

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Town Hall Room  
THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2016 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra (6:08 P.M.),  
Wilson  
ABSENT: Supervisor LeGoff  
STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public  
Works Derek Perry

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Clerk Dreyfus called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**Treasurer Brixie moved to nominate Trustee Scales as Supervisor Pro Tem. Seconded by Trustee Styka.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Pro Tem Scales led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. JOINT MEETING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Supervisor Pro Tem Scales opened the Joint Meeting and the following guests introduced themselves:

Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA)  
Debbie Alexander, Assistant Executive Director

City of East Lansing  
Mark Meadows, Mayor  
George Lahanas, City Manager

Delhi Township  
Evan Hope, Clerk

City of Lansing  
Virg Benero, Mayor

Consumers Energy  
Chris Thelen, Lansing Area Manager

East Lansing Public Schools  
Nell Kuhnmuensch, East Lansing Board of Education President

Ingham County Road Department (ICRD)  
William Conklin, Managing Director

Okemos Public Schools (OPS)  
Melanie Lynn, School Board President  
Don Romain, School Board Member  
Vincent Lyon-Callo, School Board Secretary

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC)  
Susan Pigg, Executive Director

Board members and guests discussed the following:

- Joint study between Meridian Township and the City of East Lansing was conducted in the 1990s to determine ways to cooperatively work through the two (2) fire departments to provide fire service to both municipalities in a more economical manner
- At that time, there were significant differences in training and pay scale between the two departments, which has since changed
- Ongoing discussions regarding a regional fire service which includes the cities of Lansing, East Lansing and townships of Delhi, Delta, Lansing and Meridian
- Agreement for Blue Card certification which is officer training certification for a standard regional approach to fighting fires, including common terminology for firefighter safety and standardized methods
- Next step to consider is the possibility of a Regional Fire Management Authority to entertain efficiencies (e.g., apparatus)
- Fire, rescue and EMS would all be on the table for consideration
- Fire Authority would review the best administrative model to use
- Community choice to determine the level of service provided
- Statistics show assistance provided and received among townships and cities is nearly the same
- Board member preference to have the closest unit respond
- Opportunities currently exist across the region to have the closest unit respond
- First consideration must be given to the need of the resident receiving service, not boundary lines
- Regional approach would realize savings through shared use of the 40 hour administrative staff (e.g., emergency management staff, fire marshals, fire inspectors, chief officers ) who become part of an authority while the suppression employees would remain with their original employer, approximately 1/6/ of a fire department's staff
- Consumers Energy has moved to an incident command structure in the last two (2) years, and developed a public safety department, complete with a public safety liaison for the Lansing area
- Training of Consumer's Energy emergency personnel on how to respond to emergencies involved Consumers' equipment
- Use of a shared assessor and skilled trade (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) inspectors between Meridian Township and the City of East Lansing
- Collaboration between Meridian Township Administration, Meridian Township Police, ICRD and OPS on installation of a streetlight and pedestrian activated crosswalk for Kinawa Middle School
- Effort of the ICRD regarding snow removal to ensure safety of OPS children
- Appreciation for the infrastructure services provided by Meridian Township to an East Lansing elementary school
- Potential 2017 bond proposal to improve aging East Lansing elementary buildings
- Sensitivity to the need for school districts to offer assistance in addressing mental health issues experienced by school aged children
- Ongoing efforts for Ingham County to offer assessing and equalization services to its municipalities similar to Oakland County
- Regional approach to assessing services would provide economies of scale
- County government as the "built in" regional government
- County is sent trails millage money collected by municipalities without the county soliciting input as to the best way to expend those funds
- Concern municipalities must compete for trails millage money instead of developing a county system for trails
- Expressed concern the area will have a disconnected fragmented trail system
- Joint agreement between Delhi Township and the City of Lansing delineating areas of first response
- Delhi Township is currently contracting with Delta Township for heavy commercial assessing services
- Delhi Township has worked with Holt Public Schools on joint projects since the 1970s
- Okemos Bridge repair necessary as the bridge is old and required the detours
- Marsh Road Bridge over the railroad tracks is a full superstructure replacement
- Feasibility of a warning sign further down Okemos Road regarding the detour
- Signs currently at Okemos/Jolly Roads and Okemos/Kinawa Roads warning of the detour
- Suggestion for Dobie Road traffic to continue on Central Park Drive for drivers to access Marsh Road

- Capital Area Multimodal Gateway station is now open and all tenants are moved into the building
  - Facts revealed Michigan State University (MSU) did not own all the property as previously thought
  - Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) was forced to negotiate with the railroads over the course of 18 months to obtain a lease for the parcel previously used for parking and the Amtrak station
  - All tenants were actively engaged in the design of the building
  - Once lease negotiation began, tenants changed their mind
  - Greyhound decided they did not need a station
  - CATA employee was placed on site and CATA is currently negotiating the rights to sell Greyhound tickets to customers
  - Last building standing will be razed in the Spring to construct the parking lot once MSU has concluded its environmental cleanup process on that parcel
  - Once the parking lot is constructed, a parking charge will commence
  - Constituent request for CATA to provide space in the station for welcoming literature regarding the region (e.g., Greater Lansing Visitors Bureau Guide)
  - Tenants currently include Amtrak, Indian Trails, Mega Bus and Amtrak Blue Water Line
- Bus Rapid Transit Project
  - 30% engineering work has just been completed
  - BRT budget for construction has been reduced to \$133 million
  - Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) "Fast Track" has elevated eligible federal funds from \$75 million to \$100 million
  - Budget is considered "fiscally constrained", where costs and revenues match
  - FTA is waiting for CATA to revise its environmental assessment documents and modeling in order to move forward
  - Completion of the Small Starts application will request the President of the United States authorize inclusion of this project in the upcoming federal budget
  - Plan is to open construction in late 2017 or early 2018 with operation in late 2018 or early 2019
  - Opportunities remain for local contribution of services currently being provided in the corridor, such as a continuous string of fiber optics to run all the signals and realtime station information, at an estimated cost of \$5 million
  - Utility relocation could be done through local investment
  - Additional streetlighting could be donated by the Board of Water and Light and though donation by Consumers Energy
  - Sparrow Hospital has donated the funds for installation of a pedestrian light at the station in front of the hospital
  - Creation of nine (9) new traffic lights to coordinate with the nine (9) controlled intersections
  - BRT project is a multi-jurisdictional project with two (2) road owners and four (4) jurisdictions
  - CATA is currently in discussions with the Michigan Department of Transportation to determine if they will perform the construction management and oversight for the road construction portion of the project
  - City of Lansing and MDOT have road projects which must be done simultaneously with the BRT
  - BRT project will design both the City of Lansing and MDOT's project as part of the BRT project
  - MDOT's participation for less than what is currently budgeted would be considered a local contribution
  - Today's total cost of the BRT is \$143 million, subject to cost refinement
  - Cleveland BRT demonstrated the rail "feel" and is a magnet for economic development
  - CATA is vital for this area's urban core and the metro region
  - BRT will help retain the region's greatest talent, which is college graduates
  - Appreciation for the regional cooperation in the greater Lansing area
- Consolidated agreement between the City of East Lansing and Meridian Township for a school election
- Synchronized traffic signalization along the Grand River Corridor as an example of potential regionalism

- Synchronized traffic signalization would reduce congestion, increase fuel efficiency and would improve quality of life
- Consumers Energy remediation work on its natural gas infrastructure through a pipeline integrity program
- Consumers Energy plan to install smart meters to its business and residential customers
  - Citizen concern with privacy concerns over smart meters
  - Consumers Energy will use cell phone technology (text messages) to convey data to its system
- Suggestion for regional municipal leaders to meet with the goal of submitting a joint application to the county for trail millage
- New owners of property at the corner of Grand River and Abbott are committed to develop the land in an appropriate manner with diversity relative to age and types of businesses
- Need for creation of more private-public partnerships within the region
- Diversity of Lansing's executive workgroup is working on development of inclusive communities
  - Ways to address MSU's "brain drain"
  - Experts on diversity initiatives within major regional organizations are sharing their knowledge, experience and best practices with the workgroup
  - Many municipal leaders in the region worked together to adopt a non-discrimination ordinance for their local units of government
- Continued work on a regional transit oriented development code through creation of an overlay district
  - Use of a multi-jurisdictional form based code would encourage developers to create development designs which support transit and pedestrians first and the automobile second
  - Each jurisdiction should consider where they want the boundaries of the overlay district to be located
  - Input from a group of private business owners, property owners and developers is essential for the code's success
  - Importance of bringing development with and alongside the BRT
  - Transit oriented development code will help shape the "districts" in an effort not to have municipalities fighting for the same new businesses coming to the region
  - Possible use of a municipality's Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) boundary to define the transit oriented design
- County trails millage can help create connectivity from the Capitol to Lake Lansing
  - Map for the route provides a way to move people through the corridor without having to travel near the street by developing a trail along the Red Cedar River from Park Lake to Hagadorn Road
  - Possibility of East Lansing continuing a river trail from Hagadorn Road to near Bogue Street
  - East Lansing owns little riverfront property
  - East Lansing has been unable to obtain the needed right-of-way
  - Belief some of the aging apartment units may now be willing to allow the connectivity in an effort to remain competitive in the expanded apartment rental market
  - Progress on the Lake Lansing sidewalk gap between Meridian Township and East Lansing would require the bank to be built up and utility poles to be moved
  - Projected cost for the sidewalk gap of \$10,000-\$15,000
  - Cost could be prorated based on the distance required to reach the joint boundary line
  - Family which owns the property on the west side of the termination of the sidewalk would not provide an easement
  - Setback requirement required in Meridian Township's wetland ordinance complicates the matter
  - City of East Lansing is in the process of reviewing its sidewalk policies as there are a number of areas in the city where the sidewalk is not connected as it has been past practice to wait until development occurs to construct the sidewalk
- Importance of increasing efforts towards the "bigger picture" of regionalism
- Broader regional discussion in the future for collaboration on the area's aging fiber network
- Meridian Township's Cable Communications Commission has been and continues to discuss community broadband
- Belief regional broadband may garner more success

- Successful partnership between Consumers and the City of Lansing regarding extension of the south Lansing multi-modal pathway
- Goals to accomplish prior to the 2017 Intergovernmental Meeting are submission of a joint trail application to the county and connection of the Lake Lansing sidewalk between Meridian Township and East Lansing

Supervisor Pro Tem Scales recessed the meeting at 7:35 P.M.

Supervisor Pro Tem Scales reconvened the meeting at 7:45 P.M.

5. ACTION ITEMS

Supervisor Pro Tem Scales opened and closed Public Remarks.

- A. Consumers Energy Company Gas Franchise Ordinance – **Final Adoption**  
**Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the Consumers Energy Company Gas Franchise Ordinance resolution. Seconded by Trustee Styka.**

**Trustee Veenstra moved to amend the time period from 30 years to 12 years. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.**

Board and Consumers representative discussion:

- Board member preference for a shorter renewal period to provide the Board with an opportunity to discuss issues with Consumers Energy
- Section 8 of the gas franchise provides for revocation with a 60 day written notice
- Board member belief the revocation clause is the “nuclear” option to use
- 30 year renewal is the maximum allowed by state law
- Consumers Energy is accessible at any time to address issues
- Ordinance addresses the ability of Consumers Energy to operate its utility in the right-of-way
- Service and operation of the utility is regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission
- Board members’ expressed desire at the last meeting for a three (3) or four (4) year time frame in order for Consumers to come before every Board
- Board member suggestion for the Township Manager to provide each new Board with every agreement which contains a revocation clause

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Veenstra  
ON THE AMENDMENT: NAYS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus  
Motion failed 1-5.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,  
ON THE MAIN MOTION: Clerk Dreyfus  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried 6-0.

6. COMMUNICATIONS (None)

7. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor Pro Tem Scales opened and closed Public Remarks.

8. BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Supervisor Pro Tem Scales reminded the community the Okemos Education Foundation will host a program titled “The Life and Death of Emmett Till: A Four Person Perspective” on April 19, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Okemos High School Auditorium. He stated it is free to the community

9. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor Pro Tem Scales adjourned the meeting at 7:56 P.M.

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MILTON L. SCALES  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR PRO TEM

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BRETT DREYFUS  
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary