

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD REGULAR MEETING - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2011 **7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor McGillicuddy, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Dreyfus, LeGoff, Veenstra
ABSENT: Clerk Helmbrecht, Trustee Ochberg
STAFF: Township Manager Gerald Richards

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
Supervisor McGillicuddy called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS
Supervisor McGillicuddy led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. ROLL CALL
The secretary called the roll of the Board.
4. PUBLIC REMARKS
Supervisor McGillicuddy opened and closed Public Remarks.
5. REPORTS/BOARD COMMENT/NEW WORRIES
6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Treasurer Brixie moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Seconded by Trustee Dreyfus.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

Treasurer Brixie moved to nominate Trustee LeGoff as Clerk Pro Tem.

Without objection, Trustee LeGoff was appointed as Clerk Pro Tem.

7. VISION SESSION/ENDS: Joint Meeting with Neighboring Governments and Area School Boards
Supervisor McGillicuddy opened the Joint Meeting and introduced the following guests:

Alaiedon Township
Steve Lott, Supervisor

Capital Area Transportation Authority
Sandra Dragoo, Executive Director

Haslett Public Schools
Chris Coady, Haslett Board of Education President

Ingham County Road Commission
Bill Conklin, Managing Director

Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), Inc.
Joe Manzella

Lansing Township
John Daher, Supervisor

Okemos Public Schools
Catherine Ash, Superintendent
Amy Crites, Okemos Board of Education President

City of Williamston

Tim Allard, City Manager

Williamstown Township

Mickey Martin, Supervisor

A. Urban Service Boundary, Harmony Gmazel, Land Use Planner, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC)

Ms. Gmazel offered the following overview:

- Regional Growth Project, a preferred land use vision, agreed upon by TCRPC in 2005
- Regional Growth Project was the guiding document for the existence of the Urban Service Boundary Committee
- Supervisor McGillicuddy and other local elected and appointed officials realized Tri-County needed a task force to tackle an urban service boundary, the urban and rural service districts, as well as the possibility of those districts sharing services
- Task Force members operated in the spirit of new regionalism
- New regionalism:
 - Establishes visions and goals, and sets new policy to achieve
 - Looks at the process using visioning and planning to create a fair and equitable structure between governments and agencies
 - Service district or service boundary lines are flexible
 - Collaboration within the committee is emphasized through voluntary agreement
 - Binding trust exists, rather than accountability
 - Empowerment is created through the binding trust by the constructive involvement of the communities
- Urban Service District /Urban Service Boundary (USD/USB) Committee's mission is to support the establishment of an USB thereby providing communities in the region with tools and policies to promote the following elements:
 - Keep urbanized area viable
 - Protect farmland, open space, and rural quality of life
 - Preserve priority conservation areas
 - Utilize existing infrastructure
 - Cost-savings through cooperation and efficiency
- Regional Growth Project data analysis shows that patterns of development in our region cannot be sustained
- Urban service boundary "sprang" from the preferred vision for the Tri-County Area
- Definition of an urban service boundary (contained in Michigan State University's Policy Brief for the Michigan Legislature in 2000) as a successful tool for managing urban sprawl. Such boundaries allow a unit of government to publicly declare that a specific area surrounding a municipality will be the target for urban growth, and thus indicate that areas beyond that boundary will not be supported with public infrastructure services. Such boundary lines are typically enforced by limiting water or sewer services, rather than extending them constantly to support suburban development.
- Creation of the USB location focused on Lansing, East Lansing, Lansing Township, and the urbanized townships surrounding these municipalities
- Ten criteria used by the committee for creation of the USB:
 - Existing and planned sewer and water infrastructure
 - Improved roads and road hierarchy
 - Connection between transportation system destinations
 - Existing population densities
 - Zoning districts and future land use plans of each community
 - Natural resources and working lands
 - Distance threshold from existing support services
 - Capital Improvement Plans
 - Regional benefit factors
 - Existing and anticipated PA 425 Agreement areas
- Data collection included:
 - Proposed boundary line compared to the regional land use vision

- USB overlapped with water and sewer service areas
- USB overlapped with developable lands (approximately 70 square miles)
- USB overlapped with generalized zoning districts
- Results from the community collaboration survey revealed the majority of committee members were in support of some type of collaboration on the issue of an urban service boundary
- Urban service boundary already exists in Delhi Township's Master Plan and on its zoning map
- Some communities, like Meridian, have a "growth management" boundary line
- Meridian Township's "growth management" boundary line has not been acted upon in quite some time
- Existing work done years ago in Meridian Township on its "growth management" boundary line was what inspired the boundary line on the regional urban service boundary
- Anticipated 2011 Committee action:
 - Establish and grow trust between communities
 - Formalize commitment to USB through resolutions of support from the member governments acknowledging the new study and the steps to implement a boundary
 - Adopt the USB into local policy (inclusion in the Master Plan and zoning ordinance language)
 - Collaboratively explore and employ tools that support the USB
 - Use of sample Master Plan language on a community-by-community basis
 - Ascertain if location of the proposed boundary line is conducive to successful implementation

Board members and guests discussed the following:

- Urban service boundary line shown for Meridian Charter Township is the same as was eliminated over 12 years ago
- Concern with legal ramifications for areas in Meridian Township where water and sewer have already been extended past the proposed urban service boundary line
- Reminder that the boundary line is a beginning point, not a final USB
- Meridian Township's representatives (Supervisor McGillicuddy and Township Manager Richards) were comfortable using the proposed boundary line as a starting point
- Meridian Township Board members and staff should have input on the location of the boundary line
- Board member request for Township attorney input
- Concept of an urban service boundary as an economic necessity
- State legislation exists which allows Townships to have an urban service boundary
- Request that public schools have input into this process as it moves forward
- Tax revenue sharing as a planning tool available for use during development of a cooperative urban service boundary

B. Grand River Corridor Project, Debbie Alexander, Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) Michigan/Grand River Avenue Transportation Study Update

Ms. Alexander offered the following overview:

- CATA worked with Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to study the Michigan/Grand River Avenue corridor from the Capitol Building east to Marsh Road
 - MDOT, as the "owner" of the road, suggested CATA lead the initiative and consider a multi-modal transportation project
- Existing CATA service is at or exceeds capacity at certain times during the day
 - CATA need for a decision on whether to add more vehicles to the route or look at a higher-speed alternative to provide public transportation
- CATA was obligated to follow a strict federally mandated process
- First step of the process is to perform an alternatives analysis
 - Purpose of the alternatives analysis is to choose the alternative transit and determine whether the alternative chosen is a competitive project
 - Specific grant funding program that provides eligibility for projects specifies criteria for meeting the eligibility
- Study Process
 - Project initiation
- Development of Corridor Options

- Base line which would be a slight improvement, but not a full established guide way
- Bus rapid transit, a dedicated roadway on which runs rubber tired vehicles at a high speed with an advanced system (e.g., docking systems, signal preemption)
- Modern streetcar
- Light rail system
- Evaluation of alternatives
 - Learned that faster travel does not necessarily generate increased ridership
 - Approximately 6,600 daily trips in the Michigan/Grand River Avenue Corridor (1.7 million trips annually out of a regional total of 11.3 million trips in the region)
 - Modern streetcar has highest ridership but is the most costly
 - Bus rapid transit improves travel time at a lower cost, but needs higher ridership in order to be competitive
- Locally preferred alternative was a modified bus rapid transit system
 - Increases frequency from ten (10) minutes to six (6)
 - Complete replacement of Route 1
 - Provides 28 stations (every ¼ to ½ mile along the corridor)
 - Increase in ridership of 1,000 trips per day
 - Initial estimate of a 7-½ minute savings of travel time
 - Building cost of \$194 million
 - Rebuild roadways only to add stations
 - Need for compliance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirement for cost per passenger index that did not exceed \$24.99
- Funding options:
 - A decision within the region would be required to redirect funding from a variety of existing sources in the short-term to make this project a reality
- If the project is awarded status by the FTA, the next step would be to refine the engineering and identify funding sources
- Michigan/Grand River Avenue is the “spine” of the region
- Corridor has many valuable assets (e.g., state employment center, ball park, hospital, Michigan State University, Meridian Mall)
- Short turn option (ending at Hagadorn) would reduce costs, but also reduce ridership and increase cost per passenger index
- Kiplinger report stated the greater Lansing area is a great place for young adults to live but has unimpressive public transit
- Next steps:
 - Modification of TCRPC’s model which is required to be used for estimating
 - CATA Board submission of the Small Starts application in Summer, 2011
 - Finalize alternatives analysis report
 - Continue work with FTA; final decision on the project may not transpire for one year after application submittal

Board members and guests discussed the following:

- Wide regional representation on the Steering Committee
- Proposed transit system would economically energize the corridor between the Township boundary and Park Lake Road as it is ripe for redevelopment
- Proposed transit system would help sustain the Meridian Mall and expand its customer base
- BRT is the most feasible alternative from a financial perspective
- This project is eligible for 80% federal funding and a 20% local match
- Local match for all public transportation projects since the inception of CATA has always been provided by the state
- State law requires the state to provide at least two thirds of the match and have historically provided 100% of the match for the capital portion of the project
- Grand Rapids has received its full funding grant agreement from the FTA to build a BRT light system
- Detroit has recently submitted its application to the FTA for funding through the New Starts program for a light rail project
- Progressively timed traffic signals along this corridor would allow the buses to travel faster and be a low cost option to achieve some of the stated goals

- Signalization at intersections will be studied because adding a station at an intersection changes the dynamics
- Request for Board members not to look at the roadway or its function in the same light as it is currently
- Signalization will be an important tool to move pedestrians safely to the stations of this center running system
- Concern with delivery trucks parking along Grand River in East Lansing and the resulting traffic congestion
- Greater Lansing Next plan (regional economic development ten year plan) reveals that business follows talent, talents look for great places and great places need good transit
- Modified BRT system enables transit oriented development which allows higher densities in the same area (more people using the same amount of infrastructure)
- This modified BRT system would be the enabler for creation of economic development supported by communities and private sector developers
- Reminder that 20,000 students cross the East Lansing segment of the corridor on a daily basis
- Two Park and Ride lots for the proposed BRT system, one located at the east end of the route and one at the US 127 interchange
- Park and Ride would allow Okemos and Haslett high school students to park at the east end of the route to ride the proposed BRT system to Lansing Community College (LCC)
- Possible opportunities for school systems to utilize the feeder lines to aid public school transportation
- CATA system would feed into this “spine”, but a thorough evaluation of the mechanics has not yet been undertaken
- School of Choice students could use the proposed BRT as an option
- High school students could use the proposed BRT system as a commuting option to attend a new three-year program scheduled to begin in the fall at the LCC campus which allows students to simultaneously obtain their high school diploma and an associates degree
- CATA looking for a public/private partnership with a developer to construct and/or own the station and then link (possibly through a pedestrian bridge) to the Park and Ride lot which could be shared with the development
- Funding through a variety of federal sources with a state match
- Michigan’s Comprehensive Transportation Fund (CTF) would be the source of funding for the transit component
- In all likelihood, the roadway match would also come from the state
- TCRPC will need to ascertain if it will divert conventional surface transportation Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds
- Suggestion for the region to remain fluid in its thinking on funding
- Movement among the transit community to raise the Small Starts investment level (currently \$75 million) to \$150 million
- CATA will need help from all communities in its efforts to have the state and federal government provide the necessary funding for the project

Board members and guests discussed the following topics:

- Okemos Board of Education continued concern with the proximity of Rezoning #10070 to Chippewa Middle School
- Haslett Board of Education affirmation of the Superintendent of Haslett Public Schools request that any medical marihuana facilities be kept 1,000 feet from any school building similar to other controlled substances
- Superintendent of Okemos Public Schools concern with loss of per pupil funding proposed by Governor Snyder
- Okemos and Haslett Public Schools continued loss of enrollment
- Positive result of Meridian Township’s collaboration with Williamstown Township for police services
- Proposed collaboration between the City of Williamston and Meridian Township for the township to run some of its parks and recreation programs
- Suggestion to publish a regional Parks and Recreation program book to have the various entities share in the cost

- Suggestion to have all the regional stakeholders come to the table to discuss delivery of services in an effort to avoid duplication
- ICRC only has ½ FTE weighmaster
- Overweight trucks very damaging to roads
- When the ICRC issues a violation and the court upholds the fine, all monies go to the state
- Opportunity to keep money at the local level by having local police write tickets for excessive truck loads and 70% of the penalty can stay in the community
- ICRC has scales and offered training
- Haslett Board of Education's appreciation to Meridian's Parks and Recreation Department for its assistance to Murphy Elementary School in the creation of butterfly gardens at Orlando Park as a service learning project
- Haslett Board of Education's appreciation for the new Haslett Public Library project

8. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor McGillicuddy opened and closed Public Remarks.

9. FINAL BOARD MEMBER COMMENT (None)

10. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor McGillicuddy adjourned the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

SUSAN MCGILLICUDDY
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

ELIZABETH LEGOFF
CLERK PRO TEM

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary