

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
MERIDIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
June 1, 2017 MEETING MINUTES  
TOWN HALL ROOM, MERIDIAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: Jade Sims, Malinda Barr (left at 8:35), David Ledebuhr, Shawn Dunham (left at 8:48), Trustee Phil Deschaine, Adam Carlson, Township Manager Frank Walsh, Chris Buck, Josh Hundt

ABSENT: David Olson, Lynda Rowlee

OTHERS: Treasurer Julie Brixie, Ex-Officio, Planning Commission Vice-Chair John Scott-Craig, Director of Community Planning and Development Mark Kieselbach, Associate Planner/Economic Development Coordinator Ben Motil, Director of Communications Deborah Guthrie, Administrative Intern Griffin Graham

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Buck called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. and asked Trustee Deschaine to read the Mission Statement.

2. **MISSION:** Set the standard in creating an entrepreneurial culture, be the example for revitalization of our business districts, and be the leaders in building sustainable public/private partnerships.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOTION BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR TO APPROVE AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CARLSON. MOTION PASSES 8-0.**

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Communications
- b. Minutes – May 17, 2017

**MOTION BY TRUSTEE DESCHAIINE TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER DUNHAM. MOTION PASSES 8-0.**

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

6. PRESENTATION

None.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer Brixie distributed and reviewed the financial report dated 6/1/17. Report on file.

**MOTION BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR TO APPROVE FINANCIAL REPORT. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER BARR. MOTION PASSES 9-0.**

8. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

Staff provided a summary memo and update regarding the Burcham Hills issuer's fee.

9. PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

Planning Commission Vice-Chair John Scott-Craig provided a summary of recent Planning Commission activities.

10. NEW BUSINESS

None.

11. OLD BUSINESS

a. Business Retention & Expansion Program Draft

Chair Buck summarized the current EDC efforts in Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) program.

- The BRE program may include coordination with multiple staff from various departments in the Township, including Planning and Communications
- Strategy would include visiting businesses in the Township.
- The BRE program may include social media.
- Communications Director Deborah Guthrie updated the EDC on the current social media strategy for businesses that the Communications Department is currently doing.
- Director Guthrie cited specific samples including Central Pharmacy and Mitten Raised Bakery.
- The Communications strategy for business retention through social media includes multiple social feeds with videos, photos, status updates, and news articles.
- The EDC could focus on existing businesses rather than the ribbon cuttings or grand openings.

- Cohesiveness in messaging would be critical for maintaining a singular brand for the Township.
  - The EDC could increase awareness in the businesses, informing them the Communications team does business promotions, rather than the EDC having their own social media strategy.
  - The EDC could push their content onto the already existing Township website.
  - Members discussed if 2018 would be a better implementation period for this project, rather than 2017 which is relatively full in regards to 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary events.
  - Members showed consensus in visiting businesses in the Potential Intensity Change Areas (PICAs).
  - Staff will provide a list of the businesses in the PICAs for the EDC to consider. The goal is to gather content for the EDC, but content could also be forwarded to Communications.
  - A follow up survey can be provided. Draft wording for the survey will be provided at the next EDC meeting.
- b. Matching Fund Façade Improvement Program Draft

Staff provided a draft program for consideration. Discussion was held by the EDC Board. Items included:

- Intent to incentivize businesses to aesthetically improve, which could increase overall attractiveness of the Township as well as improve business success.
- Discussion regarding the effectiveness of the proposed façade improvement program.
- Questions were raised if doing only 3 or 4 businesses a year would actually provide a meaningful impact in the Township.
- The EDC has a small budget for a façade improvement program, and there are larger upcoming projects to consider, such as the relocation of the Farmers' Market.
- Discussion regarding if the program would be a one-time splash or if it would be an ongoing program.
- Discussion if there would be merit in limiting the program area to specific areas of focus.
- The three PICAs were discussed as the focus business districts.
- Funding partnerships should be explored with LEAP or the MEDC.
- Discussion was held if the façade improvement program would be "big picture", or if the program would ultimately be ineffectual in 2 or 3 years.
- Members discussed if funds should go towards the Farmers' Market relocation, instead of the EDC spending close to 25% of their budget on four or five facades out of approximately 1,600 businesses in the Township.

12. CHAIR REPORT

- Chair Buck sworn in on the Brownfield Authority.  
The EDC Board discussed Mikhail Murshak as a recommendation to the Township Board to serve as an EDC member.

**MOTION BY CHAIR BUCK TO RECOMMEND MIKHAIL MURSHAK TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD TO SERVE ON THE EDC. SUPPORTED BY MANAGER WALSH. MOTION APPROVED 9-0.**

13. STAFF REPORT

- a. Development Projects Update – EDC staff provided updates on the status of proposed and ongoing projects within the Township. Report on file.
- Chair Buck requested two additional items to be permanently included on the agenda for upcoming meetings – “MERIDIAN MALL REPORT” and “FARMERS’ MARKET RELOCATION UPDATE”.

14. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

- Manager Walsh reported Meridian Township completed its Annual Audit Report for 2016. The report will be before the Township Board on June 6, 2017.

15. TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Trustee Deschaine provided an update on Township Board activities including:

- The proposed Hannah Farms project.
- The proposed gas station renovation project on Marsh and Haslett Rd.
- The Urban Services Boundary.
- The status of Okemos and Haslett schools, in regards to the potential in developing single family housing in the Urban Services Boundary.

16. OPEN DISCUSSION/BOARD COMMENTS

- Reminder of a ribbon cutting at 1620 Haslett Road for Central Pharmacy at 1 p.m.

17. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

18. NEXT MEETING DATE:

- July 6, 2017 7:30 a.m.

19. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objection, Chair Buck adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.