

***CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
March 22, 2010**

APPROVED

**5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Chair Reicosky, Secretary Domas, Commissioners Beyea, Goodale, Honicky, Jackson, Wilcox
ABSENT: Vice-Chair Deits, Commissioner Jorkasky
STAFF: Director of Community Planning and Development Mark Kieselbach, Director of Public Works and Engineering Ray Severy, Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Reicosky called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

Commissioner Honicky moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Wilcox moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2010. Seconded by Commissioner Beyea.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Reicosky opened the floor for public remarks.

Michael Leon, 4890 Chipping Camden Lane, Okemos, spoke to the special use permit standards and in opposition to Special Use Permit #09101.

Greg Wade, 1320 Ethel Street, Okemos, spoke in support of Special Use Permit #09101.

David Pierson, attorney on behalf of Trilogy Services, 1305 S. Washington, Lansing, spoke in support of Special Use Permit #09101.

Marna Wilson, 1905 Tomahawk, Okemos, spoke in opposition to Special Use Permit #09101.

Mike Powell, Powell & Associates Engineers, 4700 Cornerstone Drive, White Lake, on behalf of Trilogy Services, spoke in support of Special Use Permit #09101.

Mark Clouse, Eyde Co., 4660 S. Hagadorn Road, East Lansing, spoke in support of Special Use Permit #09101.

Chair Reicosky closed public remarks.

5. Communications

- Gerald J. Bugenski, 2567 Jolly Road, Okemos; RE: Support for a reduced speed limit on Jolly Road between Hagadorn and Okemos Roads
- Township Board Update for the Regular Board meeting of March 16, 2010 as given by Principal Planner Oranchak

6. Public hearings

- A. Special Use Permit #10041 (AT&T), a request to allow the installation of new utility cabinets in the easement at 2258 Bennett Road causing the total footprint of all utility cabinets to exceed 50 square feet.

Chair Reicosky opened the public hearing at 7:29 P.M.

- Introduction by the Chair (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation and applicants)
- Summary of subject matter
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the special use permit request as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 18, 2010.
- Applicant
Al Dionise, Engineering Manager, AT&T, 3337 Abbott Road, East Lansing, availed himself for Planning Commission questions.
- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Honicky spoke to the sufficient isolation of the site for the proposed use.

Commissioner Jackson inquired as to the location of this site.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the address of the cabinet is 2258 Bennett Road.

Commissioner Jackson addressed the 50 decibel (db) load at the property line. She inquired of staff as to its additional screening recommendation.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded this issue will be addressed during site plan review and the applicant will be required to add screening if determined necessary.

Commissioner Jackson inquired as to the exact location of the proposed new cabinets.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded they are between the two larger existing cabinets.

Chair Reicosky asked if there would be a need for a back-up generator for these cabinets.

Mr. Dionise responded in the event of a power failure, the structures are equipped with internal batteries for a designated amount of time. If the outage were to last longer than the life of the internal batteries, AT&T would use electrified trucks to power the generator until full power was restored.

Commissioner Beyea requested staff incorporate a condition of approval stating the decibels not exceed 50 db at the property line. He believed landscaping for sound reduction should also be included in the approval.

Mr. Dionise added AT&T will meet the landscaping requirements. He added that the fans in the unit only run when a specific temperature is reached.

Chair Reicosky stated there may need to be a sound retarded fence or privacy barrier to give the structures a friendlier feel in the neighborhood. He added this issue can be adequately addressed during site plan review.

Chair Reicosky closed the public hearing at 7:45 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Special Use Permit #09101 (Design Services Co.), a request to construct a 94-bed, 57,464 square foot assisted living/skilled care facility, a non-residential use in the RR (Rural Residential) district.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Clarification of earlier Planning Commission comments
- Important for assisted living residents to get out and be part of a community
- Project is not consistent with five(5) of the special use permit criteria
- Project impact on the wildlife in the area
- Project is inconsistent with the Master Plan
- Project is contrary to the Greenspace Plan
- Project would be a detriment to Cornell Road as a scenic road corridor
- Property has significant and substantial wetland areas to the west and north
- Significant runoff in the area from a heavy rain
- Proposed water run-off mitigation would be insufficient for this grassy knoll in the event of a heavy rain
- Importance of strategic and sustainable growth
- Great project in the wrong location
- Project is compatible with surrounding uses
- Project will not negatively effect surrounding neighborhoods
- Changes made to the site plan at the last meeting respond to and reflect the less urban character of this portion of the Township
- Better location for senior citizen development in the area of The Lodges of East Lansing

Commissioner Honicky moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby denies Special Use Permit #09101 (Design Services Company) to construct a 94-bed assisted living and skilled care facility on a 9.01 acre site zoned RR (Rural Residential) and located on the north side of Grand River Avenue, east of Cornell Road. Seconded by Commissioner Wilcox.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Beyea, Goodale, Honicky, Jackson, Wilcox,
Chair Reicosky
NAYS: Commissioner Domas
Motion carried 6-1.

Commissioner Honicky moved [and read into the record] NO THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby recommends denial of Special Use Permit #09101 (Design Services Company) for a building greater than 25,000 square feet in gross floor area. Seconded by Commissioner Wilcox.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Beyea, Goodale, Honicky, Jackson, Wilcox,
Chair Reicosky
NAYS: Commissioner Domas
Motion carried 6-1.

8. Other Business

A. Redevelopment Committee Report

Subcommittee members Reicosky, Beyea and Domas offered the following highlights:

- Task given to the subcommittee to review, research and recommend a new or revised redevelopment ordinance
- Subcommittee implemented the 80/20 rule: Grand River Corridor is the area of the Township where 80% of the variances originate
- Consideration was given to the current economic development conditions and changing demographics
- Draft provides a change in the development process from current practice through use of a pre-development informal meeting with developers and the surrounding neighborhood(s)
- Content:
 - Purpose is to develop vacant or redevelop underused properties in an environmentally conscious manner
 - Implements the goals of the Master Plan
 - Use of smart growth principles and pedestrian oriented development
 - Amenities:
 - Amenities may be proposed by the developer in exchange for waivers from the current ordinance requirements, (e.g., lot area and width, setbacks)
 - Categorized into aesthetics (e.g., architectural features, public art), health and safety (e.g., bicycle use, pedestrian access on the site), transportation and parking (e.g., public transportation access on or near the site) and environmentally oriented (e.g., incorporation of green building techniques)
 - Value of amenities must be 1% of the total project cost
 - Streamlined application process
- Public participation and community involvement:
 - Subcommittee explored public engagement by other communities
 - Planning Commission will no longer hold a public hearing
 - Township Board will hold a public hearing
- Exclusion of design standards
- Need for additional engagement with the public, developers and the business community to augment components of the draft ordinance
- Need for an update of the Master Plan

Planning Commission discussion:

- Impact of the Township's carbon footprint through land use
- Concern with waiver request to increase impervious surface
- Many of the sights this ordinance will address are older sites with odd shaped and/or small lots and an increase in impervious surface will make them easier to redevelop
- Concern with waiver request on maximum building height
- Concurrent Planning Commission and Township Board review process
- Lack of criteria for basis of Planning Commission review
- Criteria the same as for a special use permit request
- Rationale of subcommittee decision to move from redevelopment focus to commercial planned unit development ordinance
- Ordinance change will alleviate many of the variance requests required to come before the Zoning Board of Appeals
- Appreciation to the subcommittee and staff for its efforts in producing a readable, specific and useful document

Commissioner Jackson moved to transmit the draft Commercial Planned Unit Development ordinance to the Township Board for comments along with a recommendation to conduct a community-wide initiative based on findings:

- **The Master Plan must be amended to meet statutory requirements**
- **The current Master Plan does not acknowledge or address recent and ongoing economic and demographic changes affected the Township and the region**
- **The Capital Area Transportation Authority's corridor initiative will impact land use decision in the future**
- **The entire community must be engaged to a much greater extent in establishing a vision for the future and long term goals to sustain the preferred quality of life in Meridian Township**

Seconded by Commissioner Wilcox.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

9. Township Board, Planning Commission officer, committee chair, and staff comment or reports
(None)

10. New applications

- A. Special Use Permit #08011 (Shaw's Triangle & Dougilray), a request to construct 18 buildings with a total combined size greater than 25,000 square feet.
- B. Commission Review #10053 (Meridian Township), a request for Section 61 review for the extension of public water and sewer services along Herron Road and Pioneer Trail in the Herron Acres subdivision.

11. Site plans received (None)

12. Site plans approved

- A. Site Plan Review #09-08 (Capstone), a request to develop the Lodges of East Lansing on the north side of Hannah Blvd, east of Hagadorn Road.

13. Public remarks

Chair Reicosky opened and closed public remarks.

14. Adjournment

Chair Reicosky adjourned the regular meeting at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary