

UNAPPROVED

**JOINT SPECIAL MEETING  
MECOSTA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
GREEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
BIG RAPIDS CHARTER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2022**

William Routley, Mecosta County Board Chair, called the Joint Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Members present on roll call – Mecosta County – William Routley, Marilyn Bradstrom, Jerrilynn Strong, Linda Howard, Ray Steinke, Tom O’Neil and Wendy Nystrom.

Green Charter Township roll call – James Chapman, Janet Clark, Denise MacFarlane, Roger Carroll, Dale Jernstadt, James Peek; Gary Todd absent

Big Rapids Charter Township roll call – Bill Stanek, Hannah Saez, Penny Currie, Carman Bean, Tony Geib, Christopher Teceno, Jerry Everett.

W. Routley advised the reason for this Joint Special Meeting is to approve a Michigan Renaissance Zone application for Gotion, Inc. by Green Charter Township, Big Rapids Charter Township and Mecosta County.

Randy Thelen, President/CEO of The Right Place and Kelly Wawsczyk, Executive Director of Mecosta County Development Corporation/The Right Place were introduced and presented on the process to get where we are today with the Renaissance Zone application and additional incentives that could come with the approval.

Gotion, Inc. representatives Chuck Thelen - VP Operations and Aaron Haley – Director of Project Mgmt presented on what Gotion, Inc is and what they plan to bring to Mecosta County.

**Public Comment:**

President Bill Pink – Ferris State University – spoke in favor of approving the Renaissance Zone application. This is an incredible opportunity; many communities would love to be able to have this meeting you are having right now; to bring in a partner to this community – congratulations. Serves as a board member on The Right Place and MEDC. FSU stands poised and ready to assist the community and partners coming to the table. This is something for our students, the Bulldogs – what it will do for us as a University – to get people into great paying jobs. The perspective of FSU is this is paramount to helping students and helping the community; thank you and congratulations on this opportunity.

Michelle Graham – Mecosta Township Supervisor/Mecosta County Development Corporation member - believes approval of the application will be good for Mecosta County.

Julie Burrell – Oceana County resident and Economic Development Director for Newaygo County/The Right Place - spoke regarding how this could also impact neighboring counties, such as Newaygo; is very supportive of this investment.

Carleen Rose – City of Big Rapids resident and business owner – has never been as excited as today; is very supportive of this venture. Feels we are ready as a community to embrace this opportunity; this is a once-in-a-several-decade opportunity.

Dave Hamelund – Big Rapids Township resident and business owner –thanked the Boards to speak about this exciting prospect coming to our community; this is a big win for Mecosta County; urges the Boards to vote in favor of the Renaissance Zone.

Dave Bee – Director of West Michigan Regional Planning Commission for 23 years - planning is what this is all about tonight; leadership saw the importance of this opportunity and stuck with it. Embrace success and past leaders for making this opportunity happen.

Nora Balgoyen – representing ITC Transmission, Michigan Electric Transmission Company – moving power is ITC’s sole focus; promotes understanding of the grid; understands the magnitude of this economic opportunity. ITC is excited to be a key partner and proud to support this project.

Jeff Maze – Executive Director for Consumers Energy Business Customer Care - has been working on energy solutions to serve this project. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Big Rapids/Mecosta County. Will work with colleagues at ITC and is confident in the infrastructure to support this project; upgrades will improve reliability in the area. Consumers is working to protect the planet with clean energy sources. Thank you to Township/County leaders for leadership and considering this proposal. This is an example of how to move Michigan forward; Consumers asks for support to move this project forward.

Mark Klumpp – resident and Township Supervisor of Morton Township – this opportunity is a game changer; please support this.

Joe McNally – Broker/Owner of ReMax Big Rapids - this is next level exciting; groundwork was laid for this project 20 years ago ... thankful for those people. Big advocate of this project and wants to see engagement in the community; partnership with local leaders if this comes to fruition.

Tracy Ruell – Mecosta Township resident – this is a great opportunity for our area; thank you to Big Rapids Township for the past work; the property was built for this. This is the opportunity to say yes and make it happen.

Suzanne Cox - DLZ Energy and Architects – 9 offices in Michigan, 4 in West Michigan. Has been involved with other battery projects in small communities; will be honored to be involved in this project; the benefits to these communities have been enormous.

Kevin Cushway – Green Township resident – has property in Green Township and is in favor of the project.

Shelly Keene – Executive Director of Michigan Works West Central and resident of Hinton Township - has been a part of this conversation since the early stages; skilled workforce is a priority. Goal is to assist qualified job seekers to provide meaningful employment. Production level jobs will help put people in top tier ... prepared to work with Gotion to work through the hiring process; more than 2,300 positions will be needed over 10 years. This will increase the number of competitive jobs in the area; team is ready to step up and assist to make this project possible. Michigan Works West Central supports this Renaissance Zone application.

Tyler Huntley – CEO of Huntley’s Clubhouse, childcare provider – this is a once in a lifetime chance to grow Mecosta County; could be a 10% increase in population to our community. It will be a benefit to small businesses, churches, families in this community and will strengthen our economy. Requesting to take seriously the safety of the people in this community with regard to environmental impacts of this factory.

Dave Eisler – former President of FSU – this is an exercise in democracy seeing all elected officials working together; has lived in Big Rapids Township for 20 years. Finally have an opportunity to make a positive, critical difference. This is big ... once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; proud to be a part of this.

Paul Griffith – Colfax Township resident and former Executive Director of Michigan Works - has worked on many new projects over the years ... none as large as this one. This company likely to get workforce around 40-mile radius ... Mecosta County and surrounding areas/counties; average annual wage will be \$61,000. Tonight’s vote and others in the following months will be the most important vote ever made as an elected official; in favor of this application.

Connie Koepke – resident of Stanwood and Director of Mecosta County Visitors Bureau – it’s an understatement to say this company will fill our hotels and generate new money into our community that we so desperately need; overall positive for everyone.

W. Routley closed Public Comment.

The Township and County Boards presented questions to Gotion, Inc and The Right Place.

**Green Charter Township – Resolution #19262022**

Jim Chapman, Supervisor of Green Charter Township Board, explained the need to vote on a motion allowing a Trustee to abstain from voting on the Resolution due to a property sale with Gotion, Inc.

J. Peak moved for unanimous consent for Mr. Jernstadt to abstain from voting. Second by D. McFarlane. Roll call vote: 6 yeas; 0 nays; motion carried.

J. Peak moved to adopt Resolution #19262022 – Resolution to Consent to Establishment of Renaissance Zone within the Township. R. Carroll seconded; roll call vote: 5 yeas; 0 nays; 1 abstain [Jernstadt]; motion carried.

**Big Rapids Charter Township – Resolution #2022-05**

T. Geib moved to adopt Resolution #2022-05 – Resolution to Consent to Establishment of Renaissance Zone within the Township. C. Bean seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

**Mecosta County Resolution #2022-12**

J. Strong moved to adopt Resolution #2022-12 – Application for Renaissance Zone. R. Steinke seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

B. Stanek, J. Chapman and W. Routley thanked all for attending the meeting.

Meeting adjourned 9:11 p.m.



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Marcee M. Purcell, Mecosta County Clerk and  
Clerk for the Mecosta County Board of Commissioners

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William Routley, Chair  
Mecosta County Board of Commissioners