

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
TOWNSHIP BOARD SPECIAL MEETING - **APPROVED** -  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Central Fire Station Community Room  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2017 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Deschaine (6:04 P.M.),  
Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public  
Works and Engineering Derek Perry, Director of Community Planning & Development  
Mark Kieselbach, Communication Director Deborah Guthrie

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll of the Board.

3. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened and closed Public Remarks.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Trustee Opsommer moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Distributed Antenna System (DAS)

Director Guthrie summarized the subject matter as outlined in staff memorandum dated January 20, 2017.

Board, staff and applicant discussion:

- Telecommunication providers apply for Metro Act permits
- Review of permits and check requirements
- Antennas are not included as part of telecommunication facilities
- Businesses setting up DAS have no legal “rights” to construct antennas in the right-of-way
- Township Board is the body which determines DAS parameters and placement logistics
- Board member recollection the previous Board desired input from the Communications Commission on this issue
- Possibility of making the antenna look like a light post
- Stealth design
- Placement at least 500 feet apart
- Inquiry if there would be one or multiple companies constructing antennas
- Co-location on DAS antennas
- Interest in learning about potential revenue streams
- ACD.net (ACD) was contracted by Verizon Wireless
- Difficulty in uploading data at larger crowd events
- Inquiry if additional services are provided with the antenna installation
- Data usage is significantly increasing
- Antenna placement would facilitate 5 G roll-out
- Interest in learning if the co-location is placed on cell towers, some of which could be on private property
- Some systems can accommodate four (4) major carriers
- Concept is to place six DAS antennas in the Meridian Mall area and three (3) in the Towar Garden area

- Inquiry as to if there are different pricing tiers for access to DAS
- Inquiry if existing towers can assist with coverage issues and reduce the need for DAS
- Signal to noise ratio improves with closely placed antennas
- ACD does not install DAS on private property
- Inquiry about placement on Township property
- ACD is a not a “utility” by standard definition
- Courts have ruled the Township has discretion in this issue as regulations are “lax”
- Best interest of the Township to control the aesthetic look of the antenna
- Applications can be submitted by various companies
- Possibility of 36 carriers (9 X 4) if no antenna co-location
- Co-location can only occur if it is vertical or “contained within”
- Regulations on private property placement
- ACD proposal is for a 36 foot pole, as it is not cost effective if height is below 25 feet
- Ingham County has indicated DAS is a complex issue relative to antenna placement on traffic light poles
- Planning Commission has oversight of the SUP process
- A special use permit (SUP) is required by the Township to construct DAS on private property
- Stealth tower is a use by right, with the Township having regulatory control
- The Township can require applicants to have a stealth design
- With a stealth design, the Township can control the design and look using existing ordinances if an antenna is located on private property
- Innovation at Meridian Township is not predicated on DAS approval
- Potential negative long-term impact of allowing one DAS provider to place antennas on Township rights-of-way
- One DAS provider creates a template for other DAS providers
- Inquiry as to the potential for obsolescence of DAS
- A bond is required for equipment removal in the event of business failure
- Observation of a Verizon customer who lives in the Towar Garden area is that he has had no coverage issues and suggested use of the existing towers is sufficient for calls and data
- Importance of control over rights-of-way for safety and planning purposes
- The Township can potentially restrict an area where DAS antennas are placed
- Antenna placement on street light poles along Grand River could help with compliance of Meridian’s “dark sky” policy
- Light poles are already in place so DAS providers would have to configure project around the existing street lights
- Applicants submit requests with specific locations for placement of DAS
- Concern with the Township giving up “blanket control” of rights-of-way
- Ordinance language could help regulate placement on a case-by-case basis
- In each circumstance, the application should be carefully reviewed
- Meridian Township is pro-technology and protecting rights-of-way has nothing to do with being opposed to new technologies
- Right-of-way is a separate issue from DAS placement
- Ability to limit placement by zoning district
- A cell tower SUP was denied in 2016 using the denial criteria contained in our Township ordinance
- DAS antennas were built into the walls at Spartan Stadium to deal with cell phone problems in crowds, but reports indicate it didn’t address network issues
- Right-of-way is a valuable asset and it is “easy and desirable” for telecommunication providers to want to use a right-of-way for much higher profits
- Revenue stream based on an agreement made with ACD
  - Number of poles, linear feet of fiber, etc. are not covered under the METRO Act, so can be considered during lease negotiations
- Key money is made on water towers
  - Antennas on a water tower are prime real estate

## B. Open Space Ordinance Amendment

Board and staff discussion:

- Inquiry if golf courses should count as “open space” with respect to zoning regulations
- In a Planned Residential Development (PRD), current ordinance requires 20% as open space
- In a Planned Unit Development (PUD), current ordinance requires 50% as open space
- Golf courses currently do not count as open space in the PUD ordinance
- Golf courses are a use by right in residential areas
- Inquiry as to what is counted as open space within a golf course (pools, etc.)
- Golf courses are a commercial enterprise
- Golf courses meet the “spirit of the law” in preserving large contiguous areas
- Inquiry as to what happens if a golf course fails
  - How is open space protected if a golf course closes
- Many golf courses are struggling to survive
- Inquiry if access to open space is restricted to golfers
- Inquiry if the conservation easement for a golf course is built into the approval for a PUD
  - Preserved permanently even if the golf course closes
- Many individuals like the aesthetics of living adjacent to a golf course
- Agreement to exclude wetlands and water assets from courting towards the 50% open space requirement for a PUD
- Property manager and property owner maintain the golf course
- Possible resident concern about using the golf course to meet open space requirements for a PUD
- In certain circumstances, using golf courses towards open space requirement in a PUD may exceed 50% open space

6. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, stated the DAS discussion was informative, as data is growing exponentially. He noted his preference for the private property option rather than placement of antennas in the rights-of-way. Mr. Provencher inquired about obsolescence of DAS in five (5) years.

Supervisor Styka closed Public Remarks.

7. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS (None)

8. ADJOURNMENT

**Clerk Dreyfus moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Opsommer.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 8:40 P.M.

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RONALD J. STYKA  
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

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BRETT DREYFUS, CMMC  
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary