

**BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2023  
BIG RAPIDS TOWNSHIP OFFICES, 14212 NORTHLAND DR.  
BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307  
6:00 PM  
APPROVED**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.**

**CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m. ROLL CALL: Stanek, Saez, Currie, Bean, Everett, Geib, Routley present.**

**ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: Bean - discuss facts posted to the website and the misinformation given at the State of the Township and 9&10 News.**

**NEW BUSINESS: The purpose of this meeting is to discuss concerns amongst Board members, and attorney updates. Called by Bean and Currie.**

**C. Bean** - We should create factual information on our page not mislead the public - we don't want to betray the trust of the township.

**H. Saez** - Comments/accusations as a board on meetings we aren't invited to from Tracy Ruell - accused of missing a zoom call on 3rd with EGLE that not one of us were invited to or CC'd on any email. Please clarify (Bill) - States he did have a meeting and that Kelly came and reported on the meeting.

**H. Saez** reads Carman's comment "Whether Gotion is or is not a Chinese company should not influence one's decision on supporting or opposing this project. What should be considered is if this is a good fit for the community. The Chinese connection reference in the BRCT survey was considered carefully. To omit the reference would have been misleading. Further, the Chinese people are very proud of their culture and its technological accomplishments. To exclude their role in this endeavor has the potential to offend them. At this point, in this most fragile process, the controversy, disrespect and divisiveness displayed in the recent posts may lead Gotion to decide that our community is not "a good fit for them." Please, could everyone at least pretend that we are civil. Let us all think before we post." I commend Bean for saying this and couldn't have said it better myself. That same night, we discover that Bill has made a statement to 9&10 saying "It is not a Chinese company"

**Stanek** - "That's not what I said"

**Saez** - That's exactly what you said.

**Currie** - There are two main concerns of our residents. The company's origin, and the environment. If we cannot get the first one right, how are we supposed to get the second right?

**Bean** - **Not one board member has gone on record whether they are in favor or opposed to this.** So there's an awful lot of innuendo from Paul Griffith, Jim Chapman, Bill and from others. People who have no idea because they don't have information. Just 5 short weeks ago did we get the info that Green Twp has had for months. You told us you had to sign a confidentiality agreement and there was none.

**Stanek** - "Whatever you say"

**Currie** - We want you to recant your statement with 9&10 on film.

**Bean** - Our job is to represent our constituents. You are not doing that.

**Stanek** - I apologize if that's how you feel. I will talk to our attorney about that.

**Bean** - I move that we appoint an individual to recant and revoke policy that Bill is spokesperson even if it's a onetime temporary motion.

**Currie** - I don't understand why you don't think its misleading Bill.

**Stanek** - I don't think it is.

**Saez** - And you have a room full of people laughing.

**Stanek** - They're welcome to. I don't care.

**Bean** - We know you don't and that's the problem.

**Saez** - Reads letter, including numerous disrespectful comments made by Stanek regarding board to numerous people. Continues with Ethics policy, and broken ethics policies by Stanek in question. Disclosure of conflict of interest - not informing board of Treasurer position with MCDC, or signing a confidentiality agreement with them with knowledge of the project far before informing the

board; truthfulness, information acquired, community decisions, community role models, transparency, representation of township interests.

**Currie** - Stop right there - townships best interests. Not the county's, not MCDC. The Township. In addition the code of ethics that you refused to sign because of religious beliefs. As an elected official you must be open and honest with your board, and you have failed to do that numerous times.

**Bean** - Your comment to us is always "Recall me". I would like to request your resignation.

**Stanek** - According to our attorney you have to request it. You can request it but I will deny it.

**Saez** - As many times as you've asked us to recall you and then you won't. You don't feel you've done anything wrong?

**Stanek** - I do not.

**B. Schriver** - I'd like an explanation of why you can't sign the ethics policy due to your religious beliefs.

**Stanek** - I will not share that in public.

**Lenny** - Bill I think you should be ashamed of yourself. I have heard you say that this is not a Chinese company. You are a typical politician and you don't ever have to be held accountable for your actions.

**Chuck Healey** - Just an outsider looking in - I've heard several things - varying degrees of Chinese ownership. I've been asking questions. I was also told by Tracy Ruell - talk to Jim Chapman he has the documentation. I talked to him and he said "I don't have anything, it's just what I heard." You're just taking someone's word on it. That's the problem.

One thing I've heard - and maybe this will help - if someone were to ask - on the FAQ sheet it says "Gotion is not owned by the chinese government" and that is a huge tap dance around everything because if I wouldn't say that "McDonalds is not owned by the American government."

**Bean** - It is a spin. Initial questions were not questions the public was asking. Answers go in circles.

**Schriver** - Someone from the right place - comments about not getting the right answers, stating the "difference in culture"-first red flag I saw.

**Lenny** - Signs all over asking for people to work and how will we find the people? Surveys don't mean anything.

**BRT female resident** - How do you feel about them tapping into our resources?

**Bean** - Only resources of ours used would be water and electricity, not mining here as we don't have the material to mine.

**Resident-** Are they going to be refurbishing batteries here?

**Lenny** - One time they say building batteries and one time they say components.

**Currie** - Explains the process of how they are built after her discussion with a battery director. \*See conversation below\*

**Resident** - They're calling for a huge amount of refurbished batteries because this is such a new concept and the scientists are not sure how to dispose of the waste safely.

**Currie** - Waste explained "capture what they can", as we are told.

**Paul Bullock** - (Speaking to Currie) I meant no disrespect, when quoted 5x multiplier -Only unsure who you got it from because I saw 2.3-3.7 according to 3 studies from "professionals" but point is never heard of any type of multiplier like that.

**Currie** - A battery plant director. He knows what he's talking about because he's seen the influx first hand.

**Resident** - Where are they getting the water?

**Bean** - That would be negotiated; a couple wells on our property that has a few customers.

**Resident** - I had a customer move out of BR because of no housing for middle income - and they were told by the city that they didn't have enough water when the college kids are in session. Is that going to affect our water table?

**Saez** - Chuck Thelen (Gotion VP) committed to having a water study done at the Ren zone meeting but we've heard nothing on that yet.

**Cate Arroe** - Why are questions asked of only the people going to benefit and why not asking people who could announce the cons of the project. It's The Right place, Gotion, Ferris. No environmentalists. Wondering if we are only getting pros but interested to see vast cons of the project.

**Saez** - I've reached out to numerous EGLE reps - no response; In addition to the recent meeting that we were not included in recently, with EGLE.

**Stanek** - Kelly informed the board of wetland study.

**Cate** - Could I request that someone comes to a meeting with the cons?

**All** - yes. **Cate**; "said requested".

**Saez** - Bill could you share what you learned in the meeting with EGLE?

**Stanek** - A lot of the acreage they want to use and some are wetlands.

**Currie** - If they want to use wetlands they have to transfer the wetlands. If they're going to build on the wetlands they must replace them. If they can recreate them within a certain mile radius then they can. Had to submit other plans to EGLE.

This is an example of information we would like to know about. I personally was invited to this meeting last Friday and that's the only reason I know what I'm telling you now.

**Resident** - What is the deadline of the project?

**Currie** - We've heard March 31st, break ground by March, first of April, possibly February. Answer always changes, so unsure.

**Bean** - Would like their proposed timeline online and public.

**Resident** - Do I have the right to ask what the board thinks about this company?

**Stanek** - You can ask for opinions.

**Currie** - I think I can speak for everyone when I say we don't have enough information to make a decision.

**Joe Bechaz** - Comment on Walmart/Meijer and wetlands.

**Currie** - Addressing Twp boards concerns - Asks if there is a contingency plan with Green Township if BRT were to vote no.

**Stanek** - That's up to Green Twp. I've heard there is a contingency plan.

**Chapman** - As much animosity as there is here I'm not interested. Sure Bill for you, be happy to. There has been serious concerns on how this board is going to go and what it's going to do and in order to save this opportunity for the community we have been trying to develop a plan B. No formal plan but discussions on whether or not it could be handled; depends on wetlands.

**Joe Bechaz** - Isn't Green Twp's land all private property does green twp have anything to do with that?

**Chapman** - Public act stuff but sale of property is private.

**Everett** - I'd like to address the lack of relationship between townships - we have something in common and I don't understand why you and Bill aren't working to bring the boards together to share ideas and concerns.

**Chapman** - It's very simple i've tried multiple times to satisfy info on one on one basis - trying to get us to come to meetings. Board member shoving finger in face saying you're wrong;

**Everett** - This board would welcome you to come to our meetings - I've been to several of yours now and you let me speak and I appreciate that. Bill - I'd like to speak to that I think we really need to start working together.

**Saez** - Well that would start at the misinformation ending.

**Schrivver** - Well stating "trying to save this opportunity" feels like you've already decided.

**Chapman** - Believe it's a generational opportunity. If we can sit civilly because it is in the best interest of my residents. Development plan needs to be worked out.

**Resident** - I seem to think there are lots of unanswered questions - Is there any way to document those and try to have answers?

**Stanek** - Project is so fluid, haven't gotten design together, lots cant be answered right now.

**Resident** - As a leader of the community you all are supposed to know.

2-3 years employing 50-100. It will be very automated. No definite thing to say we want this for the jobs. Any way possible to speak to someone who knows what's going on and get information for us?

**Chapman** - Clawbacks - no money until break ground. Certain requirements must meet or have to give money back. Hook to keep them honest and ensure goals are met.

**Bean** - Amount of incentives with detail on website.

**Resident** - What all questions have been asked?

**Saez** - I've compiled a list with all meetings and The Right Place answered what they could.

Chuck Thelen told us a minimum of 300 jobs and also bringing foreign people to get the plant "up and running."

**Resident** - Where will they house them?

**Saez** - That's another question we've asked. Asked about Ferris housing rumor.

**Resident** - Are my taxes going to go up because of this? Who's going to pay for the roads to repair them from the traffic, the infrastructure etc?

**Bean** - 50 million dollar infrastructure grant

**J Bechaz** - Couldn't say how it would be distributed yet

**Stanek** - Property taxes could go up if property value goes up

**Bean** - Double edged sword. Wonderful if you're selling, not so good for the next generation buying. My home might increase in value, great.

**Everett** - When the government spends tax dollars, where do you think we get those dollars, no single politician saying let me contribute.

**Chapman** - If we drop this project will taxes go down? No. We just got the opportunity for it to come here.

**Paul** - I live in Chippewa Twp and I'm the county administrator - I have no anticipation of taxes going up unless property taxes go up. State tax dollars going into it - no control over that.

**Everett** - Yes you do by who you elect.

**Paul** - Any bond indebtedness will still be paid, possibly only 50%, but could be paid off quicker which could result in reduction of taxes.

**Bean** - Or another bond; audience concludes; yes another bond.

**Paul** - But those are voted on. The MEDC analysis, they project would have a 3.13 multiplier; every job will create 2.13 other jobs within the community. Right from MEDC application. Bottom line - tax dollars spent? Absolutely. Local tax dollars - no. **To Mr. Stanek - to say it's not a Chinese company, I will not take that position.** I will take the position that it is a multinational corporation that is headquartered in china. Which, if that makes Ford a US company, this would be a Chinese company. But I would argue that it is a not a Chinese government owned company.

**Currie** - No one is saying that. So why not simply say it's a Chinese company with multinational directors? Why cover it up?

**Paul** - I'm fine with taking that tact.

**Currie** - There lies our problem. Being told multiple different things - led to do our own research which has led to pros and cons. When MEDC wrote a letter to the strategic fund, there were other things not accurate. Not saying if the multiplier is accurate or not, but it has led us to look elsewhere for information.

**Saez** - Additionally at the ren zone meeting Chuck had said there was a phase 3 that we weren't aware of and that's why we may have different information on a multiplier estimate.

**Paul** - He did allude to the fact that there was a phase 3. Phase 1 is 150,000 tons of raw materials. Big roll of film coated with "some stuff", 10 acres of buildings. Phase 2 - 40 acres under roof, but when we talk about jobs, 500 in first year; by year 3 about 700, year 5 additional 800; ramping it up. If this happens, and they don't fulfill - clawback provisions. If this happens and they do a 10 year build out the last group of people that they hire are in 7th grade right now. Generational project. Time to ramp up. Chuck explained in study they went 45 mins for job fulfillment. It's their problem if they can't fulfill jobs, not ours. I understand you're getting a lot of pressure from many different directions - all I would ask that you do is just do what you're doing to get the facts you can gather. There are things we don't know and cannot provide. Fed/state Government has regulatory agencies that are a pain in the neck for manufacturers and they will watch out for us.

**Paul** - was there a 2nd plan at the Ren zone meeting? Yes, I drafted a resolution for my board that if BR Twp didn't want to participate and Green did, my board would have considered that. That wasn't necessary because you did want to participate. **\*Take note of Tony Geib's comment coming up shortly after this\*.**

**Joe bechaz** - Paul, are you representing the county?

**Paul** - I'm me, Paul.

**Bechaz** - Well you keep saying you're the county administrator.

**Saez** - Do you believe that any standing board members of the MCDC should have Abstained from voting on the Ren zone, and should they abstain from voting on the sale of the land?

**Paul** - No, because MCDC doesn't have any economic interest in this.

**Currie** - You mean financial?

**Bechaz** - Your director works for The Right Place.

**Paul** - She works for us.

**Bechaz** - No she works for The Right Place.

**Paul** - We contract with The Right Place for her services.

**Bechaz** - There you go.

**Paul** - There was a back up resolution, I drafted it; just wanted you to know.

**Bean** - We know that.

**Saez** - We just want to know now if there's a contingent plan for the company to go entirely in Green township if BR township was to vote no.

**Paul** - Not to my knowledge. My fondest hope is that we can do this together. Don't hear anyone up here saying they are a hard no. So I'm still hoping.

**Bean** - A lot of people think we are. It comes from up North.

**Routley** - to Paul - You seem to be quite jumpy at the 5 times multiplier, as the administrator is there a number that you think would be too big for us?

**Paul** - No.

**Routley** - Could we withstand a million people? That to me seems like too many so you can't come up with just a number off the top of your head?

**Paul** - No because it will be organic growth. The minute this broke the city started getting inquiries for hotels. People see opportunity. Look to South - some places with no large city but still 60-70 thousand people. Could we handle that? Yeah sure. Schools would love it. Ton of positive economic things that could happen. My kids graduated from Evart. I have watched Evart rise and fall, mostly fall with places closing in recent years. Handled influx without problem - struggles were with people leaving. Handled expansions very well. I have faith in resiliency of our community.

**Saez** - Chapman claimed in one of his comments that the county thinks our board is foolish for questioning any of this, so I would like to clarify that comment. He wonders where the animosity comes from but he continuously disrespects us on a public platform.

**Paul** - well first of all, if you look at my facebook you'll find nothing. But if you say something to my face, I care about that because let's talk, let's have a discourse.

**Bean** - Paul I appreciate your input this evening.

**Lenny** - There's an expression, the fish, she rots from the hat. You are the fish. Bill, we would not have this tonight if you would have been 100% open with your board. I believe you need to set the record straight, I believe you need to keep your board on board, and I think a lot of this would go away. But you are the problem, and you can be the solution.

**Stanek** - I'm sorry. I have shared everything after being made public.

**Resident** - I'm sorry I'm ignorant but what does FSU have to do with this?

**Bean** - They have an opportunity to add degree programs/training. Financial and growth incentives.

**Resident** - So most jobs will be filled from Ferris? Is there anything else they have to offer FSU other than that?

**Stanek** - Ferris has always been a tech school and that will help. Main reason Gotion picked BR.

**Resident** - Gotion said they had 30 other places to come and decided here, did anyone look into that?

**Bean** - We don't know that, company will make decision based off of analysis that they do

**Resident** - Scary thing to think that we're the place because we're the only location that didn't turn them down.

**Stanek** - No, lots of places would like them. We should be asking why wouldn't they come here

**Resident** - Because of materials they're bringing in. These aren't everyday materials. These are toxic materials.

**Currie** - And then there's materials that are nasty to mine and the way they're being mined is horrendous. We need to acknowledge that as a community. You can put your blinders on to the way it's being mined or acknowledge it's a nasty thing. If you want to move forward because of its economic growth for us then so be it, but at least do your research. At least be aware that you are affecting someone else's life.

**Schrivver** - At the last meeting there was a motion made about doing a survey - haven't seen that; only online survey. No one with any level of experience ever puts any credibility into online surveys. Disappointed to see that. Need something mailed which I believe was discussed.

**Saez** - The total came to around \$2,000 to do so and when I asked Bill he said he couldn't see approving that amount.

**Bean** - We voted as a board to do this as a mail in and you unilaterally decided not to. It was motioned 7-0.

**Routley** - More so I specifically asked if there was a dollar amount that we needed to approve.

**Bean** - We need to resurrect and get it out there. That's what we voted on.

**Stanek** - Property owners or residents?

**Bean** - Whatever we have on file.

**Geib** - We voted as a board; I'm not an attorney but supervisors don't have the right to veto. That's what we need to do.

**Mary Bechaz** - I've had 76 apartment rental inquiries within 4 days for my listing. We are going to need housing.

**Bean** - A step in process needs to be completed called development agreement

**Paul** - With regard to county bldg dept - not at all concerned. Might need to add an inspector, but any additional cost we pass onto building permit. Bldg dept is self sustaining

**Schrivver** - Watched the city go through this with marijuana. My personal opinion - vote driven by people who wanted legal weed. Focus was money. Look what we ended up with. 17 shops, 5 already closed. Let's be more deliberate than the city was, and a lot of what I hear on this is financial incentives.

**Everett** - Before we close the meeting I'd like to understand what we've accomplished. Bill, what can I expect you to do, what do you expect us to do?

**Stanek** - One thing I'd like to do is work with Green township.

**Joe Bechaz** - I suggest Bill and Jim don't meet one on one. Have additional board members. You'd be surprised how smooth things went when you weren't counting on one persons commentary.

**Stanek** - I'd like to have both boards.

**Saez** - Last bit of info to update boards - update from attorney on possibly appraisers for property. Additionally, I motion to make a meeting with our attorney to discuss our term sheet and the legal opinion that was given to us tonight. Supported by Bean. Unanimous support.

**Routley** - I think the joint meeting should wait upon survey results.

**Resident**- Can you all get on the same page and support each other. You have no idea how much control you have over what the rest of the lives will be like for our children here. Stop thinking about yourselves and think about our children. Do the right thing.

**Tony Geib**- It was brought up tonight, the very fact that it was said that several other community leaders were concerned about "this board and what it would do", with something we weren't even informed of ahead of time. Why would they think that before they even informed us? I know Penny likes to say that I don't say a lot. But that speaks volumes Bill and that's all I'm going to say.

**Bean** - They came with a contingency plan to the renaissance zone meeting, and we hadn't even known about it for a week. They came with an application in their hands.

**JBechaz** - Well Bill knew about it for 1.5 years before that. Now you know why I suggested having more board involvement in conversations.

**Geib** - We made a motion and voted on that as well and it still hasn't happened.

**Chuck Healey** - Point of clarity - discussion about Bill recanting what he said to the news, discussion about having someone else do that. Can I get clarity on where we are on that?

**Currie** - Carman's motion still stands and I support it.

**Saez** - Carman moved to appoint an individual to recant the statement if Bill was not willing to do so.

**Stanek** - I told you I need to talk to the attorney first.

**Bean** - You didn't before you said it.

**Stanek** - All in favor of the motion say I; all say I, Stanek "abstain".

**Everett** - I don't think you can.

**Stanek** - I'll vote no.

**Currie** - I make a motion to appoint Carman. Saez supports. Motion passed unanimously.

**Adjourned. 7:49 pm.**

Big Rapids Charter Township will provide necessary and reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audiotapes of printed material, if individuals with disabilities, upon five business days notice to the township. Individuals requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Hannah Saez, Big Rapids Charter Township Clerk, 14212 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI 49307- call 231 796 3603 or fax request to 231 796 2533.