

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2016 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson
ABSENT: Supervisor LeGoff
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, Human Resources Director Marx

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Clerk Dreyfus called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

Trustee Wilson moved to appoint Trustee Styka as Supervisor Pro Tem. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-1 (Scales).

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 (None)

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka opened Public Remarks.

Tim Potter, 4632 Van Atta Road, Okemos, spoke in support of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Grant Application for the Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector in Central Park and in support of moving forward with the Pathway Master Plan.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, addressed alleged discrepancies in Board of Water & Light's computation regarding payback for investment in the Community Solar Project. He offered a scenario for investment in the number of solar panels equal to the amount of money spent by the Township last year for streetlight bills from the Board of Water and Light. Mr. Bowlby offered his rationale for purchasing additional solar panels, as the return on investment would be substantially more than the interest earned currently in the market. He believed such action would position Meridian Township as a leader in clean, solar and alternative energy.

Bill McConnell, 4376 Manitou, Okemos, spoke in favor of the DNR Grant Applications for improvements to Central Park as well as a timeline for updating the Bicycle and Pedestrian Pathway Master Plan. He urged the Board to fill the current vacant seat on the Environmental Commission.

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka closed Public Remarks.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Upon request by Township Manager Walsh, Chief Hall provided an update on the Okemos Road closing as follows:

- Beginning March 21st northbound Okemos Road traffic near the bridge will be detoured to Mt. Hope Road, down to Hagadorn Road

- Southbound Okemos Road traffic near the bridge will be diverted at the median to use the northbound lanes
- Survey of Indian Hills residents showed their preference for signs in their subdivision which indicate no through traffic in an effort for Okemos Road traffic not to use Nakoma Drive as a cut through
- Police officers will be patrolling the subdivision to ensure compliance with the posted no through traffic signs

Board discussion:

- Timeframe of the bridge closing is estimated to be approximately two (2) months
- Detour is similar to the one used when the pedestrian bridge was constructed over the Red Cedar River last summer
- Ingham County Magistrate Blumer has indicated he will uphold citations issued by Meridian Township police officers for those drivers who ignore the “no through traffic” signs in the Indian Hills subdivision

7. BOARD COMMENTS & REPORTS

A. Treasurer’s Quarterly Report

Treasurer Brixie reported on delinquent personal property tax collection totals for tax years 2010-2014, 2015 total tax year collections as of February 24, 2016, 2015 tax year distribution totals as of February 10, 2016, and current fixed maturity investments and non-fixed investments as of January 31, 2016.

Board discussion:

- Board member request for distribution totals for each entity to be shown
- Request for the Redi-Ride millage distribution to be listed separately from the CATA millage distribution
- Total tax collection as of March 1st when the taxes are turned over to Ingham County was over 95%

Clerk Dreyfus reported the unofficial election results for the March 8, 2016 Presidential Primary for votes cast both at the polls and through absentee voting, acknowledging a 44.4% voter turnout. He noted the results do not necessarily reflect the political preferences of Meridian Township citizens as Michigan does not have a registered party system. Clerk Dreyfus added citizens can vote for a candidate in the political party of their choice in the August 2nd Primary and for any party in the November 8th General Election. He expressed appreciation to the 150 election workers for their perseverance in serving voters at Meridian’s 19 precincts. Clerk Dreyfus explained the longer lines were due to voter selection between two ballots and the auto advance feature for the ballot number in the electronic poll book. He stated the Clerk’s Office is seeking new election inspectors for the upcoming 2016 elections and will actively outreach and recruit in April and May. Clerk Dreyfus explained training will be provided to the election inspectors and workers are compensated for their time on election day at the rate of \$10.00 per hour.

Trustee Scales reported the Redi-Ride Committee met on March 3rd. He indicated the group is still in Phase One of the three (3) phased review process. Trustee Scales announced the next Redi-Ride Review Committee meeting will be held on March 24th from 3-5 P.M. in the Township Hall Room.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA (SALMON)

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka reviewed the consent agenda.

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

A. Communications

(1) Board Deliberations (BD)

13B-1 Renee Korrey, 4633 Okemos Road, Okemos; RE: MARC Redevelopment Project

(2) Board Information (BI)

BI-1 Victoria Voges, Education Director, Nokomis Native American Learning Center, 5153 Marsh Road, Okemos; RE: Continued email exchange with the Director of Parks and Recreation Maisner relative to the condition of the furnace at Nokomis

BI-2 Gus Breymann, 2176 Donovan Place, Okemos; RE: Website and Branding Contractor M3 Group

BI-3 Doris W. Schwartz, 2209 Kent Street, Okemos; RE: Email exchange with Trustee Scales relative to Roads in Need of Repair – Cedar Bend Heights Heritage Neighborhood

(3) Regional Linkage (RL)

RL-1 Nell Kuhnmuensch, President, East Lansing School Board of Education, 501 Burcham Drive, East Lansing; RE: East Lansing Public Schools Board of Education Community Newsletter

(4) On File in the Clerk's Office (OF)

Material submitted at the February 16, 2016 Board Meeting

Trustee Milton Scales; RE: Sample of Lansing Fire Department's Community Room Application

Treasurer Brixie 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 Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

B. Minutes

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the February 16, 2016 Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

C. Bills

Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills for the bill run of March 1, 2016 as follows:

Common Cash	\$	1,066,383.37
Public Works	\$	49,963.36

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Trust and Agency	\$ 3,344,104.50
Total Checks	\$ 4,460,451.23
Credit Card Transactions	\$ 10,576.69
Total Purchases	<u>\$ 4,471,027.92</u>
ACH Payments	<u>\$ 655,837.76</u>

Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills for the bill run of March 15, 2016 as follows:

Common Cash	\$ 198,294.32
Public Works	\$ 460,034.75
Trust and Agency	\$ 3,403,442.58
Total Checks	\$ 4,061,771.65
Credit Card Transactions	\$ 6,244.14
Total Purchases	<u>\$ 4,068,015.79</u>
ACH Payments	<u>\$ 535,369.50</u>

Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

- D. 2015 Order to Maintain Sidewalks, Special Assessment District No. 16 – Resolution #4 (Set Public Hearing Date for April 19, 2016)

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the 2015 Order to Maintain Sidewalk Special Assessment District #16-Resolution #4, which files the proposed final special assessment roll with the Township Clerk and sets the date for a public hearing on April 19, 2016. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

E. Disposal of Surplus Printers

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the disposal of the following surplus Township printers at public auction, internet auction, or by sealed bid: 2003 HP Plotter 800 Design Jet, 2006 KIP 3000 Engineering Copier Scanner Printer and 2003 Ricoh Afficio IS330dc Copier Scanner Printer. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)

11. HEARINGS (None)

12. ACTION ITEMS

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka opened Public Remarks.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, offered his calculations regarding computation for the amount of increased rent needed in order for the applicant to pay for the brownfield for The Square, 2655 Grand River Avenue.

Eric Helzer, Advanced Redevelopment Solutions, PO Box 204, Eagle, spoke to the revised numbers the developer has offered as presented in a table for The Square on Grand River Brownfield Plan. He addressed the possibility of a “pass through” to all taxing jurisdictions and explained how that concept would play out.

Ernie Schaefer, Campus Village Communities, 200 Diversion Street, Rochester, provided clarification on issues raised during numerous Board discussions on The Square on Grand River (e.g., applicant was aware of the environmental contamination, seller should reduce the price of land, etc.). He delineated the benefits he believed the plan provides.

Greg Schaefer, Campus Village Communities, 200 Diversion Street, Rochester, listed the proposed amenities, including a different type of housing stock in Meridian Township. He indicated Campus Village is attempting to take care of an existing issue which must be dealt with in order for anyone to redevelop the site.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, spoke in opposition to the brownfield for The Square on Grand River due to loss of revenues to various public entities (e.g., Capital Area District Library (CADL), Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA), etc.). He expressed support for Special Use Permit (SUP) #16011 for development of a Marriott Hotel. Mr. Provencher requested a minor change to the hours of operation and a process for residents to obtain and return keys in the policy for use of the Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club Community Room. He spoke in opposition to the community solar project as he believed it should be located in Meridian Township. Mr. Provencher voiced support for both DNR Grant Applications by the Parks Department.

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka closed Public Remarks.

A. The Square, 2655 Grand River Avenue – Brownfield Request

Trustee Veenstra moved to deny the request for reimbursement of eligible activities as proposed in the Brownfield Plan for The Square on Grand River in the amount of \$2,835,000 for a period of 11 years for property located at 2655 Grand River Avenue. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

Board and applicant’s representative discussion:

- Board member belief approval of the brownfield will allow the developer not to pay their fair share of taxes for Township services

- Board member calculation the proposed 184 units built on 5.87 actual acreage equates to a density of over 31 dwelling units per acre
- Board member assumption staff was aware the site was previously used as a landfill
- Appreciation to the developer for their submitted plans to offer amenities
- Board member belief the project is too large and not an appropriate use of the mixed use planned unit development (MUPUD) ordinance
- Board member belief removal of one (1) building would eliminate the need to apply for a brownfield tax credit
- Board member belief contamination on the subject property was not common knowledge to Township staff or current Board members
- Vision for the Grand River Corridor previously included residential development along the corridor
- Concern with prior Board approval for the project and subsequent possible denial of the brownfield
- Board member concern if the brownfield is not approved, the future of the property is in question and the contaminated land closest to the Red Cedar River will not be cleaned up
- Cleanup of the site will entail encapsulation of the current contamination in the stormwater detention area in the southwest corner of the site
- Cleanup will include a closed detention system in the place of the contamination in the southwest corner of the site
- Current buried concrete will be removed and trucked off site
- Soils under the old gas station will be removed if found to be contaminated during construction
- Groundwater flow direction currently is towards the Red Cedar River and flows through the contamination zone in the fill area in the back of the site and into the river
- Area where the concrete is buried has less contaminant than originally thought
- Intent by the applicant to have two more investigations to further define the areas of contamination if the brownfield is approved
- Brownfield program is the vehicle established by the state to cleanup known contamination
- Appreciation to the developer for assuming some of the financial responsibility in the cleanup of the site as requested by the Board
- Board member request for the developer to walk through the steps used in determining how they would share in the cost of the cleanup
- Developer will not know the true cost of cleanup until the work is actually performed, but the estimates are based on studies and soil borings
- Developer is willing to take on a \$400,000 upfront risk
- If work on the cleanup shows the cost of cleanup is less, the developer will not receive funds beyond the cleanup costs
- Developer is willing to pay the cost of police and fire services on an annual basis
- Developer will receive reimbursement by the state for costs incurred as invoices are submitted and approved
- Previously approved project met all the criteria and approvals have been granted by the Township
- Board member belief the point of the Brownfield program is to clean up contamination and remediate and improve “blighted” areas
- Board member belief the vacant property is not a drag on the community or a blight on the area
- Board member concern approval of the brownfield does not equate to complete cleanup of the property
- Concern the contamination continues off site
- Second investigation round revealed a vapor barrier is not needed
- Second round is the winter round and the most important round of investigation
- Third round in the Spring will succinctly determine if a vapor barrier is needed
- Board member belief there are safer ways to deal with the development and cleanup of the site now that the existence of on site and off site contamination is known

- Board member clarification that while the Township will receive Police and Fire Millage money, the reality is the Township will collect the Police and Fire Millage, but the payback will be extended due to the pass-through for these millages
- Appreciation for the efforts by the developer towards Board suggested revisions when the project was before it
- Suggestion for the applicant to extend the payback period for a significant amount of time (e.g., 30 years) to allow the taxes to pass through at a greater rate

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Styka, Veenstra, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: Trustees Scales, Wilson
Motion carried 4-2.

B. Consumers Energy Company Gas Franchise Ordinance – **Introduction**

Chris Thelen indicated the franchise renewal is a requirement in the state constitution for Consumers Energy, as a utility, to operate in a public space within the Township. The franchise has a maximum time frame of 30 years.

Trustee Wilson 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 “Consumers Energy Company Gas Franchise Ordinance” of the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County, Michigan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Clerk of the Charter Township of Meridian is directed to publish the Ordinance in the complete form in which it was introduced at least once prior to the next regular meeting of the Township Board. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Trustee Scales moved to amend the time frame for the franchise to three (3) years. Seconded by Trustee Veenstra.

Board and Consumers Energy representative discussion:

- Preference for each future Board to have Consumers Energy come before it to review the franchise agreement
- Inquiry as to recourse for the Township in the event it has an issue with Consumers
- Mr. Thelen is accessible for dialog with Board members on an ongoing basis at any time
- Clause contained in the contract allows for revocation by either party with 60 days’ notice
- Franchise renewal timeframes vary by community
- Township attorney reviewed the franchise and did not offer comment relative to the length of the franchise agreement
- View by administration that Consumers Energy and the Township have an “outstanding” working relationship
- Board member concern the timing of the contract to coincide with Board election/reelection appears to politicize the franchise

Trustee Veenstra moved to amend the previous amendment from three (3) years to four (4) years. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Continued Board discussion:

- Concern the franchise does not address any standard of service
- The proposed agreement is based on the performance of future Consumers Energy employees
- Renewal every four (4) years will allow new Board members to establish a working relationship with Consumers Energy
- Board member suggestion to have an annual utility report provided at a Board meeting which would also allow for members of the community to participate
- Board member suggestion to invite the utility companies to the annual Intergovernmental Meeting

- Clarification by Consumers Energy this franchise is for operating its utility in a public right-of-way
- The Michigan Public Service Commission (PSC) manages the operation of service provided by Consumers Energy
- Consumers provides overall good quality service to residents in the Township
- PSC has jurisdiction over Consumers Energy's rates and operation
- Board would have "leverage" by requiring Consumers Energy to come before it every four (4) years

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra
ON THE VEESNTRA NAYS: Trustee Styka, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
AMENDMENT: Motion failed 2-4.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra
ON THE SCALES NAYS: Trustee Styka, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
AMENDMENT: Motion failed 2-4.

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Trustee Styka, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
ON THE MAIN NAYS: Trustees Scales, Veenstra
MOTION: Motion carried 4-2.

- C. Special Use Permit #16011 (Marriott) – Request to Construct a 67,000 Square Foot Courtyard by Marriott

Treasurer Brixie moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby approves Special Use Permit #16011 (PHG Land Development, LLC) to construct a single building totaling approximately 70,000 square feet in gross floor area, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Approval of the special use permit is in accordance with the cover sheet prepared by KEBS, Inc. dated February 1, 2016, subject to revisions as required.**
- 2. Special Use Permit #16011 is subject to all conditions for the hotel use placed by the Planning Commission.**

Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Board discussion:

- Nearby hotel is often full
- Region is short of hotel beds
- Michigan State University will serve as a vehicle to bring in patrons during major sport events
- Hotel use is low impact on the community
- Traffic generated by the nearby hotel has not created a problem
- Staff summary of the conditions placed on the SUP by the Planning Commission for the hotel use in February
- Board member preference for the words "where feasible" to be removed relative to the LED lighting condition contained in the Planning Commission approval of the SUP

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

D. Tri-County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Trustee Veenstra moved to approve the Tri-County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, authorize the Clerk to sign the resolution, and direct the Fire Department to forward a copy to Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Board discussion:

- Approval needed in order to be eligible for hazard mitigation and disaster declaration grants
- Township had previously moved buildings to higher ground in the east end of Ottawa Hills where it was prone to flooding

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

E. Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club Community Room – Use Policy

Trustee Scales moved to approve the Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club Community Use Policy for Fire Station 91 as presented. Seconded by Trustees Veenstra.

Board discussion:

- Appreciation for the fact the policy is succinct
- Prevailing Board consensus there should be no charges for use of the community room by members of the community
- The last word in the second sentence of the Hold Harmless/Indemnification Agreement should be changed from “city” to “township”

Trustee Veenstra moved to eliminate the question about the number of children, the question about the adult to child ratio, the question if this meeting is for election or campaign purposes, and is this a fundraiser. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

Board discussion:

- Board member belief this community room should be used for any of the standard community uses
- Validity in knowing the number of children present as well as an adult-to-child ratio for safety purposes
- Election and campaign meetings should not be held in a taxpayer funded community room if a fee is not charged
- Disagreement with the comparison previously made by a Board member between a privately owned apartment complex community room and the fire station community room

VOICE VOTE: Motion failed 1-5 (Trustees Scales, Styka, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus).

Clerk Dreyfus moved to amend condition #1 of the Community Room Use Policy as follows:

- **Insert sentence four (4) to read: The second priority is for Meridian Township boards, commissions or any meeting involving official Township business.**

Seconded by Trustee Styka.

Board discussion:

- Use of discretion by the scheduler using a “common sense” approach
- Concern over a long list of priorities before a community group
- Board member belief the only “group” to bump someone from their reservation would be the Fire Department
- Differentiation between a scheduling policy and a bumping policy

Clerk Dreyfus moved to approve the resolution supporting submission of a grant application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for development of a universally accessible Central Meridian Trail Connector and accessible fishing deck in Central Park with a total project cost of \$395,000. A thirty one (31%) percent local match of \$122,450 will be funded by the park millage, with the remaining sixty-nine (69%) percent (\$272,550) funded by the MNRTF Grant. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Board discussion:

- Twelve (12) foot wide pathway allows access by a diverse mix of all non-motorized transportation types
- Initial recommendation was made for a pathway width of 16 feet
- American with Disabilities Act (ADA) recommendation is eight (8) feet
- Board member belief an eight (8) foot width is sufficient for all non-motorized transportation uses in Meridian Township
- Different “use” scenarios where the 12 foot width is fully utilized
- Reminder the path at Hawk Island is 12 feet wide and does not seem excessive
- Pathway plan will engage more users
- Location is a great connector site to other trails in the Township which will be used by avid cyclists
- Cyclists will use this connector to ride at greater speed
- Board member concern with the impact to the park as the park becomes less “natural” with a 12 foot wide path and is more expensive to construct
- One aspect of the voter approved park millage was to enhance the Central Park Complex to make it more connective
- Voter elected Park Commission spent a great deal of time on this plan, including hosting a charrette to receive extensive public input
- Park Commission believes the pathway should be 12 feet in width

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

- H. DNR Grant Application – Accessible Gateway Footbridge and Restroom Facility in Central Park/Meridian Historical Village
Director of Parks and Recreation Maisner summarized the proposed project as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 9, 2016.

Trustee Scales moved to support submission of a grant application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for construction of a universally accessible restroom building and gateway footbridge in Central Park-Meridian Historical Village, with a total project cost of \$300,000. A fifty percent (50%) local match of \$150,000 will be funded by the park millage with the remaining fifty percent (50%) funded by the LWCF Grant. Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Board and staff discussion:

- Main purpose of the plan is to create connectivity to the center of the Township
- Appreciation for beautification to the Meridian Historical Village
- Appreciation for a new restroom facility
- 14 feet is the standard width for footbridges and 12 feet in width would require construction of a custom footbridge at a greater cost
- Current six (6) foot wide wooden footbridge is 44 years old, rotting and in need of replacement

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Wilson, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

- I. Natural Resources Trust Fund Acquisition Grant Application for Land Preservation
Director of Parks and Recreation Maisner summarized the proposed acquisition grant application as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 9, 2016.

Treasurer Brixie moved to support submission of a grant application titled Ponderosa Land Preserve to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for an estimated total project cost of \$1,159,900 for the acquisition of approximately 89 acres of property with parcel numbers 33-02-02-35-426-006 and 33-02-02-35-200-012 as noted on Exhibit A; Okemos, Michigan. Meridian Charter Township is requesting \$514,900 (forty five percent, 45%) from the Meridian Natural Resources Trust Fund. Meridian Charter Township will provide a fifty-five (55%) local match consisting of \$500,000 from the Land Preservation Millage and a \$136,000 donation from the current land owner. Seconded by Trustee Wilson.

Board and staff discussion:

- Excellent quality of diverse woodland areas in these two (2) parcels
- Property contains a stream with spawning fish in it
- Property is adjacent to Legg Park and the Red Cedar Glen Preserve
- Board member belief this area of the Township has high development “pressure” on it
- Subject property is north of the Ponderosa/Bonanza subdivisions and east of the Ember Oaks subdivision
- Board member preference for pathway access from the Ember Oaks subdivision to the subject property
- Board member concern with the cost of the property at over \$10,000 per acre
- Explanation that the grant process for Trust Fund Grants require an appraisal
- Grant application will be reviewed by the state which has the authority to set a different value on the property
- Appraised value is what is submitted in the grant application
- An additional appraisal will be required if the grant is approved by the state and would take place in December, 2016 or early 2017
- Even if the second appraisal determines a higher value on the land, the state will not provide additional funds beyond what has been asked for
- Inquiry if the property contains forested wetlands which are already protected by the state
- Board member request for the number of acres of forested wetlands located on the site
- State protected forested wetlands on the site would affect the price per acre
- Subject property contains a regulated wetland north of Ponderosa
- Board approval of the motion allows for grant application submission and provides only the required match if the grant is approved
- Purchase of the property will come before the Board in the future
- Appreciable wetland on the property would reduce the amount of buildable acreage and reduce the value of the property

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

[Supervisor Pro Tem Styka recessed the meeting at 9:09 P.M.]

[Supervisor Pro Tem Styka reconvened the meeting at 9:19 P.M.]

[Trustee Wilson left the room at 9:20 P.M.]

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

Without objection, Treasurer Brixie suggested Agenda Item #13B be considered before Agenda Item #13A.

Supervisor Pro Tem opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, believed the travel expense policy does not go far enough. He noted the Planning Commission's concern with the MUPUD Concept Plan for 4675 Okemos Road/2150 Clinton Street centered on parking. Mr. Provencher expressed appreciation the Board will elicit public input when the Pathway Master Plan comes back before the Board, noting the pathway millage renewal will be before voters in November, 2016.

Brian Goldberg, counsel for KNSJ, LLC, 2248 Mt. Hope Road, #702 displayed the recorded easement on the overhead relative to the MUPUD Concept Plan at 4675 Okemos Road/2150 Clinton Street. He stated the concept plan shows the existing parking in a portion of the recorded easement, a non-exclusive easement between the property owners for ingress, egress and parking.

Jim Raynak, 2143 Hamilton Road, Okemos, managing member for KNSJ, LLC, stated KNSJ owns most of the block and there is a current easement which runs along the north property line of the proposed redevelopment of 4675 Okemos Road/2150 Clinton Street. While expressing support for redevelopment of the aforementioned property, he encouraged review of the easement and the limited parking proposal for the downtown Okemos area. He noted employees of Special A'Fare Catering, Dominoes, Bottoms Up, Arty Party, Smart Homes and Okemos Ace Hardware are parking at 2153 Hamilton Road, the old dry cleaners parking lot.

Bill Arens, Studio Intrigue Architects, 1114 S Washington Ave #100, Lansing, representative for the property owner, highlighted elements of the MUPUD Concept Plan located at 4675 Okemos Road/2150 Clinton Street.

Linda Pace, 1792 Lenore Lane, Haslett, voiced concern with the units installed for heating in the upgrades to Grange Acres, alleging they cause black mold in the apartments. She stated 17 residents have died within one (1) year since the heating units have been installed. Ms. Pace also spoke to the lack of snow removal and the fact she believed First Housing "bullies" the tenants if they complain.

Supervisor Pro Tem closed Public Remarks.

A. Travel Expense Policy

Human Resources Director Marx summarized the draft travel expense policy as outlined in staff memorandum dated February 24, 2016.

Trustee Scales provided highlights of the thought process used to date to bring the current draft before the Board.

Board and staff discussion:

- Draft provided to the Board is a sufficient start to a joint policy
- Travel expense policy will help further define a culture of consistency
- Use of credit cards, mentioned by the public, is administrative in nature and monitored by the Township
- Possibility of a policy on credit card usage which complements the travel expense policy
- Specifics directed to Board members could be included in the draft travel expense policy
- Board member preference for the first line in the draft travel expense policy to include Commission members
- Per diem is the maximum amount allowed per day applied to overnight travel
- Board member preference for a separate travel expense policy for elected officials
- Definition of Township business relative to elected officials
- Importance of avoiding the appearance of impropriety for elected officials
- Board member belief the Township should not reimburse elected officials for meals when they meet with constituents
- Board members should be reimbursed when they carry out statutory duties
- Board member preference for elected officials to receive meal reimbursement only during overnight travel

- Board member preference for one travel and expense policy for all Township employees, including elected officials
- Board member belief no elected Board member has ever requested or received mileage or expense reimbursement for meeting with a constituent
- Board member belief no elected official in Meridian Township has ever requested reimbursement for campaign-related activities
- Concern “Township business” (activities or events attended by an elected official on behalf of the Township) can purposely be mischaracterized as “campaigning” by Board members with a political agenda directed against another Board member
- Board member belief if a question arises when submitting a reimbursement request, “Township business” can be clearly and easily defined to the supervisor who signs off on the travel expense form
- Board member reiteration there have been virtually no problems “whatsoever” with the existing travel and expense reimbursement policies currently in place, as reported by the Township Human Resources Director
- Board member assertion this is a “non-issue” and the discussion by another Board member is more about political pandering to voters than solving a supposed problem
- Suggestion for the signatory for Board member expense statements to be the Supervisor
- Suggestion for the signatory for Supervisor expense statements to be the Township Manager
- Ensure there is a clear and concise voucher form
- Campaign Finance Fund was created to use those funds for expenses associated with an elected official position
- Request for this item to be placed on the agenda as a discussion item one more time
- Board member suggestion to submit comments or proposed clarifications to the Human Resources Director before the next time this item is on the agenda
- Township currently has specific guidelines in place regarding reimbursement for mileage, through petty cash and through preapproved travel
- Board member request for the aforementioned guidelines to be given to Board members before the travel expense policy is discussed at the next Board meeting
- Board member preference for the meal reimbursement paragraph to be cleaned up
- Board member preference to remove the sentence contained in the Mileage Reimbursement section regarding a valid driver’s license and auto insurance coverage for personal vehicles as it is state law
- Consideration of a flat \$39.00 per diem reimbursement for meals with no receipts needed

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on the agenda for discussion at the April 5, 2016 Board meeting.

- B. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development Concept Plan, 4675 Okemos Road/2150 Clinton Street
Director Kieselbach summarized the proposed MUPUD concept plan as outlined in staff memorandum dated February 25, 2015.

Board, staff and applicant’s representative discussion:

- Concept plan shows 63 parking spaces, while the Township parking requirements indicate 194 parking spaces for both the restaurant and the apartment complex
- Applicant’s attempt to create a more pedestrian friendly site in the downtown Okemos area
- Concept plan is the early stage in the schematic design of the site
- Owner does not believe greatly reduced parking will have a detrimental effect on nearby businesses
- Owner is well aware of how the reduced parking may affect his business interest
- Applicant expects the site plan to evolve as the proposed project moves through the process
- Appreciation for the reuse of the fire station siren in the redevelopment project
- Township Board is looking at the “big picture” items during the concept plan phase of the project
- Parking spaces, lot coverage and setback requirements for a MUPUD can be waived by the Board

- Okemos Road frontage shows the current sidewalk on the plan which butts up to the back of the curb in front of the old MARC building
- Wide landscape area currently exists in the front of the old MARC building
- Streetlight placement in some places along Okemos Road is in the middle of the sidewalk
- Board member belief one of the key items to building a walkable community in this location is to make the Okemos Road sidewalk safer and more comfortable for pedestrians
- Board member belief creation of a safer walking environment would allow the applicant to provide fewer parking spaces
- Board member preference for the applicant to place a landscape buffer between the street and the sidewalk along Okemos Road by moving the existing sidewalk to the west to allow the pedestrians to be closer to the building and farther from Okemos Road traffic
- Board member belief a landscape buffer would give pedestrians a sense of protection
- Board receipt of comments from citizens expressing concern about sound emitted from the patio
- Concept plan shows landscaping around the immediate vicinity of the patio
- Suggestion for the applicant to consider specific types of year-round landscaping which would capture the sound coming off the patio in an effort to be considerate of the Clinton Street residents
- Consideration of sound muffling landscaping around the parking lot would also address the intrusion of slamming car doors
- Board member concern the entryway is on the south side, while the covered bicycle parking is placed on the west side of the property
- Belief by the applicant a covered bicycle parking structure is obtrusive towards the front on the south side of the project
- Board member belief the bicycle parking, both covered and uncovered, should be given priority near the entrance as ten bicycle parking spaces equate to the space of one automobile
- Board member preference for resolution of the automobile parking issue early on in the process
- Pervious/impervious surface ratio will be determined later in the process
- Impact of the recorded easement on the concept design
- Northern edge of the building ends “along” the easement line and the applicant does not have any current plans for the space
- Suggestion of shared parking among businesses when peak hours are offset
- Suggestion of off-site employee parking to free up parking spaces for patrons
- Easement shown on the plans should be addressed by counsel for the involved property owners
- Completed project will be the first large rejuvenation in downtown Okemos
- Energy from a popular restaurant can spill over into surrounding businesses
- A vibrant downtown will require collaboration among neighboring businesses

Trustee Veenstra moved to take up remaining agenda items past 10:00 P.M. Seconded by Trustee Scales.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

C. Pathway Master Plan

Assistant Township Manager/Director Perry summarized the current Pathway Master Plan as outlined in staff memorandum dated February 25, 2016.

Board discussion:

- Board member belief the highest priority should be to fill in the gaps in the pathway system (i.e., in front of the driving range on Grand River, along Mt. Hope Road from Maumee to Okemos Road)
- Board member suggestion to use eminent domain in the event one property owner will not provide an easement
- 2016 plan to fill the pathway gap on the south side of Mt. Hope Road

- Park Commission will offer suggested additions to the Pathway Master Plan
- Board member request for the Friends of the Pathway to assist the Township with the prioritization of pathway construction
- Most of the gaps left in the pathway plan are expensive to construct
- Board member is looking for community input to delineate the order of importance to fill in the pathway gaps
- Planning Commission's Master Planning process revealed residents' preference to focus on the need for connectivity

14. FINAL PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, spoke to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) federal standards which must be complied with relative to pathway width. He spoke to several expenses by staff listed in the bills and addressed the need for oversight of staff expenses.

Township Manager Walsh clarified that many of the aforementioned charges were multiple staff people on one (1) ticket.

Jim Raynak, 2143 Hamilton Road and Brian Goldberg, explained he attended tonight's meeting to avoid the in-place easement for the Okemos Road/Clinton Street redevelopment project becoming a legal problem. He noted the original easement has been in effect since 1984 and was amended in 2013. Mr. Raynak voiced concern with the possibility of "giving up" 75% of the required parking for this redevelopment project. Mr. Goldberg added when the two parcels were put together the easement was extinguished. He expressed apprehension concerning a plan which shows parking spaces where they cannot be located due to the easement.

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka closed Public Remarks.

15. FINAL BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Trustee Veenstra spoke to earlier public comment concerning alleged problems at Grange Acres. He requested staff investigate the problems to ensure compliance with Township rental standards.

Treasurer Brixie announced CATA will provide free Entertainment Express Route rides on St. Patrick's Day from 4:00 PM until 3:00 AM. She reported that at its last meeting, the CATA Board approved Equal Employment Opportunity Policy 103 with additional non-discrimination language for hiring of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) members. Treasurer Brixie indicated at the same meeting, an update to the BRT was given, noting the 30% engineering phase has been completed with a cost reduction of \$17 million. She reminded citizens of the BRT Community Conversation on March 22nd from 6:00 PM until 8:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Room. Upon inquiry, she indicated the current cost estimate for the BRT stands at \$142 million.

Treasurer Brixie stated at the last Land Preservation Advisory Board Meeting, the application for the "Ponderosa" property was brought forth.

Trustee Scales announced wearing of dark blue during March is in recognition of colon cancer month, and urged residents to have a colon check-up.

Clerk Dreyfus reported his attendance at the March 3rd Economic Development Corporation (EDC) meeting where the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) Public Art Grant was discussed, as well as a potential EDC sponsorship of \$1,500 to the Celebrate Meridian Event. He reminded citizens the regularly scheduled Board meeting of March 24th will be the Township's Intergovernmental Meeting where regionalism and areas of mutual concern will be discussed.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, MARCH 15, 2016 REGULAR MEETING *APPROVED*

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka reported his attendance at the last two Okemos School Board meetings and announced the Okemos School District has agreed to lease an additional 8,000 square feet of Wardcliff School to Ingham County Community Mental Health for autistic students. He added the Okemos School Board is moving forward with its equity plan to improve diversity. Supervisor Pro Tem Styka reported the Okemos Education Foundation (OEF) will host a Civil Rights Symposium titled "The Legacy of Emmett Till" on Tuesday, April 19, 2016 beginning at 7:00 P.M. in the Okemos High School Auditorium. He explained the history surrounding Emmett Till, adding admission is free to the public.

Trustee Scales provided additional historical information surrounding Emmett Till's beating, lynching and subsequent funeral.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Veenstra moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Clerk Dreyfus.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

Supervisor Pro Tem Styka adjourned the meeting at 11:10 P.M.

RONALD J. STYKA
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR PRO TEM

BRETT DREYFUS
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary