



Charter Township of Meridian  
Meridian Economic Development Corporation  
Township Municipal Building, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864  
Thursday, November 2, 2023– Minutes -DRAFT

**Members**

**Present:** Treasurer Phil Deschaine, Chair Kim Thompson, Shawn Dunham, Manager Frank L. Walsh, Brenda Chapman, and Trustee Kathy Sundland

**Members**

**Absent:** Dave Ledebuhr and Adam Carlson

**Others**

**Present:** Economic Development Director Amber Clark, Planning Commissioner Milton Scales, Marketing & Public Relations Specialist Rachel Stohlin, and Executive Assistant Michelle Prinz

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Thompson called the meeting to order and read the mission statement at 7:36 am.

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 DUNHAM TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CHAPMAN. MOTION PASSES 5-0.**

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes-Meeting October 5, 2023
- b. Financial Report
- c. Development Projects

**MOTION BY MEMBER DUNHAM TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CHAPMAN. MOTION PASSES 5-0.**

5. PRESENTATION-Lansing 5:01 Retention Attraction Program

Samantha Harkins discussed the new regional talent retention and attraction campaign. It includes consistent messaging “Be Our Neighbor”. The campaign includes strategic placement of ads for the region on social media and bus wraps including the benefits of living in the region of low cost living, short commutes, and many things to do. The primary target of the campaign is out of state young professionals. Ms. Harkins asked the EDC to consider joining the coalition of support

for the campaign. There was consensus that the EDC would like to be a part of the campaign. Director Clark will bring an idea for participation back to the EDC at the December meeting.

6. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Village of Okemos Redevelopment Project Update

Director Clark gave an update on the project. She continues to reach out to the developers weekly to discuss their plan moving forward with the denial of the grant funding for the project. Developers continue to not be able to meet with their revised plan. Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) has removed the grant and loan from the project. They are requesting to fill and grass the large hole on the site.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. 2024 Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Meeting Calendar

Director Clark presented the proposed 2024 EDC Meeting Calendar. There was a short discussion of moving the meeting start times later, but it concluded with keeping the existing 7:30am start time. It was mentioned that the August and November meetings will be held at the Central Fire Station.

**MOTION BY MANAGER WALSH TO APPROVE THE 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (EDC) OF MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP, AS PROPOSED. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER DUNHAM. MOTION PASSES 5-0.**

b. 2024 EDC Goals

Member Dunham, Chair Thompson, and Member Chapman met with Director Clark to discuss possible 2024 EDC Goals. The following 2024 goals were presented for discussion. There was consensus that these goals are great priorities for 2024.

1. Define and select a public improvement project that meets the eligibility requirements of the Public Spaces Community Places MEDC match grant of \$50,000 toward a community amenity.
2. Working alongside of MABA, feature each monthly MABA Spotlight Member on HOMTV, Social Media, and other media platforms.
3. Launch a "Prime of Meridian" (like Top of Town) business promotion survey. For each business with the most votes, promote their award selection on all media platforms.
4. Support community garden/urban gardening initiatives. Partner with local neighborhood and community groups to engage those eager to participate in sustainable living.

**MOTION BY MEMBER DUNHAM TO ADOPT THE MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP EDC 2024 GOALS, AS PRESENTED. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CHAPMAN. MOTION PASSES 5-0.**

9. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

a. Township Board

Trustee Sundland reported the following:

- Working on housing ordinance update to include accessory dwelling units
- Updated the Township Investment Policy
- It's National Fire Prevention Month
- Working on Paid Parental Leave for up to 12 weeks
- Working on recreational marihuana licensing standards

b. Township Manager

Manager Walsh reported the following:

- Phase 1 of the MSU to Lake Lansing Pathway is almost complete
- Discussing a Senior/Community Center with possible reuse of the former Younkers space
- Former House to Home building is being demolished
- Deer Program has gotten 72 deer so far
- Severe problems with the new Fire Ladder Truck
- Amber is working on her Economic Development Certification
- Reno, new police dog, is almost ready to come back to work after illness
- Interviewing 5 Parks & Recreation Director candidates next week
- Working on public safety recruitment and retention program
- Sent a letter to CATA requesting no millage for Redi-Ride service
- Holding two more Board listening sessions
- Exterior improvements made to Harris Nature Center
- Discussing renovations needed at all 3 fire stations to accommodate sleeping for females

c. Planning Commission

Commissioner Scales stated the Planning Commission denied the proposed housing off of Park Lake Road because they believe it is not in line with the Master Plan. The Township Board will receive the proposal at the second meeting in November. The Master Plan Update will be back before the Planning Commission at the next meeting.

d. Chair

None.

e. Staff

Director Clark reported the following items:

- Construction is underway with Consumers Credit Union and Trader Joe's
- Corridor Improvement Authority TIF Plan will be at the Board for final adoption
- Working on economic development certification
- Haslett Village Square is under demolition
- EP League will have a ribbon cutting at the Meridian Mall this weekend

10. COMMUNITY REPORTS

a. Meridian Mall

Member Dunham reported the following updates:

- An indoor golf simulator concept is opening
- Remote race cars hobby shop opening
- Jerk chicken is coming to the Food Court
- Take and go mattress shop opening

b. MABA

Director Clark mentioned that the MABA Business Expo will take place on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am at the Meridian Mall. 30 vendors are registered and proceeds will go to the Small Business Gift Card Program.

11. OPEN DISCUSSION/BOARD COMMENTS

None.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

The Township is working to promote more affordable housing through MSHDA's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing Improving Local Livability (CHILL) Grant and the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance update. The Towar Garden area will be targeted area for the grant along with the downtown Haslett neighborhoods.

There was general discussion that using the existing vacant Younkers building for a potential Community/Senior Center is more appealing than building something new.

13. NEXT MEETING DATE

- December 7, 2023 at 7:30am at the Township Municipal Building-Town Hall Room.

14. ADJOURNMENT

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