



Charter Township of Meridian
Meridian Economic Development Corporation
Meridian Township Hall Room
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864
Thursday, Month Day, 2023--DRAFT

Members

Present: Phil Deschaine, Kathy Sundland, Kimberly Thompson, Brenda Chapman, Adam Carlson, Shawn Dunham, and Dave Ledebuhr,

Members

Absent: Manager Frank Walsh, Henry Kwok, Trisha Bird, and Tom Conway

Others

Present: Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director Amber Clark, Assistant Township Supervisor Patricia Herring Jackson, and Planning Commissioner Peter Trezise

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Kimberly Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:30am

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 DUNHAM TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO MOVE NEW BUSINESS TO OLD BUSINESS TO ALLOW THE GREATER LANSING CHINESE ASSOCIATION THE OPTION TO SPEAK ABOUT LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION SUPPORT. MOVE TO APPROVE THE AMENDED AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR. MOTION PASSES 6-0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes-Meeting November 3, 2022
- b. Development Projects

MOTION BY MEMBER DUNHAM TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CARLSON. MOTION PASSES 6-0.

5. COMMUNICATIONS – Communication from Conner Bailey Haslett resident

6. PUBLIC REMARKS
NONE

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION SUPPORT

- i. Members of the Greater Lansing Chinese Association were present to request local support of the Meridian Economic Development Corporation for the January 29, 2023 Lunar New Year celebration to be hosted at Meridian Mall. Parks Department and Director LuAnn Maisner is also contributing to the event, assisting with coordination and getting tables for the festival. Previous years the Meridian EDC has supported the Lunar New Year festival with a financial contribution. The request for support allows for the contributor to have branding opportunities for logos and promotion of their business. In exchange the sponsorships help the GLCA fund the celebration. The festival includes traditional Chinese New Year cultural celebrations like a Lion dance, ceremonial observances and the engagement of the Chinese American community. Meridian Township boosts a concentration of Chinese Americans in our community and the Meridian EDC see the support of this event as enhancing awareness of culture in Meridian Township. The added benefit to Meridian Mall to host an attraction could persuade attendees to stay at the Mall, celebrate and patronize.

GLCA explained they have about \$1500 to cover for the festival to launch for 2023. Meridian EDC has previously sponsored including the two years of COVID-19. Now that COVID-19 is over the plan is to relaunch the event starting this year. The number of sponsors and patrons of the festival have lowered in recent years. Support from Meridian EDC will go far.

Member Ledebuhr made a motion with a second by Member Chapman to support the 2023 Lunar New Year celebration. Member Ledebuhr asked GLCA if they were confident they could cover the remaining \$500 for the festival. GLCA is confident the funding necessary will be received.

MOTION MADE BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR TO SUPPORT \$1000 FOR THE 2023 LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION BY THE GREATER LANSING CHINESE ASSOCIATION. MOTION DIRECTS STAFF TO COMMENCE PAYMENT TO GLCA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CHAPMAN. MOTION PASSES 6-0

B. MABA 2023 MEETING CALENDAR

NO ACTION REQUIRED- FYI FOR BOARD MEMBERS

C. NEW AND ESTABLISHED BUSINESS AWARDS 2022

- i. Director Clark discussed the 2022 New Business of the Year selected by MABA each year was Nothing Bundt Cakes and the Established Business of the Year is "Beewax Barrn", formally Ralya House Beeswax. Meridian EDC partners each year with MABA to publicly award two businesses, one for each category. The businesses must be within the boundaries of Meridian Township. MABA at their November 2022 meeting held an open voting option with the MABA members to select a business for each category. Meridian EDC members were more in favor of a community wide selection process which allows more residents to be engaged on selecting a business they appreciate. Director Dunham asked if the Township could do a "best of town" award. Director Dunham discussed how important a business will feel to have the community select them. The two awards from MABA and the Meridian EDC are great start, an enhanced business award would promote other businesses that may get left out. Could Meridian Township create a business awards platform to select businesses

to promote based on industry and voting. For example: “best of town restaurant” “best of town automotive repair shop” “best of town landscaping” Different awards for categories of business industry and work with the Communications department to host these awards.

Director Clark suggests a quarterly award based on specific parameters. March is Women in Business, this would be a good time to feature business and host a survey. Then another in June, September and December. Director Clark should come back to the group in February with a list of things we want to do.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Meridian Township 2023 Goals

This item was accidentally left out of the packet. The Meridian Township Board in December voted to approve the Township’s annual goals for the community. There are three main goals that the Township will focus on this year:

1. MSU to Lake Lansing Trail Phases 1 and 2 which will be the last remaining steps to complete for the finalized trail system. This is a project that has taken several years to plan and coordinate. In the end we will have a non-motorized pathway system from Lake Lansing to MSU campus off of Hagadorn. This intergovernmental connection will allow pedestrians and bikers to gain access to the entire Ingham County region without the use of a car. As urban development continues to gain traction post COVID-19 the adjustment for communities to be resilient will be even harder. Having amenities in our community that are supported through our general tax revenue is a great economic plus for the Township.
2. Communications and Community Enhancement is a goal for 2023 the Township will prioritize. The 2022 construction year allowed Township staff to engage the general public on a regular basis. Meridian Township’s goal to enhance communication is a tactic that will allow for greater synergy in the community.
3. Meridian Township to create a taskforce to determine the feasibility of a Senior Community Library Center in Meridian.

9. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

a. Township Board

Trustee Sundland reported the following:

The Township Board adopted 3 main township goals (see above) for 2023. The Board discussed the MSU to Lk Lansing pathway as a major achievement for Meridian Township and supports the effort to establish equity in all places including development. Communications for the Township was stellar in 2022 especially related to the Grand River Ave. and Okemos Bridge construction. The community appreciates open communication and there are ways to improve our engagement among the residents. Not all utilize Social Media.

The Township Board approved the use of ARP funds to several different categories of use: Funding in support of Affordable Housing, Digital Plan Review, Wind Screens, Police Department Locker Room Update, 2023 Local Road Fund, Senior Community Feasibility, Meridian Historical Village Update.

Township Board created Capital Projects Fund in support of Township facility updates as Necessary. Approved Grand Reserve SUP for projects over 25K sq. ft.

b. Planning Commission

Planning member Peter Tresize spoke about approving the sign ordinance. Working through the approvals for Grand Reserve and updating the zoning regulations for

Marihuana establishments in Meridian Township. This update does not include permitted recreational retail use. The zoning updates removed grow/processor operations from permitted uses, which removed two overlay district areas. The Economic Development Department is in favor of the removal to preserve the available industrial for other economic development. The limited supply of large industrial parcels, makes it very unlikely an operation would come to the Township. The Planning Commission will make a determination on the updates and submit to the Township Board for review.

Treasurer Deschaine asked Member Ledebuhr if he would share his professional opinion on any negative effects Marihuana retail establishments have on surrounding parcels. Director Ledebuhr said in his experience the retail establishments are much like any other. How a community regulates their commercial parcels is shown by sign requirements, landscape requirements, regulating hours, parking, accessibility, green space etc. If properly regulated it should look and blend in with the communities other retail establishments. Other members spoke of their experience utilizing any Marihuana retail locations regionally. The regulation of development and not the market, will ensure any retail establishment is an enhancement of the community.

- c. Chair Kimberly Thompson advised everyone that 2023 is the year to select a new Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. If anyone would like to nominate themselves or anyone else please send those comments to Director Clark. The position serves two consecutive years before elections run again.
- d. Staff reported they are working on March is Women in business month celebration with a local business. That may be the first top of town selection for the community is a woman owned business. Juneteenth plans are underway and the committee will meet on Saturday. A three day festival is planned and should run right up to 'celebrate meridian' which will hopefully tie together nicely. No ribbon cuttings set for this month but Rally House on Grand River and Valley Wing on Jolly will open soon!

10. COMMUNITY REPORTS

- a. Meridian Mall- Shawn Dunham updated the committee that the Mall attendance numbers are dropping back to 2019 numbers which were lower than post COVID numbers. Some of the incubator spaces are being utilized and it is allowing for small businesses to stay open longer. Atomic Tacos signed a longer lease for their new space as well as Bubble Tea. Director Clark asked if the Mall was working with LEAP for the incubator space and the Shawn said that had been the case previously but not in recent years.
- b. MABA- Director Clark updated the group first meeting is Friday January 13th at MSUFCU Farm Lane Community Room 9:15 am.

11. OPEN DISCUSSION/BOARD COMMENTS

- Member Ledebuhr recommends for Conner Bailey should be responded to. The letter should be sent to the Township Board for their review and inclusion in pursuit of the Snr Comm Center. A response from the Meridian EDC should also come, thanking the resident for their comments.

- Member Ledebuhr asked for Planning department staff to provide an in person explanation of the Sign ordinance and subsequent changes. Director Clark said she would speak to the Planning department about providing that at the next meeting.
- Brenda Chapman reviewed PA 338 of 1974 the Act that enables EDC's in Michigan. She stated part of our mission is support of agricultural development. What about the local farmers? What can we do to assist them? Director Clark stated there aren't many farmer's within the boundaries of the Township due to zoning. Rural Residential is the agricultural zone in Meridian however only MSU has an actual farm. The other "farming" done in the township would be considered more urban farming. Director Clark will work on a program to support a local farmer having a spot at the farmer's market to advocate farming.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

NONE

13. NEXT MEETING DATE

- February 2nd, 2023 at 7:30am

14. ADJOURNMENT

9:07am Chair moved to adjourn all in favor

Yas: all

Nays: None