

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2016 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra
ABSENT: Supervisor LeGoff, Trustee Wilson
STAFF: Township Manager Frank Walsh, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works and Engineering Derek Perry, Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Police Chief David Hall, Fire Chief Fred Cowper, Director of Parks and Recreation LuAnn Maisner, Director of Information Technology Stephen Gebes, Finance Director Miriam Mattison, Human Resources Director Joyce Marx, Communications Director Deborah Guthrie

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Clerk Dreyfus called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Trustee Veenstra moved to appoint Trustee Styka as Supervisor Pro Tem. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustees Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: Trustee Scales
Motion carried 4-1.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Recognition of Larry Parsons-Meridian Mall Manager

Chris Buck, Chair, Meridian Economic Development Corporation (EDC), recognized Larry Parsons for his 34 years of service to Meridian Mall and presented him with a certificate of appreciation for his contribution to Meridian Township. He wished Mr. Parsons well in his retirement.

B. Recognition of Malinda Barr - International Certified Tourism Ambassador Star Award

Treasurer Brixie presented Malinda Barr, an EDC member, with a certificate for being selected as the recipient of the 2016 International Certified Tourism Ambassador of the Year Star Award.

Ms. Barr added she believed the Ambassador Star Award places the Greater Lansing area "on the map" relative to tourism.

C. July 8, 2016 Storm Response

Township Manager Walsh summarized the recent storm events and recognized Police Chief Dave Hall, EMS/Training Chief Bill Priese, Assistant Township Manager Derek Perry and HOMTV Internship Coordinator Brandie Yates for their extraordinary efforts and unparalleled response to aid residents in the aftermath of the July 8th rain storm. He also thanked the Board of Water and Light and Consumers Energy for their diligent work in restoring power throughout the community.

Trustee Scales added Township Manager Walsh to the group who dedicated their time over the July 8th weekend to ensure power was restored to the community.

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka opened Public Remarks.

Ann Alchin, 5972 Cypress, Haslett, offered comments in response to previous public comment on funding for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). She clarified that a speaker at the last Board meeting, Mr. Schaetzel, is the husband of Treasurer Brixie and should have acknowledged that affiliation. Ms. Alchin suggested Board members clearly identify the proposed Costco location as East Lansing.

Erik Lindquist, 4436 Copperhill Drive, Okemos, offered summary of a study done on 11 BRTs around the country, giving statistics on the cost per mile for the proposed BRT at \$15.6 million per mile. He added the average cost of the 11 BRTs listed in the study was \$14.4 million per mile, acknowledging seven (7) of the 11 were much less than the average per mile cost. Mr. Lindquist reiterated his request made at the June 21, 2016 Board meeting that a breakdown of the cost of the proposed BRT be provided by CATA. He indicated the original net operational costs of \$3.5 million would ultimately need to be absorbed by all CATA millage customers, questioning why that figure has now been changed to zero. Mr. Lindquist spoke in support of the resolution on tonight's agenda and urged there be further discussions held through the creation of a Transportation Commission.

Bill Collette, 2373 Barnsbury Road, East Lansing, relayed circumstances surrounding Treasurer Brixie's comments allegedly made about him to the media. After he spoke with the *City Pulse* reporter, he has now determined Treasurer Brixie lied and questioned her credibility. He urged the Board to amend the resolution to openly oppose the BRT. Mr. Collette stated CATA spent \$3 million to interest people to support the BRT, while not expending funds to send an informational packet to the businesses along the Grand River Corridor. He provided a quote from Treasurer Brixie on May 17, 2016 that stated, "The whole point of the BRT is to get more people riding public transit and more cars off the roads due to congestion and overcrowding, adding the BRT will meet the need of transporting people through the corridor and provide more capacity on both the road and buses, and smooth the traffic flow on Grand River Avenue." He questioned why there was no mention about the economic impact on people who own businesses, shop and live in Meridian Township.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Drive, East Lansing, indicated there are several ways to "do" a BRT, one of which could be friendlier to disabled citizens. She believed the Grand Rapids model to be a good solution as they use side running lanes and operate only during peak times of passenger use. She warned that if CATA does not look at other methods of providing this service they will face a legal suite from her, as her bus use will no longer be the shortest accessible use. Ms. Rose believed the problems with Redi-Ride are not likely to be resolved soon as it is an election year. She suggested a one mill increase for Redi-Ride on the November ballot to increase availability to residents as well as drafting the ballot language such that it would open up the contract to other transportation providers. Ms. Rose indicated current Redi-Ride patrons do not have an option for evening services, even from a different provider.

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandlewood, Okemos, voiced concern with the Township's appointment process to its Boards and Commissions. He addressed the qualified residents within the township who volunteer their time and expertise and are then "purged" for political reasons after extensive service. Mr. Norkin specifically pointed to Professor Michael Thomas, Professor Tom Malik and Professor Thomas Deits. He explained his version of the circumstances around not reappointing Professor Deits, and requested the Board offer an apology to Mr. Deits.

Karla Hudson, 6009 Skyline Drive, East Lansing, encouraged the Board to discuss the need for Redi-Ride to be placed on the November ballot while considering the “people” who use this service. She stated she did not support the BRT project in its current form as it will not meet the needs of disabled members of the community.

Mary Hoenshell, 2341 Barnsbury Road, East Lansing, read a statement from Matt Johnson posted on the Stop CATA’s BRT website page in opposition to the BRT, as he did not believe the proposal “makes sense.”

George Tesseris, 2840 E. Grand River Avenue, East Lansing, believed the BRT project is a waste of money, although he has supported CATA for many years. Mr. Tesseris stated 75-80% of the property owners and businesses along Grand River Avenue are opposed to the BRT project. He did not believe the proposed plan using no left hand turns makes sense either economically or business wise. Mr. Tesseris urged the Board to support a resolution in opposition to the BRT.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, voiced his objection to a candidate for public office (who is also a vendor at the Farmers Market) “pitching” himself for a Township elected office position at the market. He requested a policy be established to deal with this issue.

Renee Korrey, 4633 Okemos Road, Okemos, spoke in opposition to the BRT, agreeing with previous speakers that the language in the BRT resolution should be stronger. She stated she has learned information from other citizens who had addressed the Board in this forum, including the breakdown of CATA vs. police and fire millage on residents tax statements.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, showed the sewer cleaning activity for 2015, noting the last three (3) quarters were ahead of schedule, as well as the first two quarters in 2016. He complimented both the Assistant Township Manager and Township Manager for aggressively seeing to this important public health issue. Mr. Bowlby clarified a comment made at a previous Board meeting by noting there is no intent by CATA to reduce lanes on Grand River within Meridian Township. In response to a previous statement made by a Whole Foods representative that they would not have located their store on Grand River had the BRT been in place due to the lack of left turns, he indicated his review of Whole Food locations across the country reveal several locations on roads with medians.

Douglas Lecato, 1530 Holbrook Drive, Holt, stated he has used various CATA services for the past 27 years as he is wheel chair bound. He stated some of the stations for the proposed BRT will be better able to accommodate handicapped individuals (e.g., safer, better lit). Mr. Lecato urged the Board to consider the efficiencies the BRT will bring.

Nick Tesseris, 2800 E. Grand River Avenue, East Lansing, voiced his strong opposition to the proposed BRT. He noted many residents and business owners oppose the BRT. Mr. Tesseris indicated he is looking for Board members to advocate the position of the community members on the BRT.

Sean Hammond, Deputy Policy Director, Michigan Environmental Council (MEC), 820 N. Verlinden, Lansing, believed the proposed BRT to be a model for Michigan to follow. He believed the change to be positive for Meridian residents and the greater Lansing area for four (4) reasons: 1) \$90 million in federal transit funds would come back to the Lansing area which would allow for the road to be rebuilt; 2) safety as it will provide crosswalks along Grand River between Hagadorn and Okemos Road which would provide greater access to businesses; 3) implementation of the “Michigan left” along the corridor should not be a problem as it is prevalent throughout the state and 4) economic development as a similar BRT system in Eugene Oregon provided a four (4) to one (1) return on business investment along the corridor. Mr. Hammond shared comments from a coworker at MEC who is also a Meridian resident, indicating her support for a BRT system. He urged the Board not to pass the resolution on this issue contained in the Board packet.

Ron St. Laurent, 4168 Mariner Lane, Okemos, voiced opposition to the proposed BRT, as he believed the projected time savings is at the expense of vehicular traffic. He stated there will be fewer bus stations than current bus stops which will make bus riders walk further to ride the bus. Mr. St. Laurent added the projected time savings will be for the bus itself, not the bus rider. He clarified public funds used to build the BRT are tax revenues and ultimately derived from the residents. Mr. St. Laurent urged the public to look at all subsidies in total when considering the BRT.

Patty McPhee, 5275 Thames Drive, Haslett, spoke to a population increase for Meridian Township, citing statistics for the population of Grand Rapids and Cleveland. She did not believe the BRT is a fit for our community and would not be a positive transit system for the greater Lansing area. Ms. McPhee announced East Lansing has asked for further discussion on the BRT as it morphed into something other than what was originally portrayed.

Jeff Neilson, 2717 E. Grand River Avenue, East Lansing, gave accolades to Director of Parks and Recreation LuAnn Maisner for her outstanding work for Meridian Township. He listed his three (3) major complaints with the BRT as follows: (1) time savings at the expense of the elimination of 17 bus stops; 2) assertion the anti-BRT people are against progress, but the corridor in Meridian Township and East Lansing is “completely full” of businesses and homes and (3) overcrowding in buses only applies to routes that run from MSU campus to Chandler Crossing (Routes 20, 23, 26 and 31). Mr. Neilson expressed opposition to the BRT, stating CATA needs to provide “empirical data” regarding its assertions relative to the need for a BRT in the Lansing area.

Pam Dilley, 3030 Hamlet Circle, East Lansing, spoke in opposition to the BRT, adding she has always been a supporter of CATA. She offered past history when the Michigan Department of Transportation wanted to eliminate the boulevard on Grand River and Michigan Avenues and the residents of Chesterfield Hills subdivision filed a lawsuit. She believed boulevard removal to be a dead issue and was shocked when she heard about the CATA BRT. Ms. Dilley indicated receipt of federal funds are not a reason to “destroy” our community.

Nancy Mahlow, 430 N. Fairview Avenue, Lansing, spoke to the need for more consideration to be given to seniors and physically challenged residents relative to access to the proposed BRT.

Rhonda Bueche, 4126 Leeward Drive, Okemos, spoke to the lack of transparency by CATA regarding scientific evidence on the merits of the proposed BRT. She believed using such a large amount of federal, state and tax dollars for a seven (7) mile section of road along Grand River Avenue is unfair to the population “as a whole.” She voiced her strong opposition to the BRT.

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka closed Public Remarks.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh reported the following:

- Staff will meet with the Board of Water and Light on July 21st to review the Township’s response to the recent rain storm
- Tour of the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) with MSU officials on July 25th
- Administration is waiting for final information from the Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS) regarding the unfunded pension liability
- Township Manager and Trustee Styka met with MSU President Simon last week to discuss community issues and further the Township’s relationship with MSU
- Introduction of the Management Team to the public by the Manager

7. BOARD COMMENTS & REPORTS

Trustee Veenstra clarified the cost of the BRT is actually \$143 million.

Without objection, Supervisor Pro Tem Styka moved the agenda.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA (SALMON)

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

Clerk Dreyfus moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 5-0.

A. Communications

Board Deliberations (BD)

- (1) BD 12A-1 Bill and Chris Collette, 2373 Barnsbury Road, East Lansing; Support for the Township Board to pass a resolution to suspend its support of the current BRT plan
 - BD12A-2 Patty McPhee, 5275 Thames Drive, Haslett; RE: Questions concerning the BRT
 - BD12A-3 Treasurer Julie Brixie; RE: Email exchange with Kathy DeVito concerning the *City Pulse* Radio interview of Julie Brixie
 - BD12A-4 James Spanos, 4648 Nakoma Drive, Okemos; RE: Need for a comprehensive traffic impact study on the BRT
 - BD12A-5 Donald Isleib, 5400 Park Lake Road, East Lansing; RE: Request for the Board to take a position in opposition to the BRT
 - BD12A-6 Patricia A. Holliday, President, Jon Anthony Florist, 809 E. Michigan Avenue, Lansing; RE: Copy of her letter to Lansing Councilmember Jody Washington voicing her opposition to the BRT
 - BD12A-7 Susan Pigg, Executive Director, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, 3135 Pine Street Road, Suite 2C, Lansing; RE: Copy of the Summer Mid-Michigan Clean Cities Newsletter which includes a story about BRT systems
 - BD12A-8 Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett; RE: Deliberations on the BRT
 - BD12A-9 Erik Lindquist, 2096 Tomahawk Road, Okemos; RE: Response to Neil Bowlby's letter on BRT deliberations
 - BD12A-10 Patty McPhee, 5275 Thames Drive, Haslett; RE: Follow up questions on the BRT
 - BD12A-11 Anne Woiwode, 5088 Powell Road, Okemos; RE: Request for the Board not to adopt a resolution withdrawing support for the BRT
- (2) Board Information (BI)
 - BI-1 Lev Raphael, 4695 Chippewa Drive, Okemos; RE: Fireworks
 - BI-2 Ann Alchin, 5972 Cypress, Haslett; RE: Enforcement of the Fireworks Ordinance
 - BI-3 Phyllis Vaughn, 6100 Balog Court, Haslett; RE: July 5th Board Meeting
 - BI-4 Catherine Witchell, 2387 Sapphire Lane, East Lansing; RE: Opposition to the Costco store location
 - BI-5 Kevin Schumacher, 5868 Westminster Way, East Lansing; RE: Bike lanes on Park Lake Road and the BRT

- BI-6 Mark Cunningham, 2376 Graystone Drive, Okemos; RE: Complain about "Curbpainters 76" business solicitation
- BI-7 Sean Finn, 2158 Haslett Road, East Lansing; RE: Sewer situation at 2158 Haslett Road

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 Scales.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 5-0.

B. Minutes

(1) Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the June 21, 2016 Regular Meeting as amended. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 5-0.

(2) Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the July 5, 2016 Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 5-0.

C. Bills

Clerk Dreyfus moved that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills as follows:

Common Cash	\$ 293,422.43
Public Works	\$ 267,049.06
Trust & Agency	\$ 673,858.86
 Total Checks	 \$ 1,234,330.35
Credit Card Transactions	\$ 6,410.98
 Total Purchases	 <u>\$ 1,240,741.33</u>
 ACH Payments	 <u>\$ 403,394.47</u>

Seconded by Trustee Scales.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 5-0.

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

D. Ratification of Part-Time Firefighter/Paramedic Appointments

Clerk Dreyfus moved to ratify the appointments of Steven Davich and Brett Moore to the position of part-time Paramedic/Firefighter. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

NAYS: None
Motion carried 5-0.

- E. Request to Purchase MERS Generic Credited Service
Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve the request from Fire Captain William Richardson to purchase additional credited service as provided by the Municipal Employees' Retirement System Plan document. Captain Richardson is requesting to purchase six months' worth of service. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 5-0.

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)

11. HEARINGS (None)

12. ACTION ITEMS

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, reiterated the cost of the BRT contained in tonight's resolution should be \$143 million. He believed the language contained in the resolution should be stronger to note opposition by the Board to the current BRT proposal.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, summarized his revision to his letter contained in the Board packet relative to the crash report summary highlighting some statistics. He alleged the installation of a median is what will make Grand River Avenue safer. Mr. Bowlby believed the Board should be thinking about what Meridian Township needs. He inquired who is claiming that both bus and automobile traffic will improve with the BRT, as he is not aware any traffic study has been conducted.

Doug Lecato, 1530 Holbrook Drive, Holt and CATA Board member, believed time efficiency and the economic catalyst of the BRT will be beneficial to many residents. He urged the Board to look at the "bigger issue."

Nick Tesseris, 2800 E. Grand River, East Lansing, stated businesses along the corridor do not believe the BRT is right for them. He alleged the BRT is not right for Meridian Township as it will negatively impact many residents. Mr. Tesseris stated the residents/business owners will be watching the vote on the BRT very carefully.

Karla Hudson, 6009 Skyline Drive, East Lansing, noted that what works for one disability group may not work for another and voiced her continued objection to the current BRT project. She noted Grand Rapids is the second largest city in the State of Michigan and chose a BRT light.

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandlewood, Okemos, noted the four CATA "scheduled routes" which travel in Meridian Township accumulate approximately 19,500 bus hours per year. He stated the open market all-inclusive rate is \$75 per bus hour, and using the number of hours of service from CATA for Meridian Township's \$4.6 million collected through the millage is "just shy" of \$1.5 million. Mr. Norkin believed the Township is paying three fold for CATA services. He believed transparency and equity are issues regarding funding of CATA.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Drive, East Lansing, stated the Lansing area has a higher proportion of citizens who are totally blind than the ten percent (10%) national average. She requested Board members not make decisions for other people unless they are dependent on this service for their transportation needs. Ms. Rose urged the Board to change its resolution on the BRT to one of opposition.

Shawn Hammond, Deputy Policy Director, Michigan Environmental Council, 820 N. Verlinden, Lansing, believed the BRT to be a major benefit for the community. He pointed to studies from the University of Utah which looked at Eugene, Oregon, a similarly populated city with similar “set up” (multiple downtowns and a university). Mr. Hammond pointed to a 12% increase in rent along Eugene’s BRT corridor, a 10% increase in jobs within ¼ mile of the corridor, an increase in all business types within ½ mile of the corridor and a four (4) to one (1) return on investment. Relative to traffic studies, he indicated the model for the BRT was generated at the federal level and he believed it to be overly conservative as it does not take into account increased ridership due to “avoided” car rides. Mr. Hammond urged the Board to defeat this resolution before it and continue to have dialogue with CATA and supporters of the BRT to work out the concerns in order to build a better project for the greater Lansing area.

Rhonda Bueche, 4126 Leeward Drive, Okemos, believed the area does not need a BRT to have safe crosswalks on Grand River. She addressed the need for available public transit for all segments of the population.

Bill Collette, 2373 Barnsbury Road, East Lansing, requested the BRT resolution be amended to specifically state Board opposition to the BRT in its current form. He noted a provision contained in Michigan’s Uniform Traffic Code states there will not be any U turns allowed in business districts. Mr. Collette once again requested a traffic impact study be conducted.

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka closed Public Remarks.

A. BRT Resolution

Trustee Veenstra moved [and read into the record] NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN, as follows:

The Township Board of the Charter Township of Meridian is committed to ensuring that its residents are provided with an effective and efficient system of public transportation; and The Township Board of the Charter Township of Meridian hereby opposes the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the form as proposed by CATA as of July 19, 2016; and

The Township Board of the Charter Township of Meridian hereby commits to serving as a conduit between the citizens and business owners and operators of Meridian Township to assist in resolving the issues and concerns between its citizens and business owners/operators and CATA, and to work towards a public transportation system that meets the needs of the residents of Meridian Charter Township.

Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Trustee Scales offered the following amendment:

- Add the last resolve to read: **“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Clerk of the Charter Township of Meridian is directed to send a copy of this resolution to all parties where previous copies of Township support of the Bus Rapid Transit were officially transmitted.”**

Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Board resolution does not effectively communicate what the Board has communicated to “others”
- Faith in the Clerk he will send copies of the latest resolution to all relevant parties

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

Trustee Scales offered the following amendment:

- **Add language after the second paragraph in the NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED clause to read: “If agreement is not reached by September 30, 2016, this issue shall return to the Township Board agenda for action at the first Township Board meeting of October, 2016.”**

Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Resolution identifies the problem but does not provide for resolution of the problem or a timeline for that resolution
- Board member belief it is the Board’s responsibility to handle this situation
- Amendment gives the Board and CATA a date certain (60+ days) to resolve its differences or it reverts back to the Board for action
- Board member belief the amendment language to take action at the next meeting after the date certain is premature as it is a complex issue
- Concern whether the amendment is necessary if the Board is on record in opposition to the BRT in its current form
- Board member preference for business owners and CATA representatives to sit down and look at the BRT on an intersection-by-intersection basis and driveways for individual businesses
- Board member preference to engage all facets of the community in the aforementioned dialogue
- Board member belief the deadline is too optimistic
- Board member reminder he previously proposed the strongest advocates against the BRT and the strongest proponents for the BRT as well as interested citizens to come together for a discussion
- If the BRT issue cannot be resolved the Board, as the conduit, needs to take a definitive position

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Veenstra

NAYS: Trustee Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus

Motion failed 2-3.

Treasurer Brixie offered the following amendment:

- **Add a WHEREAS clause to read: WHEREAS, Meridian Township residents and businesses should be provided a public forum that allows CATA and the public ample opportunity to engage each other in a meaningful and productive manner regarding the proposed BRT; and**

The motion died for lack of a second.

Board discussion:

- Need to ascertain the cost benefit ratio of the BRT
- Rationale for why the CATA BRT costs 3.5 times the BRT in Grand Rapids
- Board member preference for CATA to fully disclose, in writing, where the money for the BRT is coming from
- Board member preference for CATA to provide comprehensive details, in writing, on how the money for the BRT project will be spent
- Board member statement he has a duty to taxpayers not to approve a project unless he knows in enough detail how the money will be spent to make a decision whether the spending is warranted
- Board member belief proponents of the BRT mix transportation improvements (e.g., additional traffic lights) with rationale for the BRT

Trustee Scales offered the following amendment:

- **Add language after the second paragraph in the NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED clause to read: “If agreement is not reached by October 10, 2016, this issue shall return to the Township Board agenda at the Township Board meeting of October 18, 2016.”**

Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

Board discussion:

- Amendment provides a specific deadline, but allows the Board to enter into discussion if “headway” is not being made
- Amendment provides approximately three (3) months for both sides to work on this issue
- If not progress is made, the amendment does not require immediate Board action after the deadline

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 4-1. (Treasurer Brixie)

Treasurer Brixie offered the following amendment:

- **Add the following language as a statement between the two paragraphs in the THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED clause: “Meridian Township desires to have better engagement of all facets of our community in the design process of the BRT; and**

Seconded by Trustee Styka.

Board discussion:

- Business owners and residents have come to the Board with many concerns about the design of the BRT
- Board member belief the second paragraph of the NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED clause says the same thing and this amendment is unnecessary

VOICE VOTE: Motion failed 1-4. (Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Clerk Dreyfus)

Trustee Veenstra moved to amend the title of the resolution to read: Resolution for Meridian Township to Oppose the Capital Area Transportation Authority’s (CATA) Current Plan for a Center-Running Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Along the Grand River Corridor

Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 4-1. (Treasurer Brixie)

Board discussion:

- Board member supporter of reducing congestion and improving safety along the Grand River Corridor
- Board member endorsement for a “transformational” BRT proposal which is cost effective, improves capacity, makes it easy to use public transit, improves the bus riding experience and is beneficial for seniors and residents with disabilities
- Current BRT proposal does not meet the criteria for a “transformational” project
- Opposition to the BRT in its current form does not mean the Board is not supportive of positive economic development along Grand River
- Opposition to the BRT in its current form does not mean the Board does not want to transform the Grand River Corridor with appropriate mixed use developments
- Meeting with all stakeholders will allow the group to develop an improved BRT plan through compromise
- Board member preference for a Meridian Township Transportation Commission to be established which would hold public hearings, seek stakeholder input and provide an exhaustive analysis after extensive research
- Resolution is a positive statement the voices of citizens count and elected officials listen to their constituency
- BRT would not add a new route, but will change Route 1
- Resolution states the current BRT plan is unacceptable in its current form
- Resolution opens a time-limited door for real dialogue
- Resolution is not in opposition to public transportation
- Importance of not having bus stops moved for residents with disabilities
- Current BRT plan creates a barrier between businesses and the community

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: Treasurer Brixie
Motion carried 4-1.

[Supervisor Pro Tem Styka recessed the meeting at 8:35 P.M.]

[Supervisor Pro Tem Styka reconvened the meeting at 8:51 P.M.]

- B. Rezoning #16020, 1792 Hamilton Road, RC (Multiple Family) to PO (Professional and Office)
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 Zoning District Map of Meridian Township pursuant to Rezoning Petition #16020 (Pete Potterpin) from RC (Multiple Family, 14 units per acre) to PO (Professional and Office).

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 Trustee Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Owner of the property wants to expand his building onto the property to the west

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 5-0.

- C. 2016 Action Plan- Goals & Objectives-6 Month Report
Manager Walsh and the Management Team provided an update on the Top Ten board approved 2016 Goals and Objectives as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 14, 2016.

Board and staff discussion:

- The Police and Fire Departments are competing with all other agencies in this community
- Concern that without a comparable benefit package, Meridian Township will lose out to the competition
- Township has already lost out to the competition in both departments, specifically for minorities
- An action to reduce benefits to current employees will reduce the Township’s ability to continue to hire quality employees
- City of East Lansing is under a financial review team
- Staff concern with sustainability of an 80% pension after 25-30 years
- Pension fund is “drowning in debt”
- Without looking at the Township’s pension benefits and police and fire revenue, this community will be unable to make its pension payments in five (5) to seven (7) years, or less, depending on the rate of return
- Pension fund rate of return is currently set at 7.75% and the rate of return is less than 2% for 2016
- Staff statement the numbers showing how underfunded the pension fund is “woefully” inaccurate as it is “much more underfunded”
- Pension fund is currently funded at 57% and falling
- Changing the benefits for new employees does “nothing” to stop the erosion going on in the currently promised benefits
- Staff believes the Township’s pension fund will be \$50-\$60 million in debt in the next few years
- Comparison between Meridian Township’s millage of approximately 8 mills to support local government v. East Lansing’s 19 mills
- Township must “live within its means”

- Board member belief a pension is a promise which should be kept
- Need for awareness of how the Township “got into” this situation so the Township’s action is not repeated in the future
- Board member preference for the Township Manager to find a way to “stop the bleeding” and “lighten the blow”
- Administration is meeting with representatives from unions and Michigan Employees Retirement System personnel on August 4th
- Explanation of a blended multiplier
- Appreciation to Manager Walsh and the Board for addressing the pension liability problem
- Part of the problem is the Township does not have expensive police and fire departments compared to the number of residents it services
- Inquiry as to how other communities only spend 65% of their revenue on police and fire and Meridian Township spends 89% of its revenue
- Simple response is more taxes are being collected
- Over 300 public participants have been involved in the branding process
- Work by the consultant and the Branding Development Committee to create a vision statement, mission statement, new Township logo/seal and “catch phrases” which will then be presented to the Branding Selection Committee
- Website design company is waiting on the results of the Branding Committee to obtain color schematics
- Board member preference to help Granger increase the number of its customers who recycle from 66% to 75%
- Board member preference for the Township to engage in an education campaign to persuade every apartment complex to voluntarily offer recycling to their residence
- Board member belief the Township must pass an ordinance which requires every apartment complex to offer recycling to their residences

D. Emergency Brush Pick Up Authorization

Trustee Veenstra moved to authorize the Township Manager to implement a Storm Damage Debris Clean-up Program for the residents of Meridian Township at a cost of \$30,000 to \$45,000.

Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Board discussion:

- Concern with the lengthy timeline for the original idea of one crew with a chipper (10-12 weeks)
- Board member preference for the Township to set up significant funds for this recurring problem
- Board member belief Meridian Township’s residents deserve brush pick up
- Staff is exploring all options, including future purchase of equipment for speedy brush removal
- Board suggestion to encourage Consumers Energy to have a necessary tree trimming program
- Consumers Energy already has an established tree trimming program

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried 5-0.

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka opened Public Remarks.

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandlewood, Okemos, expressed appreciation to the three (3) Board members who served on the Redi-Ride Review Committee. He urged Board members to find a way to place a question on the November 8, 2016 ballot regarding Redi-Ride.

Karla Hudson, 6009 Skyline Drive, East Lansing, expressed appreciation for Board consideration of establishing a Transportation Commission. She noted that if you are a resident of Meridian Township who does not drive because of a disability and are not registered with SpecTran, you would not have the ability to attend tonight’s meeting.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Drive, East Lansing, requested she be considered as a member of any commission related to transportation issues. She voiced her appreciation for the Board's willingness to create the Redi-Ride Review Committee. Ms. Rose urged a question be placed on the ballot in order to allow users to have access to Redi-Ride at reasonable hours for the next two (2) years.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, voiced concern with the hours of availability for the Recycling Center. He believed any improvement to the roadway would be appreciated.

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka closed Public Remarks.

A. Recycling Center Driveway

Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works & Engineering Perry summarized potential solutions to rebuild the access road to the recycling center as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 17, 2016. He provided a sample of the material for Board member inspection.

Board discussion:

- Geogrid material will be placed in the road bed in a small sample area and observed throughout the next three (3) seasons
- If the condition of the road is successful, staff will come back to the Board for authorization to proceed with rebuilding the road
- Staff will remove existing material, lay the geogrid, place some aggregate back in place and roll it to assist with the drainage, retain the material in place, and rebuild the road bed with aggregate material
- Geogrid material keeps the gravel road in place and potholes do not develop

14. FINAL PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, announced the upcoming Democratic debate for the position of Township Clerk will be aired live on Thursday, July 21st at 7:00 P.M. He reconfirmed his endorsement of Trustee Scales for Supervisor and incumbent Clerk Dreyfus for Clerk as they bring reasoning to their decisions in a rationale manner.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood, Haslett, believed that if a vendor at the Farmers Market (Mr. Mankowski) used that forum to promote and campaign for himself, it is totally inappropriate. He announced the Citizens for a Sustainable Community sent a candidate questionnaire to all local candidates. He noted residents can visit www.meridianlink.org in order to review the candidates' responses to the questionnaire. Mr. Bowlby expressed his appreciation for the Board's vote on the BRT.

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka closed Public Remarks.

15. FINAL BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Clerk Dreyfus reported the primary election will be held on Tuesday, August 2nd and urged residents to get out and vote. He announced the polls will be open at 7:00 A.M. and close at 8:00 P.M. Clerk Dreyfus explained the process for citizens to submit an application for an absentee ballot, which must be submitted by Saturday, July 30th. He added the Clerk's office will be open on that Saturday from 8:00 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. Clerk Dreyfus explained that on Monday, August 1st any resident wishing to receive an absentee ballot must submit their application to the Clerk's Office, have it processed to receive a ballot, and vote their ballot in the Meridian Municipal Building. He cautioned citizens regarding the timeliness of the US mail if they wait until the last week of July to request an absentee ballot be mailed to them. Clerk Dreyfus reported that ten (10) new election inspectors applied to aid in facilitating the election in response to extensive communication advertising the need for citizens to become involved in the process, both in August and November.

Trustee Scales announced the Redi-Ride Review Committee will meet on Thursday, July 21, 2016 beginning at 3:00 P.M. in the Central Fire Station Community Room, addressed as 5000 Okemos Road.

In response to an earlier comment, Trustee Veenstra stated the Farmers Market is on public property and there is a right to pass out campaign literature at that location. He pointed to an opinion from the Township Attorney concerning questions involving Redi-Ride being placed on the November ballot. Trustee Veenstra offered his explanation of the Meridian Township proposal on the ballot to renew and restore the Township's pathway millage, as well as the 3.8 mills total which are collected and distributed to CATA.

Clerk Dreyfus clarified that although the Farmers Market is funded through tax collection, there is a difference between citizens who use this venue for campaigning advocacy and issues, and a vendor who pays a monthly fee to sell food products at a farmers market and actively engages in political activities.

Trustee Scales moved to adjourn. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka adjourned the meeting at 9:55 P.M.

RONALD STYKA
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR PRO TEM

BRETT DREYFUS
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary