

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
SPECIAL MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD -**APPROVED**-  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room  
Tuesday, March 26, 2024, 6:00 pm

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

ABSENT: Supervisor Jackson

STAFF: Director Gebes, Deputy Manager Opsommer, Manager Walsh, Director Diehl

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Pro Tem Hendrickson called the March 26, 2024, Special Board meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Pro Tem Hendrickson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Guthrie called the roll of the Board. Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Hendrickson, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson present at 6:03 pm.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Recapping 2023 and Reviewing 2024 Goals

Township Manager Walsh recognized and thanked Director Diehl and Executive Assistant Prinz for their efforts to pull together the meeting. Manager Walsh presented data showing the payments made to reduce debt, outlined the progress made on the top 2023 goals, and highlighted important events that occurred in 2023. He then outlined the top five goals for 2024 and discussed how the Township plans to meet those goals

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the agenda. Supported by Trustee Wilson.**

**VOICE VOTE**

**YEAS: Supervisor Pro Tem Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson**

**NAYS: NONE**

**Motion carried: 6 - 0**

## 6. JOINT MEETING WITH TOWNSHIP BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

### A. Reports of Activity in 2023 and Look Ahead to 2024

#### i. Capital Area District Library-Tom Moore (Haslett/Okemos) & ED Jenny Marr

CADL connects people to resources, to each other, and to the community as a whole. To build connections that help people feel like they are part of a place. CADL circulated around 2 million items last year. They focus on depth and breadth of the collections and community events to attract all community members. The major goal is to build a collection that represents the diversity in the community.

#### ii. Lansing Board of Water and Light-Township Rep Brian Pillar

LBWL has around 1,200 power accounts and a small number of commercial water accounts in Meridian Township. LBWL will be focusing on green energy over the next few years. June 30 of this year will end Meridian Township representation per City of Lansing Charter, representation will resume in Summer 26. Mr. Pillar plans to continue communication between the Township and LBWL.

#### iii. Park Commission-Chair Mary Nardo Farris

Recognized the work of Parks staff and support of residents. Recognized the positive changes that have happened with the transition from Director Maisner to Director Wisinski, that she has brought energy, positive attitude, and organizational skills to the role. Exterior upgrades at Harris Nature Center were completed last year. New signage and acquisition of a 2.71-acre parcel in Land Preservation program. 750 volunteer hours in Stewardship program. Recreation programs have brought in 2,200 children from kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade as well as many participants in adult programs. Special events were well attended. Snell-Tower recreation center has reopened, and programs are growing. Senior Center served 300 individuals across 1,500 programs. Recognized efforts of maintenance crew. Survey of Historic Village has helped prioritize upgrades and repairs and work will continue. Upcoming projects will include those from Capital Improvement Program, engineering and construction projects, and events at the Farmer's Market.

#### iv. Planning Commission-Chair Alisande Shrewsbury and all Planning Commissioners

In 2023, the Commission addressed ordinance updates, reviewed 18 applications, updated Conservancy District, reviewed 5 rezoning requests. They updated goals and objectives of the Master Plan including changing the Meridian Mall to a PICA district and making minor changes to the urban service boundary. For 2024, they will be determining what land is available for development, potential update of street parking ordinance, reviewing ADA standards, potential update to the landscape ordinance, and research into middle housing.

#### v. Pension Board-Tanya Pratt

Updated information about staff who receive pensions, cleaned up and removed employees who are no longer active. Changed projection of actuarial from 5 years to 3 years based on recommendation of actuaries. Treasurer Deschaine added that the pension for which this board provides oversight is 100% funded.

#### vi. Downtown Development Authority-Ron Sdao

Supported Douglas J with first Match on Main application which came from DDA eligibility for a \$27,000 grant to reinvest into community. Working on entry sign for northbound side of Okemos Rd at the edge of Ferguson Park. The first facade improvement grant application has been submitted to the DDA. County Drain Commissioners office is planning a project across 4 parcels near the corner of Okemos Rd and Grand River.

- vii. Environmental Commission-Bill McConnell, Andrea Paul, and Dave Batten.  
Climate Sustainability Action Plan revision has been reformatted and ready for feedback from the Board. There is a new focus on capturing food waste. In 2023, 9,000 lbs. of food was collected from the Farmer's Market food gleaning program. The ongoing solar energy program is working on increasing residential installations. In 2023, across 4 meetings 99 people attended and 32 solar energy systems were installed. This does not take into account commercial solar energy systems. The Green Grants program is growing. Mr. Batten provided further information about food that has been collected from the Farmer's Market, local businesses, and community member – about 5,000 lbs. collected per month and it is collected and transported to 10 local non-profits by volunteers. Hundreds of people have come together for the common good.
- viii. Community Resources Commission-Georgia Styka, and Navendra Turmella  
Dedicated to the idea that all people of all ages deserve a community that cares for them and strives to help them in a time of need. The emergency needs fund is 100% donations and 100% of emergency needs funds go to those in need. The emergency needs fund goes to help residents avoid eviction and utility shut offs. Meridian Cares provides an ambulance waiver for eligible residents, discounted bus passes from CATA, 240 students benefited from the 2023 backpack program with Kiwanis, residents sponsorship 262 families for holiday food assistance in 2023, and the baby bottle boomerang is a new donation option that serves not just to raise funds but also to spread the word about cares. Goal of 2024 is to increase visibility of the emergency needs fund.
- ix. Communications Commission-Leslie Charles, Lisa Whiting-Dobson and Mike Nevells  
HOMTV is a model for Michigan and the Communication Commission wants HOMTV to remain viable and enviable despite the changing environment within the communications world. The Commission plans to explore different sources of funding and is looking for more Commissioners. Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program has begun a 30 day program to improve speed, reliability, and access. The Board has approved funding for new CAM equipment to support HOMTV. Communications efforts start on the inside and reach far beyond the outside.
- x. Economic Development Corporation-Kim Thompson  
2023 was a quiet year for the EDC. We have maintained Redevelopment ready status which allows access to grants. Getting the mall designated as a PICA area was important to give more opportunities for the area. In 2024, the EDC is supporting Motorfest, Pride, Juneteenth, Lunar New Year, and working with Lansing 501.
- xi. Board of Review-Kathy Birchen  
Ms Birchen gave an overview of how Board of Review works. The bulk of meetings are in March with brief meetings in July and December. The members receive mandatory training and serve to ensure the property values on the tax roll are accurate and the Board of Review has authority to change property values.
- xii. Corridor Improvement Authority-Chair Bruce Peffers  
In 2023, the Township Board approved TIF money for the CIA. The funds will be used to develop a visual plan for the corridor with action items to implement.
- xiii. Local Officials Compensation Commission-Steve Vagnozzi  
Mr. Vagnozzi reminded residents that the Commission meets every 2 years to set salaries of elected officials. In 2023, the Commission reviewed data from comparable

communities and gave Meridian Township officials a 3% increase, the same as Township staff received.

xiv. Lake Lansing Advisory Board-Curt Armbruster

This Board is challenged to maintain water quality at Lake Lansing within a \$90,000 annual budget. The budget is primarily used for annual water quality testing, surveys that lead to mechanical harvesting and sometimes chemical treatment to reduce plant biomass in the lake which makes the lake more usable. Have just completed a natural shoreline demonstration project to show residents the benefits of a natural shoreline. Participated with Ingham County to have a second boat washing station at the Boat Launch to clean boats before they are put into the lake to help prevent invasive species. Newsletter sent twice a year to residents in the assessment district and expanded to include Meadowbrook Subdivision. Worked with Clinton County Drain Commission to address nutrients coming from the Meadowbrook Subdivision. The Ingham County Drain Commission has indicated that the dam needs repairs and the Advisory Board has been working with the Drain Commission to communicate with residents. In 2024, the Advisory Board is planning to get a fish study, will continue education and outreach, as well as the annual maintenance.

xv. Land Preservation Advisory Board-Kathleen Fay

600,000 seeds have been harvested, 588,000 of them planted back into the preserves to build biodiversity. Volunteers have picked up 3,500 lbs. of trash and removed 2,500 lbs. of invasive plants. 14 vernal pools have been identified and 16 education programs held to teach residents about the pools. In 2024, the goals are to increase inclusivity and improve management practices in the parks, particularly with prescribed burns. Land Stewardship Coordinator Cambell has been appointed to the advisory committee for Michigan Waterway Stewards.

xvi. Zoning Board of Appeals-Anthony Bennett

Goals have been to try to preserve the ideals of Meridian Township without strict adherence to the zoning laws when there is a viable reason to change.

7. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Pro Tem Hendrickson opened comments from the public at 7:48 pm

Supervisor Pro Tem Hendrickson closed comments from the public at 7:48 pm

8. ADJOURNMENT

**Trustee Wilson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Trezise**

**VOICE VOTE**

**YEAS: Supervisor Pro Tem Hendrickson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Sundland, Trustee Trezise, Trustee Wilson**

**NAYS: NONE**

**Motion carried: 6 - 0**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:48**



Patricia Jackson  
Township Supervisor



Deborah Guthrie  
Township Clerk