

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 11, 2010**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Chair Reicosky, Vice-Chair Deits, Secretary Goldsberry, Commissioners Goodale, Honicky (7:03 P.M.), Jackson, Jorkasky, Wilcox
ABSENT: Commissioner Beyea
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Reicosky called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

Commissioner Deits moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Wilcox.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 27, 2010. Seconded by Commissioner Wilcox.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Reicosky opened the floor for public remarks.

Allen Russell, DTN Management, 1690 Mack Avenue, Haslett, read from prepared notes offering clarifications and site modifications in response to staff review and comments made at the September 27, 2010 Planning Commission public hearing.

Chair Reicosky closed public remarks.

5. Communications

- Norma Ray, 2934 Mount Hope Road, Apt. 111, Okemos; RE: Concerns with MUPUD #10014 (DTN)
- Harry A. Settimi, Alpha Square, LLC, 4500 S. Hagadorn Road, East Lansing; RE: Concerns with MUPUD #10014 (DTN)
- Williamstown Township Planning Commission; Invitation for a Joint Planning Commission Meeting

6. Public hearings

- A. Special Use Permit #10131 (Meridian Township), a request to relocate the Haslett branch library into a Haslett Public Schools' building addressed as 1590 Franklin Street.

Chair Reicosky opened the concurrent public hearings at 7:15 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 October 7, 2010.
- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Honicky noted the playfield is well utilized and there may be times when existing parking may not be sufficient.

Principal Planner Oranchak noted that, in addition to on-site parking, there is ample parking at Ralya Elementary School (adjacent to the proposed location), Haslett Middle School across the street and the nearby administration building.

Commissioner Deits inquired as to the option of three (3) “library patron only” parking signs placed on the site.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded staff will look at that option as the project progresses.

Commissioner Wilcox indicated she has been at the Haslett library on several occasions during the day and there has not been a problem with parking. She spoke in support of the project.

Commissioner Jackson voiced her appreciation with the reuse of existing vacant space for community benefit as well as the fact it is near the location of the existing library. She inquired as to how many parking spaces would have been required for this public use.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded staff had not calculated the parking, but it would not have been more than the 60 parking spaces on the east side. She added she did not take into consideration the additional spaces in front of the building.

Commissioner Jackson noted there is ample parking available near the proposed library and the location ideally lends itself for walkability and bicycle transportation. She voiced her support for the addition of bicycle parking for the proposed relocation.

Commissioner Jorkasky lent her support to the facts the proposal is near the existing library location, is a good reuse of an existing building, there is ample parking and it meets an existing need.

Commissioner Honicky inquired as to the age of the original building.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded she was unsure of its age. She added the Township has looked at all necessary upgrades and the architect plans reflect those upgrades.

Chair Reicosky noted there is additional space north of the ball field in the event the library “grows” to the point additional parking is needed. He inquired as to the public transportation route in that area so that there is an avenue for patrons who cannot drive, walk or bicycle to the library.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded CATA has a route on Marsh Road and the proposed location is less than ¼ mile from the bus route.

Chair Reicosky inquired as to the possibility of extending the bicycle path currently under construction on Marsh Road to the new library location.

Principal Planner Oranchak noted bicycles traveling on the west side of Marsh Road would be able to cross at the light on Franklin Street as well as bicyclists being able to utilize the light at Marsh and Haslett Roads.

Commissioner Goodale expressed interest in a flashing street sign indicating a cross walk between the site and the Haslett Middle School be pursued for safety reasons.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it would be necessary for the Township to initiate a request with the Ingham County Road Commission for installation of a flashing street sign.

Chair Reicosky closed the public hearing at 7:33 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #10014 (DTN), a request to develop a MUPUD consisting of 41 multiple family units and an approximate 9,500 square foot office building on approximately 4.47 net acres addressed as 2946 Mt. Hope Rd, 2950 Mt. Hope Rd. and 4528 Hagadorn Road

Principal Planner Oranchak clarified the total square footage of the apartment building is now 61,896 and the total amount of all buildings on the site is 71, 408. She noted the applicant will be required to provide plans and dimensions for each floor as the process moves forward.

Planning Commission, staff and applicant discussion:

- Owner of the chiropractic office was previously aware of the proposed project
- Setback from Mt. Hope Road has been increased approximately five (5) feet
- Additional space allows for placement of the required street trees
- Office component will be built through a phased approach
- Condition in the resolution provides a recommendation that the office component must be built first or concurrently with the residential component
- Suggestion to require a bond which would be forfeited in the event the office component is not built by a time certain
- The Township has historically required bonds for public improvements, not entire buildings
- Potential clients currently being considered for the office building include professional medical, insurance, accounting and attorney users
- Long-term option of spin-off with Michigan State University's Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) development in close proximity
- Applicant has had extensive long term discussions with two major clients interested in build-to-suit business space within this proposed development
- Applicant willingness to adhere to concurrent construction of the two buildings with the proviso that the office component would be a "shell" to maintain flexibility with the interior finish to suit the needs of clients as they develop (i.e., number of restrooms, elevators dependent upon size of the users)
- Appreciation for the applicant's willingness to listen and act on Planning Commission and public input from the public hearing
- Closeness to Mt. Hope Road is offset by the distance in the rear for adjacent neighbors
- Appreciation that the reduction in parking spaces adds to the exceptional greenspace
- Carports will aid in reducing lights and noise for the adjacent neighbors
- Zoning Board of Appeals variance to permit the total window area on the first floor façade facing Mt. Hope to be less than 50 percent, as stated in condition #8, was previously granted for the Capstone Development
- Two inch caliper is the required size contained in the Township's ordinance for street trees as noted in condition #16

- Appreciation for the applicant's imitative to work with the Ingham County Road Commission for development of an alternative drainage plan which would be routed away from neighboring properties
- Request for the applicant to provide signs regarding noise to be posted just inside entrances to the development
- Language contained in all DTN Management leases regarding noise control
- Conscious design by the applicant not to provide outdoor recreational opportunities in an effort to limit noise
- Applicant has provided to a copy of the site plan and changes to the neighbors
- Landscape buffer and additional setback from Mt. Hope Road addresses investment future concerns expressed by the owner of Alpha Square, the chiropractic office
- Statement by applicant's engineer that the green shown on the drawing constitutes various types of plantings through which water will percolate and the use of open type block for the patios will also allow water to be percolated through and infiltrate into the ground
- Trees will collect water on the leaves and there is much less runoff due to plant storage of water

Commissioner Honicky moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby recommends approval for Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #10014, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Approval of the mixed use planned unit development design is recommended in accordance with the site plans prepared by Fitzgerald Henne & Associates, Inc. and received by the Township on October 8, 2010; and building elevations and floor plans prepared by The Peabody Group, and received by the Township on January 29, 2010. All plans are subject to revisions as required.**
- 2. Approval is subject to the following amenities for size of structure as listed in the applicant's communication dated September 22, 2010 (four are required): redevelopment of an obsolete property; underground utilities; exceptional green space; public outdoor seating; bicycle parking/storage; consolidation of three parcels; two sheltered bus stops.**
- 3. The character and quality of the building materials and general architectural design of the buildings shall be consistent on all four sides of each building. The majority of the building shall be comprised of brick or masonry products.**
- 4. The project shall be constructed in one phase with both buildings being built simultaneously; or the project may be built in two phases with construction of the office building, the use permitted by right in the PO (Professional and Office) district, being the first phase.**
- 5. Trash and recycling receptacles shall be at least 40 feet from any property line abutting residential zoning. The final design of the dumpster enclosure shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
- 6. A sidewalk shall be shown connecting the office building to the Hagadorn Road pedestrian-bicycle pathway.**

7. Floor plans of each floor of each building showing dimensions and total area shall be provided to establish the accurate size of each building and the combined total square feet of both buildings.
8. The Zoning Board of Appeals shall approve a variance to permit the total window area of the first floor façade facing Mt. Hope Road to be less than 50 percent or the building shall be redesigned to comply.
9. A site plan showing the areas of impervious and pervious surfaces and calculations used to determine compliance with Section 86-432(d)(10) shall be submitted with the application for site plan review with the evaluation subject to the review and approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.
10. Site accessories such as railings, benches, trash receptacles, exterior lighting fixtures, and/or bicycle racks shall be of commercial quality, and complement the building design and style. Final design and location shall be subject to the Director of Community Planning and Development.
11. Any future building additions or expansions to the buildings shall require modification to the mixed use planned unit development and special use permit subject to the approval of the Township Board.
12. Families, as defined in the zoning ordinance, or no more than three unrelated persons, shall occupy a residential unit.
13. The parking lot shall be designed in accordance with the requirements of Section 86-756 Design and Construction Requirements.
14. Bicycle parking shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of Section 86-760 and located near entrances to each building.
15. All existing debris found on the subject site as a result of clearing, grading, or construction activities related to the proposed project shall be removed from the site and shall be properly disposed.
16. Street trees not less than two (2) inches in caliper shall be installed along Mt. Hope Road and Hagadorn Road at a minimum of one tree for every 70 feet of lot width. Species and location of the trees shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development and the Ingham County Road Commission.
17. Landscaping shall generally comply with the provisions of the Code of Ordinances including the Mixed Use Planned Unit Development standards outlined in Section 86-440(d)(4) and other applicable sections of the Ordinance pertaining to landscaping.
18. Site and building lighting shall comply with Article VII in Section 38 of the Code of Ordinances and shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development. Parking lot lighting shall not exceed 15 feet in height. LED lighting shall be used where feasible.
19. A sign program shall be submitted as part of site plan review and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.

20. All mechanical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and similar systems shall be screened from view by an opaque structure or landscape material (if at street level) selected to complement the building. Such screening is subject to approval by the Director of Community Planning and Development.
21. The applicant shall obtain all necessary permits, licenses, and approvals from the Ingham County Drain Commissioner, Ingham County Road Commission, and the Township. Copies of all permits and approval letters shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.
22. The utility, grading and storm drainage plans shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Public Works and Engineering and shall be completed in accordance with the Township Engineering Design and Construction Standards.
23. A copy of the site plan information that exists in a computer format for the development project and construction plans shall be provided to the Township Engineering staff in an Auto Cad compatible format.

Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

Commissioner Deits offered the following friendly amendments:

- Amend condition #2 by inserting “covered” before “bicycle parking/storage”
- Amend condition #10 by deleting “bicycle racks” and inserting “covered bicycle parking/storage”

The friendly amendments were accepted by the maker and seconder.

Chair Reicosky offered the following friendly amendment:

- Add condition #24 to read: Hours for delivery of supplies and trash removal shall be between 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M.

The friendly amendment was accepted by the maker and seconder.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Deits, Goldsberry, Goodale, Honicky, Jackson, Jorkasky, Wilcox, Chair Reicosky

NAYS: None

Motion carried 8-0.

- B. Special Use Permit #10121 (DTN), a request to develop a group of buildings more than 25,000 square feet in area associated with MUPUD #10014.

Commissioner Deits moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby recommends approval of Special Use Permit #10121 to construct two buildings greater than 25,000 square feet in gross floor area subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval of the special use permit is recommended in accordance with the site plans prepared by Fitzgerald Henne & Associates, Inc. and received by the Township on October 8, 2010; and building elevations and floor plans prepared by The Peabody Group, and received by the Township on January 29, 2010. All plans are subject to revisions as required.

2. Special Use Permit #10121 is subject to all conditions placed on Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #10014 by the Township.

Seconded by Commissioner Goodale.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Deits, Goldsberry, Goodale, Honicky, Jackson, Jorkasky, Wilcox, Chair Reicosky

NAYS: None

Motion carried 8-0.

- C. Zoning Amendment #10050 (Planning Commission), a request to amend sections of Chapter 86 Zoning, Article VII, Signs and Advertising Structures, of the Code of Ordinances to permit signs designating parking spaces reserved for “take-out” patron parking at restaurants in commercial zoning districts.

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the proposed zoning amendment as outlined in staff memorandum dated October 7, 2010.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Amendment is more generic in its approach
- Township attorney has determined the Township cannot regulate designated parking space content
- Proposed zoning amendment deals only with signs designating parking spaces for a specific use
- Logo can be no more than one-third (1/3) of the sign size
- Attorney determination gives the Planning Commission good guidance
- Concern with the table included in the staff report showing the number of permitted signs
- Preference for the Director of Community Planning & Development to determine the number of signs for each request
- Determination by the Director of Community Planning & Development on the number of reserved signs for each request is arbitrary
- Guidance needed for criteria to be used by staff to approve the number of reserved signs
- Resolution is a recommendation to the Township Board
- Reserved handicap parking is mandated by federal law and requires one handicap parking space for every 25 parking spaces on a site
- Need for the Planning Commission to be cognizant of the number of assigned parking spaces in a multi-tenant building
- One business creating parking “problems” for another business in a multi-tenant would be an issue for the management company to address
- Height difference for parking spaces and entrance and exit signs
- Draft ordinance satisfies the ZBA’s request to the Township Board
- Current signage which does not conform to the proposed ordinance will be considered legal non-conforming signs

Commissioner Honicky moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby recommends approval of Zoning Amendment #10050, to amend sections of Chapter 86 Zoning, Article VII, Signs and Advertising Structures, of the Code of Ordinances to permit signs used to designate parking spaces reserved for specific purposes. Seconded by Commissioner Jorkasky.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Deits, Goldsberry, Goodale, Honicky, Jackson, Jorkasky, Wilcox
NAYS: Chair Reicosky
Motion carried 7-1.

8. Other Business

A. Commercial Planned Unit Development (C-PUD) Ordinance

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized changes to the draft ordinance as outlined in staff memorandum dated October 7, 2010.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Draft ordinance applies to any property in the Township zoned C-1, C-2 and C-3
- Request for staff review of the merit of in-fill ordinances developed through the Greening Mid-Michigan Plan
- Possible inclusion of a condition which includes the “80/20” rule
- Add proposed amenities to the Procedures Section; i.e., (3)(a)(4): Existing site conditions and characteristics of the land and surroundings
- Include time limits in Planning Commission Review Section (5) which mirrors time limits for decisions in the MUPUD process
- Staff perception the proposed language primarily addresses in-fill development
- Request for staff to narrow which sites this ordinance will apply to
- Possible overlay for a specific location v. all properties zoned commercial
- Ad Hoc Committee discussed not limiting the application to specific locations
- Very limited vacant commercial land in the Township
- Staff to incorporate suggested modifications and move forward with the public hearing process
- Additional opportunities to make changes to the draft ordinance based on comments at the public hearing
- Ordinance is an opportunity for developers, owners, residences and government to partner in an effort to promote the business community with the quick progress
- Process to apprise citizens of the public hearing will be through the statutory requirement of publication in a newspaper 15 days prior to the actual hearing date
- Staff will send out letters to those individuals invited to the roundtable discussions to advise them of the public hearing

Commissioner Goldsberry moved to go forward with the public hearing process. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

9. Township Board, Planning Commission officer, committee chair, and staff comment or reports

Commissioner Deits reported the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) met last week and the installation of LED streetlights is in process. He noted discussion also centered on whether the DDA should move forward with form based codes for the area. Commissioner Deits also indicated mention was made that the light rail system is no longer part of the Grand River Corridor Transportation Project discussion as it is too costly to implement and the region does not qualify for federal dollars based on population. He added the idea of a dedicated bus lane is now being explored. Commissioner Deits reported the Holiday Market will take place again this year on a date to be determined.

10. New applications (None)

11. Site plans received (None)

12. Site plans approved (None)

13. Public remarks

Chair Reicosky opened and closed public remarks.

14. Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary