

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 **6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor LeGoff, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra
ABSENT: 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, Director of Information & Technology Stephen Gebes, Director of Finance Miriam Mattison, Director of Parks and Recreation LuAnn Maisner, Senior Planner Peter Menser, Parks and Land Management Coordinator Jane Greenway

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor LeGoff called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor LeGoff led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll of the Board.

4. PRESENTATION

A. Our Town Grant Presentation-Peter Menser

Senior Planner Menser explained Meridian Township is collaborating with Michigan State University's (MSU) School of Planning, Construction and Design on a grant opportunity through the National Endowment for Arts titled "Our Town." He noted this grant funds projects which builds knowledge of creative placemaking, defined as partners from public/private, non-profit and community sectors who strategically shape the physical and social character of an area. Senior Planner Menser indicated creative placemaking is about moving artists, designers, community culture groups, arts research groups, cultural affairs offices and art organizations into neighborhoods to begin a dialogue about the neighborhoods and regions around them to make the quality of life better in their communities. He stated creative placemaking brings arts into the community development process by raising the visibility of arts and culture so that more residents participate in the process.

Senior Planner Menser noted the grant will focus on a six (6) mile stretch of the Grand River Avenue Corridor from Meridian Mall to the Broad Art Museum in East Lansing on the campus of MSU. He added the goal of the grant is to create a unified vision of that six mile portion of the corridor and MSU will provide the financial match, with the Township providing "sweat equity." Senior Planner Menser explained the first portion of the grant begins with the visioning process through "sandbox" meetings attended by a group of diverse stakeholders, followed by landscape architecture students creating graphics which illustrate the conversations which occurred at the sandbox meetings. In addition, he indicated a survey will be conducted which will include current and potential residents to better plan an environment which will make residents "happy." Senior Planner stated the application has been sent and involved parties are waiting to hear if the grant funding is awarded to MSU and the Township.

Board discussion:

- The general idea of transportation will be considered during the discussions
- Once members of the Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) are appointed, they will interface with the grant process

- When the Whole Foods applications was submitted, discussions took place with Mr. Tesseris about the possibility of art being placed at that location
- Ann O'Connor from Art Unlimited and Juanita Baldwin will represent the community artist's perspective to the sandbox meetings
- Timing for notice of the awards is not known by staff

5. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandlewood, Okemos, thanked Erik Lindquist, a professional Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Lansing Community College professor of accounting, who "stepped up" to challenge the incumbent Treasurer, Julie Brixie, in the November 8th General Election. He noted Mr. Lindquist is on the November 8th ballot as a "No Party Affiliation", and urged residents to cast their vote for Mr. Lindquist. Mr. Norkin pointed to the "insurmountable budget hole" in the Township's Municipal Employees Retirement System (MERS) program. He believed this "hole" was due to poor oversight by the Pension Board and the Treasurer, and she should not be rewarded by being reelected to another term of office.

Kathy Sundland, 2318 Barnsbury Road, East Lansing, noted there is a line item in the budget relative to ambulance fees for residents who refuse services. She objected to charging citizens a fee for services they did not request.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Drive, East Lansing, voiced appreciation for her appointment by the Board to the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) Board of Directors. She questioned how she can represent the taxpayers of Meridian Township when she was told she is not allowed to speak directly to any CATA Department Director without permission from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sandra Draggoo. Ms. Rose added Delta Township pays \$140,000 annually for part of its Redi-Ride Service provided by CATA. She requested consideration for appointment to the Township's prospective Transportation Commission.

Ann Alchin, 5972 Cypress, Haslett, offered an explanation of the "thin blue line," representative of the police force as an entity to stand between good and evil people. She expressed her anger at the negative campaign literature piece sent out prior to the August primary election, calling it an obscenity. Ms. Alchin objected to the use of the thin blue line symbol in the negative campaign mailing which she characterized as a "piece of garbage." She noted one of the people behind the aforementioned literature piece will be running for reelection in November.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, spoke to the removal of Erik Lindquist's political campaign signs throughout the Township. He believed such behavior is improper. Mr. Bowlby offered a graph which depicted the linear regression of Meridian's investment returns for the time the current Treasurer has been in office. He made the comparison between the Township's investment returns and the investment returns while Mr. Lindquist was the Finance Director of CATA. Mr. Bowlby believed knowledge of how to make investments is an important aspect of the Treasurer's position and Mr. Lindquist is more qualified.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT

Manager Walsh offered the following:

- Administration is meeting Friday with the Township's third party administrator on the Township's 2017 health care plan
- Township changed to self-funding for health care last year and the plan is performing better than expected
- Intent to lay a portion of the material down on the Recycling Center drivet to see how it performs prior to making a determination as to its effectiveness
- Study on the condition of current Township facilities is near completion

7. BOARD COMMENTS & REPORTS

Trustee Veenstra announced the Township will hold a public hearing on the 2017 Recommended Budget on Thursday, September 29, 2016 with possible adoption the same evening. He explained the information he requested regarding the increase in CATA's reporting of the number of Redi-Rides was because the 26,000 figure was booked trips while the actual ridership was approximately 20,000 trips. Trustee Veenstra questioned the 2% figure used for denied rides. He questioned CATA's analysis that the cost per mile for line buses was approximately \$8.00 per mile, while noting the cost per mile for the BRT was calculated at approximately \$4.00 per mile.

Clerk Dreyfus announced the General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 8, 2016 and any citizens who wish to register to vote must do so by October 11th in order to vote in the November 8th General Election. He indicated the number of absentee ballot requests have increased significantly throughout the years. Clerk Dreyfus stated anyone 60 years of age or older qualifies to vote absentee and can request to be placed on a permanent absentee voter list in order to be mailed an application for each election. He noted absentee ballots may be requested through the Clerk's Office until 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, November 5th. In addition, Clerk Dreyfus stated a voter may request an absentee ballot on Monday, November 7th from 8:00 AM until 4:00 P.M. which cannot be taken out of the building, but voted here and returned to the Clerk's Office. He announced the "Douglas J" property located at the corner of Hamilton and Okemos Road is up for sale, reminding Board members of their many discussions for this property relative to its zoning, special use permit and the proposed mixed use planned unit development.

Trustee Styka announced Meridian Township will celebrate its 175th Anniversary in 2017. He announced HOMTV is compiling a documentary and encouraged residents who have historical knowledge to impart any knowledge they have with the Township's communications department. Trustee Styka announced the Community Resources Commission is holding a fundraiser on Sunday, September 25th at City Limits East Bowling in an effort to provide resources for the Meridian Cares Emergency Fund. He also announced Meridian Township will be hosting its semi-annual Recycling Event on Saturday October 1st from 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM. at Chippewa Middle School.

Trustee Styka requested the Clerk provide his thoughts on a letter individually sent to Board members from the Ingham County Election Commission indicating Meridian Township's election results were "coming in late."

In response, Clerk Dreyfus offered the following:

- The Clerk's office applies the following eight (8) principles when conducting elections in Meridian Township:
 - Ensures all citizens eligible to vote can easily register to vote at the Township
 - Ensures all citizens who are eligible to vote via absentee ballot are able to easily request and receive an absentee ballot
 - Ensures voter privacy is protected throughout the voting process
 - Manages and directs all resources and logistics necessary to conduct elections at the 19 voting precincts in the Township
 - Trains election workers and election chairpersons so they are able to effectively conduct elections at each precinct
 - Plans appropriately so voters can move through the polling location as efficiently and smoothly as possible
 - Ensures all election results are accurate and all numbers balance at the end of the night, before the election workers return to the Township Clerk's office to turn in the results
 - Transmit accurate results to the County Clerk as soon as possible
- The Clerk's Office has consistently met the first seven (7) goals
- Voter flow at precincts is relatively fast, tabulation of results are accurate and voter privacy is ensured, whether by absentee ballot or in person
- The issue contained in the letter is an administrative concern, not an election issue and does not affect Meridian Township citizens and voters
- Meridian Township is the second largest municipality in Ingham County with respect to its 19 voting precincts

- For elections where Meridian Township was last turning in its election results, the majority were due to a discrepancy in a single precinct, where the numbers did not balance at the end of the night
- Accuracy is the number one (#1) priority, and the Clerk's Office works diligently to report election results as soon as practical
- It is more detrimental to the election process if the Clerk's Office rushed through the processing of ballots and submitted them to the county prematurely, with the number of ballots not balanced
- Under such a scenario, election workers would be required to appear before the Board of Canvassers the next day to deal with the imbalance of number of ballots
- Goal of the Clerk's Office is to proactively solve the imbalance as soon as possible, and required for every election night
- Other reasons for delays can be technology related
 - In 2013, old election equipment provided by the State of Michigan and the Ingham County Clerk's Office malfunctioned, preventing electronic transmission of results via an obsolete modem using an outdated PC workstation
- Research into ways to improve the ballot counting process culminated in a decision to implement Absentee Voter (AV) Counting Boards in Meridian Township
- Main benefit of an AV Counting Board is that it speeds up the processing of ballots at precincts, and helps with number balancing at the end of the night
- Implementation of this procedure requires a set of new logistics, additional voting tabulator equipment, an additional team of election inspectors, as well as a special location to house up to 12 people that will be sequestered for the entire day of the election
- The Clerk's Office has had on-going communication with the Ingham County Clerk regarding election results and AV Counting Boards since the August Primary Election last month
- The Ingham County Clerk, along with the Ingham County Board of Canvassers, recommended we initiate AV Counting Boards as soon as possible which the Clerk's Office agreed to
- Clerk's belief the AV Counting Board will speed up the processing of ballots on election night at every precinct in the Township
- Absentee ballots will no longer be counted at the precincts throughout the day and run through the tabulator, but will be processed at one room within the Municipal Complex
- Freeing up individual precincts from this task will make it easier for each precinct to keep running tallies, in real time, of all the voters coming through the polling location, and the running total of all ballots processed through the tabulator, making it easier for the numbers to balance at the end of the night
- AV Counting Boards should allow for the Township's results being received at the Ingham County Clerk's Office in a shorter period of time
- Election workers will be trained to keep a running tally during the entire time the polling locations are open, which should be a welcome change for election inspectors who have had to deal with a number discrepancy which can appear when the polling location is closed
- The Clerk's office follows a philosophy of continual improvement through the adoption of new, best practices
- Implementation of the AV Counting Boards, along with changes made in training, will make it easier for election workers to process ballots at individual precincts, reduce the number discrepancies, and reduce the time it takes to report accurate election results to the County Clerk

Board discussion:

- Inquiry as to who will make up the AV Counting Boards
- AV Counting Boards will be selected from a pool of election inspector applicants
- AV Counting Boards will be located in the Nelson Room of the Public Safety Building
- Election Commission will meet to review and approve the proposed AV Counting Boards, the election inspectors who serve on the Boards and all election inspectors
- Each of the three (3) AV Counting Boards will be comprised of four (4) inspectors
- Letter from the Ingham County Clerk, sent individually to each Board member, implies there was a lack of communication between her office and the Township Clerk, which does not hold up to scrutiny of the facts

- Request for the Clerk to provide the letter from the Ingham County Clerk's Office as a communication in the next regular meeting Board packet for public review

Trustee Scales recommended the Supervisor make a decision regarding replacing Trustee Wilson with Trustee Styka as a member of the Elections Commission to have a full complement of the three (3) member Commission.

Clerk Dreyfus stated he was amenable to work with either Trustee Wilson or Trustee Styka on the Election Commission, recommending the issue be discussed first with Trustee Wilson as to her availability.

Treasurer Brixie reported her attendance at the last Land Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) where the members received an update on the work being performed to remove invasive species in all preserves. She added the LPAB went into closed session to discuss possible land acquisition. Treasurer Brixie voiced appreciation to all the taxpayers who cumulatively paid 95.1% of summer taxes due by the September 14th deadline.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

Clerk Dreyfus offered the following friendly amendment:

- **Add Agenda Item 9G: Approval to Change Polling Location**

The friendly amendment was accepted by the maker and seconder.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA (SALMON)

Supervisor LeGoff reviewed the consent agenda.

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

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

A. Communications

(1) Board Deliberations (BD)

BD 13E Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Drive, East Lansing; RE: Request to be appointed to the prospective Meridian Township Transportation Commission

(2) Board Information (BI)

BI-1 Tim Potter, 4632 Van Atta Road, Okemos; RE: Smart Growth America's 2017 Free Technical Assistance Workshops

BI-2 Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Drive, East Lansing; RE: Bad Experience with Capital Area Transportation Authority's Spec-Tran Service

BI-3 John Russell, President, Russell Builders, 4131 Okemos Road, Suite 12, Okemos; RE: Zoning Board of Appeals handling of his variance request

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

Material handed out at the September 6, 2016 Meeting

Kathy DeVito, 420 Chimney Oaks Drive, Okemos; RE: CATA Board Position

Patty McPhee, 5275 Thames Drive, Haslett; RE: CATA Representative

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 Styka.

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

B. Minutes

Treasurer Brixie moved to approve and ratify the minutes of the September 6, 2016 Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

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

C. Bills

Treasurer Brixie moved that the Township Board approve the Manager's Bills as follows:

Common Cash	\$	129,882.93
Public Works	\$	88,241.34
Trust & Agency	\$	2,469,316.33
Total Checks	\$	2,687,440.60
Credit Card Transactions	\$	7,334.51
Total Purchases	\$	<u>2,694,775.11</u>
ACH Payments	\$	<u>396,133.86</u>

Seconded by Trustee Styka.

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

[Bill list in Official Minute Book]

D. 2017 Budget Public Hearing Date-September 29, 2016

Treasurer Brixie moved that a public hearing be held at 6:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Room on September 29, 2016 for the purpose of taking comments regarding the 2017 Charter Township of Meridian Recommended Budget. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

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

E. Land Preservation Acquisition Recommendation-Tank Trust

Treasurer Brixie moved the Meridian Township Board forward the proposed donation of the Edward Felton Tank Revocable Trust, 2.51 acres (parcel #33-02-02-11-177-008), to the Planning Commission for Section 61 Review for approval as to the location, character and extent as a public ground or open space. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

Board discussion:

- Subject parcel is east of Carlton Road
- Property is 100% wetland and is already protected
- Subject parcel impacts Lake Lansing and other Township preserves through its water connection
- Opportunity to improve fish habitat through use of this site
- Property is in the vicinity of the Lake Lansing Watershed
- Allowing the property to be part of the Land Management Program will assist in the creation of a healthy ecosystem in the area through invasive species control
- Land is a 100% donation
- Township ordinance requires a Phase I environmental assessment
- Cost of the assessment is \$2,000
- Assessment would uncover any contamination prior to the Township taking ownership of the property

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

F. Ratification of Police Officer Appointments

Treasurer Brixie moved to ratify the appointment of Tori Klewicki-McNutt and Loudore Jr. Brutus to the position of Police Officer contingent upon successful completion of those items stipulated in their conditional offers of employment. Seconded by Trustee Styka.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

G. Approval to Change Polling Location

Treasurer Brixie moved to adopt the resolution “Change Location of Precinct #20 Polling Place in Meridian Township.” Seconded by Trustee Styka.

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTORNEY (None)

11. HEARINGS (None)

12. ACTION ITEMS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, voiced his continued concern relative to Rezoning #16030, noting the property is compliant with its current zoning. He indicated once the rezoning is approved and the owner requests a property split, both parcels will be non-compliant regarding the required setbacks for the two buildings. Mr. Provencher believed the process to be “backwards.”

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

A. Rezoning #16030 (Maniaci) 3690 Hulett Road RR (Rural Residential) to RAA (Single Family-Low Density) Introduction

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 #16030 from RR (Rural Residential) to RAA (Single Family-Low Density).**

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 Scales.

Board discussion:

- Likelihood of a variance request for one of the parcels once the property is split
- Rezoning request meets all of the Township’s criteria
- Request meets the objective of retaining the rural character in the eastern portion of the Township and promote infill development in the western portion of the Township
- RAA is reasonably low density
- Split is reasonable and will allow for a new home to be built on one of the parcels
- Concern once the split occurs, the garage currently on the property will be in the front yard and a violation of our current ordinance
- Board member preference for the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to grant a variance if the garage is a useful building
- Caution expressed by the ZBA Chair in the past regarding Board action causing an applicant to request a variance

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

B. 2016 Deer Management Program

Trustee Veenstra moved [and read into the record] **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN authorizes that the Township-managed deer harvest will occur on the following properties in 2016: Northwest Land Preserve; Northridge Land Preserve; Forest Grove Land Preserve; Meridian Transfer Station property; Meridian Central Wetland Preserve; Hubbel Land Preserve; Central Meridian Uplands Land Preserve; Central Park; Tihart/Cornell Wetland Preserve; Davis/Foster Land Preserve; Red Cedar Glen Land Preserve; Central Park Drive/Okemos Road (fire station); Ted Black Woods Park; Southwest Meridian Uplands Land Preserve; Sower Woods Land Preserve; Red Cedar Natural Area; Meridian Riverfront Park; Red Cedar River East Land Preserve; Towner Road Park; and with the following additional properties that were not included in previous deer management programs including: Forest Hills Natural Area; Orlando Park “outlot b”; Hartrick Park; Tacoma Hills Natural Area; Riverside Cemetery; Glendale Cemetery; Wonch Park; Ferguson Park, Sumbal Land Preserve and Lake Lansing North Park/Conservation Easement Parcel for a total of 29 township-owned properties.**

Seconded by Treasurer Brixie.

Trustee Veenstra offered the following amendment:

Add the following properties to the list of 29 township-owned properties:

- Dobie Road Ingham County Farm
- Michigan State University’s Dobie Reserve

- **Private property of Delta Dental**

Seconded by Trustee Scales.

Board discussion:

- Intent of this resolution is to address only Township properties

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Veenstra, Supervisor LeGoff
NAYS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Treasurer Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
Motion failed 2-4.

Dr. Daniel O'Brien, Wildlife Veterinarian, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, provided an update on the number of deer exhibiting chronic wasting disease (CWD) for Meridian Township (5 positive results out of the 1,043 animals tested) and throughout the State of Michigan.

Board discussion with Dr. O'Brien:

- Board member inquiry if the change in Michigan law was the result of the CWD outbreak
- No evidence CWD can be transmitted to any other animal other than the cervids
- The Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization recommend animals testing positive for CWD or the larger family of diseases to which CWD belongs not be consumed by humans or other animals
- Concern with reducing the 450 foot safe shooting zone for archery to zero feet
- Less range for archery hunting v. hunting with a firearm
- Board member belief last year's kill of 86 deer was inadequate
- Inquiry as to further efforts to stop CWD from becoming established in Meridian Township
- Hunting is more difficult in suburban settings as there are safety concerns
- Surveillance effort within Meridian Township and the "core" area has resulted in success due to the buy-in of Meridian Township government and private landowners
- Providing hunters with opportunities to be involved in the process is an important part of the program's success
- Board member preference to extensively increase efforts to reduce the deer population and stop CWD from becoming established in Meridian Township

Treasurer Brixie offered the following amendment:

- **Insert "with the following condition: approval from Okemos Public Schools for the hunting on Hartrick Park, Ferguson Park and the Sumbal Natural Area" after "29 Township-owned properties"**

Seconded by Trustee Styka.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer Brixie,
Clerk Dreyfus
NAYS: Trustee Veenstra
Motion carried 5-1.

Continued Board and staff discussion:

- Nine (9) new areas are being proposed for hunting
- Okemos Public Schools had expressed concern about hunting on the three (3) areas included in the amendment as parents were dropping off their children at Central Elementary in the morning
- Board member preference to touch base with Okemos Public Schools prior to proceeding with hunting on those three (3) properties
- Other properties are located between Ferguson Park and Central Elementary School
- Deer Management Program for Meridian Township commenced in 2011
- Discovery of CWD within the Township necessitated changes in the rules (e.g., no baiting, no meat donation to the food bank) and brought the program "to a halt"
- From 2011 through 2015, there have been 1,355 deer-car accidents in Meridian Township

- DNR has budgeted \$3 million toward fighting CWD
- Steps previously taken to establish the program were important components in fighting CWD
- Necessity of deer kill by professional sharp shooters as the Township is not able to eradicate CWD on its own through the existing program
- Program is highly managed and includes proficiency testing

ROLL CALL VOTE YEAS: Trustee Scales, Styka, Veenstra, Supervisor LeGoff, Treasurer
ON THE MAIN Brixie, Clerk Dreyfus
MOTION: NAYS: None
Motion carried 6-0.

13. BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, spoke to what the Capital Improvements Programs (CIP) are supposed to be and how they should be formulated. He stated his understanding of the CIP is to include projects which the Township intends to build. Mr. Bowlby noted the previous Board denied the sewer extension for the Greenwood subdivision, but projections in the CIP still include the Green Road, Redondo, Oakdale, Mapleville and Beechwood sewers. He added the residents of Sleepy Hollow petitioned the Township to extend sanitary sewer and water into their subdivision, but it is scheduled in the CIP for 2021. Mr. Bowlby questioned if it is the Township's intent to install sewers in the Woodwind-Fox Chase area (now included in the Urban Services Boundary) in 2019 without asking residents if they want to have sewers. He alleged the CIP is not a resume padding exercise to say how much the Township wishes to expand. He requested the Greenwood subdivision sewer projects be removed from the CIP.

Ann Alchin, 5972 Cypress, Haslett, suggested the Township could find better uses for some of its money than the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). She indicated that while the DDA has received over \$247,000 in tax increment financing (TIF) funds, it is in debt to the Township for \$199,500. Ms. Alchin read the mission of the DDA for Board member and the public. She addressed the fact the old Meridian Area Resource Center (MARC) building was published as the "Eyesore of the Week" in the City Pulse. Ms. Alchin indicated the owner of the property no longer plans to build a Tavern and Tap restaurant on the subject site.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, questioned how the 2017 Recommended Budget could be constructed when there is unfunded pension liability and nothing concrete presented on how to meet that financial commitment. He believed the 2017 budget to be preemptive. Mr. Provencher spoke in support of Donna Rose as a member of the prospective Transportation Commission as she could provide detailed information from the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) and be a voice for persons with disabilities.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Drive, East Lansing, requested she be considered for Board appointment to the prospective Transportation Commission.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

A. Williamstown Township Police Service Contract

Police Chief Hall summarized the fourth two-year contract proposed to provide law enforcement services to Williamstown Township as outlined in staff memorandum dated September 15, 2016.

Board discussion:

- Appreciation of Williamstown Township residents for the service provided by the Meridian Police Department
- Current program is well run
- Board member request for the amount of 2015-2016 contract
- Board member preference for all direct and indirect costs to be covered by the contract

- Suggestion for a possible press release highlighting the additional police services provided to Williamstown Township and its residents
- Projected expenditure for this contract last year was \$218,000, while \$220,000 was budgeted
- Cap of \$22,500 per quarter on extra hour services was placed by Williamstown Township
- Inquiry if the Township is recovering any overhead costs
- Included in the increase for 2017 is Williamstown Township's share of the cost for body cameras
- Infrastructure costs are included in the rate provided to Williamstown Township

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at its October 4, 2016 meeting.

B. Shaw Street Property

Director Kieselbach summarized the Shaw Street vacant property owned by Meridian Township as outlined in staff memorandum dated September 14, 2016.

Board discussion:

- Board member preference for a neighbor to purchase the property
- Property is owned by the public and all interested parties should have the opportunity to purchase
- Staff interest in knowing the Board's preference for the process used to sell the property
- Suggestion to notice all property owners within 300 feet regarding sale of the property
- Board member suggestion to have the property listed through a realtor in order for anyone to have an opportunity to bid on the property

C. 2017 Recommended Budget

Manager Walsh provided an overview of the 2017 Recommended Budget. He noted the public hearing will be held on September 29, 2016 at 6:00 P.M.

Board and staff discussion:

- General Fund millage rate of approximately 4.2 mills has been rolled back to 4.18 mills due to Headlee and resulted in a loss of approximately \$38,000, while revenue forecasts will remain the same
- Township will change the way the CIP is shown in the future
- MERS has changed its rate of return and mortality rate which has increased the Township's liability
- MERS is also changing its smoothing rate
- Township has conducted research and created a model which assumes a pension system with a 4% rate of return
- Function of the Township Pension Board
- Township Pension Board does not oversee MERS
- Township has no managerial oversight of the MERS system
- Administration has developed a plan which will place the Township in a good position 10-13 years from now to deal with the unfunded pension liability
- Communities throughout the state who belong to MERS are dealing with the same issue relative to unfunded pension liability
- Current employees support retiree payments
- Retiree health care is not an accrued benefit
- Meridian Township currently has 108 active employees and 104 retirees
- Appreciation for the overall 2017 Recommended Budget
- Board member desire that the rental housing inspection and reinspection fee schedule for multi-family and high density student complexes be increased
- Staff will investigate what other communities are doing relative to fee schedules for complexes

- Board member preference to increase rental registration back to \$1,200 from the reduced amount of \$800
- Board member statement all operating millages are rolled back due to Headlee, not just charter millages
- With the rollback, Meridian Township's total millage rate is 7.6163
- Appreciation to staff for compilation of the 2017 Recommended Budget
- Concern with the change of terms and figures between the 2017 Recommended Budget and the Powerpoint budget presentation document (e.g., property tax)
- Township is reimbursed for certain elections (e.g., 2015 state sales tax proposal, 2016 Presidential Primary)
- 34.83% increase in building maintenance over the 2016 Budget is due to one-time improvements to facilities and an increase in pension costs
- 143.92% increase in cemetery expenditures due to the remaining active employee from the previous two-member Teamsters Union who is partially paid out of the cemetery fund
- Clarification regarding the seeming disparity in estimates for the Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway contained in the Funding Summary for the CIP
- Column labeled "Other" in the CIP Funding Summary includes projected donations and one-time funding
- Some of the funding in the column labeled "Other" in the CIP Funding Summary is earmarked for the Ingham County Trail Millage
- CIP is a planning tool and projects are not funded
- Clarification regarding the seeming disparity in funding for the Service Center expansion
- Service Center was designed to be expanded in the future if necessary
- Board member request for a realistic plan and figures for the Capital Improvements Program in the future
- Staff to provide an amended CIP for Board members at the next meeting
- Board member request for Sleepy Hollow Sanitary Sewer to be moved up in the CIP as the residents have petitioned for water and sewer
- Board member believe the current ambulance fees at \$650 plus \$12.25 per mile is too high
- Board member belief most insurance companies will not pay the entire amount
- Many residents do not have insurance
- Board member opposition to the proposed increase in ambulance fees to \$750 plus \$13 per mile as it places a burden on citizens who cannot afford insurance
- Proposed ambulance fee increase would help fund heart monitors for each of the Township's four (4) ambulances at \$40,000 per monitor
- Meridian Township currently charges the lowest ambulance fee within the region
- Board member opposition to the charge for ambulance refusal services
- Fire Chief to explain patient refusal after Advanced Life Support (ALS) Services at the next Board meeting
- Township is exploring payment of ambulance services with a credit card as it may bring an additional \$50,000 annually in revenue
- Township has a waiver program for qualified residents who cannot pay for ambulance services
- Board member preference for the Township not to pay membership dues of \$400 to the Lansing Chamber of Commerce as it is a partisan organization
- Board member concern with the payment of \$15,000 in dues to the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) as he believes it provides little benefit to Meridian Township and LEAP pays its administrative staff large salaries
- Michigan Townships Association (MTA) dues of \$6,300 provides resources and benefits to Meridian Township
- Board member concern only three townships belong to the Michigan Municipal League (MML)

- Board member concern the MML takes the side of cities if there is an adversarial position between a city and township
- MML does not provide a service to Meridian Township and the \$8,000 in dues could be better utilized
- Board member belief the Township does not have many issues in common with other communities which belong to the MTA due to its size
- Township belongs to the MML Worker's Compensation Pool
- Township joined the MML for the worker's compensation insurance benefits
- MML has been helpful in dealing with legislation regarding the dark store policy, revenue sharing, elimination of a paper tax roll, etc.
- Meridian Township functions much like a city due to its size and its full time police and fire departments

It was the consensus of the Board for staff to provide additional information regarding the CIP as well as fees and bring back final changes to the budget at its September 29, 2016 Meeting.

- D. Land Preservation Acquisition Recommendation-Serafine Trust
Parks and Land Management Coordinator Greenway summarized the recommendation for Land Preservation acquisition as outlined in staff memorandum dated September 15, 2016.

Board discussion:

- Proposed site is in good condition and is picturesque land
- Land Preservation Advisory Board is desirous of neighbors who are active and engaged in the community and preserve
- Proposed site has a variety of plant and animal species
- Herron Creek is an important natural tributary of the Red Cedar River
- Herron Creek has a significant bird population
- Synergy of placement next to an existing land preserve for continuity of greenspace
- Previous interest in development of the site
- Existing wetland on the site
- Multifamily housing is located to the west and this parcel would create passive recreational opportunities for those residents
- Purchase offer for this parcel has been accepted at \$162,500

It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on for action at its October 4, 2016 meeting.

- E. Transportation Commission
Trustee Styka summarized the items of discussion from the last Board meeting on this topic.

Board discussion:

- Board member suggestion for a seven (7) member makeup of the Board
- Areas represented should include Redi-Ride, CATA, Spec-Tran, bicyclists, pedestrians/trail users, rail user, etc.
- Four proposed specifics would be included in the charge of the commission
- A minimum of monthly meetings for the first six (6) months then bi-monthly thereafter
- Initial two-year appointments
- If the commission becomes permanent after the initial two-year period, two (2) appointees each year would have staggered terms over a three (3) year period with the Board appointee serving during his/her term of office
- Board member preference not to include a rail services user
- Board member preference to include a transportation specialist
- Big picture view should include the interconnection of all modes of transportation uses within the region

- Concern over one of the Commission charges which abdicates staff's responsibility of handling citizen complaints
- Board member request for the public to weigh in on the charge of the commission
- Interest in how the commission can aid the township with its current work (e.g., Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan review)
- Board member request for staff to provide input to the Board regarding how the commission can assist the Township Board and the Township in its daily operations and future planning
- Board member preference for staff to continue to follow-up on citizen complaints, but provide a summary to the Transportation Commission

It was the consensus of the Board to continue discussion of this item at its October 4, 2016 meeting.

14. FINAL PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, inquired as to LEAP's function for the Township. He expressed concern LEAP represents the interests of developers and the Township should not be paying dues for that representation.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, believed only the common areas and one-third of the units in large apartment complexes are inspected each year. He inquired if the fee is based on the number of units inspected or the total number of units within the project. Mr. Bowlby asked if the Township is required to participate in MERS or if it is an investment option for the Township. He noted the Township Manager indicated MERS has experienced a 2-3% rate of return and suggested the Township invest in solar panels which will result in a 5-6.25% rate of return.

Manager Walsh replied the Township can leave MERS and bond for the pension, but the law would require close out of the pension fund. He believed 60-80% of Michigan communities have their pension system through MERS.

Ody Norkin, 3803 Sandlewood, Okemos, believed someone should be held accountable for the unfunded pension liability. He did not believe Township residents should bear the burden of the situation through collection of additional revenues and they are entitled to be provided accountability. Mr. Norkin objected to employees "taking a hit" by what he characterized as lack of follow-up on poor actuarial guesswork. He believed the Township Treasurer should be held accountable for taxes paid by residents.

Manager Walsh responded to public comment by offering history on the issue of unfunded pension liability. He stated the problem has been in existence for 25-30 years, but the magnitude of the liability has increased exponentially over the last 24 months largely based on the level of benefits provided by Meridian Township, the MERS assumption on the rate of return not being realized and the mortality rate smoothing. Manager Walsh noted the situation the Township is in must be shared by everyone in order to retain the level of police and fire services offered to residents.

Donna Rose, 6207 Cobblers Drive, East Lansing, shared her vision of the Transportation Commission as she believed it should be for all modes of transportation within the Township, which excludes highways, airports or rail. She stated no one who sits on the Commission should have the ability to benefit from their position (e.g., transportation provider). Ms. Rose believed residents will complain directly to the Transportation Commission. She stated it would be terrible for the Township's pensioners to rely on a promise not kept.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

15. FINAL BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Clerk Dreyfus announced the new polling location for Precinct 20 is New Hope Church, 1340 Haslett Road in Haslett.

Trustee Veenstra expressed appreciation that New Hope Church allowed the Township to use its facility for voters in Meridian Township. He requested the Board adopt a policy that every lawsuit against the Township or a Township employee be listed on the agenda as a received communication. Trustee Veenstra suspected MERS "tardiness" in recognizing how much their return on investment had decreased was part of the problem with the unfunded pension liability Meridian Township faces.

Trustee Scales noted the September 14th edition of the Towne Courier contained a guest opinion piece by the Chair of the Ingham County Commission dealing with the county's unfunded pension liability. He read an excerpt from that article, noting the Chair stated "Ingham County needs to make significantly larger annual payments to MERS because MERS now requires that pensions be fully funded by a much earlier date. Because of these changes, the funded portion of county pensions dropped from 71% to approximately 66%." He likened it to a mortgage company dropping the length of the house mortgage from 30 year to ten (10) years, which increases the payment needed to be made. Trustee Scales believed this is what the Township needs to address and fix.

Treasurer Brixie responded to earlier public comment which depicted a graph showing interest rate earnings in terms of dollars for the Township portfolio v. CATA's portfolio. She pointed out CATA's investment portfolio is significantly larger than Meridian Township and believed it not to be an accurate comparison.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor LeGoff adjourned the meeting at 10:10 P.M.

ELIZABETH LEGOFF
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS, CMMC
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary