

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING **-APPROVED-**  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
517-349-1232, Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
TUESDAY, June 16, 2020 **6:00 pm.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Director of Public Works Perry, Fire Chief Hamel, Police Chief Plaga, Community Planning Director Kieselbach, Information Technology Director Gebes, Principal Planner Menser, Finance Director Mattison, Human Resources Director Marx, Environmental Programs Coordinator Harvey, Economic Development Director Lane

OTHER: Environmental Commission Chair Sarver, Environmental Commission Members Jackson and Masten, Human Services Specialist Jackson

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Dreyfus called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Environmental Commission – Meridian Climate Sustainability Report 2020

Environmental Commission (EC) Chair Sarver outlined the Township's commitment to renewable energy and reducing greenhouse gas emission. Sarver encouraged the Township to adopt a Climate Emergency Resolution.

Environmental Program Coordinator Harvey summarized Township efforts in energy efficiency, renewable energy, recycling and waste reduction, transportation, and water management/green infrastructure. He mentioned the EC's interest in an environmental review of the Code of Ordinances and Green Infrastructure Audit.

Environmental Commissioners Jackson and Masten outlined the human health risks and effects on rivers and lakes of coal tar sealants and spoke in support a ban of coal tar and other high PAH sealcoats in the Township. Deputy Township Manager Perry spoke on the positive results of using a low PAH sealant on the Township parking lots.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 6:43 pm.

No public comments.

Supervisor Styka closed public remarks at 6:44pm.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh reported on speaking to police department leadership group, Klingemann's purchase of previous Toys R Us site, local road program, new retail sites, Covid hotline still operating, solar projects, Marketplace on the Green, Walnut Hills.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisor Styka:

- Announced it was Juneteenth, the last day of the Proclamation of Freedom from slavery, which occurred in Texas.

Trustee Jackson:

- Asked for an update on Grand River Area project, Deputy Manager Perry outlined the design work being performed by the State's Transportation Department in preparation for their major road repairs in 2021.
- Attended the LEAP Board Meeting, distribution of pandemic funds to small businesses.
- Attended the Meridian Police Department's Neighborhoods Leaders Meeting.

Clerk Dreyfus:

- Received over 7,000 absentee ballot applications; hired temporary elections workers; received calls from vendors offering solutions for processing AV absentee ballots, staffing needs for the precincts; addressing COVID precautions in office and for precinct workers at polling locations; State is offering funds to assist with purchasing PPE safety and disinfectant supplies.

Treasurer Deschaine:

- Two outdoor pods are open; Treasurer and Planning Dept, approximately 90% of visitors are assisted at the pods.
- Tax bills will be mailed out on July 1.
- Attended MTA Conference on how townships restart attended the election meeting to approve the ballots.
- Attended Election Commission meeting, August ballots approved.
- Environmental Commission was awarded a \$10,000 grant for new trees – primarily planted on township and school properties;

Trustee Opsommer

- Governor's Executive Order regarding holding virtual meetings expires June 30 but extension likely.
- CATA has announced a new diversity and inclusion task force, interested residents can go to CATA website for details; all CATA routes have resumed operations, three of their facilities have reopened, fares have been reinstated, riders to board at front of bus and masks are required.

Trustee Wisinski

- Environmental Commission is being proactive in contacting the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy's Environmental Justice Department Advocate to ask for guidance in addressing potential environmental justice issues.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Trustee Opsommer moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried: 7 – 0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

**Treasurer Dreyfus moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.**

Discussion:

**Treasurer Deschaine moved to remove pages 2 and 3 from the Communications packet. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.**

Discussion:

- Request to have written policy on what is - and is not - accepted as board communication
- Clerk Dreyfus discussed history of Board communications, recent example of response to citizen communication
- Incoming vs outgoing communication policies, who and how to respond to letters
- Clerk Dreyfus will prepare written policies after the August election
- Clerk shared email sent by citizen, and one sent to Supervisor, in 2017 & 2018, which he contended, affirmed a policy of noon Thursday as the deadline for communication to be included in the Board packet.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Wisinski, Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus,

Motion fails: 3 – 4

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

A. Communications

**Clerk Dreyfus 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 Sundland.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

B. Approval of Minutes – June 2, 2020 Regular Meeting

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the June 2, 2020 Virtual Meeting of the Township Board as submitted. Seconded by Sundland.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

C. Bills

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve that the Township Board approve the Manager’s Bills as follows. Seconded by Trustee Sundland**

<b>Common Cash</b>		\$	<b>456,873.61</b>
<b>Public Works</b>		\$	<b>767,845.09</b>
<b>Trust &amp; Agency</b>		\$	<b>2,942.73</b>
	<b>Total Checks</b>	\$	<b>1,227,661.43</b>
<b>Credit Card Transactions</b>			
<b>05/27/2020 - 06/10/2020</b>			
	<b>Total Purchases</b>	\$	<b><u>8,463.28</u></b>
<b>ACH Payments</b>		\$	<b><u>2,269,931.54</u></b>

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

D. Disposal of Surplus Vehicles

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to authorize the disposal of vehicle #51 (2002 Chevy Tahoe), and vehicle #26 (2011 For Van) by public auction, internet auction, direct sale to another municipality or by sealed bid. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY

None

11. HEARINGS

A. Haslett Marathon Brownfield Plan

Associate Planner Menser summarized the demolition of the gas station reviewed in May and recommendations for the plan.

Dave Van Haaren, Triterra, owner representative, \$339,000 over 27-year tax capture brownfield plan, no interest or pass through into the revolving fund; new taxes generated for schools, taxes captured from local millages only, eligible activities proposed include demolition and clean-up, developer-financed.

Jessica DeBone, PM Environmental Inc., stated the development is on .9 acres; will be demolishing the current buildings and pumps and adjusting their locations. The business will have seven jobs and five new jobs. The proposed building will be closer to Haslett Road and is eligible for brownfield monies.

Casey Armstrong, PM Environmental Inc., reviewed the impact of the site soils and the soil improvements during redevelopment of the site.

**Supervisor Styka called the public hearing to order at 7:34pm.**

**Supervisor Styka closed the public hearing at 7:35pm.**

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Meridian Cares Pandemic Support

**Trustee Opsommer moved to allocate \$12,000 from the Meridian Redevelopment Fund to Meridian Cares and \$50,000 from the General Fund to support Meridian Township residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

Board discussion:

Increase in funding is to address the forthcoming community needs, Human Services Specialist Jackson stated there is more information due to recent data, predictions of continuing high unemployment will be high, eviction ban ending soon, insufficient funding

allocated for future housing needs. Township Attorney Fahey summarized legal opinion, appropriate program for Township to allocate funds to Meridian Cares. Funds available to provide support from General Fund.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

B. Final Preliminary Plat #17012 extension – Silverstone Estates

**Trustee Opsommer moved to adopt the resolution extending final preliminary plat approval for Silverstone Estates to June 5, 2022. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

Board discussion:

Tree survey has been completed, roadway configured to save some trees, concession has been made on density, added additional open space, belief it will be a good addition to the Okemos Public Schools and for re-opening Wardcliff Schools, extension is to allow application additional time to address outlined concerns.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

C. Hotel Liquor License 2736 Grand River Avenue

**Treasurer Deschaine moved to adopt the resolution approving the B-Hotel liquor license for East Lansing Lodge, Inc. to sell beer, wine, and spirits for on premise consumption at the Clarion Pointe Motel at 2736 Grand River Avenue. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

Board discussion:

Hotel upgrade was needed for the area; applicant is remodeling and upgrading and needs endorsement for liquor license.

Ryan Nofar, owner Clarion Point, noted improvements including a small marketplace in the lobby, which will offer local and imported beer and wine selections.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

D. Environmental Commission Appointment

**Trustee Jackson moved to approve the appointment of Tom Frazier to the Environmental Commission for a term ending 12/31/2021. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.**

Board discussion:

Mr. Frazier's qualifications were outlined and the Environmental Commissions supports the recommendation.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

E. 2019 Downtown Development Authority Annual Report

**Trustee Jackson moved to approve the 2019 Downtown Development Authority Annual Report and approve dissemination to the public, State Treasury, and required taxing jurisdictions as required by the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.**

Board discussion:

The report outlines the revenue and expenses for the year; the TIF plan contract came in under budget, debt repayment of DDA for streetlight project is being made.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

F. Resolution Declaring Racism a Health Crisis

**Trustee Wisinski moved to adopt the attached resolution to join Ingham County Health Department in declaring Racism as a public health crisis. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

Board discussion:

Need to improve quality of life and address health disparities; will be joining other governments declaring racism as a public health crisis; asked to have resolution transmitted to Governor Gretchen Whitmer, DHHS Director Robert Gordon, Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield, Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and the Michigan Township Associations.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

G. Nemoka Drain – Full Disclosure Certificate

**Treasurer Deschaine Moved to approve and execute the Resolution to Authorize Official Statement and Continuing Disclosure Certificate for Nemoka Drain Drainage District Bonds as presented. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

Board discussion:

Deputy Manager Perry outlined the project; approximately \$1,400/year based on approximately 100 parcels; will improve infrastructure between county and township. Timing issue, will be paving Colby Road at no cost to residents on street – historically would have been a special assessment district; last road paved was Newton Road –paid for by multiple entities; Drain Commission Office has obtained property for drain basin at Shop-Town area and in Shaw-Potter area for storm water retention ponds; contractor hired, assessments made, now need bonds to proceed with project.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7 – 0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Haslett Marathon Brownfield Plan

Board discussion:

27 year tax capture for brownfield project financing plan, will not be capturing state taxes; environmental hazards outlined by owner and how contaminants are handled during construction; will add diesel gas tank but not remove gas tanks currently on site; certified operator of underground storage tanks required on site for daily reporting; will research if an electric charge station will be included on site; legal liability when changing owners of gas station owners (with contamination involved) and due care activities; question regarding amount of applicant's funds are involved in the project; the Brownfield Authority Board supports project; property owner supports site clean-up; new building cost of \$1 million; current SEV value is \$1.4 million, when project complete, taxable value will be \$4.5 million.

**Board consensus to place this item up for action at the next meeting.**

B. Community Policing Discussion

Police Chief Plaga spoke on policing policies, training and procedures on how the Police Department functions. Biannual, every police officer completes a fair and impartial police training and implicit bias training. The Police Department received accreditation in February. Meridian Township does not allow chokeholds. Police officers are assigned 3-4 neighborhoods. Citizens attend quarterly meetings and receive monthly updates. Community police officers assigned to schools and build relationships. Proposal for community forum in August on community policing with opportunity for more personal dialogue.

Board discussion:

Vetting process for new Township police officers includes a written test with integrity component; interviews and comprehensive background investigations including home visit, second interview with a psychiatrist; bachelor's degree is not required; Township Manager and Supervisor voice support for Chief Plaga, August discussion on how department can improve.

C. Amendment to Chapter 82 Vegetation

Director Kieselbach outlined the Amendment.

Board discussion:

Length of mowing property from sidewalk, Planning Director provided other related current mowing ordinance requirements of 35 & 45 feet, deep lots can circumvent 75 foot requirement for mowing from structure, issues at vacant parcels, belief that Township needs to mow 75 feet into a property to address lawn problems, concern about timeframe for enforcing new mowing ordinance, concern that ordinance change was supposed to be for vacant parcels only, new mowing requirement is now proposed for all residential properties with sidewalks, what is appropriate distance to mow from a sidewalk, neglect of Walnut Hills property owner and impact on surrounding property owners, current lawn mowing ordinance, view that proposed ordinance pertains primarily to vacant parcels or properties with large setbacks.

**Trustee Opsommer moved suspend the rules to take up under Introduction this evening. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland

NAYS: Clerk Dreyfus

Motion carried: 6 – 1

**Trustee Opsommer moved to Introduce the Vegetation Ordinance Amendment as presented in the packet with 75 feet specified from a sidewalk. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.**

Continued discussion:

Suggestion that proposed mowing ordinance be moved to the Vacant Parcel Ordinance; if property is not mowed, the grass breeds ticks and creates other health concerns.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski

NAYS: Clerk Dreyfus

Motion carried: 6 – 1

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka Opened Public Remarks at 9:53 pm.

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 9:54 pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Supervisor Styka suggested if the next meeting is not virtual, that we move the meeting to the Central Fire Station and it will be televised if there is staff.

He voiced concern about legal requirements not being met regarding the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) minutes from January meeting, because they were not available for approval at the June ZBA meeting. Attorney Fahey outlined potential legal concerns, and what remedies are available.

Clerk Dreyfus reported he had been made aware of the ZBA minutes about 2 weeks ago; workflow process has always been for Planning Dept. staff person to work closely with Clerk Assistant to produce minutes, Planning staff person left Township, Clerk Admin Asst. left following month, Clerk's Office was never notified about the January ZBA minutes until first week in June. Temporary Clerk staff now available and the minutes are being completed as priority for Admin Asst.

Supervisor Styka reiterated that the responsibility was with the Clerk, no matter what excuses are presented. He expressed concern that legal requirements could no longer be satisfied.

Clerk Dreyfus responded that an explanation of the problem was not an excuse, and that good teamwork and communication in January would have prevented this from becoming an issue.

16. ADJOURNMENT

**Trustee Wisinski moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Jackson**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried: 7 – 0

**Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 10:08 pm.**