

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 20, 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 Beyea, Goodale, Honicky, Jackson, Wilcox
ABSENT: Commissioner Jorkasky
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 Wilcox moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

A. August 23, 2010 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Deits moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 23, 2010. Seconded by Commissioner Wilcox.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

B. August 30, 2010 Round Table Meeting

Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the Round Table Meeting Minutes of August 30, 2010. Seconded by Commissioner Goldsberry.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

C. September 13, 2010 Round Table Meeting

Commissioner Honicky moved to approve the Round Table Meeting Minutes of September 13, 2010. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

4. Presentation: Greening Mid-Michigan Project

Harmony Gmazel, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Ms. Gmazel, Land Use Planner, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, 913 W. Holmes Road, Suite 201, Lansing, offered highlights of the project as follows:

- Greening Mid-Michigan as a collaborative effort between community agencies and offices including county conservation districts, the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, county community development departments, Eaton County Parks, Regional Committee for Stormwater Management, Clinton and Ingham County Agricultural Preservation Boards, Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), Inc., Ingham County Health Department's Land Use and Health Resource Team as well as the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Project was a multi-year process
- Greening Mid-Michigan as a way to plan for a green infrastructure system in the Clinton, Eaton

and Ingham County region

- Green infrastructure as a system of larger hub areas, larger parks which are linked with smaller sites such as farmers' markets, school grounds, etc. by trails, other non-motorized facilities, riparian corridors or wildlife corridors from a regional viewpoint
- Athletic complexes, conservancy areas, wetlands, working lands, gardens, markets, historic sights can be included in a green infrastructure system
- Planning for green infrastructure include health and wellness benefits, ecological benefits derived from open space protection (including environmental impacts, i.e., groundwater, riparian areas), cultural and educational benefits
- Oakland County's decision to hire a consultant to ascertain the economic benefit of promoting an improved and enhanced green infrastructure plan resulted in an estimate of millions of dollars in property tax values
- Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) supported Phase I of this project through creation of a conservation area inventory which identified areas which contained high quality habitat and vegetation
- Second phase was a workshop held in February, 2010 attended by approximately 150 people from mid-Michigan, grouped by geographical area, to sketch their "vision" of a regional green infrastructure system
- Typical land use snapshot in a township within the Mid-Michigan region includes a strong agriculture or business component, village or city centers, fragmented by a freeway system, usually contains a high quality riparian or river area and experiencing urban encroachment
- Importance of having master plan policies which promote development while protecting agricultural business and natural areas on a regional basis
- Implementation tools include low impact development, trails and greenways planning, private property practices, farmland preservation efforts and master planning
- Creation of an on-line tool kit with the assistance of MSU's Urban Collaborators Program, a grant through the Michigan Department of Community Health's Building Healthy Communities and the Ingham County Health Department
- Interactive tool kit, which includes 17 significant tools for green infrastructure planning, is available at www.greenmidmichigan.org
- Request to the Planning Commission for support of this project through passage of a resolution

Planning Commission discussion:

- Possible assistance from the Greening Mid-Michigan Project in further development of Meridian Township's trails along the riverways and corridors
- Types of alternative energy infrastructures which would impact the project
- Necessity of keeping green infrastructure discussion at the forefront during review of land use or structures built
- There is currently no regional Joint Planning Commission to have policies and procedures in place for citizens who wish to implement an alternative energy system
- Mechanism of notification process for special use permit, etc. requests within a community allows neighboring communities to look at the proposal in order to ascertain if it would interfere with the greater regional vision
- TCRPC has the Greening Mid-Michigan vision as its "policy" and promotes that policy through planning efforts and education
- TCRPC does not have joint planning authority to perform reviews on a region-wide basis other than transportation projects
- TCRPC is using the Greening Mid-Michigan data for road and freeway projects
- After outreach to the communities within the tri-county region to procure support, workshops with panel discussions will be held to showcase Greening Mid-Michigan in order for local jurisdictions to implement policy recommendations

- DNRE Grants Division supports regional green infrastructure planning
- DNRE sees green infrastructure planning as a way to reduce costs and make Parks & Recreation planning more efficient on a regional basis
- Having a regional vision when a community applies for trust fund monies aids in the points process
- Additional opportunity for the Planning Commission to ask questions after delivery of the Greening Mid-Michigan Project posters
- Use of Tri-County's tool kit when the Planning Commission reviews the Township's Master Plan
- Tri-County role of helping facilitate connections between communities during their Master Plan update process
- Request for a resolution of support does not require a commitment of funds
- Resolution of support asks the Township to recognize the value of the planning project, realize the greater regional significance of what happens in the township and promote the tools within the Township's Master Plan language
- Consensus for the resolution to be considered at the September 27, 2010 Planning Commission Meeting

5. Public Remarks

Chair Reicosky opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

6. Communications (None)

7. New applications

- A. *Special Use Permit #10111 (Consumers Energy), request to upgrade the existing electric substation located at 5521 Okemos Road.
- B. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #10014 (DTN), 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 Road and 4528 Hagadorn Road
- C. Special Use Permit #10121 (DTN), request to develop a group of buildings more than 25,000 square feet in area associated with MUPUD #10014

8. Site plans received

- A. Site Plan Review #10-97-17 (Rhodes), addition to enclose the outdoor seating area at Dusty's Cellar, 2085 Grand River Avenue

9. Site plans approved

- A. Site Plan Review #10-99-14 (Eliott), remodel of former Bennigan's/Wild Wings Café into Leo's Lodge restaurant at 2085 Grand River Avenue

10. Adjournment

Chair Reicosky adjourned the regular meeting at 7:44 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary