

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD SPECIAL MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2015 **1:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor LeGoff, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra (1:28 P.M.), Wilson

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works Derek Perry, Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Police Chief David Hall, Fire Chief Fred Cowper, Assessor David Lee, Director of Information and Technology Stephen Gebes, Parks & Recreation Director LuAnn Maisner Finance Director Gretchen Gomolka, Human Resources Director Joyce Marx, Communications Director Deborah Guthrie

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor LeGoff called the meeting to order at 1:04 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor LeGoff led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Trustee Scales moved to approve the agenda amended as follows:

- **Move to accept public comment at the beginning of this meeting**

Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

Karla Hudson, 6009 Skyline Drive, East Lansing, urged the Board to consider Meridian Redi-Ride as a goal for 2016. She requested senior citizens, school districts, a Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) representative, persons with disabilities and community residents interested in public transportation comprise members of the workgroup. Ms. Hudson suggested the workgroup consider other outside vendors as potential providers of public transportation and consider the CATA representative as only a consultant. She suggested Donna Rose and Ody Norkin be selected as members of the workgroup.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, suggested taking the 2015 Goals and Objectives document and separate out what was accomplished, what remains, and what is going to be worked on for 2016. He supported making Redi-Ride a high priority for 2016.

Judy Linn, 5435 Van Atta Road, Okemos, urged the Board to concentrate on how to make the Township better. She requested the community be more inclusive, encouraging diversity. Ms. Linn advocated for the Township helping current residents "age out" in the Township. She encouraged the Township to continue making Meridian parks more barrier free in an effort to offer increased use by some members of the aging population with physical limitations. She requested residents' health, welfare and safety transcend politics.

6. 2016 TOWNSHIP BOARD GOAL SETTING

Manager Walsh offered a Powerpoint presentation on 2015 accomplishments, both completed and near completion. He recommended the Board start with key objectives for 2016, finalize the key objectives and then discuss the 2016 goals.

Board and staff discussion:

- Board member preference to review each goal and objective for 2015, line by line
- Board member belief the Board has the role of oversight and should have a broader vision and an oversight approach
- Board member belief the Board should apprise staff where they would like to go and have confidence in staff to accomplish it
- Board member belief the Board should focus on overarching objectives and directives
- Board member preference to identify any urgent maintenance needed
- Board member suggestion to establish a process for evaluating what goals and programmatic policy making should be implemented for 2016
- Many of the 169 objectives contained within the nine (9) goals in 2015 are already handled by and through staff
- Board member suggestion for each Board member to state what they would like to see included in the key objectives; then add any agreed upon objectives to the draft 2016 goals
- Staff suggestion for each Board member to review the 169 items within the 2015 Goals and Objectives and focus on two to three items which they deem vital to be accomplished in 2016 and bring those issues forward during the next Board discussion on its goals and objectives
- Compilation of those issues brought forward would be inserted into the key objectives for 2016
- Board member suggestion to have staff review the 169 goals and objectives and remove the ones which have been accomplished as well as ongoing issues handled by staff, and provide the revised list to the Board prior to the December 1st Board meeting
- Board member suggestion to strike through the accomplishments listed in the 2015 Goals and Objectives so what has been accomplished is still visible
- Board member suggestion to signify on the list any ongoing work by stating “ongoing” next to the objective
- Board member suggestion to amend the pervious/impervious language contained in our ordinances to encourage water recharge at its source through incorporation of increased pervious design
- Board member suggestion to encourage more low-to-mid income housing options in the Township and improve barrier free and ADA compliant accessibility in new projects
- Board member suggestion to review how to minimize the blight in neighborhoods where there is vacant property
- Board member suggestion to incorporate diversity in every level of Township operations and the community as a whole
- Staff identification of the existing risks and raise those to a “higher” level
- Pension obligation as the largest fiduciary “risk”
- Board member belief the objective for major upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant will become a much greater cost
- Support for creation of a vacant property ordinance
- Vacant and foreclosed homes in all types of neighborhoods negatively impact many residents in the Township
- Board member preference for continued use of the previous format
- Suggestion by two Board members to investigate a possible location for Township solar panels and, subsequently, begin measuring the return on those installed solar panels
- Board member suggestion to include proactive cell tower planning and placement
- Board member suggestion to continue investigation of a process to develop a railroad quiet zone as a quality of life issue
- Board member suggestion to increase inspections and fees for high density apartments
- Suggestion by two Board members to review the rental registration ordinance
- Suggestion by two Board members to create an ordinance which limits smoking in common areas of apartment
- Suggestion by several Board members to reconsider the amenities listed within the MUPUD
- Suggestion by two Board members to review how the size of the MUPUD is designed when it includes existing adjacent commercial property (e.g., allowance of high density bonuses which would not otherwise occur)
- Board member suggestion to change the definition of dwelling unit relative to density
- Board member belief a key component of the sign ordinance should include removal of a complete sign when the building is sold or foreclosed to prevent “visual blight”

Trustee Scales moved to adopt the following nine overarching goals:

- **Goal #1: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance the environment**
- **Goal #2: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance public health, safety and welfare**
- **Goal #3: Meridian Township shall provide an unparalleled parks system**
- **Goal #4: Meridian Township shall provide exemplary public services and facilities**
- **Goal #5: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance our economic prosperity for all residents**
- **Goal #6: Meridian Township shall promote and enhance diversity across the Township**
- **Goal #7: Meridian Township shall provide outstanding recreational and cultural programs**
- **Goal #8: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance constituent communications**
- **Goal #9: Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance neighborhoods and eliminate blight**

Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Necessity of keeping the existing nine (9) goals
- Each of the Board's suggestions previously mentioned fall within one of the nine (9) categories
- Keeping the same goals does not disrupt planning for the Master Plan

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Clarification of a previous public suggestion stating solar panels can be purchased with investment funds for the Township
- Explanation by the Treasurer that solar panels cannot be purchased and used as an investment as that action is not allowed by state law
- Board member explanation of this brainstorming process as one of ideas being proposed during this first phase
- Decision of what issues move forward will come in further deliberations
- Board member preference to receive a report from staff on where the street tree ordinance stands
- Board consensus for each Board member to verbally list their new 2016 objectives for staff compilation
- Board member suggestion to include improvements to Redi-Ride services
- Board member suggestion to prepare a more realistic amenities list for a MUPUD (i.e., eliminate underground utilities, recycling, LED lights in the building, etc.)
- Board member suggestion for inclusion of a recharging station (where electricity is available) at the trail heads in parks for motorized wheelchairs
- Board member suggestion to allow mother-in-law quarters as a separate unit in the home or a small home on the property to help with Meridian's aging population
- Board member suggestion for ordinances to be updated on the Township website during the course of the year
- Board member suggestion to review programs similar to the one used by the County of St. Louis which identifies influential members of the community of the ethnicity they are seeking to recruit for assistance in recruiting job applicants
- Establish a goal of diversity for each department
- Communications has the greatest diversity of any department in Meridian township, albeit most of the positions are unpaid
- Board member suggestion to fill in gaps within the pathway system, possibly through the use of condemnation if necessary
- Board member suggestion to investigate a ban on smoking in all public housing
- Board member suggestion to revisit parking requirements for development and redevelopment
- Board member suggestion to investigate the possibility of using form based codes
- Nine goals adopted earlier in the meeting are long term overarching goals
- Focus for 2016 should be related to the short term goals presented in the booklet which can be accomplished in 2016
- Board member suggestion to fit the five (5) 2016 draft goals under the nine (9) long term goals

- Board member belief the 2016 key objectives broken down by department can also be fitted within the nine (9) long term goals, while acknowledging within the objectives are items which fit within the five (5) proposed 2016 draft goals
- Board member suggestion to investigate how meetings can be made more constituent friendly to encourage interaction and increase attendance
- Board member suggestion to liberalize the rules relative to non-conforming properties
- Board member preference for staff to provide the Board with two documents; one for 2015 with strikeouts and one for 2016, which includes the items proposed tonight
- Board member preference for an explanation of the accomplishments in 2015 rather than strikeouts
- Board member preference for one document to work from
- Booklet provided to each Board member provided a very detailed summary of 2015 accomplishments

It was the consensus of the Board to allow staff to take the information received and bring back to the Board in the agreed upon form.

7. FINAL PUBLIC REMARKS

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, expressed appreciation for Board comments which will move the Township forward from this point.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Clerk Dreyfus moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Styka, Scales, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus,
Supervisor LeGoff
NAYS: Trustee Veenstra
Motion carried 6-1.

Supervisor LeGoff adjourned the meeting at 3:02 P.M.

ELIZABETH LEGOFF
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS, CMMC
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary