



Charter Township of Meridian  
Meridian Economic Development Corporation  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864  
Thursday, November 4, 2021- Minutes -DRAFT

**Members**

**Present:** Chair Kim Thompson, Vice Chair Brenda Chapman, Manager Frank Walsh, Dave Ledebuhr, Adam Carlson, Joel Conn, Treasurer Phil Deschaine, Trustee Kathy Sundland, Henry Kwok, Tom Conway

**Members**

**Absent:**

**Others**

**Present:** Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director Amber Clark, and Trustee Patricia Herring Jackson

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Vice Chair Kim Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:33 am and 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 CONWAY TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR. MOTION PASSES 9-0.**

4. PRESENTATION: Value Engineering

**Director Clark gave a brief introduction on Value Engineering a small business based in Meridian Township. Value Engineering is a civil engineering, design and construction firm whose core values are collaboration, innovation and dependability. Value Engineering is looking to connect in the Meridian community.**

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes-October 7, 2021
- b. Financial Report
- c. Development Projects

**MOTION BY MEMBER CONWAY TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CONN. MOTION PASSES 9-0.**

6. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

7. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Acceptance of \$1000 reimbursement for Lunar New Year Celebration 2019. Director Clark provided the recap of the Meridian Lunar New Year celebration contribution first submitted in 2019. The EDC elected to have the money stay with the Greater Chinese Association of Lansing in the event the celebration went forward. The celebration did not occur and now the EDC will receive the full reimbursement.
- b. Director Clark began review of the item by clarifying, Village of Okemos LLC will be the formal entity title and moving forward Tru North is no longer associated with the project. Director Clark introduced the floor for Eric Helzer of Advanced Redevelopment Solutions and John Peckham who will coordinate the project going forward. Mr. Helzer gave a brief overview of the past several months of work related to Village of Okemos. In July, the Village of Okemos team requested an amendment to their approved Mixed Use Development Plan (MUPUD) to reduce the amount of commercial space on Hamilton and start development on Ardmore Avenue. The Meridian Township Board and community members were not in support of phased development in this way. The MUPUD was amended to allow the removal of a story and the surface parking deck. The remaining elements of the development are a requirement. After several internal meetings with Township staff, they finally have the Village of Okemos development team prepared to enter the approved financial stage of this project.

Mr. Helzer stated they will apply for financial assistance to the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, Downtown Development Authority, and Meridian Redevelopment Fund. He presented a spreadsheet of the Sources of Funds Analysis and their proposed calendar timelines for application submittals. They are committed to building a 4 story mixed residential and commercial project, with commercial store fronts on Hamilton road. A 200 unit mix of residential and 32,000 square feet of commercial space to allow for boutique, restaurant, salon and leasing office for the residential units.

In the next quarter, the Village of Okemos Team will apply to the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the Meridian Redevelopment Fund for funding of the project. The amount requested will have an actionable agreement that is approved by the Township Board. The developer has several approval steps to conclude with the State of Michigan in order to meet a proposed deadline of construction in 2022.

Chair Chapman asked – what is the gap in the financing on the project? When will the sources of funding go from “pending” to approved?

Eric Helzer responded the gap is \$5.75 million currently without the approval of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) which he is confident he can secure. Mr. Helzer explained that the MEDC typically commits to a public project after they see all the local contributions for the project. There is strong support for the MEDC Capital

Assistance Team on the project, the verification of that will occur after all the local financing applications are approved.

Director Ledebuhr questioned the process for reimbursement of the \$2.4 million they could receive from the Township?

Mr. Helzer commented that they propose a reimbursement agreement that works like a construction draw that will allow for the developer to submit receipts for eligible project costs and receive a monthly reimbursement for that portion of the project. As long as the activity is an eligible one based on our agreement.

Chair Chapman questioned equity on the project in relation to borrowing against the Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Mr. Helzer explained that lenders risk assess TIF dollars at 60% of their value. In order for the performa to work, the developer must balance the appropriate amount of dollars that they will use from the TIF. If the developer utilizes more of TIF dollars, they will have less they can borrow from commercial lenders.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval Shop Small 2021 Initiative

Director Clark reviewed the memo presented in the packet advising of activities Meridian Township will partake in as a part of Shop Local/Small Business Saturday. The recent community survey presented in the Township shows the lack of business specific activities planned for Meridian businesses. To better promote and share the benefits of shopping local the Meridian EDC will charter two projects:

Local Shop Small Promotional Ad- to be created by the Communications Department with volunteers from the EDC to be included in the video. The ad will run beginning the week of November 27<sup>th</sup>. The message will encourage residents to think and shop local this season.

Shop Local gift card promotions- In 2020 MABA and the Meridian EDC partnered for the Grub Grab gift card program. Patrons who purchase \$25 gift cards or more received an extra \$10 sponsored by MABA and the EDC. The memo requested the EDC support this shop local initiative.

**MEMBER LEDEBUHR OFFERED THE AMENDED MOTION AND MEMBER CONWAY SECONDED; TO APPROVE A SHOP LOCAL PROMOTIONAL GIFT CARD PROGRAM WITH THE CAVEAT THAT MABA IS A SUPPORTER OF THE SHOP SMALL INITIATIVE. MOTION PASSES 9-0.**

9. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

- a. Township Board
- b. Township Manager

Manager Walsh reported the following:

- The County and MDOT will have major road construction projects planned in Meridian Township in 2022. It will not be an easy travelling experience in the

Township as the Okemos Bridge will be under construction, as well as, Grand River Avenue from Park Lake to Oak Pointe. We are working with the County and MDOT to provide as much outreach as we can on the subject. MDOT was available to present to the public in November. The presentation was recorded and is online for members of the public to view.

c. Planning Commission

- MUPUD is at the Township Board level for approval
- Consumers Credit Union is coming to Meridian and will be a larger reconstruct project in front of Hobby Lobby

d. Chair  
None.

e. Staff  
None.

10. COMMUNITY REPORTS

a. Meridian Mall

Member Dunham reported that a larger retailer has made it back to Meridian Mall and doors will be open soon. New data at the mall show numbers are back up, however people aren't spending their time at the mall for as long of time periods as in the past.

b. MABA

Director Clark reported that MABA is meeting in hybrid form at the MSUFCU Farm Lane location. She will ask MABA about participating in the Shop Local initiative.

11. OPEN DISCUSSION/BOARD COMMENTS

None

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

13. NEXT MEETING DATE

- December 2, 2021 at 7:30am

14. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objection, Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting at 9:15am.