation has overlap with the Parks Commission and meets together when necessary
- Board member suggestion for possible joint meetings between Land Preservation and the Environmental Commission
- When lands are being assessed by the Land Preservation Advisory Board, one or two Environmental Commissioners are invited to participate in the parcel's review
- Township plan to capture all 2013 accomplishments by the various Boards and Commissions in the Township's annual report
- Board member preference to publicize all accomplishments as they occur
- Appreciation for allowing bicycles on the trail linkage between Legg Park and Sylvan Glen

Park Commission

- Review of Central Park Master Plan in order to give Central Park more of an identity and make it a destination
- Working with the Ingham County Road Department (ICRD) on parking at the Newton Road Park
- Approval of a grant request from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to construct an accessible loop trail in Wonch Park which connects to the existing pedestrian bicycle pathway system
- Harris Nature Center Foundation commissioned construction of a six (6) by ten (10) foot Eastern box turtle sculpture as the main feature for their planned nature exploration area
- Nature exploration area as a space for tactile interaction with nature
- Natural pathway between Legg Park and Red Cedar Glen Preserve as part of the restoration project which extended the pedestrian bicycle pathway from Eastgate Park to Sylvan Glen
- Worked with the Ingham County Drain Commissioner (ICDC) to remove a large log jam adjacent to the Eastgate Park area and the disturbed area was replanted
- Worked with the ICDR on the Van Atta Road bridge replacement to reduce its impact on the operations of the Harris Nature Center
- 3 Eagle Scout projects throughout the park system
- Friends of the Parks Recognition ceremony honored 125 individuals/organizations for their contributions to the Township
- Parks Department hosted a river clearing event which opened up 19 log jams for improved kayaking/canoeing navigation along the Red Cedar River
- New canoe launch will be built on the east side of Van Atta Road to facilitate parking as part of the Van Atta Road bridge replacement project
- Interns are in the process of GPS mapping of Meridian trails
- Absent a millage, new development of any type can only occur with the assistance of grants, volunteer groups, and donations
- Dollar value of total 2013 volunteer hours equated to \$750,000

- Appreciation to the Parks and Recreation Director and staff for their diligence in maintaining the parks for public enjoyment
- Explanation of the park millage request for 2/3 mill over the next 12 years to be placed on the August, 2014 ballot for capital improvements and updated maintenance
- Developers for Aldi addressed Park Commission concerns regarding their proposed MUPUD
- Park Commissioner requested it be allowed to determine the best way to connect to the area for the sidewalk to be extended west between the grocery store and residential buildings
- No discussion regarding a pathway from Dobie Road west through Michigan State University property
- Possible change in ordinance to allow parks to have gravel roads and gravel parking lots due to low use in the winter months
- Financial and environmental benefits of gravel roads and gravel parking lots for our park system
- Difficulty in accessing Legg Park, the largest park in the system
- Board member preference for the Park Commission to bring a specific proposal before the Township Board

Planning Commission:

- In 2013, the Planning Commission recommended approval of one (1) zoning amendment, two (2) rezoning requests, two (2) mixed use planned unit developments, one (1) wetland use permit, one (1) special use permit (SUP) and approved 16 SUPs
- Role of Planning Commissioners to study and plan for the development of Meridian Township
- Planning Commission responsibility to create the Master Plan and carry out its review and update
- 2014 goal of establishing the urban services management area as part of the Master Plan in cooperation with efforts by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
- 2014 goal of completing the first part of the Township's Master Plan with the establishment of shared goals and objectives to ensure sustainable development over the next 20 years
- Chair's belief that the Township's Master Plan process is where having all Boards and Commissions come together should commence
- Invitation to all Boards and Commissions to offer input during the Master Plan Update process in order for the Planning Commission to properly assess existing conditions, development conditions and then implement the findings
- Appreciation for the Park Commission input provided to the Planning Commission on the Aldi/Eyde MUPUD project
- Request for reconsideration of Planning Commission removal from the Capital Improvement Program process
- Appreciation for all of the volunteers who are willing to serve on the Boards and Commission
- Willingness by the Planning Commission to consider gravel driveways and parking lots for Township parks
- Board member request for the Planning Commission to look at changes in the Future Land Use Map
- Suggested ordinance change to allow the use of a plasma center by right in industrially zoned property
- Board member belief the Planning Commission should always be included in the Section 61 Review process
- Appointment on the Planning Commission is an opportunity for residents with expertise to provide guidance to the Board
- Planning Commission as the first step for the public in many Township processes
- Planning Commission has a role as an approving body and another role as a recommending body
- Board member recommendation the Planning Commission receive a motion to approve and a motion to deny where appropriate
- Chair's belief the process for the Master Plan and the Future Land Use Map is to establish a shared vision followed by information updates upon which the FLUM is created and then develop the Implementation Chapter

- Legal advice from the Township Attorney through staff there was no need to provide both a resolution to approve and a resolution to deny

Zoning Board of Appeals

- Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) as a quasi-judicial board which ascertains if there are reasons to “break” Township ordinances
- Many properties along the Grand River corridor are small and have little or no building envelope
- Preference to not have other bodies approve redevelopment SUPs pending variances which must come before the ZBA
- Eight criteria mandated by the state which the ZBA must meet in order to grant a variance
- Utilization of the commercial planned unit development (C-PUD) or MUPUD along the Grand River corridor would avoid variance requests going to the ZBA
- Request for input by ZBA members on recurring problems which may require ordinance modifications

Board discussion:

- Suggestion to hold an annual meeting in a social setting
- Preference to hold meetings as issues arise
- Suggestion to have leadership on various Boards and Commissions meet together to be involved in the planning process on Board initiatives

Supervisor LeGoff recessed the meeting at 8:55 P.M.

Supervisor LeGoff reconvened the meeting at 9:11 P.M.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the agenda amended as follows:

- **Place Agenda Item #13A next on the agenda: Consumers Energy Presentation**
- **Add Agenda Item #12C: Retain Legal Services of Bloom, Sluggett and Moran**

Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:

- **Move Agenda Item #12 A: Resolution Approving the Consumers Energy Streetlight Contract to the last discussion item, Agenda Item #13C**

Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

Board and staff discussion:

- Waiting an additional two (2) weeks should not matter as the date of the proposed contract states August 1, 2013
- Concern with continued postponement of certain items only to hear the same points at subsequent meetings
- Procedure in place to first have a discussion on the issue followed by action usually at the next meeting
- Contract is in perpetuity and should not be “rushed”

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Veenstra, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: Trustee Scales, Treasurer Brixie
Motion carried 4-2.

VOICE VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION: 6-0.

Consumers Energy Presentation

Chris Thelen, Area Manager, Public Affairs Department, Consumers Energy, presented information relative to the December, 2013 power outages, providing an overview of Consumer Energy’s response to the ice storm, investment in its line-clearing activity, electric infrastructure

and the top ten (10) outages in the last five (5) years.

Board and Consumer Energy representatives' discussion:

- Concern that Consumers Energy did not provide its report in time to be included in the packet for Board member review
- Consumers Energy submitted its final report to the Michigan Public Service Commission on February 14th
- Township met with Consumers Energy two weeks ago and learned some of the workers had to travel to Kalamazoo and Battle Creek for sleeping accommodations
- Township believed it could facilitate crews at its warming station(s) in the event of another catastrophic power outage
- Consumers Energy appreciates feedback from the various communities which will help in subsequent power outages
- Infrastructure improvements and more aggressive tree trimming would alleviate excessive outages in certain areas of the Township
- Board member belief a power outage should not last more than 48 hours
- Steps which need to be taken in order to achieve a 48 hour outage limit
- Aggressive tree trimming would help, but must be mindful that the December ice storm was a catastrophic event
- Line clearing has been completed on more than 63% of the circuit miles in Meridian Township since 2009
- Board member inquiry for an estimated time frame for 100% line clearing
- Challenge for Consumers Energy to obtain the necessary clearances
- Many outages which occurred during the ice storm came from trees outside of Consumers Energy's area of responsibility
- Consumers Energy clears along primary distribution lines and 15 feet on either side of the pole line
- Primary distribution lines are lines with higher than house voltage placed above the transformers
- Where the wire actually comes to the homes, Consumers only looks at tree trimming when they push or rub on the line
- Fifteen (15) feet on either side of the pole line is not that wide when you might have a 60 or 70 foot tree sitting just outside of that area
- During the ice storm, the ice weighted down the crowns of many trees well outside of the area that could possibly be addressed
- 100% clearing would not prevent power outages during a catastrophic storm event
- Inquiry as to Consumers Energy's plans to increase its level of tree trimming program
- Consumers Energy's commitment to be more aggressive in its tree trimming program in the future
- Each year, Consumers Energy evaluates all circuits in the state and are rated on a formula basis, of which one criteria is reliability of tree related outages
- Appreciation to Consumers Energy employees for their service during the December ice storm power outages

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor LeGoff reviewed the consent agenda.

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

The adopted Consent Agenda items are as follows:

- A. Communications
(1) Board Information (BI)

- BI-1 Mitch McGrath, 5658 Wood Valley Drive, Haslett; RE: Lack of progress on the new central fire station
- BI-2 John P. Gardner, Government Affairs Manager, Comcast, Heartland Region, 1401 E. Miller Road, Lansing; RE: Change to Comcast's channel lineup effective March 5, 2014
- BI-3 Whitney Zuker, 1791 Nemoke Court, Apt. 6, Haslett; RE: Blue Gill Grill Fundraiser for Alaina Melton to sing in the 2014 Blue Lake International Choral Ensemble

(2) Regional Linkage (CL)

- RL-1 Sara Graham, Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), 1012 N. Walnut Street, Lansing; RE: Meridian Area Resource Center (MARC) as a recipient of grant funding from LEAP's New Economic Division
- RL-2 Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA), 4615 Tranter Street, Lansing; RE: East Lansing charrette on the proposed bus rapid transit system on March 19-23, 2014
- RL-3 Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA), 4615 Tranter Street, Lansing; RE: Stakeholder Group Meetings on the proposed bus rapid transit system on April 14-17, 2014

(3) Staff Communications (SC)

- SC-1 Martha Wyatt, Associate Planner; Site Plan Review Decision as of February 14, 2014

(4) On File in the Clerk's Office

- Material handed out at the February 4, 2014 Meeting
Sue Simkin, 2032 Central Park Drive, Okemos; RE: Maps on relocating the proposed new central fire station

Treasurer Brixie moved that the communications be received and placed on file, and any communications not already assigned for disposition be referred to the Township Manager or Supervisor for follow-up. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff,
Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

B. Minutes

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the February 4, 2013 Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff,
Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

C. Bills

Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills as follows:

Common Cash	\$ 622,878.99
Public Works	\$ 499,854.52
Total Checks	\$ 1,122,733.51
Credit Card Transactions	\$ 7,452.95
Total Purchases	<u>\$ 1,130,186.46</u>

ACH Payments

\$ 574,569.93

Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff,
Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

- D. 2014 Order to Maintain Sidewalks, Special Assessment District (SAD) No. 15, **Resolutions #1 and #2** (Set Public Hearing for March 18, 2014)

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve 2014 Order to Maintain Sidewalk Special Assessment District #15-Resolutions #1 and #2, which tentatively approve the improvements and the cost estimates of proposed improvements, and sets the date for a public hearing on March 18, 2014. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff,
Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)

11. HEARINGS

- A. 2013 Order to Maintain Sidewalks, SAD No. 14

Supervisor LeGoff opened the public hearing at 9:58 P.M.

Director Severy summarized the 2013 Order to Maintain Sidewalk, SAD No. 14 as outlined in staff memorandum dated February 14, 2014.

Supervisor LeGoff closed the public hearing at 9:59 P.M.

12. ACTIONS ITEMS/ENDS

Supervisor LeGoff opened and closed Public Remarks.

- B. Resolution Supporting Regionalizing Governance of the Lansing Board of Water & Light
Trustee Scales moved [and read into the record] NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Board of the Charter Township of Meridian supports the development and passage of an amendment to the Lansing City Charter to regionalize the governance of the BWL by providing representation on the Board of Commissioners to customer communities that are currently unrepresented; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Meridian Township Board believes that regional representation on the BWL's Board of Commissioners should be provided in rough proportion to each customer community's share of residential electric customers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Meridian Township Board believes that an advisory or ex officio role for currently unrepresented communities is insufficient and that meaningful representation can only be accomplished by the addition of voting regional representatives to the Board of Commissioners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Meridian Township Board believes that regional representatives added to the Board of Commissioners should be appointed by the Mayor or Supervisor of each customer community with the consent of their Council or Board; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Meridian Township Board requests that the Clerk of Meridian Township transmit a copy of this resolution to the Mayor of Lansing and to the President of the Lansing City Council. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Resolution was initially developed by the Mayor of East Lansing and an outgrowth of discussions with the Township Supervisor of Delta Township
- Time to look to the future to take Board of Water and Light from a good utility to a great utility
- Need for a seat at the table to have input on a utility that services part of Meridian Township

Trustee Veenstra offered the following friendly amendment:

- **Amend the first RESOLVE clause after “Board of Commissioners” by deleting “to” and inserting “for”**

The amendment was accepted by the maker of the motion.

Trustee Veenstra moved the following amendment:

- **Amend the next to last resolve clause by deleting “appointed by the Mayor or Supervisor of each customer community with the consent of their Council or Board” and insert “elected by the Council or Board of each customer community”**

The motion died for lack of a second.

Board discussion:

- Most customers outside the City of Lansing reside in either Delta Township or the City of East Lansing
- Concern with each Township having a representative on the expanded Board of Water and Light Board
- Preference for one seat to be allocated for the combined Townships with a small customer base
- Current discussions center around five (5) additional seats to the current eight (8) member Board: Delta Township and East Lansing each having two (2) seats and Meridian Township receiving one (1)
- Delhi and Lansing Townships are requesting that the seat proposed by Meridian Township be rotated among the remaining Township as the term expires
- Dialogue regarding regionalizing BW&L governance commenced after three Meridian Township Board members attended Lansing City Council’s special public meeting after the ice storm and addressed this issue
- Appreciation for Board members who continue to work on this issue
- Resolution does not preclude any other considerations regarding power distribution in Meridian Township
- Staff reminder that the resolution only deals with electric and BW&L provides water to the southern third of Meridian Township
- Rationale for Meridian Township having more representation on BW&L’s Board because of the number of water customers serviced by BW&L

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff,
Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

C. Retain Legal Services of Bloom, Sluggett and Moran

Treasurer Brixie moved to retain the legal services of Bloom, Sluggett and Morgan at a rate of \$190.00 per hour not to exceed \$10,000. Attorney Jeffrey Sluggett will provide legal assistance to the staff and Township Board in all matters pertaining to the construction of the central fire station. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Board and staff discussion:

- Law firm has expertise in zoning and land use issues which would aid in the ongoing discussions regarding the location of the new central fire station
- Most of the issues raised pertain to zoning and land use
- Differences between the current legal contract and proposed legal counsel
- Belief the proposed law firm is the best zoning and land use counsel in the State of Michigan
- During discussions on the new central fire station, litigation has been mentioned by speakers from the Autumn Park Condominium Association
- First goal of the Township is to work with the Autumn Park Condominium owners and attempt to find a solution to this issue
- Necessity of preparing for impending litigation in the event a solution cannot be reached
- Board member belief the hiring of another attorney is the action of an “appellant”
- Current legal advice that Autumn Park Condominium Association is the appellant
- Board member belief there is no need to expend additional money if the Board voted to start the process over again
- Board member belief a delay would not be catastrophic for the construction of a new central fire station at a location amenable to a majority of Township residents
- Board member belief that retaining new legal counsel is an inappropriate response to dealing with the key issues at stake
- Board member hope that new counsel will bring conciliation to the issue

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff,
Treasurer Brixie
NAYS: Clerk Dreyfus
Motion carried 5-1.

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, believed the Consumers Energy Streetlight Contract has not been changed since last before the Board and is too monopolistic. He objected to the contract being open ended and requiring the Township to pay for removal of Consumers equipment in the event it chose to disassociate with Consumers.

Trustee Veenstra moved to discuss Agenda Item #13B after 10:00 P.M. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra, Wilson, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

B. 2013 Order to Maintain Sidewalks, Special Assessment District No. 14

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at the March 4, 2014 Board meeting.

14. PUBLIC REMARKS

Lawrence Nolan, attorney for the Autumn Park Condominium owners, 4765 Nakoma Drive, Okemos, believed the Township should begin the processes for the new central fire station over again. He addressed the media “dog and pony show” surrounding the closing of the existing central fire station and questioned the timing of its closing. Mr. Nolan believed the Township should build a fire station in a responsible manner, adding it is not necessary to spend all of the \$3.5 million generated from the millage.

David Strobl, 1320 Cove Court, Okemos, reviewed comments on the fire station issue beginning at the May 1, 2012 Board meeting. He inquired if the fire station issue is one of finances or saving people’s lives. He inquired as to why the Township will not start the process all over again, noting there are scientific approaches for the Township to determine the best location for a fire station.

Sue Simkin, 2032 Central Park Drive, Okemos, offered her opinion on the analysis performed for the central fire station, indicating the optimum place for the fire station location on Grand River near Dobie Road. She stated a fire station is both a blight and a blessing. Ms. Simkin addressed the noise issue relative to the effects of living in close proximity to a fire station.

Vance Kincaid, 4530 Nakoma Drive, Okemos, filed an official complaint regarding an alleged threat and bullying towards him by an employee. He stated the failure to approve is not a denial relative to SUP #13121. He believed the Board did not follow the Township's 2005 Master Plan. Mr. Kincaid suggested the Township build an EMS facility and place the training tower and storage facility at the Meridian Service Center. He did not believe centralizing services was a wise idea and urged the Township to build the fire station correctly.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, requested the Board consider an amendment to the police forfeiture contract to show the public what was seized, the value of the seizure and any determination made. He addressed his disappointment at earlier comments made by the Fire Chief. Mr. Provencher objected to discussion of expansion of the new central fire station when it has not yet been constructed.

Ken Phinney, President, Local 1600, IAFF, 4655 Krentl, Holt, stated the closing of the current central fire station was done, in large part, at the request of the union due to the inhabitable condition of the building. He reminded the public that the make-shift fire station will not be the best situation, but will temporarily service the area in order to meet fire and EMS emergencies.

15. FINAL BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Trustee Scales met with Representative Sam Singh on February 6th to discuss amending the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act to include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) protections. He added this meeting was a follow-up to a letter he wrote to the Democratic leadership to the House of Representatives, and Representative Singh intends to share that letter with the Democratic caucus. Trustee Scales also attended President Obama's signing of the Farm bill at Michigan State University (MSU) on February 7th. He reported his attendance at the February 10th School Board meeting and the Township's Planning Commission meeting to gain insight on issues which will ultimately come before the Board.

Trustee Veenstra reported his attendance at the February 12th regular meeting of the Transportation Review Committee of Tri County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) where discussion took place on the bus rapid transit cost of \$215 million. He noted all the financing will come from state and federal sources and will not, therefore, need local jurisdiction approval. He reminded citizens of the February 26th Michigan /Grand River Corridor report on the charette at 5:30 P.M. at the Hannah Center. Trustee Veenstra expressed agreement with earlier public comment regarding the plowing of the Hillsbrook parking lot. He also agreed with public comment regarding the Board appointment process utilized on December 10th.

Clerk Dreyfus met with the Nokomis Executive Board on February 7th where the lease, relationship with the Township, heritage festival, more meetings with the Township, electric circuits and lighting were all discussed. He reported his attendance as the Board representative at the February 13th EDC meeting where corridor improvement authority (another taxing tool used to capture incremental tax revenue), the Haslett Stakeholders Meeting, grant ready projects and attendance at tonight's joint meeting were considered.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor LeGoff adjourned the meeting at 11:00 P.M.

ELIZABETH LEGOFF
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary