

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Town Hall Room  
TUESDAY, October 3, 2017 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland  
ABSENT: None  
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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Styka called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Meridian Garden Club- Presidents Award for the National Garden Clubs presented to the Meridian Garden Club.

B. Township Manager presented the 3rd Quarter 2017 Performance Report, including the Master Plan adoption process, website development, economic development, and the hiring of a new Economic Development Director. Also mentioned the long-term plan to eliminate pension debt, local road funding, and Towner Road Park improvements. Railroad Quiet Zones not on action plan, but is a goal as well as relocation of the Farmers Market. Environment discussed as a core component of Meridian Township, leading to possibility of installing solar panels on the Township Hall. "Welcoming, Diverse and Inclusive," Meridian Township is ranked the #1 place to live in Michigan by the Michigan Township Association.

C. Overview of Township Website

Communications Director Deborah Guthrie gave a presentation of the website, the most popular components of the website, and transition process.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Curt Armbruster, 6411 E Reynolds, Haslett, stated support for 13A the Lake Lansing Special Assessment District (SAD). Serves as Chair of the Lake Lansing SAD Advisory Committee.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, suggested showing the Meridian Township 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary film in schools and libraries multiple times throughout the year. He reported no response from the Township with respect to questions he raised regarding public safety improvement through the new millage.

LaNita Campbell 6049 Skyline Dr., East Lansing, spoke on behalf of the Skyline Hills Association. Oppose rezoning of Walnut Hills Country Club (WHCC), discussed rezoning amendment and lawsuit, and expressed concern of Township subsidizing the developer.

Michael Jenkins, 6030 Skyline Dr., East Lansing, Karen Renner, 6070 Skyline Dr., East Lansing, Ben Louage, 6118 Skyline Dr., East Lansing, and Jan Jenkins, 6030 Skyline Dr. East Lansing, stated their support of the Township Board fighting the WHCC lawsuit.

Jo Ellen Zilch, 6284 Ridge St, Haslett, wants a further understanding of the Lake Lansing SAD, and the class of properties being assessed. She stated that Lake Lansing does not cause an increase in value for her property or homes on her street, and questioned why the SAD assessment is not based on value of the properties, rather than a flat tax that is the same for everyone.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

#### 6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh reported: "Dark Store" theory/lawsuit going before the Michigan Supreme Court on Oct 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, with tax implications for Meridian Township. Met with Municipal Employee Retirement System (MERS) to discuss pension deposit accounting.

#### 7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer Brixie reported:

- The \$1.1 million payment was made to MERS and earning good rates of return. Reported the land preservation boundary correction and sale closed. The Treasurer attended the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission meeting with amendments made to the Transportation Improvement Plan, and set working groups for next year.

Trustee Deschaine reported:

- The Transportation Commission met Sept 28<sup>th</sup>, presentation made by Trustee Opsommer discussed two federal grants to expand Redi-Ride Service, Job Access Grant and New Freedom Funds. EDC (Economic Development Corporation) will be meeting on 10/5/17. "Excited" for new Economic Director and the possibility of a new Economic Redevelopment Fund. Missed last meeting due to annual work conference

Trustee Opsommer reported:

- That the CATA CEO Search committee will be meeting for an update on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017. CATA Board of Directors meeting held in September had a short agenda. Attended the meeting of the Transportation Committee and presented two grant opportunities which could be utilized to expand Redi-Ride service hours. Administration from CATA was present to provide updated figures, ridership, and ridership demographics which was presented to Manager Walsh and Supervisor Styka.

Trustee Sundland reported:

- She is planning to attend the Communications Committee meeting the next evening and will update the Township Board at the next meeting.

Clerk Dreyfus reported:

- The last date to register to vote is October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017. You must be a registered voter to vote in the upcoming November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 election.

Trustee Jackson:

- Asked Clerk Dreyfus to explain to the citizens what they will be voting on in the November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 election. Clerk Dreyfus explained that it is an override to the Headlee Amendment involving Ingham County millages which requires voter approval.

Supervisor Styka reported:

- He and Manager Walsh met with CATA, and received information regarding the Redi-Ride services and the positive effects from the changes that were previously agreed upon. He mention a Fundraiser at Old Chicago held by the Community Resources Commission (CRC) whereby 20% of your bill will be donated to the CRC.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

ROLE CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, and Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

**Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Trustee Jackson**

A. Communications

(1) Board Information (BI)

BI-1 Brett Dreyfus, Meridian Township Clerk; RE: Strong Town information sent to PC  
BI-2 Becky Bennett, Ingham County Board of Commissioners; RE: Fact sheet for tax limitation ballot proposal for November 7, 2017 General Election

(2) Commission Linkage (CL)

CL-1 Melinda Barr; RE: Resignation from the Meridian Economic Development Corporation

**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 Trustee Jackson.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Minutes

**Treasurer Brixie moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the September 19, 2017 Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Bills

<b>Common Cash</b>	<b>\$ 201,415.80</b>
<b>Public Works</b>	<b>\$ 169,696.14</b>
<b>Trust &amp; Agency</b>	<b>\$ 14,522,442.05</b>
	<b>Total Checks: \$ 14,893,553.99</b>
<b>Credit Card Transactions</b>	<b>\$ 6,974.51</b>
August 31 <sup>st</sup> to Sept 13 <sup>th</sup>	
	<b>Total Purchases: <u>\$ 14,900,528.50</u></b>
<b>ACH PAYMENTS</b>	<b><u>\$ 1,649,700.22</u></b>

D. Grand River Water Main Special Assessment District #49 – Resolution #3

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Supervisor Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)

11. HEARINGS

A. Lake Lansing Special Assessment District (2018-2027)

Supervisor Styka opened the Public Hearing at 6:47 P.M.

Public Works Director Perry introduced and summarized the proposed Lake Lansing Special Assessment District (2018-2027).

- Public:

Jo Ellen Zilch would like answers to questions: Why certain properties are included in the Lake Lansing Special Assessment District? She states that she understands that some properties have access to the lake and some that can enjoy the use of the lake and that is a driver for the value of these properties, but feel she is not involved in that class at all.

- Staff & Board Discussion:

Director Perry responded that ~~when the district was formed in 1998 there has to be a benefit, there is maintenance and management of the lake and these properties (near Lake Lansing) have some type of water quality impact on the lake and it was a determining factor. There is Tier 1 and Tier 2 properties, Tier 1 are properties that are directly on the lake, and get to enjoy the lake. Tier 2 are not directly on the lake but still have an impact on water quality in Lake Lansing.~~

WHEN THE DISTRICT WAS FORMED IN 1998 THERE WAS A BENEFIT TO THE LAKE FOR ALL PROPERTIES IN THE DISTRICT. MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WATER QUALITY IMPACTS FROM PROPERTIES NEAR LAKE LANSING ARE A DETERMINING FACTOR. TIER ONE PROPERTIES ARE DIRECTLY ON THE LAKE, TIER TWO PROPERTIES ARE NEAR THE LAKE BUT NOT LAKEFRONT AND HAVE AN IMPACT ON WATER QUALITY.

~~Supervisor Styka mentioned that when they formed the district, Tier 2 properties may have run off or have other effects on the lake. Especially their drainage system impacted the lake.~~  
TIER TWO PROPERTIES MAY HAVE RUNOFF (DRAINAGE) THAT IMPACTS THE LAKE.

Clerk Dreyfus wanted Public Works Director Perry to clarify if the assessment process is based less on the lake impacting the homeowner, and more on the homeowner impacting the lake. He also inquired if Tier 2 properties were benefiting from lake access which is why they are paying the assessment.

~~Perry stated that it was a combination of both impact on the lake on the homeowner and impact of the homeowner on the lake.~~

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS IS BASED ON BENEFIT OF THE LAKE TO THE HOMEOWNER AND IMPACT FROM PROPERTY OWNERS ON THE LAKE.

Supervisor Styka asked Perry to clarify which parcels were Tier 1 and which were Tier 2.

Perry stated Tier 1 parcels are on the interior of the lake and Tier 2 properties sometimes go back a few blocks from the Tier 1 parcels.

~~Trustee Deschaine mentioned that the homes both impact and benefit the lake. He stated that residents built their homes there in order to access the lake and they benefit from a healthy Lake Lansing.~~ HOMES BOTH BENEFIT FROM AND IMPACT THE LAKE. HOMES ARE BUILT TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE LAKE AND BENEFIT FROM A HEALTHY LAKE.

Trustee Opsommer asked that funding be explained for the Lake Lansing SAD.

~~Funding is from the Township and Ingham County, it does not rely solely on the assessments of the property owners. Clinton County has been asked for an assessment to help offset some of the costs because they impact the lake from the north.~~ FUNDING FOR THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT DOES NOT RELY SOLELY ON THE ASSESSMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY OWNERS, BUT INCLUDES PAYMENTS FROM MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP, AND INGHAM COUNTY. CLINTON COUNTY HAS BEEN ASKED FOR AN ASSESSMENT IN THE PAST TO HELP OFFSET SOME OF THE COSTS BECAUSE THEY IMPACT THE LAKE FROM THE NORTH.

Supervisor Styka closed the public hearing at 6:53 P.M.

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Sleepy Hollow SAD Resolution #1

**Trustee Deschaine moved to approve the Sleepy Hollow SAD Resolution #1. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

Board discussion:

- Resolution #1 starts the process of special assessments. There will be 2 public hearings.
- Public hearing set for Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- Concerns and regarding the aggressive timeline laid out for the Sleepy Hollow SAD
- A repayment schedule was formed that satisfies the Treasurer’s Office and the Engineering Department timeframe for the sale of the bonds
- Prepayment letters will be sent out for residents who may want to pay it all at once.
- Partial and full prepayment of assessments are acceptable
- Assessment collection merged with the winter tax collections
- Special township fund normally used to pay for public water and sewer projects, not enough funds to cover this project, making bonding necessary
- Ensuring residents have ample time to prepare for assessments
- Inquiry as to how many of the approximately 25 properties petitioned the Township to add public water and sewer to the Sleepy Hollow Neighborhood
- Petitions indicate 55% of residents wanted water and 66% wanted sewer
- Board member belief that community meeting addressed resident issues
- Mostly issues of undeveloped parcels and how they will be treated
- Parcels were assessed based on location and if public water was available to them
- Those who do not have access to water or sewer would be assessed for both and those who have access to water would only be assessed for sewer
- Bond sale results in a lower interest rate for the residents, rather than using Township funds, and it financially benefits the residents

ROLE CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Sundland, Deschaine, Supervisor Styka,  
 Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus, Trustee Jackson  
 NAYS: None  
 Motion carried 7-0

B. CPUD #17014 Haslett Marathon Streetscape Plan

Planning Director Mark Kieselbach stated the conditions that the board put on the approval of the streetscape and provided an overview of the Streetscape Plan as outlined in the staff memorandum dated September 26, 2017.

**Trustee Opsommer moves to adopt the Resolution approving the streetscape plan CPUD # 17014 prepared by Kebs Inc. dated August 28, 2017 and received by the Township on September 13, 2017. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

Board and staff discussion:

- Options included a sidewalk from the building along Haslett Road, which would require a ramp along the entrance on Haslett road to be ADA compliant.
- Installing a grass area along Haslett Road would alleviate the need for a ramp
- Board member belief proposed convenience store is too large for the site, resulting in huge number of variances.
- A smaller size would result in less variances, it would be safer, with more green space, activity spaces zoned on both sides of the building, and still look nice with the canopy and arches
- Concern with lack of support for project from adjacent Haslett Shoptown
- Question if snow removal will continue to be an issue
- Parcel is one of the oldest in the Township, on the corner of Marsh and Haslett Roads
- Site plan it is non-conforming and they don't need the road set back
- Board member belief there are many areas where snow can be piled, and snow can be taken from the site to other lots
- Board member pleased to see green space on the site streetscape, due to no parallel parking buffers on the road
- Concern that busses have been in accidents involving buildings which caused structural damage, because of lack of parallel parking buffers
- Board member view that focus is on Downtown Okemos and Downtown Haslett, and pleased that developers are focusing on areas already developed

ROLE CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Treasurer Brixie, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus,  
Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland  
NAYS: Clerk Dreyfus  
Motion carried 6-1

C. Final Preliminary Plat #06012 (Whitehills Lakes South No. 2) Final Preliminary Plat Extension  
Director Kieselbach presented information from the September 25<sup>th</sup> staff memorandum about the final preliminary plat approval for the remaining 21 lots in Whitehills Lakes South expiring on July 7, 2017

**Trustee Opsommer moved to adopt the resolution extending preliminary plat approval for the remaining 21 lots in Whitehills Lakes South until July 7, 2019. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

- Michael R. McGraw of Redwood Land Investments LLC requested a 2 year extension of the final preliminary plat approval as they have public improvements that need to be completed
- Question about drain work on the site
- Staff response that in this plat there was difficulty with roads and grades, a cul-de-sac and improved drains were already completed.
- Developer had to comply with the Ingham County Drain Commissioner, Ingham County Road Department, and Meridian Townships public water and sewer requirements

ROLE CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Deschaine, Treasurer Brixie, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried unanimously 7-0

D. Meridian Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Appointment

**Trustee Deschaine moved to approve the EDC recommendation of Joel Conn to the Economic Development Corporation for a term that expires on December 31, 2021. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

Board discussion:

- Melinda Barr resigned from EDC and there is now a vacancy
- Joel Conn has been recommended for the appointment
- Conn has attended EDC meetings and is the VP of Friedland Industries in Old Town
- Board member belief Mr. Conn has experience in development in Old Town
- Board member belief that Conn can help Meridian make commercial centers vibrant again
- Suggestion to send a Thank You note to Malinda Barr for years of volunteer service for the EDC and the Township

ROLE CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Brixie, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Deschaine  
NAYS: None  
Motion carried unanimously 7-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Lake Lansing Special Assessment District (2018-2027)

Public Works Director Perry discussed concerned resident questions and his willingness to communicate with residents for the SAD. Perry asks the board if they are ready to proceed with this issue.

Board Discussion:

- Board member believes there has been strong support from all board members
- Board member suggested moving forward at the next meeting
- Board member suggested putting it on the Consent Agenda for the next meeting as previous special assessments

**It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for consent at the next Board meeting.**

B. Zoning Amendment #17030 Allow Golf Courses as Open Space in PUD and in PRD

Director Kieslebach summarized proposed Zoning Amendment #17030 as outlined in a staff memorandum dated September 26, 2017, which would amend the Code of Ordinances to allow golf courses to be counted as open space in the Planned Residential Development (PRD) and Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinances.

Board Discussion:

- Questions regarding land ownership, operation and maintenance of the golf course
- PUD option: public 9-hole golf course with 50% (or more) set aside and adjacent 50% designated neighborhood residential development, ex. Indian Hills subdivision

- Could golf course be operated by Homeowners Association (HOA), or combination public and HOA with reduced fees for HOA members, higher fee for public
- PUD has a Board amendment process if a golf course ceases to operate as a golf course
- Can be used for recreational amenity (playground) and remainder would be open space
- PRD process results in a Plat and any amendment process has to go through Circuit Court
- Responsibility for open space maintenance and golf course transition maintenance
- Goals include increasing open space to 55% or 60% and/or operate as a functional golf course
- Concern about land used for recreational amenities and percentage of true open space
- When a golf course ceases operations, it is no longer considered functional and the improved land, buildings, and driving range is not viewed as a “golf course” at that point
- PRD and PUD ordinances require the land be designated to a specific body: PRD to an HOA, a conservancy group, or for public use, PUD has to be part of a registered deed with the county and designated to a corporation, association or legal entity according to the PUD
- Golf course closes in 2 years, the land can be reconfigured, but cannot develop the land due to deed restrictions, and Board is prohibited from changing it from a PRD
- A platted PRD is only able to be changed into an out lot, or a private / public park, and changes must adhere to the general purpose of open space,
- Board member belief that the Township “keep the eye on the prize” which is keeping golf courses open, viable and part of the community

**It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with this Zoning Amendment.**

- C. Resolution of Support for Constitutional Amendment to Create an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission

Board discussion:

- Resolution points out that legislative and congressional redistricting often results in voting districts that unfairly support one of the two major political parties
- Gerrymandering means politicians choose voters, rather than voters choosing politicians
- Need to move away from partisan politics

**Treasurer Brixie moved to waive the rules and vote, seconded by Trustee Opsommer. It was the consensus of the Board to adopt this motion immediately.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion Carried Unanimously

- Board member read resolution of Support for Constitutional Amendment
- Board member states that its “on the record” that Elections Director (Clerk) supports this
- Board member brought up gerrymandering to the previous board and stated his participation in Voters Not Politicians
- An independent Citizens Redistricting Commission can stop specially drawn up districts as to not allow politicians to pick out who they think will vote for them
- Board member stresses the importance that all voices are equally heard and represented
- U.S. Supreme Court will be taking up gerrymandering in October, 2017
- Alarming practice of elected officials segregating their districts to avoid primary elections or other competitive elections, or to generate primary elections
- Michigan is losing congressional seats because of gerrymandering

**Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the Resolution of Support for a Constitutional Amendment to Create an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.**

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Suzanne Hardy, 6336 Skyline Dr, East Lansing; opposes zoning changes for the Walnut Hills Golf Course. Lives directly on the golf course – it is a nuisance and a hazard. She would like to see a setback written into the Master Plan with a 300 ft. space between the fairways and the houses.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett; concern with system capacity in Item 12A and will this prove to be a detriment to other members of the community. With 12B, will applicant go to a 24-hour operation, what is applicant’s business model? 13C – he supports this resolution.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Trustee Jackson commented that during the special hearing and public comment, the Skyline community expressed confusion in the lack of clarity about how the land in the golf course, as part of a PUD or PRD, would be protected as open space in perpetuity. She they will continue to ask questions about the issues to gain clarity and understanding. She states it is a good plan.

Trustee Deschaine welcomed two new members to the community and stated that the book stores, book clubs and libraries will prosper with them as residents.

Trustee Opsommer talked about feedback from the community on the zoning amendment, he offers that it is an elective feature, and that certainly open space could be just an open track of land without any recreational amenity other than use for walking and experiencing the land. It is optional so it would be up to developers and perhaps those who buy into an HOA to express their support or opposition to exploring that reality.

Supervisor Styka shared that Township Manger has been trying to put together a schedule to thank the commissioners and board members for all the appointed bodies and honoring them. The suggested date is November 2, 2017.

16. ADJOURNMENT

**Treasurer Brixie moves to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion Carried Unanimously

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 7:52P.M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
RONALD J. STYKA  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
BRETT DREYFUS, CMMC  
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Maggie Rodgers-Sanders, Secretary