

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**AGENDA**

**Wednesday, October 7, 2015**

**Town Hall Room  
Meridian Municipal Building  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864**

**Work Session**

1. Call the work session to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Approval of the work session agenda
3. Review of the minutes of the September 2, 2015 work session/regular meeting
4. Other business
5. Public remarks
6. Adjournment

**Regular Meeting**

1. Call the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Approval of the regular meeting agenda
3. Approval of the minutes of the September 2, 2015, work session/regular meeting
4. Public remarks
5. Chair's Report
6. Communications/staff report
7. Other Business
  - a. Review/recommendation regarding Wetland Use Permit #15-02 (Chvala)
8. Study groups/liaison reports
  - a. Land Preservation: Jim Kielbaso
  - b. Energy Team: John Sarver
  - c. Parks: Richard Searl
  - d. Natural Features: To be determined
9. Public remarks
10. Adjournment

## WORK SESSION

**PRESENT:** Vice-Chair Jackson, and Commissioners Kielbaso, Sarver, Schools, and Searl

**ABSENT:** Chair McConnell

### STAFF

**PRESENT:** Richard F. Brown, Jr., AICP, Associate Planner

### OTHERS

**PRESENT:** None

1. **CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Jackson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE WORK SESSION AGENDA**

Agenda approved without objection.

3. **REVIEW OF THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 1, 2015 WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING**

Minor corrections noted.

4. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- Discussion on the possibility of holding a Joint Meeting with Land Preservation in October. Because they are so busy, Land Preservation would prefer waiting until January or February.
- Staff also noted some upcoming wetland use permit applications, so it will be likely that a regular meeting would be necessary in October to provide feedback.

5. **PUBLIC REMARKS**

None

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session was adjourned by Vice-Chair Jackson without objection at 7:00 p.m.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES  
Meridian Municipal Building – Town Hall Room  
September 2, 2015 - Draft**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Vice-Chair Jackson and Commissioners Searl, Schools, Scherbarth, Sarver, and Kielbaso

**ABSENT:** Chair McConnell

**STAFF:** Richard F. Brown, Jr., AICP, CBSP Associate Planner

**OTHERS:** John Scott-Craig

**1. CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Jackson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Approved by consent without objection.

**3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JULY 1, 2015 WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Approved by consent without objection.

**4. PUBLIC REMARKS**

None

**5. GREEN THEMES PRESENTATION BY COMMISSIONER LISE SCHOOLS ON "USING INTERPRETATION AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL"**

- "Every place has a story."
- Self-guided activities and special events are growing in popularity compared to pre-set hikes or guided tours.

**6. CHAIR'S REPORT**

No report other than Vice-Chair Jackson noted he was filling in for Chair McConnell.

**7. COMMUNICATIONS/STAFF REPORT**

Associate Planner Brown summarized the following:

- Updated the status of the 2015 ITC Tree Grant
- Fall Recycling Event on October 3rd

8. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- a. Resolution of appreciation for Commissioner Scherbarth (see attached)
- **RESOLUTION** made by Commissioner Kielbaso and **SUPPORTED** by Commissioner Schools. Approved 5-0.

9. **STUDY GROUPS/LIAISON REPORTS**

- a. **Land Preservation:** Commissioner Kielbaso noted the Board is in negotiation stage on a property and gave a general status report of on-going activities/site visits.
- b. **Energy Team:** Commissioner Sarver summarized Energy Committee activities, noted Consumers Energy has been unable to identify any prospective community solar sites in the Township, and noted the 2015 Lansing Solar Tour takes place on Saturday, October 3rd.
- c. **Parks:** No report at this time.
- d. **Natural Features:** Commissioner Schools noted possible interest in fulfilling this role once the project scope is better defined.

10. **PUBLIC REMARKS**

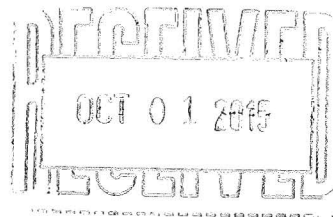
None

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

- **MOTION** by Commissioner Sarver to adjourn. **SUPPORTED** by Commissioner Kielbaso. Approved 5-0. The Regular Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.



October 1, 2015  
Project No. G140549



Mr. Rick Brown, AICP, CBSP  
Associate Planner  
Charter Township of Meridian  
5151 Marsh Road  
Okemos, MI 48864

Re: Wetland Use Permit Review  
Wetland Use Permit 15-02 Application  
Chvala Property

Dear Mr. Brown:

Mr. Cory Chvala proposes to excavate approximately 19,500 cubic yards of material from 2.0 acres of wetland to create a 0.3 acre deep water area and 1.7 acres of wetland enhancement at residential property located at 5384 Van Atta Road, Haslett, Michigan. To compensate for wetland loss, Mr. Chvala proposes to construct 0.3 acre of mitigation wetland in existing upland adjacent to the site's wetland. FTCH delineated site wetlands on September 16, 2013, and attended a Pre-Application meeting at the site with Mr. Chvala and Mr. Tom Kolhoff of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) on October 16, 2014. The MDEQ issued a permit authorizing wetland impacts on June 29, 2015.

At the request of the Township, FTCH reviewed Wetland Use Permit (WUP) Application 15-02 request and wetland mitigation plan. This report provides a brief description of the resources that would be impacted by the proposed work, evaluates the WUP Application according to review standards in the Township Wetland Protection Ordinance (Article IV of Chapter 22 of the Code of Ordinances of the Charter Township of Meridian), and makes recommendations to the Township regarding issuance or denial of the WUP application.

### Overview of Proposed Wetland Impacts

The proposed activities are located in Section 13 of the Charter Township of Meridian (Township), T4N, R1W, Ingham County, Michigan. The site's wetland primarily consists of cattail marsh with reed canary grass located along the outer edge. Mr. Chvala proposes to create a 0.30 acre pond with a depth up to 15 feet, and 1.7 acres of wetland enhancement, with standing water depths of 1- to 4-feet and irregular bottom contours. Two-foot deep, 6-foot wide channels would also be created through the wetland. To compensate for the loss of 0.3 acre of wetland due to pond construction, 0.15 acre of new wetland will be constructed at the north end of the wetland enhancement area and 0.15-acre of mitigation wetland will be constructed on the west side of the existing wetland and proposed pond location.

### Review of WUP Application

The review standards used to evaluate WUP applications are found in Section 22-157 of Article IV (Wetland Protection) of Chapter 22 of the Township's Code of Ordinances. WUPs are not to be issued unless the proposed activity is found to be in the public interest, the permit is necessary to realize the benefits from the activity, and the proposed activity is otherwise lawful in all respects. Section 22-157(2) lists eleven general criteria to be



considered when evaluating whether or not a proposed activity is in the public interest. An evaluation of the proposed activity, according to each of the eleven criteria, is as follows:

Section 22-157(2)(a) *The relative extent of the public and private need for the proposed activity.*

- FTCH was not provided information regarding the relative extent of the public and private need for the proposed activity.

Section 22-157(2)(b) *The availability of feasible and prudent alternative locations and methods to accomplish the expected benefits from the activity.*

- The expected benefits from the proposed project are wetland enhancement and pond creation. Due to existing grades, there are limited locations for placing the pond and constructing the required acreage of mitigation wetland onsite. Mid-Michigan Pond, Mr. Chvala's contractor, noted that placement of the pond on the southern portion of the site was considered. However, this location would restrict the property owner's access to the back of the property. This area also contains regulated wetland and floodplain. The owner also wishes to reserve this area for future horse pasturing.

Section 22-157(2)(c) *The extent and permanence of the beneficial or detrimental effects which the proposed activity may have on the public and private uses to which the area is suited, including the benefits the wetlands provide.*

- The proposed activity will improve and diversify wetland functions, including improving wildlife habitat.
- The proposed activity will create greater interspersions between different wetland community types, which will improve overall wetland function.
- Private benefits will be achieved through aesthetic improvements to the site and recreational opportunities (swimming, kayaking, and bird watching).
- No detrimental effects are anticipated as a result of this project, as long as invasive species do not become established due to site disturbance.

Section 22-157(2)(d) *The probable impact of each proposal in relation to the cumulative effect created by other existing and anticipated activities in the watershed.*

- There are no identified cumulative impacts of the proposed project.

Section 22-157(2)(e) *The probable impact on recognized historic, cultural, scenic, ecological, or recreational values and on the public health or safety, or fish or wildlife.*

- FTCH has no direct information pertaining to historic and cultural value or issues relating to impacts on public health.
- The project is likely to significantly positively impact recreational and scenic values for the property owner.
- The project is likely to have a positive impact on fish and wildlife by improving their habitat.
- The project is located on private land with remote access. Therefore, construction of a deep pond is not considered a significant public safety risk.

Section 22-157(2)(f) *Economic value, both public and private, of the proposed land change to the general township area.*



- The question of economic value associated with the proposed activity is beyond the scope of the issues FTCH was retained to address. Accordingly, FTCH offers no opinion, recommendations, or advice with respect to these criteria.

Section 22-157(2)(g) *The size and quality of the wetland being considered.*

- The impacted wetland consists of an approximately 4.25-acre cattail marsh with low plant species diversity. The proposed project will result in no net loss of wetland area but will diversify the wetland plant communities associated with this wetland complex. It will also introduce an open water component, which will improve wildlife habitat. Therefore, it is anticipated that overall wetland quality will improve as a result of this project.

Section 22-157(2)(h) *The findings of necessity for the proposed activity which have been made by other agencies.*

- FTCH is not aware of any findings of necessity for the proposed activity which have been made by other agencies.

Section 22-157(2)(i) *Amount of wetland remaining in the general area and proximity to a waterway.*

- According to the Township Wetland Map, the site's wetland is part of an 83.87-acre wetland complex through which the Foster County Drain flows (Township Wetland 13-12D). An approximately 0.4-acre, man-made pond is located directly east of the site's wetland.

Section 22-157(2)(j) *Proximity to any waterbody.*

- The Foster Drain is located approximately 0.3 mile south of the southern edge of the proposed site development.

Section 22-157(2)(k) *Extent to which upland soil erosion adjacent to the protected wetland is controlled.*

- The MDEQ permit stipulates that all excavated spoils be placed onsite in upland areas and that these areas be effectively stabilized with sod and/or seed and mulch. Due to site grades, the potential exists that excavated spoils could erode and be deposited in the wetland if they are not properly stabilized. Therefore, prompt and effective stabilization is necessary to prevent an unlawful discharge of soil into the site's wetland.
- The WUP application indicates a silt fence will be installed upgradient of the proposed soil disturbance area. The fence will be installed downgradient of the soil stockpile area and should intercept potential soil erosion originating from the stockpile, if any occurs.

## Recommendations

FTCH recommends the Township issue a WUP for the proposed project with the following conditions:

- Implement appropriate soil erosion and sedimentation control (SESC) measures during construction to ensure there are no impacts to the mitigation wetland and the site's existing wetland as a result of eroding soil.
- Periodically inspect the site during the first year after construction to identify and correct erosion issues.

Mr. Rick Brown, AICP, CBSP  
Page 4  
October 1, 2015



- Monitor the mitigation wetland for five years in accordance with Mid-Michigan Ponds' September 24, 2015, *Chvala Wetland Mitigation Plan*. Vegetation monitoring should be conducted between July 15 and August 31.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist in the review of this file. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at 616.464.3738 or ehtripp@ftch.com.

Sincerely,

FISHBECK, THOMPSON, CARR & HUBER, INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elise Hansen Tripp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elise Hansen Tripp, PWS

pmb  
By email