

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD **-APPROVED-**
5000 Okemos Rd., Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Central Fire Station
Tuesday, February 20, 2024, 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Wilson and Trezise

ABSENT: NONE

STAFF: Director Schmitt, Director Gebes, Chief Grillo, Chief Hamel, Manager Walsh, Deputy Manager Opsommer, Manager Diehl.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Jackson called the February 20, 2024, Regular Township Board meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Jackson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board. All board members present at 6:00 pm.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Tribute to Former Police Chief Dave Hall

Chief Grillo introduced Families Against Narcotics, Phil Pavona, and Judge Donald Allen who presented a plaque in memorial of Chief David Hall to Diane Hall, his wife, who expressed her thanks. Joel Lowell spoke on behalf of Families Against Narcotics. Supervisor Jackson recognized the members of Chief Hall’s family in attendance.

B. Lifesaving Award

Chief Hamel presented the need for and use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in lifesaving and introduced Chief Brian Pennell. Chief Pennell recognized Brandie Leal, Officer Megan Cole, Officer Maggie Cole, Lieutenant Samantha Weber, Captain Al Diaz, Firefighter Andrew Cummins, and Firefighter Amanda Arnett. Chief Hamel presented them with their awards.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Jackson opened comments from the public at 6:22 pm.

Wanda Iza with Citizens for Local Choice spoke in support of a petition for renewable energy local choice.

Supervisor Jackson closed comments from the public at 6:27 pm.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh Talked about the following:

- Good Morning Meridian 3rd show being recorded, this is meeting the communication goal set by board.
- Progress towards staffing goal for fire and police recruitment.
- Continuing to have issues with the ladder truck. If there is no progress, the board will be presented with a legal opinion on March 5th to address the issue.
- Owner of Granger states that Bag and Tag program is still available.
- Thanked Chief Pennell and Lieutenant Weber for AED training for staff.
- Audit will begin in April.
- Land Stewardship Coordinator Emma Cambell has been chosen to serve on the State of Michigan Deer Management Committee.
- Prime Meridian Magazine is being printed, will be mailed to all residents within 8-10 days.
- Director Clark working on Juneteenth and Celebrate Meridian events.
- Assessing Board of Review in March.
- Fire Station dorm project bids have been collected and will be reviewed beginning Friday.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Wilson updated the board about the task force meeting for the Community Senior Center. Notified community of the death of Terry Carroll, local bagpipe musician.

Treasurer Deschaine reminded the community of the deadline of February 29 to pay taxes at the Treasurer's Office.

Supervisor Jackson attended Chinese New Year celebration and praised the efforts and community support of the event. Additionally, she and Treasurer Deschaine attended the International Society of Arboriculture annual conference to receive 2024 Gold Leaf Landscape Beautification Award given to recognize tree planting projects through the Green Grant program.

Trustee Trezise reminded the community of early voting, absent ballot guidelines and election deadlines. Clerk Guthrie concurred, thanked Trustee Trezise and wife Sherry for their assistance with election work and updated the board on current numbers of absent voter ballots and early voters.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustee Trezise moved to approve the agenda. Supported by Trustee Wilson

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Trezise and Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 - 0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Jackson reviewed the Consent Agenda

Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Trustee Wilson.

Trustee Trezise noted that change needs to be made to reflect that Deputy Clerk Gordon was not available at the meeting and the roll was called by Clerk Guthrie. Clerk Guthrie will make the change before publication of the approved minutes.

RE: motion on the floor to approve consent agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 - 0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY

NONE

11. HEARINGS

NONE

12. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Ordinance 2024-02 – Rezone 5681 Shaw St from PO, Professional and Office, to RC, Multiple-Family Residential-Introduction

Director Schmitt provided an overview of the ordinance, clarifying the difference between Village of Nemoka zoning district, RN, and the RC designation. Notes that the decision needs to be made to designate either RC or RN when making the recommendation to introduce the Ordinance. Trustee Hendrickson recommends RN zoning to avoid spot zoning, Trustee Wilson

concurrent. Director Schmitt indicates that there will be updates in the near future to the RN district and that there may need to be an administrative hearing for a potential application on the property in question.

Trustee Hendrickson moved approval for introduction of Ordinance 2024-02, an ordinance to rezone the property at 5681 Shaw Street (Parcel ID number 33-02-02-10-428-007) from PO, Professional Office to RN, Village of Nemoka Mixed Residential. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 - 0

B. Ronald J. Styka Memorial Pathway

Manager Walsh gave an overview of the discussion from February 6th board meeting and presented the plan to name a portion of the pathway behind the homes in Okemos Preserve. He introduced three options for the verbiage of the sign and asked that one option be approved.

Trustee Trezise moved to formally approve recognizing the existing pathway bordered by Sunwind Drive, Knob Hill Apartments, and Hulett Road as the Ronald J. Styka Memorial Pathway. The language associated with the memorial shall include option 3 as presented tonight. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 - 0

C. Township Board Liaison Appointments

Supervisor Jackson spoke of the vacancies and previous discussion of Board Member's interests to serve as Liaisons. She outlined the proposed appointments resulting from that discussion.

Supervisor Jackson moved to approve the appointment of Marna Wilson, as Board Liaison, to the Land Preservation Advisory Board and the Pension Board for terms ending 11/20/2024. Supported by Treasurer Deschaine.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 - 0

Supervisor Jackson moved to approve the appointment of Peter Trezise, as Board Liaison, to the Environmental Commission and Zoning Board or Appeals for a term ending 11/20/2024. Supported by Trustee Hendrickson.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 - 0

Supervisor Jackson moved to approve the appointment of Phil Deschaine, as Board Liaison, to the Groundwater Management Board for terms ending 11/20/2024. Supported by Trustee Wilson.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 - 0

D. Board of Review Appointment

Trustee Trezise spoke in favor of Nathan Ide's extensive experience.

Supervisor Jackson moved to approve the appointment of Nathan Ide, as an alternate, to the Board of Review for a term ending 12/31/2024. Supported by Trustee Trezise.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 - 0

E. Resolution to Support Incentives for Municipal Employees to work Elections.

Clerk Guthrie detailed the need for greater support from the community to administer the election, particularly the need to staffing to cover early voting and receiving board. Manager Walsh explained the incentives he offered to employees and indicated that 12 employees responded. Trustee Hendrickson elaborated on the need for additional staffing and additionally noted that this will be an ongoing issue in future elections. Supervisor Jackson asked for greater detail about staffing. Trustee Wilson expressed her concern that the resolution be more specific and disagreed that it be presented as policy.

Trustee Trezise moved to remove this item from the agenda and allow the Administration to go forward as they deem fit. Supported by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: Clerk Guthrie

Motion carried: 6 - 1

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Assistance to Firefighters Regional Grant Memorandum of Understanding

Chief Hamel explained the need for a Cascade SCBA fill station and that the regional component makes it a higher priority to the granting agency.

Treasurer Deschaine moved to suspend the rules and take action on item 13.A. Supported by Trustee Wilson.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Wilson

NAYS:

Motion carried: 7 - 0

Trustee Wilson moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding to submit an assistance to Firefighters Regional Grant Application for a Cascade SCBA Fill Station and Compressor and authorize the Township Manager and fire chief to sign the agreement. Supported by Treasurer Deschaine.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 – 0

- B. Special Use Permit – 24-002 – Okemos Gateway LLC, 1614 and 1622 W Grand River Avenue – Building greater than 25,000 square feet.

Director Schmitt presented the details of the Special Use Permit approval of which has been recommended by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has approved the use, the Board is to discuss the size of the building. Board Members expressed concerns regarding proximity to homes, noise during hours of operation, lighting, visibility of the building with respect to the current buildings in the area, wetland impact, drain capacity, and the general size and mass of the building. Director Schmitt will return to the Board with answers to questions.

- C. Resolution in Support of Meridian Township’s State Budget Request for Fiscal Year 24-25

Deputy Manager Opsommer explained the request for funds to build a gender-neutral dormitory for Central Fire Station.

Trustee Hendrickson moved to suspend rules to consider item 13.C. Supported by Treasurer Deschaine.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Wilson

NAYS:

Motion carried: 7 – 0

Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the resolution in support of Meridian Township’s State budget request for fiscal year 24-25. Supported by Clerk Guthrie.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Wilson

NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7 – 0

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Jackson opened comments from the public at 8:03 pm

Amar Alkafaji on behalf of Okemos Gateway LLC, spoke in support of the self-storage facility.

Josh Nahum spoke in support of incentivizing employees, regarding vacancies on Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, and in support of employing social workers to help police.

Supervisor Jackson closed comments from the public at 8:09 pm

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

NONE

16. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Wilson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Sundland.

VOICE VOTE: YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Trezise and Wilson

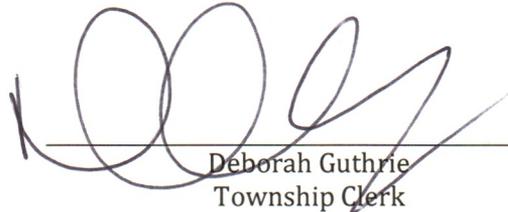
NAYS: NONE

Motion carried: 7-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM



Patricia Jackson
Township Supervisor



Deborah Guthrie
Township Clerk