

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
August 30, 2010  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4560, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

**APPROVED**

PRESENT: Chair Reicosky, Secretary Goldsberry, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Goodale  
ABSENT: Vice-Chair Deits, Commissioner Honicky, Commissioner Jorkasky, Commissioner Beyea and Commissioner Wilcox  
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak, Director of Community Planning and Development Mark Kieselbach

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Reicosky called the regular meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**Secretary Goldsberry moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

**3. Commercial Planned Unit Development Round Table Discussion**

A. Welcome by Chair Reicosky

B. Topic introduction by Secretary Goldsberry

C. Discussion

- Township Board as final decision maker
- Lack of public hearing before the Planning Commission
- Opens door to make certain properties more developable
- Some sites can't be developed under current regulations – non-conforming
- Haslett village PO (Professional and Office) zoned properties as rentals
- Applicability to certain sites in the Township such as like Haslett Village
- Assist developer and property owner to bring back to economic viability
- Mall is losing business to Eastwood
- Need to do what is necessary to attract consumers
- Viable mix of businesses to attract customers--essential businesses, destination stores, movie theaters
- Location is a disadvantage
- Consider a future for Meridian Mall as a real town center
- Attract developers with public-private partnerships
- Additional cost and time is not a good idea with the number of vacant storefronts
- Staff should advocate for development
- Ombudsman to assist businesses through the permitting process
- Economic Development Commission's (EDC) business retention and expansion activities
- Planning Commission can make the process easier for businesses to get through
- Review a "concept" first and eliminate up-front costs
- Simplify ordinances, reduce the length of time it takes to get things done
- The process for major/minor revisions should be simplified
- Traffic study requirement for every project unnecessary

- Explore the Form-Based Code concept in certain locations (property design vs. use approach)
- Brownfield redevelopment sites
- Small lot size, non-contiguous to receive federal aid
- Hire and economic development director
- Be proactive, buy and clean up property for private use
- Possible Corridor Improvement District for Haslett
- Simplify the ordinance; make it less complex for business to build and grow
- A business plan is necessary if desire good development
- EDC Façade program for Haslett as an incentive
- Mixed use development must be sensitive to the area
- The Township must decide what it wants to be
- Ease some requirements, not to be less beautiful but to help businesses and developers to be more successful, fill vacant storefronts
- Strip malls are just hanging on
- Flexibility without interfering with safety, lighting,
- Redevelopment streamlining webinar—tools for smaller sites
- As an incentive to get projects done, reduce time limit for redevelopment
- What is the time frame for extensions
- Zoning ordinance standards to not match properties
- Redevelopment process is too expensive, greenfields preferred for this reason
- Planned Unit Development and Site Plan Review processes are too expensive
- No need to require a special use permit for buildings over 25,000 square feet
- Expensive, long, unwieldy process
- More creativity and flexibility are good concepts to promote
- Move in the land use direction exemplified by the Michigan/Grand River transit project
- Be gentle to small business
- Add an incentive for preparing a traffic study
- Raise the bar from a customer standpoint with a new philosophy/attitude—first response is “what can we do” not “no”
- Work with property owners to establish business incubators
- What needs to be taken out and what added to make the ordinance easier to get people into non-conforming sites?
- More creative ways to prepare a traffic study; simplify for redevelopment only
- Create a mechanism such as a “high priority” site designation and fast track review for sites that have been available for sale or redevelopment for a long time
- How viable are zoning ordinance requirements if it’s necessary to adopt methods to encourage redevelopment
- Conflict between providing services near residential (smart growth) and requiring businesses not be near (standard setbacks)
- Hate to see standards lowered
- Process is more of a problem than township standards
- Streamline the process, review requirements, eliminate the public hearing for site plan review, allow concurrent reviews
- If an applicant follows the rules, the process should not take too long
- Small business are the engines of the economy
- Community volunteers as resources—developer, communication expert, business expert
- Redevelopment only, not greenfield development out

- Why should easing requirements result in a cost (amenities) to the developer? Development of difficult sites should be enough

**4. Public remarks**

**5. Adjournment**

Chair Reicosky adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Oranchak, AICP  
Principal Planner