

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
REGULAR MEETING TOWNSHIP BOARD -**APPROVED**-  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room  
Tuesday, March 05, 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, PR Specialist Rachel Stohlin.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor Jackson called the March 5, 2024, Regular Township Board meeting to order at 6:01 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 6:01 pm.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Introduction of New Police Officers

Chief Grillo introduced Officer Mike Hagbom and Officer Alex Stachura. Officer Hagbom is returning to the department after a few years away in the private sector. Officer Stachura is returning to the department after a short time away from the Police Academy.

B. Prime Meridian Magazine

Specialist Stohlin thanked the directors, staff, commissioners, and board members who contributed to the publication and went over the magazine’s budget and contents with those present. She stressed the importance of physical copies to all homes to reach all residents, particularly those who may not have internet access.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Jackson opened comments from the public at 6:18 pm.

Nickolas Lentz spoke to the board and community to introduce himself as a County Parks Commissioner and candidate for the Ingham County Board of Commissioners

Supervisor Jackson closed comments from the public at 6:20 pm.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh Talked about the following:

- Staffing attraction and retention, recognizing new officers, Specialist Stohlin, and several employee's work anniversaries.
- Planning Commission personnel numbers
- Local road bids are in
- Outdoor gathering and fireworks permit for Celebrate Meridian
- Marshall Park designs and Parks Commission review
- DDA façade program
- Increased participants at Snell-Towar center
- Central Park Pavilion bids are in
- Recreational Marijuana license applications are moving forward
- Recognizing Clerk's Office and election staff for work on election
- Copper Creek going forward with phase three and phase four
- Chrissy Scaccia retiring from Police Department

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Wilson recognized bagpiper Terry Carroll with a resolution in tribute of his contributions to the community.

Treasurer Deschaine reminded residents that delinquent real property taxes were turned over to Ingham County Treasurer on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Only 1.1% of parcels were delinquent.

Clerk Guthrie reported 482 early voters (1.36% of voters), around 7,100 absentee voters (20% of voters), around 2,400 in person (7% of voters). East Lansing School Board will have an election in May and Meridian Township will work with City of East Lansing to accommodate Township voters.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Supervisor Jackson moved to amend the agenda to add Item 12D, set a date for special session. Supported by Trustee Hendrickson.**

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

**NAYS: NONE**

**Motion carried: 7 – 0**

**Trustee Wilson moved to add the tribute to Terry Carroll to the consent agenda. Supported by Trustee Hendrickson.**

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

**NAYS: NONE**

**Motion carried: 7 - 0**

**Trustee Wilson moved to approve the amended agenda. Supported by Trustee Sundland.**

**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. Asked that letter from Linda Jones be added to the consent agenda

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Treasurer Deschaine.**

Trustee Hendrickson asked about the reasoning for approving the Township milage each time the Federal mileage rate changes. Manager Walsh responded that the board is permitted to approve a proposal that the Township mileage rate be the Federal rate instead of putting it on the consent agenda each time the Federal rate changes.

**ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Trezise and 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 Street from PO, Professional and Office, to RN, Village of Nemoka Mixed Residential – Final Adoption

Director Schmitt clarified that the current building will be rehabilitated for this development.

**Trustee Wilson moved to adopt the resolution approving 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 Trezise.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, Trezise and 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 clarified that there is no marijuana related business proposed for this building. He addressed the board’s concerns from the previous meeting and asked that Board discussion should be limited to the size of the building. Ammar Alkhafaji, Okemos Gateway LLC representative, provided a packet for the board and addressed the concerns raised at the last meeting. Clerk Guthrie asked for clarification regarding drainage. Deputy Manager Opsommer explained how the Drain Commissioner’s office is being included and has responded. Trustee Hendrickson expressed concerns about the ability to shield the building from the nearby neighborhood given its height and proximity. Clerk Guthrie expressed concerns about the impact of the size of the building and parking lot on the environment, and that it does not seem to meet the infill requirements set by the board. Trustee Trezise clarified that the property is considered infill, and the view can be blocked by landscaping. Treasurer Deschaine expressed concerns about the height.

**Trustee Hendrickson moved to adopt the resolution denying Special Use Permit 24-02, a request for a building greater than 25,000 square feet at 1614 and 1622 West Grand River Avenue (Parcel ID Nos 33-02-02-22-426-001 and 33-02-02-22-401-003). The subject property is joined C2, Commercial, and the applicant is proposing a three story, climate controlled, self storage facility. Supported by Clerk Guthrie.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Supervisor Jackson, Clerk Guthrie, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Hendrickson, Sundland, and Wilson**

**NAYS: Trustee Trezise**

**Motion carried: 6 – 1**

At 7:10 pm Supervisor Jackson requested a 10-minute recess. The board reconvened at 7:18 pm

C. 2022 Order to Maintain Sidewalk Resolution #4 – Set Public Hearing for April 2, 2024

Deputy Manager Opsommer indicated that the contractors could not meet the ambitious schedule set in 2022. The work was completed in 2023 so the assessment roll is up for public hearing.

**Trustee Wilson moved to approve the 2022 Order to Maintain Sidewalk Special Assessment District #20 Resolution #4, which files the proposed special assessment roll with the office of the Township Clerk and sets the date for a public hearing on Tuesday, April 2, 2024. Supported by Treasurer Deschaine.**

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

**NAYS: NONE**

**Motion carried: 7 – 0**

D. Set Time for a Special Meeting to Hold a Closed Session

After board discussion, Supervisor Jackson indicated that the dates offered will not work and she will return to the participants to ask for other dates. Trustee Hendrickson asked for clarity about the need to determine the special meeting time during a board meeting. Supervisor Jackson said that the meeting time and date does not need to be set during the board meeting.

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Consulting Agreement One Month Extension-Maisner

Township Manager Walsh explained the need for extending the contract. Trustee Wilson, Treasurer Deschaine, and Trustee Sundland expressed their support. Clerk Guthrie expressed her dissent, explaining that there is time left in her current contract and that she would prefer the decision to be brought to the board at a later date. Manager Walsh explained his reasoning for the request at this time. Trustee Hendrickson asked for clarification regarding discussion with Maisner and the current agreement. Manager Walsh clarified that this is not time sensitive to this board meeting.

B. Federal Funding Request

Deputy Manager Opsommer conveyed that it is not likely that Meridian Township will not be eligible for the Federal Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) funds. He clarified that this will not prevent the township from seeking other funds.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Jackson opened comments from the public at 7:52 pm

Supervisor Jackson closed comments from the public at 7:52 pm

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Supervisor Jackson read Resolutions in Support of International Women's Day and in Support of Women's History Month and requested that the Resolutions be included.

16. CLOSED SESSION

At 7:57 the board moved to enter closed session

**Trustee Hendrickson moved the Township Board enter closed session under OMA Section 8(1)(h) to consult with the Township attorney regarding a written legal opinion concerning a vendor's breach of contract. Supported by Clerk Guthrie.**

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

**NAYS: NONE**

**Motion carried: 7 - 0**

At 9:01 Open Session resumed

**Trustee Hendrickson to direct counsel to move forward and file a complaint in the form presented. Supported by Treasurer Deschaine.**

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

**NAYS: NONE**

**Motion carried: 7 - 0**

17. ADJOURNMENT

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

**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 9:02 PM



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Patricia Jackson  
Supervisor Pro Tem



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Deborah Guthrie  
Township Clerk