



Charter Township of Meridian
Meridian Economic Development Corporation
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864
Thursday, May 7, 2020– Minutes

Members

Present: Jade Sims, Joel Conn, Treasurer Phil Deschaine, Shawn Dunham, Mikhail Murshak, David Ledebuhr, Brenda Chapman, Township Manager Frank Walsh, Tom Conway, Kimberly Thompson, and Adam Carlson

Members

Absent: Trustee Kathy Ann Sundland

Others

Present: Executive Assistant Michelle Prinz, Community Planning & Development Director Mark Kieselbach, Economic Development Director Ken Lane, Resident Alex Newman, and Lake Trust Credit Union Manager Dylan Swan

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Sims called the meeting to order at 7:32 am and Member Carlson 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 THE AGENDA

MOTION BY MEMBER CARLSON TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR. MOTION PASSES 11-0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes-March 12, 2020
- b. Financial Report
- c. Development Projects

MOTION BY MEMBER CARLSON TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER DUNHAM. MOTION PASSES 11-0.

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

Resident Alex Newman mentioned he is looking forward to getting involved with the Township.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Virtual Meeting Platform Discussion

Concerns were mentioned regarding the security of Zoom for these meetings. Member Conway mentioned other municipalities have had issues in this regard. Treasurer Deschaine mentioned he is in favor of the Zoom platform because of its ease of use for residents. There was a consensus among the group that the Zoom platform is the best option and the group will continue to use it for virtual meetings.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. School District Engagement-Drink Cart Opportunity

There are no new updates on this subject. Director Lane will reach out to Scott Weaver and report back next month with any updates.

8. TOWNSHIP REPORT

a. Township Board

- Pine Village-senior housing development at Haslett Village Square has financing in place and has made some great updates to the mixed use building
- Approved hazard pay for front line police and fire
- Ratified police patrol contract
- Due to the pandemic, the Village of Okemos is facing significant construction delays

b. Township Manager

- Township Board election is coming up. The Treasurer and Supervisor are running unopposed. There are seven Trustee candidates; four incumbents and three challengers.
- The police benefits were restructured in this contract to allow for a savings for the Township in the years to come.
- Working on a staff realignment plan
- Developed a COVID-19 hotline with 107 calls to date
- Hoping to move the Farmers' Market to the mall parking lot to allow for more space for social distancing
- Setting up an outdoor summer service counter in the pavilion for tax payments, utility payments, building permits and ballots
- 21 local streets are in the process of being upgraded
- Is the EDC interested in redirecting their \$50,000 donation to the Farmers' Market to use for a small business grant program instead? Chair Sims recommend to table the discussion until the open discussion portion of the agenda.

c. Planning Commission

Director Kieselbach provided a summary of recent Planning Commission activities.

d. Chair

Chair Sims thanked the Township for all of the hard work during this difficult time.

e. Staff

Director Lane reported that 3 Township businesses received a \$10,000 small business relief grant through Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP). Of the 1,875 applications submitted, the tri-county area received 60 grants. The 3 businesses selected in Meridian Township include: Art Unlimited, Embassy Transportation and Red Haven. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) will soon announce business loans for the tri-county area including: 8 in Ingham County, 2 in Eaton County, and 2 in Clinton County. Other opportunities for funding may be available for tech based businesses through the Regional SmartZone. The deadline for those grants is June 30, 2020. Director Lane reviewed the Township development projects currently under construction and those under consideration.

9. COMMUNITY REPORTS

a. Meridian Mall

- Member Dunham reported he is currently furloughed and planning to return to work mid-June
- Had discussion regarding the Chinese New Year, at the Meridian Mall, sponsorship. The following motion was presented:

MOTION BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR TO SEND AN EMAIL TO THE MERIDIAN MALL TO CONSIDER THE EDC 2020 \$1,000 SPONSORSHIP, FOR THE CHINESE NEW CELEBRATION, AS A DEPOSIT FOR THE 2021 EVENT . SUPPORTED BY MEMBER MURSHAK. MOTION PASSES 9-1-1.

- Director Lane will prepare a letter to the Meridian Mall regarding the Chinese New Year sponsorship for Chair Sims review.

b. Marketplace on the Green

No new updates. Construction is expected to resume again soon.

c. MABA

Member Conway and Member Dunham reported they have resigned from the MABA Board. Member Thompson has volunteered to be the new connection with MABA for the EDC. MABA is holding a zoom membership meeting tomorrow.

10. OPEN DISCUSSION/BOARD COMMENTS

The proposed small business grant program was discussed. There is agreement to use the \$50,000 donation from the Farmers' Market donation for this program. In addition, Manager Walsh is investigating the possibility of using an additional \$50,000 from the Meridian Redevelopment Fund for a combined total of \$100,000 for the small business grant program.

MOTION BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR THAT THE EDC CONSIDER FUNDING A SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM, STAFF TO INVESTIGATE FUNDING AND HAVE A SPECIAL MEETING VIA ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2020 AT 7:30AM TO FURTHER DISCUSS THE DETAILS. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER THOMPSON. MOTION PASSES 11-0.

11. PUBLIC REMARKS

Lake Trust Credit Union, Okemos Branch Manager, Dylan Swan stated he would pass along the small business grant information to interested parties through the credit union.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE

- June 4, 2020 at 7:30am

13. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objection, Chair Sims adjourned the meeting at 9:04am.