

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2016 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor LeGoff, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra
ABSENT: Trustee Wilson
STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works and Engineering Derek Perry, Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Police Chief David Hall, Fire Chief Fred Cowper, Human Resources Director Joyce Marx

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. PRESENTATION

A. Granger Annual Recycling Update-Tonia Olson

Tonia Olson, Granger, 16890 Wood Road, Lansing, offered Granger's Annual Recycling Update, noting Granger has recently introduced a new look on Granger's website with extensive information regarding recycling at www.grangernet.com.

Board and Granger representative discussion:

- In 2010, Granger converted to single stream recycling
- In 2011, Granger introduced the option of cart recycling in addition to the tubs
- Residents who use the bag tag program are "grandfathered in" under the proposed agreement and can continue to use their recycling tub
- Granger does not have a good way to measure bag tag customers
- If an agreement is reached, Granger currently plans for new tag bag customers to pay for recycling services
- Cost of tub is currently \$1.50 per month
- Normal recycling rate is \$7.75 per month
- Free recycling would eliminate the cost barrier for cart use
- Increased recycling comes from getting bigger carts into residents hands
- Granger market areas which have transitioned to carts experienced a recycling increase
- Carts are more obvious on the street
- Suggestion for the Township to increase its promotion of recycling

[Handout in Official Minute Book]

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Brian McNitt, 5380 Park Lake Road, East Lansing, spoke in opposition to the proposed Costco store at the end of Park Lake Road as it will increase both the speed and amount of traffic on that road. He indicated it is time the Township paid attention to its residents, not the bottom line.

Lise Schools, 2300 Kewanee Way, Okemos, spoke in support of bus rapid transit (BRT) as it has the potential to double ridership which will aid the environment by improved air quality, reduced emissions, increased pedestrian and cyclist safety with more crosswalks and signaled intersections. She addressed civic responsibility by noting many riders choose to use CATA for environmental and cost reasons. She urged residents to visit www.cata-brt.org website for up-to-date information. Elizabeth Clifford, 2105 S. Pennsylvania, Lansing, stated that although she does not live in Meridian Township any more, her children attend/attended Okemos Schools and she is involved in school activities. She reported she coordinated the Summer Playground Program and partnered with various organizations to provide nutritional support and education enrichment to the most at-risk students. Ms. Clifford indicated one in five (5) families in Meridian Township struggle with low income and the need for free or reduced lunches, highlighting the income disparity within the Township. She noted for those residents who cannot afford vehicles, the BRT would make a big difference to a lot of people, expressing her support for the project.

[Prepared statement in Official Minute Book]

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, congratulated Township Attorney Stephen Schultz on being named Lawyer of the Year. In response to attacks among Board members at the last Board meeting, he addressed the energy efficiency and total environmental impact of fluorescent lights relative to the number of on/off cycles. Mr. Bowlby stated it is shown, dependent upon how long someone is gone from the room, it is more cost effective to leave the lights on. He noted the Meridian Citizens for a Sustainable Community sent out a candidate questionnaire to all to candidates in contested primary elections and six (6) of the ten (10) candidates responded. Upon candidate assent, Mr. Bowlby announced their intent to post the summaries on the Meridian link website for citizens to be informed of the position of the candidates.

Bill Collette, 2373 Barnsbury Road, East Lansing, voiced appreciation that CATA employees have attended tonight's meeting. He stated his opposition to the BRT as he noted the plan continually "morphs and shape-shifts." Mr. Collette believed none of the business owners along Grand River Avenue have been contacted or notified by CATA. He requested to see the traffic study on the effect of the BRT if one was contracted. Mr. Collette stated the busiest intersection in Ingham County is Hagadorn and Grand River Avenue, and questioned BRT's proposal to place a special light at that intersection.

Susan Pigg, Executive Director of Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, 3135 Pine Tree Road, Suite 2C, Lansing, urged the Board to support the BRT project. She noted Tri-County is the designated metropolitan planning organization for the region and the federally recognized agency to plan all federally funded transportation projects. Ms. Pigg stated a BRT service along the Michigan/Grand River Avenue corridor is an improvement in transportation services which has received "wide-spread" support, including adoption in federal plans by all federal transportation agencies. She asserted it is not a "transportation engineer's dream." Ms. Pigg encouraged the Board to recognize and rely on the technically accurate data and analysis which has gone into the decision making about this regional project, adding the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) has vetted and reviewed the concept of a BRT system, approving and adopting it many times over the years. She stated the Board should "not respond to ill-informed, fear mongering commentary" and they are "unbased" on any technical information.

[Prepared statement in Official Minute Book]

Kathy DeVito, 470 Chimney Oaks, Okemos, stated the majority of residents who came to the "STOP the CATA-BRT" booth at the Celebrate Meridian event on June 11th were not aware of the proposed BRT. She submitted a petition with 68 signatures from residents in different areas who support the effort to stop the BRT.

[Petition in Official Minute Book]

Chris Collette, 2373 Barnsbury Road, East Lansing, spoke in opposition to the CATA BRT. She voiced concern the BRT will force traffic off Grand River Avenue onto Saginaw, Haslett, Park Lake and Mt. Hope Roads. She alleged the ability of CATA bus drivers to control traffic lights and narrower lane width will negatively impact the non-CATA lanes by slowing vehicular traffic resulting in drivers finding alternate routes. Ms. Collette noted Park Lake road cannot absorb more traffic with the proposed Costco development. She encouraged the Board to pass a resolution in opposition to the BRT for Meridian Township.

Jeff Neilson, 2727 East Grand River Avenue, East Lansing, owner of the Tuffy Auto Service Center, offered information from a website titled "The Big Green" which shows buses are full from Abbot Road to Chandler Crossing, not in Meridian Township's corridor. He believed the BRT will "compromise" the handicapped, visually impaired and senior citizens. Mr. Neilson urged the Board not to support the BRT for Meridian Township.

[Website post in Official Minute Book]

Bob Swanson, 1744 Chester Road, Lansing and Vice-Chair of the CATA Board, offered the composition of the CATA Board who represent the interests of ten communities within the region. He stated the BRT will address the current and future needs of CATA riders, improve traffic flow, decrease congestion, enhance safety and increase economic activity throughout the Grand River/Michigan Avenue corridor. Mr. Swanson stated BRT projects have proven to be effective economic drivers in every community where a BRT has been implemented and will bring substantial amounts of state and federal funding.

Sandra Draggoo, CEO of CATA, 4615 Tranter Street, Lansing, noted CATA has provided quality public transportation services in Meridian Township for 44 years. She stated CATA's role is to work with other transportation entities to effectively move people in and out of the region. Ms. Draggoo maintained CATA's customers live, work and consume products and services in the Township. She indicated the BRT is an example of CATA working to improve the overall transportation network, adding Route 1 carries 1.7 million trips annually, with .25 million of those trips carrying people to and from the Meijer and Meridian Mall area. Ms. Draggoo stated Meridian Meijer is pleased to participate in this transportation initiative and sees the value of CATA, pointing to a letter of support from Meijer for the BRT project. She noted adding buses will further delay and make traffic flow problems while removing buses from mixed traffic will help with traffic flow. Ms. Draggoo requested the Township continue to work with CATA to determine how Meridian Township may continue to be a partner in the BRT project.

Randy Schaetzel, 2294 Hamilton Road, Okemos, stated no one had asked him to speak here and that he came on his own volition. He added he has lived in Meridian Township for 26 years and has never spoken at a Board meeting until tonight. Mr. Schaetzel said he has ridden the bus to work at Michigan State University (MSU) for the last 26 years. He asserted that, contrary to a previous speaker, there are a whole lot of riders from Meridian Township who use the bus. He noted he was originally against the BRT due to the high cost of the project, but changed his mind because he felt that "if we don't take that money, someone else will get the money."

Mr. Schaetzel stated he visited the anti-BRT booth at Celebrate Meridian and asked them why they were against it, and he indicated their answer was that it cost too much. He shared his response was that it's not our money and the individual agreed with that statement. Mr. Schaetzel inquired if it was wrong to not want federal and state investment in our community, and he received no answer. He noted the second concern from the anti-BRT group related to the proposed median in the road with drivers unable to turn left to directly access business along Grand River Avenue. Mr. Schaetzel agreed that it would be a "bit of an impediment", but he believed a median in the road and no left turn has worked for East Lansing as businesses are thriving there. He suggested giving bus riders a break by not planning the community around automobiles.

Tim Potter, 4632 Van Atta Road, Okemos, addressed the proposed repaving of Park Lake Road, urging narrower traffic lanes which will aid in traffic calming. He believed the upcoming MSU-Lake Lansing Pathway will bring many people to and from the Park Lake/Grand River intersection and Park Lake Road being a bike friendly north/south connector will aid in pedestrian/bicyclist movement. Mr. Potter noted the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is supportive of narrower traffic lanes and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) does provide an exception to reduce lane width to ten (10) feet which will allow for wider lanes to be striped and marked as bicycle lanes. He urged the Board to support the first north/south bicycle corridor in Meridian Township.

George Tesseris, 2840 East Grand River, East Lansing, spoke to the negative impact and local business disruption implementation of the BRT would bring. He characterized the current proposal as a “boondoggle” and opposed the BRT in its current form, addressing his calculations for the cost per ride. Mr. Tesseris alleged eliminating left turns off Grand River Avenue will close many small businesses. He spoke to the disruption to small businesses during construction of the BRT, citing the construction on Saginaw resulting in the close of at least three (3) businesses. Mr. Tesseris urged the Board to oppose the BRT plan as proposed.

Anne Woiwode, 5088 Powell Road, Okemos, identified herself as a 30 year CATA bus user and spoke to the value of the BRT project to our community. She maintained the BRT sends a signal that Meridian Township is a place which attracts residents. Ms. Woiwode indicated the millennial generation, represented by the 50,000 people who attend MSU, are increasingly disinclined to purchase automobiles. She stated that in order to make this community attractive to future homeowners, we need to “meet them where they are” in order to provide the opportunity for millennials to live, work and shop in Meridian Township.

Julie Powers, Executive Director of the Greater Lansing Housing Coalition, 600 W. Maple Street, Lansing, addressed the need for wise, thoughtful, careful and unbiased planning. She indicated back in the 1950s, ‘60s and 70s malls were the “modern hotness”, was what everybody wanted, and Meridian Township was on the cutting edge by constructing a mall on what was then undeveloped land. Ms. Powers discussed the “eight (8) mule team” rule which refers to road planning requirements that a downtown road had to be wide enough to turn around a team of eight (8) mules, a rule which is still on the books of many municipalities. She stated our planning decisions (and around the country) are based on a car culture. Ms. Powers believed we have to plan for what the millennials want since they are as large a population as the baby boomers, put off home ownership due to large student debt and want public transit. She stated the BRT issue should be “pushed” to the Planning Commission for thoughtful review and planning.

Kevin Schumacher, 5868 Westminster, East Lansing, pointed to his commute from Meridian Township to downtown Lansing noting the most dangerous part is within the Township. He spoke in support of resurfacing Park Lake Road, including traffic calming measures and designated bicycle lanes. Mr. Schumacher believed many of Meridian Township’s roadways need to accommodate bicyclists by reducing the road lane to ten (10) feet and allow for bicycle lanes which are less than five (5) feet in width.

Kathie Kuhn, 5473 Okemos Road, East Lansing, and representative for Meridian Citizens for a Sustainable Community, identified herself as a bus rider. She noted CATA Routes #22 and #23 do not run as frequently as other routes, have shorter days of availability and do not run on Sunday, adding her desire for an augmented schedule to increase ridership and decrease auto usage. Ms. Kuhn spoke in support of bicycle lanes being added for Park Lake Road during its repaving project. She spoke in opposition to the BRT as it would increase congestion, decrease landscaping, impede emergency vehicles and endanger lives as residents attempted to cross Grand River to reach the median.

Patty McPhee, 5275 Thomas Drive, Haslett, spoke in support of CATA but in opposition to the BRT. She addressed the reduction of bus stops by 17, stating it would greatly impede accessibility to CATA buses, specifically for the handicapped. Mr. McPhee believed the BRT will hurt small businesses.

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandlewood, Okemos, spoke to his mission in life which is to get people out of their automobiles. He addressed the needs of Meridian residents who are not able to access Redi-Ride. Mr. Norkin suggested the Redi-Ride Review Committee be transformed into an ongoing forum to allow business owners and residents to work towards providing people with disabilities access to transportation services beyond the current 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM schedule.

Brenda Henige, 6247 Endenhall Way, Apt. 11, East Lansing, identified herself as a blind person who uses the fixed route to be as independent as possible. She spoke in opposition to the BRT as it is center running and would create a safety issue for her. Ms. Henige stated she is no longer able to use Redi-Ride as it stops running when she gets home from work. She requested consideration be given to Redi-Ride access on both sides of Lake Lansing at the Abbot Road intersection.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Court, East Lansing, stated that as a blind person she does not want to cross the street to access the bus. She voiced apprehension she would lose the ability to use the bus she has used for the last 12 years. Ms. Rose spoke in support of the Redi-Ride reauthorization and increase being placed on the November ballot, but it should not designate CATA as the sole provider in order to allow for extension of services. She voiced concern there was not more interaction with the public before the Board passed a resolution in support of the BRT many months ago.

Bob Caven, co-owner of Battery Giant of East Lansing, 1306 Michigan Avenue, Suite A, East Lansing, voiced opposition to the BRT. He stated he is a Michigan based franchise who opened a store in the Lansing area as he believed it to be a good location. Mr. Caven indicated he learned of the BRT two (2) months ago at a Lansing Chamber meeting and would not have chosen to come to the Lansing area if he had been aware of the proposed BRT project. He stated no left turns will severely impact businesses along the Grand River/Michigan Avenue Corridor.

Jared Wilson, 5443 Amber Drive, East Lansing, expressed support for CATA, but in opposition to the BRT in Meridian Township.

Bobbie Margolis, 36 Monarch Lane, Okemos, spoke in support of CATA, and suggested open dialogue on the BRT issue to reach a consensus between the factions.

Carolyn Malmstrom, 5436 Jo Pass, East Lansing, requested the Board mitigate the traffic impact in the best way possible if the Costco development is approved. She spoke to the speed with which automobiles travel on Park Lake Road, specifically through the roundabout.

Brent Forsberg, 4725 Mohican Lane, Okemos, reinforced earlier public comment relative to all working together for the good of Meridian Township over the next 50 years. He proposed forming an ad hoc committee on the BRT with members from all factions in order to vet the issues over the next two (2) or three (3) months.

Shirley Decker, Mert's Specialty Meats, 1860 W. Grand River, Okemos, stated the Okemos Road Bridge was out for three (3) months and her business was reduced by 20%. She voiced concern with the negative impact the BRT will have on small businesses in Meridian Township. Ms. Decker voiced appreciation to the Township Manager for passing along information updates regarding the Okemos Bridge repair.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, voiced his continued opposition to the BRT. He stated the Township Treasurer has transferred \$4.7 million to CATA. Mr. Provencher noted information from MDOT's website shows CATA has the highest millage of all public transportation systems in the State of Michigan. He spoke in opposition to urbanizing Meridian Township.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh deferred his report to the end of the meeting.

7. BOARD COMMENTS & REPORTS

Trustee Veenstra requested the Ingham County Road Department (ICRD) Managing Director give an explanation to the public regarding bicycle lanes on Park Lake Road, scheduled to be resurfaced this summer.

Trustee Scales stated he believed not all Board members received the survey from the Meridian Residents for a Sustainable Community, himself included.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA (SALMON)

Supervisor LeGoff reviewed the consent agenda.

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

Board discussion:

- Concern the polling location change is too far away from the present location
- State regulations narrow the options for relocation of a polling location

A. Communications

(1) Board Deliberations (BD)

- BD13A-1 Shirley Decker, Mert's Specialty Meats, 1870 W. Grand River Avenue, Okemos; RE: Costco Wages
- BD13B-1 Debra Alexander, Assistant Executive Director, Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA), 4615 Tranter Street, Lansing; RE: Transmittal email of a letter from Meijer in support of the Michigan Avenue/Grand River Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project
- BD13B-2 Renee Korrey, 4633 Okemos Road, Okemos; RE: Opposition to the BRT Project
- BD13B-3 David S. Ledebuhr, 4767 Cornell Road, Okemos; RE: Support for the BRT

(2) Board Information (BI)

- BI-1 James Spanos, 4648 Nakoma Drive, Okemos; RE: McDonald's Bus Stop
- BI-2 Phyllis Vaughn, 6100 Balog Court, Haslett; RE: Tree retention at Grange Acres
- BI-3 Deborah Keyworth, 2684 Mansfield Drive, East Lansing; RE: Opposition to The Square on Grand River
- BI-4 William Fossum, 4996 Hillcrest Avenue, Okemos; RE: Speed Bump Request for Hillcrest Avenue
- BI-5 John P. Gardner, Director, External Affairs, Comcast, Heartland Region, 1401 E. Miller Road, Lansing; RE: Changes to the channel lineup effective June 21, 2016

- BI-6 Phyllis Vaughn, 6100 Balog Court, Haslett; RE: Concern with Personal Attacks in Local Politics
- BI-7 Kevin Schumacher, 5868 Westminster Way, East Lansing; RE: Safety of cyclists on Park Lake Road
- BI-8 Phyllis Vaughn, 6100 Balog Court, Haslett; RE: CATA
- BI-9 Ahsan Sumbal, 900 Gulick Road, Haslett; Request for the Township to rezone his property located at 2267-N-78 and 6217 Newton, East Lansing from PO, RD and RA to C-2

(3) On File in the Clerk’s Office (OF)

Material handed out at the June 7, 2016 Meeting

Christine Goodrick Beavers, 5125 E. Brookfield, East Lansing; RE: Opposition to The Square on Grand River

Sara Campbell, Store Director, Foods for Living, 2655 East Grand River, East Lansing; RE: Support for The Square on Grand River

Steve Vagnozzi, Executive Committee Vice-Chair, Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, 2144 Woodfield Road, Okemos; RE: Coast-to-Coast Passenger Rail Ridership & Cost Estimate Study Executive Summary

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 Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, 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	\$ 352,365.76
Public Works	\$ 11,101.81
Trust & Agency	1,900.98
 Total Checks	 \$ 365,368.55
 Credit Card Transactions	 \$ 12,172.26
 Total Purchases	 <u>\$ 377,540.81</u>
 ACH Payments	 <u>\$ 567,642.44</u>

Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

D. Ratification of Part-Time Paramedic/Firefighter Appointment

Treasurer Brixie moved to ratify the appointment of Benjamin Mihora to the position of part-time paramedic/firefighter. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

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

- E. Approval to Change Polling Location
Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the resolution “Change Location of Precinct #20 Polling Place in Meridian Township.” Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

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

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (See Agenda Item #13A)

11. HEARINGS (None)

12. ACTION ITEMS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, stated the Hillbrook Park Tennis Courts have been in disrepair for many years. He spoke in support of resurfacing the courts.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

- A. Economic Development Corporation Appointment
Treasurer Brixie moved to appoint Joshua Hundt to serve as a member of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to fill the vacant term ending on December 31, 2017. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Appreciation to Marsha Madle for her many years of service
- Clerk Dreyfus presented Marsha with a resolution of appreciation at her last EDC meeting
- Desire to continue working with Ms. Madle in her new position with Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)

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

- B. Environmental Commission Appointment
Trustee Veenstra moved to appoint Ben Holland to serve as a student member of the Environmental Commission to fill the vacant term ending June 30, 2017. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Board discussion:

- Applicant is an Eagle Scout and interested in the environment
- Environmental Commission recommended the applicant

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

- C. Travel and Expense Policy

Trustee Veenstra moved to approve the Travel and Expense Policy dated May, 2016. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

Board and staff discussion:

- Board member preference for two separate policies, one for elected officials and one for employees
- Appreciation to Human Resources Director Joyce Marx for her extensive work on this document

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

D. Tax Foreclosed Properties

Treasurer Brixie moved to authorize the Township Manager to work collectively with Haslett Public Schools and Ingham County Treasurer Eric Schertzing to obtain parcel number 33-02-02-10-432-007 for future public purpose. If any costs are incurred in the process, Meridian Township shall be reimbursed in full by Haslett Public Schools. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Meridian Township has the first right of refusal on tax foreclosed properties in Meridian Township from the Ingham County Treasurer
- Haslett Public Schools is interested in the property on School Street for future public use
- Property is just north of Ralya Elementary School
- Township is working collectively with Haslett Schools and the Ingham County Treasurer for proper conveyance
- Township is working towards the best opportunity which can be reached for all parties involved

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

E. Resurfacing Hillbrook Park Tennis Courts

Trustee Styka moved to amend the budget of the Park Millage Fund in the amount of \$100,000 for the purpose of renovating tennis courts in Hillbrook Park and providing accessible pathways to the courts and playground area. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Board discussion:

- Necessity of timely upkeep for tennis courts

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

[Supervisor LeGoff recessed the meeting at 8:00 P.M.]

[Supervisor LeGoff reconvened the meeting at 8:10 P.M.]

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Erik Lindquist, 2096 Tomahawk Road, Okemos, former CATA Finance Director, stated there is a credibility gap between Meridian Township business owners and CATA regarding the BRT. He believed the operational costs for the BRT need to be vetted for the benefit of the community. Mr. Lindquist noted the Federal Transportation Authority's Triennial Review resulted in zero findings for CATA, a rarity. He believed CATA should be respected as a jewel in the community. Mr. Lindquist voiced concern over losing bus stops which will create issues for persons with disabilities. Regarding the BRT, he noted skepticism over business growth opportunities for the section of Grand River from Hagadorn Road to Meridian Mall. He believed business owners and CATA need to meet as suggested during Brent Forsberg's comment time.

Brent Forsberg, 4725 Mohican Lane, Okemos, stated we are a community and need to find a way to keep positive dialogue going regarding the BRT.

Richard Hicks, 5958 Westminster Way, East Lansing, voiced his appreciation for the public meeting with Costco. He noted his opposition at this time due to the traffic patterns proposed on Saginaw Street and Park Lake Road, adding MDOT left turn arounds are intended to keep traffic moving, not impede traffic with a signal. Mr. Hicks asked who will maintain the natural area buffer zone and believed the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's (ICDC) input is critical. He urged the board to review the traffic study yet to be completed by MDOT and the ICRD prior to consideration of the rezoning request.

Brenda Henige, 6247 Endenhall Way, East Lansing, voiced support for dialogue between the different interests groups involved in the BRT process. She noted concern over the safety of 20% of the population who have disabilities with the proposed center running lane. Ms. Henige did not believe the Okemos area is ready for the change the BRT will bring to the Township.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Court, East Lansing, stated that just because you can get tax dollars for a project, isn't necessarily a good reason for choosing a project, as it must be appropriate for the area in which it is to be placed. She voiced concern with potential fatalities with center running lanes. As a bus rider, Ms. Rose does not believe the current system is broken and in need of a fix.

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandlewood, Okemos, offered his comments regarding the friction between Meridian residents and CATA and the friction between business owners and CATA. He stated there is not a single member on the ten seat CATA Board who is a credentialed transportation planner or an engineer with experience in transportation planning. Mr. Norkin reminded Board members Meridian Township had appointed one of the most recognized and respected transportation planners in the United States to the CATA Board who was not seated due to a "bogus" conflict of interest. He noted the argument was that MSU Professor Malik reported to the Provost and MSU's Vice President signed an agreement between MSU and CATA, and Professor Malik had the potential to influence the agreement between MSU and CATA. Mr. Norkin believed if Professor Malik had been allowed to be Meridian Township's representative on the CATA Board, he would have admirably served as a conduit between the Township's residents and businesses and CATA regarding the BRT.

John Wolenberg, 2459 Barnsbury Road, East Lansing, stated the proposed contract regarding the PA 108 Agreement provides a "trust but verify" factor. He urged Costco to mirror the screening of the Green Oak store and requested to be included in the discussions on the berm and landscape design. Mr. Wolenberg expressed concern with the City of East Lansing receiving any of the conservation easement as there is distrust with management of that portion of the property.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, stated if it is beneficial for the Township to enter into the Granger Recycling Agreement, he was supportive of the agreement. He expressed his desire for the Board to support the Jolly Road Transportation Alternative Program Resolution.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, expressed concerned with the brownfield language contained in the amendment to the PA 108 Agreement. He agreed with Mr. Forsberg's comment that something must be done to bring the community together to address what it is CATA is trying to do. Mr. Bowlby voiced opposition to center running lanes in Meridian Township. He noted concern future bag tag customers would have to pay for curbside recycling services as currently proposed in the Granger Recycling Agreement.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

A. PA 108 Agreement (COSTCO)

Trustee Styka offered a brief history on the PA 108 Agreement with East Lansing and the proposed amendment to the 2001 agreement as outlined in staff memorandum dated June 15, 2016.

Board discussion:

- Appreciation for efforts by Township officials and the Everett Farms, Everett Woods and Wood Creek residents for their efforts on the proposed amendment
- Proposed amendment is the first step in a long process
- Several concerns voiced by residents will need to be addressed through the rezoning, site plan review and permitting processes as it moves through the City of East Lansing
- Landscaping, noise and traffic are the three (3) largest concerns raised by neighbors
- Interest was expressed by one neighbor regarding the possibility of Costco deeding some of the land over to them and address deed restrictions currently in place which will be vetted during East Lansing's part of the process

Jurisdiction by the ICDC regarding the drain: (Questions for the Attorney (See Agenda Item #10)

- Q. Does the ICDC have jurisdiction even though this is in East Lansing? Can you explain that a little bit more for me?
- A. There is a drain, the Raby Drain, that will be impacted by this and so I would expect that the City of East Lansing will be consulting with the Drain Commissioner on how that is going to be managed. Your question is a good one because there are a number of things that are yet to be resolved as to drains, wetlands, landscape protection, open space and the like. One of things when you have only conceptual plans that makes an agreement like this difficult is how you are going to deal with those contingencies. We don't know what the Drain Commissioner's reaction will be; we don't even have a final site plan. What we do have is conceptual agreements. I think as the committee was working together the thought was to delegate the ultimate responsibility to the experts (the Director of Planning in the City of East Lansing and the Director of Planning here in the Township) and let the professionals sort through how these all interplay with each other. Drains are one issue, wetland protection, landscaping buffers, all go into a process in this Township and in the city and then the fail safe for us is the stricter standard will apply between the two (2) communities. So, you get the best of both worlds, not the worst of both worlds.
- Q. Will the Drain Commissioner actually have authority over the whole project or is it just over the small portion where the drain is? In the Township, he would have jurisdiction over all of the water retention.
- A. Just the drain. The city retains jurisdiction over drains.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Not every issue raised can be incorporated in this proposed amendment
- Concern the dark stores and tax appeals is not contained in the agreement
- Continued conversations with East Lansing local officials to encourage accommodations are made through their process for the view sheds, noise and traffic
- Some issues raised by residents (e.g., delivery times) will be limited in the eventual approval

- Meridian Township representatives are working through the specific items as they are brought to them
- Board member preference for residents to continue to bring their issues to the Board's attention so they can be addressed as the Costco project moves through the project
- Process for the proposed Costco development is unusual as the rezoning request is under a PA 108 Agreement
- Meridian Township must "get everything it wants" in the agreement prior to approving Costco's rezoning request
- Board member suggestion for the 33 acre conservation easement to be placed in the Township's Land Preservation Program
- Land Preservation Advisory Board had no interest in acquiring the conservation easement
- 33 acre conservation easement will be left to East Lansing to facilitate
- Board member concern with allowing Costco a \$1 million brownfield tax credit
- Board member belief there is no connection between the cost of contamination clean up and the amount of brownfield tax credit
- Appreciation to the Township Manager for soliciting individual input of Board members to negotiate items which will benefit Meridian Township's citizens
- Appreciation for the meeting between citizens and Costco representatives
- Development philosophy for this project includes ample greenspace protection
- Agreement includes protection for future development of the out lots as the Township will have influence over the site plans
- Costco is a good corporate citizen
- Comparison with how Meridian Township handled the new central fire station project relative to cooperation with neighbors
- Township Attorney proposed the methodology of the Township having final approval of the project
- Staff belief Meridian Township residents are protected in this agreement
- Park Lake Road will not be widened except between Haslett Road and Saginaw Highway
- Potential berm will be considered by Director Kieselbach during site plan review
- Clarification that the ICRD made a decision to cease its repaving of Park Lake Road at the proposed property line for the Costco land and will only be paved from Grand River Avenue to just north of Haslett Road

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at its July 5, 2016 meeting.

B. Bus Rapid Transit

Board discussion:

- Preference to establish a committee of all interested parties to examine the BRT proposal
- Need for civility throughout the entire process
- Board member belief it is poor government to go after money just because it is available
- If available money can be used to forward the vision of the community, then the vision should be articulated and efforts made toward that vision
- Board member preference for the BRT to be side running lanes
- Center running lanes will require every rider to cross Grand River Avenue to board the BRT
- Need for politics to be removed from the process in order to take a common sense approach
- Stigma and hardship faced by the working poor who live in Meridian Township and totally rely on CATA for their transportation needs
- Board member belief the BRT is a proposal to improve mass transit for our region, which will bring improvements to the local community and region
- Board member belief the BRT will bring improvements to safety for pedestrians
- Board member belief our corridor is currently not made for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Concern with the fact there are no lights in Meridian Township's section of the Grand River Corridor and pedestrians/bicyclists must cross the entire street to return home
- BRT project is only 30% engineered at the current time

- Board member suggestion to establish a new public body in Meridian Township called the Transportation Commission which will encompass discussion regarding Redi-Ride and the BRT
- Need for intensive dialogue to work together creatively to obtain better transportation for Meridian Township residents
- Questions surrounding the BRT include:
 - Will it increase ridership
 - Will it decrease traffic congestion along the Grand River Corridor
 - Will the current BRT plan improve the average driver's experience along Grand River Avenue
 - Will the BRT decrease driver stress currently experienced by citizens using the corridor
 - Will there be a change in the ease of people who currently use CATA in the Township in their effort to travel to the bus station
 - Will there be a change in personal driving routes by residents seeking to avoid potential congestion along Grand River Avenue by traversing through neighborhoods if congestion becomes an issue
 - What effect will the current BRT plan have on long term operating costs
 - What effect will the current BRT plan have on businesses due to no left turns
 - Is the estimated time savings due to a reduction from 45 stations to 28 stations
- If the BRT is a plan, vision and work in progress, it can be shaped by discussions with all parties involved
- Board is here to only express an opinion on the BRT
- Board member preference to allow CATA to address the concerns which have been expressed before forming an opinion on the BRT
- One agenda item for the Redi-Ride Committee is the creation of a Transportation Commission
- Concern the BRT continually changed over the last two (2) years
- Board member belief there is not sufficient time for a newly established Transportation Commission to review the BRT
- Board member preference for the Board to rescind its previous approval of the BRT
- Board member preference for the Board to consider forthcoming additional information prior to making a decision whether to rescind its previous approval
- Board member recollection the letter to the Federal Transit Authority supported additional money for a study on whether to have a BRT, not wholesale support of a BRT

It was the consensus of the Board to continue forward movement on the issue of the BRT.

C. Granger Recycling Agreement

Tonia Olson, Granger, 16890 Wood Road, Lansing offered a synopsis of the proposed agreement which would allow the free market system to remain in place in Meridian Township. She noted for that benefit Granger would offer no additional cost recycling to its customers which currently subscribe to its trash service with the exception of condo associations, etc. currently under contract with Granger and new bag tag customers.

Board discussion:

- Charging a recycling fee to new bag tag customers is problematic as it says that a customer must pay more for the recycling to be environmentally conscious
- The snow bird portion of the senior population would be affected by the decision to charge bag tag customers a recycling fee
- Concern that bag tag customers could potentially be a one-time customer who would receive the recycling benefit at no additional cost
- Granger will look for a way to monitor that, possibly through an audit to review annual purchases
- Preference to offer free recycling to new bag tag customers

It was the consensus of the Board to continue forward movement on the proposed Granger Recycling Agreement.

D. Jolly Rd-Transportation Alternative Program Resolution

William Conklin, Managing Director of the ICRD, offered information on the Jolly Road project, resurfacing from Dobie Road to Meridian Road using Federal Aid Surface Transportation Program Funding. He noted federal and state requirements for a road of this type and volume requires six (6) foot wide shoulders, preferably three of which are paved. He indicated substantial tree clearing will be needed to widen the grade in order to install the paved shoulders and the road right of way would need to be cleared to effect the widening. Mr. Conklin stated that in addition to the federal funding for the resurfacing of the Road, the ICRD is applying for a federal Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant to offset some of the cost of the work, including paving of the shoulders to support non-motorized use.

Board and ICRD discussion:

- Majority of the trees are on the south side of Jolly Road
- Major power line is just west of Van Atta Road
- Paved shoulders on both sides of Jolly Road are needed for safety purposes
- Request for review of the trees to ascertain if any of them are valuable
- Inquiry if the slopes can be made steeper where valuable trees are located
- ICRD Managing Director's recollection there are no large desirable specimens
- Steepening the slopes greater than the one-on-three will necessitate guard rails along the entire length of the road to address a safety concern
- Changes to the standard practice regarding steepening the slope would have to be approved by MDOT and the federal government
- Guardrails would be a safety concern for bicyclists
- Speed on the segment of Jolly Road from Dobie to Meridian Roads is 55 miles per hour
- Need for complete streets to make our roadways safer for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Inquiry if the Township can incorporate condemnation to complete the pathway in this area along Jolly Road in conjunction with the work to be done by the ICRD
- Curb and gutter at the intersections within residential areas would be moved back to facilitate the paved shoulder
- Shoulders typically become part of the taper where there is an approach to a residential street
- Board member concern if the paved shoulders would not be along this entire area
- Challenge with snow removal on the north side of Jolly Road near Hiawatha School where there is a slope and an emergency pathway on the curb line
- Board member request for a picture of a shoulder becoming part of the taper where there is a residential approach off Jolly Road
- Board member preference for a tree inventory to be submitted to the Environmental Commission for review
- Clarification that the section of pathway referred to earlier is farther west between Dobie and Okemos Roads

Treasurer Brixie highlighted last night's meeting with Friends of Meridian Township Pathways. She discussed the committee's desire to restripe Park Lake Road in a manner which would provide a bicycle lane, preferably 3-½" feet wide.

Board and ICRD Managing Director's discussion:

- Another discussion at the meeting centered around the possibility of restriping a section near the "old" Wardcliff School with ten (10) foot wide lanes instead of eleven (11) feet as there has been a significant decrease in the building's use
- Most of Park Lake Road from Grand River to Merrit Street (just south of Saginaw Highway) will be resurfaced beginning next month
- Park Lake Road is currently 27 feet wide between gutters
- According to state and federal standards, gutter cannot be counted as part of any bicycling facility as it has too steep of a cross slope and is occasionally interrupted by drainage grates
- State and federal requirements for Park Lake Road (considering volume and speed) mandate eleven (11) foot lanes, which would leave 2-½ feet on each side to be striped as a bicycle facility.

- State and federal requirements do not allow signage, markings or other designations as a bicycle facility unless it is four (4) feet in width
- If there was an attempt to reduce the lane width to ten (10) feet and provide markings for a 3-½ foot bicycle lane, federal funding would be lost
- Several locations do not have any excess on the roadway (i.e., Greencliff, Roseland, Grand River, Burcham, Haslett)
- Wherever there are auxiliary turn lanes, there is insufficient width to place either a 2-½ or 3-½ foot paved shoulder for non-motorized use
- ICRD recommendation not to put down a white line, but place shared lane signs
- Board member belief that when there is no lane marking, the cars take the space
- Board member belief that when there is a lane marking, cars will follow it

Treasurer Brixie moved to suspend the rules. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-1. (Clerk Dreyfus)

Board and ICRD Managing Director's discussion:

- Grant funding for the Park Lake Road project has already been obligated and is in place for work to commence next month
- Request for a design exception is typically done during the design stage, but can be applied for at any point prior to the striping
- With the strong possibility of Costco coming to the area, it is essential to allow equal access for all types of road users
- Ten (10) foot wide lanes with bicycle lanes will aid in slowing traffic on Park Lake Road
- Inquiry if the members of the Friends of Meridian Township Pathways were aware it is not legally possible to have a four (4) foot bike lane and did they prefer a 3-½ foot shoulder
- Group was aware of the shortcomings (e.g., shoulder will disappear in some areas) and the consensus was it will be an improvement over current conditions and the traffic calming improvements are free
- Inquiry as to whether the Township still wants and eleven (11) foot lane with a white stripe or no stripe if the state and federal government does not approve the design exception for ten (10) foot lanes
- Inquiry if the ICRD would allow the sharrow symbol to be printed so frequently that it would resemble the whiteness on the right side of the lane which would be three (3) feet wide
- ICRD must follow Michigan law regarding frequency and size of markings
- Concern with the possibility of Costco on this road and lines which start and stop along with the narrow entrance into Costco

Treasurer Brixie moved to request the ICRD apply to the Michigan Department of Transportation for a design exception for the placement of ten (10) foot wide lanes instead of eleven (11) foot lanes on Park Lake Road from Grand River Avenue to Merrit Road as part of its 2016 scheduled paving project in Meridian Charter Township.

Seconded by Trustee Styka.

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

Trustee Scales moved to complete the agenda after 10:00 P.M. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

E. Marsh Rd/Haslett HS Traffic Study

Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works & Engineering Perry summarized potential Township funding of a traffic study in the area of Haslett High School to ascertain the safest traffic flow and future growth as outlined in staff memorandum dated June 17, 2016.

Without objection, the Board directed staff to move forward with the Haslett High School traffic study.

14. FINAL PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Ahsan Sumbal, 900 Gulick Road, Haslett, requested the Township initiate a rezoning request for seven (7) acres of property he owns addressed as 2267 M-78 and 6217 Newton Road from PO, RD and RA to C-2. He stated for Board consideration of this request, he would be willing to sign off on the paving of Newton Road and his parents would sign off on an agreement to put in a sidewalk in front of Hiawatha Elementary.

Board discussion:

- Applicant has the option to go through the Township's established rezoning application process
- Manager already had this issue under consideration and if he brings it to the Board, a decision will be made

Brian Seipel, 4114 Spinnaker Lane, Okemos, suggested HOMTV run public programs on driver awareness regarding cycling safety. He noted the State of Michigan has created publications entitled "What Every Bicyclist Must Know" and "What Every Michigan Driver Should Know about Bicycle Lanes."

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandlewood, Okemos, explained some disabled bus patrons ride the bus through to the end of the route and let the bus make the turn in order not to cross Grand River. He spoke in support of the creation of a Transportation Commission so that those who consistently use the service can express their views and voice their experiences.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

15. FINAL BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Trustee Styka reminded residents of the Township's fireworks ordinance as the Fourth of July approaches. He announced a blood drive will be held in the Township Hall on June 30th. Trustee Styka expressed appreciation to John Duly for his efforts in the return of the Towar Garden Summer Playground Program.

Trustee Veenstra voiced his outrage that Redi-Ride would not stop on the side of the street which would allow a disabled individual not to cross the road just because that side was allegedly not in Meridian Township.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor LeGoff adjourned the meeting at 10:30 P.M.

ELIZABETH LEGOFF
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary