



Charter Township of Meridian  
Meridian Economic Development Corporation  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864  
Thursday, July 7 2022- Minutes -DRAFT

**Members**

**Present:** Chair Kim Thompson, Vice Chair Brenda Chapman, Dave Ledebuhr, Adam Carlson, Shawn Dunham, Tom Conway and Treasurer Phil Deschaine,

**Members**

**Absent:** Henry Kwok, Trisha Bird, Trustee Kathy Sundland, Manager Frank Walsh

**Others**

**Present:** Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director Amber Clark, Assistant Township Manager Dan Opsommer, and Planning Commissioner Peter Trezise

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Kim Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:30 am and read the mission statement.

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 LEDEBUHR TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER CONWAY. MOTION PASSES 6-0.**

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes-Meeting May 5, 2022
- b. Financial Report
- c. Development Projects

**MOTION BY MEMBER VICE CHAIR CHAPMAN TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR LEDEBUHR. MOTION PASSES 6-0.**

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Village of Okemos Update

Director Clark shared the most current update on the status of the Village of Okemos project. The Revitalization and Placemaking grant launched a new opportunity in financing for the project. The cost to construct a two block redevelopment continues to rise. The developer along with Township staff applied for the available \$5 Million dollar grant in support of the project. MEDC is the organization that will review and approve any applicants. The funding is federally tied to COVID-19 and the grant application should highlight how the project will provide COVID-19 resiliency to the community.

Chair Chapman asked if we are in the budget season with the Township when we help the developer pursue additional funds from the Meridian Redevelopment Fund. Director Clark stated she had the same discussion with the development team and strongly advised them to pursue requests from the available TIF from the creation of the project. Meridian Township staff and community members worked hard to create the DDA TIF program to allow for developers to be reimbursed over time.

Director Ledebuhr asked if the new developers of Haslett are not requesting funding and if the Village of Okemos is expected to receive \$1.25M for infrastructure, how much is left in the fund account.

Director Clark told the EDC that the MRF is at about \$725,000. The EDC could make a formal recommendation to the Township Board and management team to allow the Meridian Mall as a PICA to gain access to redevelopment funding. Thompson discussed the idea of community activities. Discussion of how the activity will impact economic development. Chair Thompson will provide ideas for activities as they come.

Director Ledebuhr requests the Chair place PICA designation at Meridian Mall on the next agenda for discussion. Chair Thompson agreed discussion of next PICA designation should be on the next meeting agenda.

Director Clark informed the EDC that a recommendation to approve the MRF to be used at the Meridian Mall will come forward at the next meeting.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Sponsorship for 2022 Freedom Fest- Juneteenth Community Celebration Reimbursement Payment- Frank Walsh

Due to the lack of quorum at the June 2022 EDC meeting the discussion of support of the Meridian Township Juneteenth Celebration was put on hold. At that time during the open discussion due to the lack of quorum Manager Walsh offered to pay the supporting sponsorship amount of \$2500 to be reimbursed later. Director Conway made a motion to note that Manager Walsh has offered to cover the cost of the sponsorship for the EDC and to be approved for reimbursement the next available meeting. Without quorum there was no ability to have the motion seconded. Director Conway requested staff to make note of the discussion as to allow for a continuance to have a motion and approval at the EDC's next meeting date.

The July 2022 EDC meeting had quorum and the motion was made to bring the reimbursement for the sponsorship of Juneteenth back on the table. Director Conway

stated that he made the motion last meeting. Members of the EDC requested the motion to be made again to ensure Robert's Rules of order were complied with.

The sponsorship for the Meridian EDC to support the Juneteenth celebration held the week of June 13, 2022 was paid for by Manager Walsh with a desire of the Meridian EDC upon quorum to reimburse the payment back to Manager Walsh. A check in the amount of \$2500 was submitted from the EDC Independent Bank account to Manager Walsh check #1054

**MOTION BY MEMBER CONWAY MOVE TO APPROVE THE REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE JUNETEENTH COMMUNITY CELEBRATION SPONSORSHIP FROM THE MERIDIAN EDC TO TOWNSHIP MANAGER FRANK WALSH FOR \$2500. SUPPORTED BY CHAIR THOMPSON MOTION PASSES 6-0.**

b. Economic Development Strategy Update

Director Clark relayed that the Economic Development Strategy should be updated about every three years. Our last update was 2018 and in 2021 the EDC took up discussion however determined an updated strategy should occur after the market cools from the COVID-19 pandemic. Now we are seeing an uptick in development as the cost of construction supply stabilizes. In preparation of the Masterplan update and public participation plan we could use the updated strategy and data to make informed land use decisions.

**MOTION BY MEMBER DUNHAM TO AUTHORIZE STAFF TO BEGIN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UPDATE. SUPPORTED BY MEMBER LEDEBUHR MOTION PASSES 6-0.**

8. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

a. Township Board

Treasurer Deschaine reported the following:

- Discussing the use of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to projects including local roads, IT, broadband, pathways, and fire cots
- The assessment roll for the Daniels Drain project was approved
- Tax bills and notices have gone out for Summer tax bills. The new notifications should say whether it is a tax bill or notice. We are accepting payments of tax bills now until the tax deadline.

b. Township Assistant Manager

- Local road bids are approximately 20% over budget. We are planning to use ARP funding to help close the gap.
- Contracted with Brightline Technologies to fix our IT infrastructure
- Increased Police compensation
- The County Commission approved their support of the establishment of Meridian Township's first CRA. The Commission submitted a resolution of support. CRA is established.
- New Finance Director will start in a couple weeks
- New community signs will be coming to the Board for approval
- Working on the budget now that we have a fulltime Finance Director
- Next round of ARP funding to come to the Township

- c. Planning Commission  
Commissioner Trezise reported the Planning Commission has seen the Haslett Village Square Project consisting of 300 dwelling units and 21,000 square feet of commercial space. The Township board will have their MUPUD to review and finalize at this point. The Planning Commission reviewed the Brickford Senior Facility expansion and approved that. Now PC is reviewing the current Township Sign Ordinance and has elected to exempt the Township whenever the Township is procuring a sign to be established due to the nature of Township signs being public announcements not advertisements.
- d. Chair  
None.
- e. Staff  
Director Clark discussed the following:
  - Pine Village American Home Meridian demolition has begun this week. Should be taken down and cleared by the end of the month
  - ICRD will shut down northbound traffic for about one day to set the beams for the bridge. This will only be a short while and as soon as the beams are set they will open the northbound traffic again
  - RRC Status and selection of a new site for MEDC will have to be selected by year end. We desire to maintain our RRC status in order to remain competitive for development
  - An updated market study would be helpful for the Master Plan

9. COMMUNITY REPORTS

- a. Meridian Mall  
Member Dunham mentioned the mall now reached 2018 traffic numbers in the past weeks. Several key items support the new visitors including “Reborn Kicks” a new small business owner in Meridian Mall. Large car show drew in over 400 cars and was a great draw during the Summer time Marketplace on the Green Farmer’s Market. 3000 visitors a week and now the Wednesday music in the parks are increasing traffic as well.
- b. MABA  
Friday July 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:15 am the MABA members meet for their monthly meeting. MSUFCU is their current location.

10. OPEN DISCUSSION/BOARD COMMENTS

Vice Chair Chapman discussed that the MRF request from the Village of Okemos team initially requested \$3.3M in support of infrastructure improvements. As an EDC body we voted in support of discussion of future use of the MRF. Vice Chair Chapman asked was is the status of the MRF? Are we going to consider more funding to the VoO project?

Director Clark has discussed the future request of the MRF with Township leadership and the Developer. There is a remaining gap in the funding for the Village of Okemos project. If the developer is awarded the MEDC’s Revitalization and Placemaking grant of \$5 M, they will also need the \$5 Grant/loan from MEDC for CRP. That will leave about \$1M as a gap in funding for public

streets and utilities. The developer has been directed to seek that funding from the DDA TIF as that is why the Township made significant changes to our TIF plan.

Vice Chair Chapman wants to know what is our plan moving forward with the MRF funding.

Director Ledebuhr requested to the Chair to place the Meridian Mall as a PICA designation on the table for discussion at the August meeting. If the Meridian Mall becomes a PICA How do we use the MRF funds in support of the necessary site updates?

Director Clark proposed that the EDC adopt a resolution and submit a letter to the Township Board requesting funding to stay in the MRF or to request additional funds for development. It is also the advice of Director Clark to create a stronger policy for the use of the MRF to ensure that developers are utilizing the best incentives in the best way. Director Clark will have that item on the agenda next month.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None.

13. NEXT MEETING DATE

- August 4, 2022 at 7:30am

14. ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objection, Chair Thompson adjourned the meeting at 9:58am.