

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING **-APPROVED-**
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517-349-1232, Virtual Meeting via Zoom
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2020 **6:00 pm.**

PRESENT: Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Township Manager Walsh, Director of Public Works Perry, Fire Chief Hamel, Police Chief Plaga, Community Planning Director Kieselbach, Information Technology Director Gebes, Parks and Recreation Director Maisner, Finance Director Mattison, Human Resources Director Tithof, Economic Development and Neighborhoods Director Clark, Communications Manager Yates

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Clerk Dreyfus called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Recognition of Eagle Scouts – Autumn Eyre and Regan Woods

Township Board recognized Eagle Scout Candidate Autumn Eyre, senior at Laingsburg High School, and Eagle Scout Candidate Regan Woods, junior at Okemos High School.

B. Introduction of New Full-Time Firefighter/Paramedic Steven Garelik

Fire Chief Hamel introduced Steven Garelik.

5. CITIZENS ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Styka opened public remarks at 6:13 pm.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beachwood Drive, Haslett; referenced citizen communication in previous packet and commented that bagpipe music is not “noise.” He stated the Board Resolution honoring Clerk Dreyfus was ironic due to campaign finance reports showing 4 Township Board members circumvented contribution limitations by contributing \$15,000 to Julie Brixie’s Political Action Committee, who then distributed those funds to the political opponent of Clerk Dreyfus. He also noted concerns with other campaign donations received by new Clerk-elect. He thanked Clerk Dreyfus for his years of service and said there are many grateful citizens in the community.

Robin Schneider, 5676 Cade Street, Haslett; stated she purchased her home in downtown Haslett to raise her family in this area, has lived in the Township for a long time, and supports recreational marihuana in the community.

Alan Shamoun, The Cured Leaf TC, 108 S. Main St. Suite A, Royal Oak; stated he is a medical marihuana provisioning licensee in Okemos and spoke in support of opting into recreational marihuana products in Meridian Township. He asked the Township to follow what is occurring in other locations in the State.

Megan McFarlane, Green Peak Industries, 515 Cornell Avenue, Dimondale; stated Green Peak Industries operates regional stores in Michigan and outlined security measures at their locations. She spoke in support of opting in for recreational marihuana.

Ben Joffe, Haslett Gallery LLC, 229 Depot Street, Ann Arbor; supported opting in for recreational marihuana.

Mike McCurdy, 5458 Okemos Road, East Lansing; spoke in support of recreational marihuana and asked the Township to move it into a legal and safe market situation.

Chris Yermian 222 E Merrill Street, Ste. 102, Birmingham; spoke in support of recreational marihuana and questioned why the Township would not create a safe, legal market.

Marvin Karana, DNVK 2, LLC, 29500 Telegraph Road, Ste. 250, Southfield; owns parcel at 1614 E. Grand River, stated he is proposing a new facility but wants to make sure it will be a viable business. He spoke in support of recreational marihuana.

Robert Baldori, 2719 Mt. Hope Road; stated his law office has represented recreational marihuana facilities and these businesses have not had any issues in their communities.

Deborah Guthrie, 2575 Dustin Road; thanked Clerk Dreyfus for his 20+ years of service and appreciate his sacrifices and contributions to the community.

Supervisor Styka closed public remarks at 6:41 pm.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh reported that Niche magazine ranked Okemos as best place to live and Haslett ranked number thirteen on the list; November 23 is the Township Board's Goal Setting session; DEI program continuing with staff input into process; working on agreement with Andev Group & Indian Lakes neighborhood; appreciated Communication Dept. working to help with Census and high response rate by residents; Indian Lakes/Andev Group, team is working on completing the concept agreement.

7. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer Deschaine reported:

- Meridian Township Transportation Commission meeting virtually Nov 19 at 6 PM, discussing Redi-Ride ridership and expanded hours, and Corridor Improvement Authority topic of safety along Grand River Avenue
- East Lansing-Meridian Water & Sewer Authority Board of Trustees virtual meeting November 19 at 7:30 am to discuss water quality
- Request for hotline reimplementation during COVID building closing, Manager agreed

Clerk Dreyfus reported:

- November 3 Election was certified by the Ingham County Board of Canvassers and Meridian Township's election results are official

Trustee Opsommer reported:

- CATA Board will be meeting Nov 18 and adopting a new advertising policy that will permit advertising on various CATA systems, funds will support installation of LED and Smart Stations

Supervisor Styka reported:

- Community Resources Commission is conducting Meridian Cares fundraisers for the Meridian Township Emergency Needs Fund
- No-Shave November Fundraiser — where police officers compete against each other — are seeking sponsors and donations will go to the Meridian Cares Fund
- Meridian Township is conducting a survey to determine the impact of COVID on local business, if a business did not receive a survey, they should contact the Township to participate

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Treasurer Deschaine moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried: 7-0

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

Clerk Dreyfus moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Opsommer, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

A. Communications

Clerk Dreyfus 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 Wisinski.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Opsommer, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. Approval of Minutes – November 5, 2020 Virtual Regular Meeting

Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the November 5, 2020 Virtual Regular Meeting, as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Opsommer, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

C. Bills

Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve that the Township Board approve the Manager’s Bills as follows: Seconded by Trustee Wisinski.

Common Cash		\$	540,224.63
Public Works		\$	559,072.87
Trust & Agency		\$	<u>104,188.85</u>
	Total Checks	\$	<u>1,203,486.35</u>
Credit Card Transactions		\$	10,942.28
10/29/2020 - 11/10/2020			
	Total Purchases	\$	<u>1,214,428.63</u>
ACH Payments		\$	<u>423,017.61</u>

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Opsommer, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

D. Authorization of New Signer for Bank Accounts

Clerk Dreyfus moved to adopt a resolution entitled “Authority to Open an Account” for each of the listed financial institutions in a staff memorandum dated November 17, 2020, with the effective date of November 20, 2020. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Sundland, Opsommer, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY – NONE

11. HEARINGS

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. Resolution in Recognition of Clerk Dreyfus

The following resolution was offered by Trustee Sundland:

WHEREAS, the Meridian Township Board wishes to thank Township Clerk Brett Dreyfus for his 12 years of service on the Township Board; and

WHEREAS, Clerk Dreyfus served the residents of Meridian Township as Township Clerk from 2012-2020; and

WHEREAS, Clerk Dreyfus also served the residents of Meridian Township as Township Trustee from 2008-2012; and

WHEREAS, Clerk Dreyfus leaves office as the ranking member of the Township Board; and

WHEREAS, prior to his tenure in elected office, Clerk Dreyfus volunteered his time as an active member of the Meridian Township Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, we fondly remember Clerk Dreyfus' efforts to provide an exceptional Memorial Day Service at Glendale Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Brett Dreyfus as a member of the Meridian Board ardently advocated for land use policies consistent with his vision of smart township growth;

WHEREAS, Clerk Dreyfus advocated to maintain the rural quality of the eastern portion of the Township and for the adoption of a Urban Services Boundary;

WHEREAS, the entire Meridian Township community joins us this evening in acknowledging and appreciating Clerk Dreyfus and his 16 years of public service to our 43,424 residents; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, that Meridian Township commemorates Brett Dreyfus and celebrates his many contributions to the community.

Seconded by Trustee Jackson.

Discussion:

- Supervisor Styka stated he with the Clerk for eight years, although not often in the majority, he appreciated how well the Clerk represented his positions and arguments well and will be missed in that regard. He thanked the Clerk for his service.
- Clerk Dreyfus thanked the Board for their recognition. It has been a pleasure and honor to serve residents of Meridian Township for over 20 years, starting with service on the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals up to election as Township Clerk. First Democratic

Clerk in 60 years and felt he was successful in addressing residents' issues and reaffirm trust in local government. He was excited to be part of protecting the environment and part of the group that established the Land Preservation Program.

He was glad to work with former Trustee John Veenstra in championing the Urban Services Boundary and managing the growth of the Township. As Chief Election Officer, he is proud of his team in successfully administering all Township elections. He continually advocated for expanded absentee voting and the grant he wrote resulted in new election equipment for all polling locations including new technology to process absentee ballots. He proudly advocated for the Township Anti-Discrimination Ordinance which helped protect the LGBT community, and noted that he fought hard for transparency and openness in all aspects of Meridian Township government, which was not always a pleasant task and did not make him popular at times among some public officials. He welcomed the Township's new Clerk and thanked citizens, board and commission members and staff for their support.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

B. Ladder Truck Purchase

Fire Chief Hamel outlined the proposed purchase of the new ladder truck.

Treasurer Deschaine move to authorize the Township Manager to sign documents approving the purchase of the new E-ONE Ladder Truck in an amount not to exceed \$930,000. Supported by Trustee Wisinski.

Discussion:

- Support the proposal to purchase the fire truck; it will be an exciting addition to the fire safety brigade; thanked voters for their support in approving the 2017 millage to allow for this purchase
- The ladder will reach 78 feet

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Jackson, Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

C. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Reappointment

Supervisor Styka stated Trustee Jackson has been serving and has indicated she would like to continue to serve.

Trustee Wisinski move to re-appoint Patricia Herring Jackson as the Meridian Township Delegate to the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission for term ending November 20, 2024. Seconded by Treasurer Deschaine.

Board Discussion:

- Thanked Trustee Jackson for representing the Township on the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Opsommer, Sundland, Wisinski, Supervisor Styka, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Deschaine, Trustee Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 7-0

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Update on COVID-19 Work Plan from Home

Manager Walsh reported

- Initiating a work from home program similar to the program used this past March. Currently the building is closed to the public with some of the staff working in the building and others from home.
- Issue is how someone can get a permit and make a payment. Currently visitors call one of the department numbers and an employee will meet them at the door, want to limit the amount of people entering the building. Staff are looking at various options.
- There have been several positives tests and in the public safety department and makes serving in that capacity very difficult. More positive tests could put a whole squad down.
- Goal is to protect employees and serve the public.

B. Walnut Hills Update

Manager Walsh reported

- There is a new purchaser of the site, plans to develop three or four homes for himself and his extended family. The new owner is committed to cleaning up site, staff will be meeting next week to discuss next steps for the site.
- New owner has stated he will be demolishing the buildings in the near future.

C. General Discussion about the Possibility of Opting into Recreational Marihuana

Principal Planner Menser reported Medical Marihuana Ordinances were adopted in 2019. Six applicants were considered for conditional approval. As of today, five applicants have renewed and received Special Use Permit approval and the sixth applicant has renewed his application but is working with staff to obtain the SUP approval.

Discussion:

- Board member supports small businesses but not sure if he can support recreational marihuana. Adult recreational use was discussed at length during Medical Marihuana ordinance process and Board voted not to proceed with recreational marihuana until after at

least a year or two of experience to see how the medical marihuana worked out in the Township. Medical Marihuana license holders now stating they need recreational marihuana to make their business feasible to operate, concern that this was not brought up during deliberations, Board member belief many residents spoke out in opposition and if these businesses need Medical & Recreational, then the Township needs to start the process over from scratch. Opposed to proceeding with recreational marihuana until there is experience with the current medical marihuana ordinance and ask the current businesses to wait another year.

- Recreational/adult use marihuana was approved by Michigan and Meridian voters in 2018, the Act required the Township to either opt out or be automatically opted-in to recreational marihuana, Township opted out because of a lack in local regulatory structure that compliments the State structure. Difficulty for Medical Marihuana retail outlets to effectively compete with stores that have both medical and recreational.
- Board member belief that the difficult legwork was already achieved for the two Township Medical Marihuana ordinances — zoning and regulatory — which complement the State law. Should be fair and allow current applicants to sell recreational marihuana, otherwise this creates two different marketplaces, with far more recreational than medical marihuana applications.
- Township could easily opt-in by including recreational use with medical use in ordinance; replace “medical marihuana” with “medical and recreational marihuana” ordinance language.
- Fast-changing market, other communities are opting in each month and decision is needed if Township wants to support current permit holders, four out of six permit holders are building on undeveloped sites, costly investment.
- Supports getting marihuana out of neighborhoods and residential homes and into secure, safe provisional centers. This would benefit the Township, proposed change will go through the Planning Commission process and residents can give feedback.
- Board member belief that communities who have adopted recreational marihuana have not shown a spike in crime or noticeable safety issues, no difference in medical versus recreational marihuana except in the law and the tax costs. If an individual wants recreational marihuana, they will drive to get it, most marihuana users do not want to go to doctor for a prescription but want to visit a provisional center and preserve their privacy. Medical marihuana users will decline over time, they don’t need it for recreation stores, easier than annual doctor appointments.
- Board member concern about unconscious “implicit bias” against marihuana, as described similarly in racial equity discussions. Dispensary for recreational and medical, which operates on the border of the Township, was previously a dentist office, has security on site and it blends into the area. Top citizen concerns, such as odor, safety and crime, were addressed and well thought out in the current Township medical marihuana ordinance. The Township can make a smooth transition in adding recreational marihuana.
- Concern about how marihuana affects public health; would like to see the data that was mentioned about medical marihuana facilities and if they affect the community; have received complaints on second-hand smoke and would like to know how this affects the community. Questioned reason behind accessibility to recreational marihuana. Belief that six Township license holders were committed at that time to Medical Marihuana and they should give the Board another year to evaluate the current program.
- Board member view that he wanted to see the effects of operating medical marihuana centers on the community before moving forward with recreational marihuana, locations and number of permits for medical marihuana ordinance was based on information at that time including medical needs.

- Concern about caregivers visiting the black market instead of legal stores, and is access a real issue, until a facility has been opened this results in unanswered questions.
- Board member inquiry if any of board members visited a provisioning center, very modern, safe, visually appealing, and needs to be seen in person.
- Suggestion about being careful comparing industries with Medical Marijuana dispensaries because no other store business model has only one commodity that they sell. Township applicants were approved one month before the recreational marijuana initiative was started. These permit holders has to go through the special use permit process and could not break ground until spring this year when COVID hit. Concerned about how medical dispensaries will succeed if owners cannot include recreational consumers. Customers go to licensed center because they will know the potency and receive a safer product, including edibles. It is under the jurisdiction of LARA and this addresses the concerns with public safety. Data will be slow coming in because it is a new industry with multiple local controls.
- Accessibility is not the question, but instead, does the Township wants recreational marijuana businesses in the community; concerned that recreational marijuana could become a public health issue just like gambling is now with the legalization of casinos; new opportunities means new problems; marijuana facilities would require large amount of township staff time to monitor, question revenue made by the Township on these facilities; residents have access across the western border of the Township so do we want to offer additional access?
- Belief that consumer behavior information exists along with extensive information on dispensaries, concerned about Board members questioning the current medical marijuana licensees and their commitment to the community because licensees want to modify their business proposal to the Township; when developers come forward with significant changes proposed to approved projects because of changing market trends, Board members approved all these changes with praise and compliments directed towards the developers.
- Concern that Board member comments reflect implicit bias against marijuana, facility owners subject to criticism without factual basis and based on continual vague fears and allegations, in the course of one year, the market has changed and the township should not throw applicants under the bus for asking to change their requests; large majority of Township voters legalized marijuana and had their concerns resolved in 2018; there is no difference in allowing a new, expanded residential development than there is in allowing a marijuana facility to expand its customer base when there is a demand for it.
- Township has been ranked the best place to live, belief that recreational marijuana may not hurt that ranking but need data and experience first and then could decide on the recreational component.

14. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Supervisor Styka opened Public Remarks at 8:34 pm.

Robin Schneider, 5676 Cade Street, Haslett; asked board members to stop use of term “black market” and to call it an illicit market. She was concerned when she heard several Board members state “we don’t need these kinds of business” because that is clearly implicit bias; concern they do not care about public health and safety or else they would support legalizing recreational retail in the Township. The Township took too long to opt into medical marijuana and suggested Trustees become better educated on recreational marijuana such as conducting a residents survey and take a tour of a facility to see how well regulated and safe recreational marijuana facilities are.

Scott Diana, 25607 West Street, Calumet; stated he was the former Michigan State Representative in the Upper Peninsula. He represents Tranquility Fields, a marihuana micro-business. The prefabricated facilities are built in Alpena and are purchased by facility operators in communities where recreational marihuana can be grown and processed by a local vendor. This micro-business is attracting the baby boomer market, and have identified local owners who are in the process of obtaining licenses and are interested in developing micro-businesses in the township. He is interested in sending information to the board to explain the company and how they operate their business.

Supervisor Styka Closed Public Remarks at 843: pm.

15. OTHER MATTERS AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Trustee Opsommer stated the Lansing Mall has been put up for sale and the Meridian Mall has filed bankruptcy but is continuing with open hours. Please support these local businesses.

Supervisor Styka thanked Clerk Dreyfus for his service.

16. CLOSED SESSION - NONE

17. ADJOURNMENT

Clerk Dreyfus moved to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Wisinski

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

Supervisor Styka adjourned the meeting at 8:45 pm.

RONALD J. STYKA,
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS,
TOWNSHIP CLERK