

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Town Hall Room  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 2011 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Dreyfus,  
LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra (6:03 P.M.)  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Township Manager Gerald Richards, Director of Community Planning & Development  
Mark Kieselbach, Director of Engineering & Public Works Ray Severy, Director of  
Parks & Recreation LuAnn Maisner

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor McGillicuddy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, spoke in opposition to any size limitation on the US flag other than for reasons of health, safety or welfare of residents. He believed this to be an issue of freedom of expression and requested the Board not be over regulatory.

Supervisor McGillicuddy closed Public Remarks.

5. REPORTS/BOARD COMMENT/NEW WORRIES

A. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Brixie gave an update on current fixed maturity investments, non-fixed investments (as of June 30, 2011), delinquent personal property tax collections for 2006-2010 and 2011 distribution totals as of July 28, 2011. She stated the vast majority of taxes collected go to schools and, in fact, for the summer tax bill, the Township only receives the administration fees. Treasurer Brixie noted the fixed and non-fixed investments total slightly over \$12 million.

Supervisor McGillicuddy expressed opposition to charging residents an administration fee for collecting taxes and preferred to charge the various entities for their tax collection.

Treasurer Brixie explained the state allows the Township to collect a 1% administration fee and the monies collected are used to cover the costs of operating the Assessing Department, Treasurer's office as well as contributing to administration, support staff and information technology.

Trustee Veenstra and Treasurer Brixie discussed the continued collection process for 2006-2011 delinquent property taxes.

Trustee Dreyfus expressed concern with parking tickets written during a fundraising benefit for a resident suffering from brain cancer and questioned police judgment in this type of situation. He spoke to an article in *National Geographic* entitled "Miracle Above Manhattan" where an abandoned highway traversing several blocks was redeveloped into an urban oasis.

Trustee LeGoff reported her attendance last week at the open house at the Lodges of East Lansing in Meridian Township. She spoke to the fact that the units are already rented at 94% occupancy.

Trustee Veenstra reported his attendance at the July 20<sup>th</sup> regular meeting of the Transportation Review Committee of Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) and the July 27<sup>th</sup> regular meeting of TCRPC. He noted the expansion of Michigan Flyer's fleet and routes was opposed by both the Capital City Airport and residents, in large part, because the airport believed it would cause them to lose business. An advisory vote was taken on this issue, and was defeated 8-11.

Treasurer Brixie reported her attendance at the Capital Area Treasurer's meeting where fraudulent mortgage foreclosures were addressed by Curtis Hertel, Jr., Ingham County Register of Deeds. She indicated pamphlets on this issue are available at the County Register of Deeds office and the office of the Meridian Township Treasurer. Treasurer Brixie stated the possibility of regional cooperation within Ingham County for striking old uncollectible delinquent taxes off the rolls was also discussed, since legal representation at district court is required.

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor McGillicuddy reviewed the consent agenda.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

The adopted Consent Agenda items are as follows:

A. Communications

(1) Board Information (BI)

BI-1 George Stockman, et al, 2481 Small Acres Lane, Okemos; RE: Letter by the residents on Small Acres Lane regarding the maintenance of Ruth Moore Park

BI-2 Steve Kline, Manager, Technical Services Unit, LARA, Division of Media Technology, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (DLRA), 23024 W. Grand Blvd., Suite 13-100, Detroit; RE: Notification that DLRA will no longer produce programs for PEG access

BI-3 John P. Gardner, Government Affairs Manager, Comcast, Michigan Region, 1401 E. Miller Road, Lansing; RE: Changes in Comcast's installation prices effective August 5, 2011

(2) Staff Communication (SC)

SC-1 Deborah Guthrie, Interim Communications Director; RE: Press release announcing that the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) has recognized Meridian Township as a finalist in eight (8) programming categories

(3) On File in the Clerk's Office (OF)

Material handed out at the July 19, 2011 Board Meeting

Philip J. Dwyer, 2327 Hamilton Road, Okemos; RE: Zoning Amendment #10010 (Home Occupations), Ordinance No. 2011-09

Edward Luther, Commander, Stephen W. Frank American Legion Post 269, 1485 Haslett Road, Haslett; RE: Support for an increase in the size and display of flags in commercial zoning districts to sixty (60) square feet

**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 LeGoff.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor  
 McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
 NAYS: None  
 Motion carried unanimously.

B. Minutes

**Treasurer Brixie moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the July 19, 2011 Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Trustee LeGoff.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor  
 McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
 NAYS: None  
 Motion carried unanimously.

C. Bills

**Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Board approve the Manager’s Bills as follows:**

Common Cash	\$ 382,530.54
Public Works	\$ 81,335.29
Total Checks	\$ 463,865.83
Credit Card Transactions	\$ 7,694.90
Total Purchases	<u>\$ 471,560.73</u>
ACH Payments	<u>\$ 495,508.76</u>

**Seconded by Trustee LeGoff.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor  
 McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
 NAYS: None  
 Motion carried unanimously.

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

D. Assessing Stipulations

**Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Attorney be authorized to sign a stipulation with Macy’s, Inc. in accordance with the revised assessed and taxable values stated as follows:**

**MICHIGAN TAX TRIBUNAL DOCKET NUMBER 370827  
 MACY’S, INC.  
 PROPOSED STIPULATION FIGURES**

**Original Values**

Parcel Number	Address	Year	Original Assessed Value	Original Taxable Value
33-02-02-22-101-006	1982 Grand River	2009	\$4,444,700	\$4,430,113
33-02-02-22-101-006	1982 Grand River	2010	\$3,921,100	\$3,921,100
33-02-02-22-101-006	1982 Grand River	2011	\$3,588,400	\$3,588,400

**Proposed Revised Values**

Parcel Number	Address	Year	Revised Assessed Value	Revised Taxable Value
33-02-02-22-101-006	1982 Grand River	2009	\$3,525,000	\$3,525,000
33-02-02-22-101-006	1982 Grand River	2010	\$3,370,000	\$3,370,000
33-02-02-22-101-006	1982 Grand River	2011	\$3,135,000	\$3,135,000

Seconded by Trustee LeGoff.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
 NAYS: None  
 Motion carried unanimously.

**Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Attorney be authorized to sign a stipulation with VEI-JB, Inc. in accordance with the revised assessed and taxable values stated as follows:**

**MICHIGAN TAX TRIBUNAL DOCKET NUMBER 365123  
 VEI-JB, INC.  
 PROPOSED STIPULATION FIGURES**

**Original Values**

Parcel Number	Address	Year	Original Assessed Value	Original Taxable Value
33-02-02-04-201-005	2120 M-78	2009	\$429,000	\$406,081
33-02-02-04-201-005	2120 M-78	2010	\$396,000	\$396,000

**Proposed Revised Values**

Parcel Number	Address	Year	Revised Assessed Value	Revised Taxable Value
33-02-02-04-201-005	2120 M-78	2009	\$350,000	\$350,000
33-02-02-04-201-005	2120 M-78	2010	\$350,000	\$348,950

Seconded by Trustee LeGoff.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
 NAYS: None  
 Motion carried unanimously.

E. Homeland Security Fire Grant

**Treasurer Brixie moved to authorize the Fire Department to apply for and accept an Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant through the Department of Homeland Security in the total amount of \$252,500.00 with the Township's share of ten (10) percent (\$25,250) coming from the Township's Fund Balance. Seconded by Trustee LeGoff.**

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- If grant is received, staff will replace the existing trailers with the new rescue unit (truck which carries equipment)
- The new rescue unit would allow for the retirement of a fire truck if the number of fire stations is reduced in the future

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor  
McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Resolution for Bath Township Sewer Service for Meridian Plumbing

**Treasurer Brixie moved [and read into the record] NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Charter Township of Meridian consents to sanitary sewer utility services being provided to Meridian Township Parcel No. 33-02-02-03-102-006 by Bath Charter Township, without compensation of any nature being paid to the Charter Township of Meridian, and waiving all rights which the Charter Township of Meridian may otherwise have to:**

1. render any charge or fee for sanitary sewer utility services within Meridian Township Parcel No. 33-02-02-03-102-006, and
2. regulate and control the installation, maintenance, repair and replacement of sanitary sewer utility services within Meridian Township Parcel No. 33-02-02-03-102-006.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this consent is in complete satisfaction of all obligation the Charter Township of Meridian would otherwise have to provide, maintain, repair or replace sanitary sewer utility services to Meridian Township Parcel No. 33-02-02-03-102-006.**

**Seconded by Trustee LeGoff.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor  
McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

8. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)

9. HEARINGS (None)

10. ACTION ITEMS/ENDS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened public comment.

Jerry Fedewa, 5570 Okemos Road, East Lansing, spoke in support of the preliminary plat extension for Sierra Ridge Subdivision.

Supervisor McGillicuddy closed public comment.

A. Legg Park Boundary Correction/Property Sale

**Trustee Ochberg moved to approve the sale of .47 acres of land (Parcel B), to correct the boundary in Legg Park, to Jim and Ann Wood, 3921 Van Atta Road, Okemos, in the amount of \$13,300, with the conditions that the proceeds not be utilized for planning, construction and maintenance of the proposed dog park in Legg Park, that up to five (5) dead trees are removed and replaced along the boundary, comply with the directive of the National Forest Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources to spend the proceeds on improvements to Legg Park, and Parcel B shall be combined with the existing land owned by the Wood's so that it is one contiguous parcel. Seconded by Supervisor McGillicuddy.**

Board members discussed the following:

- Combining Parcels A, B, and C to create a new parcel would not be feasible as there is inadequate frontage on a public road
- Concern with the sale of park land
- Buyers should not dictate how the Township uses the proceeds from the sale
- Once park land is purchased by the Township, it should remain park land
- Appreciation for staff explanation as to why the lot is not buildable
- Property is not viable for use as park land

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Treasurer Brixie  
NAYS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Clerk Helmbrecht  
Motion carried 4-3.

- B. Zoning Amendment #10080, request to add Section 86-444 Commercial Planned Unit Development to the Code of Ordinances, **Introduction**

**Clerk Helmbrecht moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby INTRODUCES FOR PUBLICATION AND SUBSEQUENT ADOPTION Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_, entitled “Ordinance Amending the Code of the Charter Township of Meridian, Michigan, Chapter 86, Article IV, Division 4 by adding Section 86-444.”**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Clerk of the Charter Township of Meridian is directed to publish the Ordinance in the form in which it is introduced at least once prior to the next regular meeting of the Township Board.**

**Seconded by Supervisor McGillicuddy.**

Board members discussed the following:

- Appreciation to the Planning Commission for aligning language with the MUPUD language
- Philosophical and conceptual struggle whether this ordinance is really needed
- More residential housing is needed in the Township
- Allowing a residential component in commercial areas aids schools and helps the Township’s businesses thrive
- When the residential component is removed, the benefit becomes the amenities
- Mixing uses should be about allowing residences in the commercial areas
- Zoning amendment gives greater flexibility in redeveloping obsolete or underused property

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- **Amend Section 86-444 by deleting (f) (1) c. “Building materials shall be the same on all sides.”**

**The amendment died for lack of a second.**

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- **Amend (g) (4) a. 1. h. by inserting “or 5% more vehicle trips” after “100 vehicle trips”**

**The amendment died for lack of a second.**

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Inquiry as to the origin of the zoning amendment
- Results of this proposed amendment will allow commercial developments not to request multiple variances and relaxes some controls in order to obtain amenities
- Some commercial areas in the Township have zero lot lines

- The proposed zoning amendment is another option for areas of concentrated commercial development or for commercial redevelopment
- Some commercial developments do not want a residential component (banks, etc.)
- Rigidity of current setback standards for commercially zoned property
- Zoning amendment allows a developer three options to develop commercial property
- Effect of this ordinance amendment will relieve the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) from developers requesting 20 or more variances to redevelop a parcel
- Concern that the power of a zoned community will be somewhat diluted as there may no longer be consistency
- Concern this ordinance will be the vehicle to approve projects which would not otherwise “fit” into the community
- Little commercially zoned property available in Meridian Township for development
- Use of the CPUD ordinance will require a higher quality of building materials
- Redevelopment allows the opportunity for traffic flow improvement which cannot be ascertained without a traffic study

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- **Amend Section 86-444 by deleting (f) (1) c. “Building materials shall be the same on all sides.”**

**Seconded by Trustee Dreyfus.**

Continued Board discussion:

- Language in (f) (1) a. and b. sufficiently restricts building material types to ensure quality materials are used
- Language in (f) (1) c. is overly restrictive

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Veenstra  
NAYS: Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
Motion carried 4-3.

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- **Amend (g) (4) a. 1. h. by inserting “or 5% more vehicle trips” after “100 vehicle trips”**

**Seconded by Trustee Dreyfus.**

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Elimination of curb cuts should not require a traffic study
- Expense of a traffic study
- Convincing argument by a member of the public that traffic should be based on the size of the adjacent road
- Concern with using a percentage increase of traffic on roads such as Okemos Road
- Many other communities not only require traffic studies at a specific intersection, but significant intersections within a half-mile
- Negatives of not obtaining a traffic study would be the traffic impacts which were not known at the time of development
- Once a traffic study is submitted by the developer, it is reviewed by the Township’s traffic consultant
- Many intersections in Meridian Township have the lowest level of service (which is a long delay for motorists), and 100 additional cars would have a dramatic effect
- Laws cannot be made to address a situation of one resident as the Board is responsible for the safety of all residents in the community

**Supervisor McGillicuddy called the question.**

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Opinion of staff as to the reasonableness of using 2% more vehicle trips
- Staff desire to seek counsel of engineers with more recent experience in these types of studies which use the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) manual to calculate impact of traffic on the road system

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment to his previous amendment:**

- **Delete “5%” and insert “2%”**

Continued Board discussion:

- Concern with not having science behind percentages being arbitrarily offered

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Veenstra  
NAYS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Supervisor McGillicuddy,  
Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
Motion failed 1-6.

Continued Board discussion:

- Exploration of this topic as a future agenda item to not require small businesses in areas with lower traffic counts to undertake such an intensive traffic study
- Noticing requirement for a proposed C-PUD project is the same as for MUPUDs and special use permit, (all properties within 300 feet of the site; 15 day notice published in the newspaper)

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- **Increase the noticing requirement to all properties within 500 feet**

**Seconded by Trustee Ochberg.**

Continued Board discussion:

- Major sections of the Township which do not receive delivery of the Towne Courier (a newspaper of general circulation)
- Preference to change the noticing requirements in subsection 86-65 (b), not in this amendment
- Notice is also placed on the Township’s website and posted in seven (7) other places around the Township
- Red and white sign is placed on the property a specific number of days prior to the public hearing
- The Towne Courier can be picked up at the post office, restaurants and several establishments within the Township if people desire to obtain a paper

**Trustee Veenstra withdrew his amendment.**

Continued Board discussion:

- Length of extension period should be spelled out in (h) (4)
- Time for completion, even when an extension is granted, is 48 months
- Language regarding the extension period is consistent with the language contained in the MUPUD
- After a Planning Commission public hearing, that body has 60 days in which to act
- Director of Community Planning and Development has 60 days after the public hearing in which to act

- Concern the Township Board only has 30 days after holding a public hearing to make a decision on the C-PUD

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendments:**

- Amend (g) (6), by deleting “30 days” and inserting “60 days”
- Amend (g) (6), by deleting “30-day period” and inserting “60-day period”

**Seconded by Trustee Dreyfus.**

Continued Board discussion:

- 30 days consistent with the MUPUD

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra  
NAYS: Trustee Ochberg, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk Helmbrecht,  
Treasurer Brixie  
Motion failed 3-4.

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- Amend (i) (2) a. by inserting “of more than 2%” after “Building additions”

**The motion died for lack of a second.**

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- Amend (i) (2) b. by inserting “of more than 2%” after “Building additions”

**Seconded by Trustee LeGoff.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees LeGoff, Veenstra  
NAYS: Trustees Dreyfus, Ochberg, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk  
Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
Motion failed 2-5.

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- Amend (i) (2) h. by inserting “of more than 10%” after “Any addition”

**The amendment died for lack of a second.**

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- Amend (i) (2) e. by deleting “two times” and inserting “of more than 50% of”

**Clerk Helmbrecht called the question. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees LeGoff, Ochberg, Supervisor McGillicuddy, Clerk  
Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
NAYS: Trustees Dreyfus, Veenstra  
Motion carried 5-2.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE MAIN YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Supervisor McGillicuddy,  
Clerk Helmbrecht  
MOTION: NAYS: Trustee Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie  
Motion carried 5-2.

- C. Zoning Amendment #11050 (Township Board), request to amend Section 86-402(3) pertaining to the size and display of flags in commercial zoning districts, **Introduction**  
**Treasurer Brixie moved [and read into the record] NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby INTRODUCES FOR PUBLICATION AND SUBSEQUENT ADOPTION Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_, entitled “Ordinance Amending the Code of the Charter Township of Meridian, Michigan, Chapter 86, Article IV, Division 3, Section 86-402 by amending Section 86-402(3).”**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Charter Township of Meridian is directed to publish the Ordinance in the form in which it is introduced at least once prior to the next regular meeting of the Township Board.**

**Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.**

Board members discussed the following:

- The proposed language recognizes the difficulty in complying with the current ordinance
- The proposed language is an approximate increase in flag size of 15% while maintaining the current flag pole height of 35 feet
- Current flag pole height is consistent with other height requirements for structures throughout the Township
- Current allowance for a building in a commercial district to be taller than 35 feet if the setbacks are changed, which is not addressed in this proposed ordinance
- A flag size of 60 square feet represents a 71% increase in size

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- **Amend (3) B. after “no larger than” by deleting “40 square feet” and inserting “60 square feet”**

**Seconded by Trustee LeGoff.**

Board members discussed the following:

- “Test” where a 96 square foot US flag was flown in the Township for three (3) months without causing any problems in the community
- No compelling Township interest in prohibiting a 60 square foot US flag from being flown
- A flag size of 60 square feet is commonly available in flag catalogs
- Other Belle Tire locations in Michigan fly larger flags
- A large flag can be construed as a marketing tool to attract attention to a business
- A large flag can be construed as a tool to circumvent the Township’s sign ordinance

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, Ochberg, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy

NAYS: Trustee LeGoff, Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie

Motion carried 4-3.

**Treasurer Brixie withdrew her motion.**

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Amendment to the proposal requires referral back to the Planning Commission
- Height of the flag pole would need to be increased for consistency between the flag size and pole height

**Clerk Helmbrecht moved to refer Zoning Amendment #11050 (Flags) to the Planning Commission for consideration of allowing United States flags in the commercial zoning districts to be a maximum of 60 square feet in size and to increase the maximum height of a flag pole to 40 feet.**

**Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Ochberg, Supervisor McGillicuddy,  
Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
NAYS: Trustee Veenstra  
Motion carried 6-1.

D. Preliminary Plat Extension of Sierra Ridge Subdivision

**Treasurer Brixie moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby grants the extension of Preliminary Plat #03012, Sierra Ridge Estates, for a period of two years, from July 1, 2011 to July 1, 2013, with the following condition:**

**1. All previous conditions placed on the preliminary plat approval shall remain in effect.**

**Seconded by Clerk Helmbrecht.**

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Appreciation that homes continue to be constructed during a difficult housing market
- Preliminary plat was originally approved in July, 2003
- Conditions should be reviewed for relevancy prior to approving the extension
- Concern that changing conditions would require another hearing and lengthen the process
- Extension process allows the Board to look at the project after two (2) years
- The entire process strikes one Board member as meaningless if the Board can't make changes
- During the Planning Commission's development of the Master Plan in 2002, discussion took place about changing the way subdivisions were constructed without adequate planning for greenspace
- Concern with the tone of the developer's letter to the planning staff
- The Board has approved four (4) previous extensions on this plat
- Reminder to the developer that the Planning Department has had reductions in staff
- Warning to the developer that he is responsible for meeting deadlines spelled out in the Township's ordinances
- Developer is in compliance with all conditions contained in the original approval
- Inquiry if the Township has acquired the property on Towner Road for its park system as noted in condition #25
- Developer is fairly certain his property is not adjacent to the property on Towner Road
- Property owned by Forsberg is immediately to the north and the property owned by Eyde is immediately to the east of lot #91
- Agreement by the developer to work with staff to provide access through the middle of one of the lots if the Towner Road property is, in fact, adjacent to his development

**Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:**

- **Amend the extension by deleting condition #21, and renumbering the remaining conditions**

**The amendment died for lack of a second.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra, Supervisor McGillicuddy,  
Clerk Helmbrecht, Treasurer Brixie  
NAYS: Trustee Ochberg  
Motion carried 6-1.

Supervisor McGillicuddy recessed the meeting at 8:10 P.M.  
Supervisor McGillicuddy reconvened the meeting at 8:20 P.M.

11. DISCUSSION ITEMS/ENDS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened public comment.

William Cleary, 1896 Danbury, Okemos, expressed appreciation to the Meridian firefighters who recently gave their time collecting funds for muscular dystrophy research. He spoke to Township regulations regarding installation of a step and handrail at his home. Mr. Cleary questioned the legality of a pyramid sign and stated corn in a vegetable garden blocks the vision of traffic at the corner of Hamilton and Kenmore. He stated it is necessary for him to beep his horn when driving in that area. Mr. Cleary spoke to the section of heritage pathway along Hamilton Road.

Supervisor McGillicuddy closed public comment.

A. Request from Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), regarding sign size in Professional Office (PO) and Research and Office Park District (RP)

Director Kieselbach summarized initiating an amendment to the sign ordinance to allow free-standing signs in Professional Office (PO) and Research Park (RP) and Industrial (I) to be the same size and whether directional signs should be permitted in the PO district as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 28, 2011.

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Current number of properties in RP which have two (2) acres
- Two (2) acres is the minimum lot size
- Impact of regulations on the physical environment of a community
- Meridian Township's sign ordinance is somewhat restrictive and allows easy visual access when driving
- Impact of signs on an aging driver
- Sign size is not related to use, but lot size
- Requests for larger office developments to have directional signs
- Need for directional signs to accommodate elderly residents in locating their doctors' offices (e.g., Heritage Office Park on Okemos Road)
- Suggestion to have staff draft an amendment which related the allowance of directional signs to the size of the PO park
- Directional signs as a public safety issue
- Suggestion to have the RP signs reduced to the size allowed in PO
- Goal of having conformity of sign size throughout the Township
- Township's sign ordinance as a model ordinance
- Preference for small directional signs in office parks where there are at least three (3) to four (4) buildings
- Next step is to initiate a zoning amendment to allow small directional signs in larger office parks
- Staff recommendation to allow an additional three (3) square feet of surface display area for the address on a freestanding sign in PO
- Appreciation for Board consideration of this issue
- Board Policy decision will assist the ZBA in remaining consistent

**The consensus of the Board was to direct staff to initiate a zoning amendment to allow small directional signs in larger office parks and an additional three (3) square feet of surface display area for the address on a free-standing sign in PO for Planning Commission review and recommendation.**

B. Pathway Design Updates

Director Severy summarized the conceptual design of pathways as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 29, 2011.

Board members and staff discussed the following:

- Pathway could be constructed directly behind the curb on the south side of Mount Hope Road, west of Okemos Road, but would require some tree removal, mail box relocation, street sign relocation, retaining walls and easements from property owners
- Need for staff to meet with property owners along Mount Hope Road to gauge public input on the pathway
- Shrubs and trees are a buffer from traffic noise on Mount Hope Road

- Pathway currently located on the north side of Mount Hope Road
- Preference for the gap on the north side of Mount Hope Road to be completed for continuous pathway from Okemos to Hagadorn Road
- Concern with snow removal on Mount Hope Road being pushed onto the pathway if constructed directly behind the curb
- Reminder that millage language states the pathways shall be seven (7) feet
- Recommendation from national organizations that there be a two (2) foot distance from any fixed object (e.g., tree, power pole, mail box)
- Previous Board designation of the pathway on Hamilton Road as a five (5) foot heritage pathway
- Identification of the species of trees would help the Board decide on whether to remove or keep them
- Chippewa Hills (original plat name) is an old subdivision and may qualify for a heritage designation
- Crossing from Maumee to the pathway on the north side of Mount Hope constitutes considerable personal risk as there is no visibility from the east or west due to the “dip” in the road
- Mount Hope Road has a 45 miles per hour speed limit in this area
- Safety issue for children walking from the Chippewa Hills subdivision to Central School, especially in winter when it is dark outside
- Mount Hope Road is one of the first roads in Meridian Township plowed by the Ingham County Road Commission (ICRC) after a snowstorm
- Suggestion to have staff arrange a night meeting with residents at Central School
- Verbal commitment by the Superintendent of Okemos Public Schools to aid the Township in its quest to obtain Safe Routes to School funding
- During and after heavy snows, Meridian Township would need to close lanes to remove the snow
- Continuous pathways on the north and south sides of Mount Hope Road essential to the safety of pedestrians
- Use of eminent domain to complete the pathway on Mount Hope Road
- More economical and efficient to complete the pathway on the north side of Mount Hope Road before addressing the issue of a pathway on the south side of Mount Hope Road
- Eminent domain is one of the most extreme government measures to utilize
- Staff comment that completion of the north side will not necessarily be more economical or easier to complete as there is a wetland near the Dart property and close to the fence
- Possibility of filling in the wetland, raising the ground under the fence on the Dart property, and providing a compensating cut elsewhere
- Need for obtaining easements from the property owner to remove the retaining wall on the north side of Jolly Road, just west of Hiawatha Elementary School in order to be able to effectively remove snow in that area
- Completion of the pathway on the north side of Grand River Avenue would require easements behind the billboard near the golf driving range in order to place it as far from the curb as possible
- Hill near Powell Road and Grand River Avenue is a concern
- Completion of the pathway along the north side of Grand River Avenue has a higher priority than Mount Hope due to the traffic volume

**The consensus of the Board was to direct staff to proceed with filling the gap on the north side of East Grand River and meet with interested property owners regarding the proposed pathway on the south side of Mount Hope Road.**

- C. St. Paul Lutheran Church Annexation Request  
Township Manager Richards summarized the petition for annexation by St. Paul Lutheran Church as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 27, 2011.

Board members discussed the following:

- Subject property is tax exempt as it is owned by the church and used for church purposes
- Term of agreement is for 50 years with a 50-year renewal

- Properties west of 3407 E. Lake Lansing Road are in Meridian Township
- Original petition for the church annexation was from a property owner east of the church
- Concern if the subject property is developed, a pattern of annexation could continue west along E. Lake Lansing Road
- The subject property is adjacent to East Lansing park land to the south
- If the Township Board does not approve the annexation, there is no avenue for the annexation to move forward unless someone moves onto the property and petitions for annexation
- Need to ascertain the advantage of this annexation for St. Paul Lutheran Church
- Inquiry if the church could be annexed back to Meridian Township
- Annexation v. agreement
- Township Manager recommendation to proceed with granting the annexation petition based upon the agreement with the City of East Lansing

**The consensus of the Board was not to proceed with the annexation request.**

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened and closed Public Remarks.

13. FINAL BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Treasurer Brixie stated that during an Economic Development Corporation (EDC) meeting, discussion ensued that the Meridian Township logo is out of date and could be updated. She added that the EDC is having its logo redesigned by a very talented individual who works in the Cable Department and wondered if the Board wanted to take this opportunity to explore updating the Meridian Township logo.

Board members discussed the following:

- If the Board decides to update the logo, school children within the community could be involved in the process through a contest by students from the four (4) different school districts
- Suggestion to ask the citizens for their input on this topic
- Current logo shows Meridian Township's history, including the year it was established

Supervisor McGillicuddy requested staff investigate comments by Mr. Cleary relative to the addition of a step and rail on his porch and report back to the Board.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor McGillicuddy adjourned the meeting at 9:56 P.M.

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SUSAN MCGILLICUDDY  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

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MARY M. G. HELMBRECHT, CMC  
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary