

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MINUTES
September 20, 2010
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4560, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

APPROVED

PRESENT: Chair Reicosky, Vice-Chair Deits, Secretary Goldsberry, Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Honicky, Commissioner Wilcox, Commissioner Goodale, and Commissioner Beyea
ABSENT: Commissioner Jorkasky
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Reicosky called the work session meeting to order at 7:52 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

Vice-Chair Deits moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Wilcox.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

3. Discussion

A. Commercial Planned Unit Development Ordinance

Chair Reicosky summarized comments made during the August 30, 2010 and September 13, 2010 "round tables" and opened the work session for discussion.

- Requirement for Traffic Impact Analysis raised at the August 30 round table discussion
- Desire for official Township representation at the developer/neighborhood meeting
- Is there support to go forward with the amendment?
- Has it been proven there is a need for the C-PUD ordinance?
- Has it been proven the current system is broken?
- Developer accountability to submit a thorough report of the meeting with neighbors
- Is this contract zoning?
- Michigan Planning Enabling Act authorizes planned unit developments, permits flexibility to achieve goals for diverse housing, economic development, environmental protection
- Problems intended to address were the need for commercial redevelopment, the number of non-conforming commercial sites, and the number of variances being requested/granted for commercial site development
- ZBA process is broken; exceeding its legal authority
- C-PUD evaluates non-conformities at the beginning of the process
- Where do we go from here? Public hearing, revise the document first (Pre-meetings and official Township representation, for example), alternative option to fix existing ordinances rather than create a new one
- Only apply to distressed or abandoned sites on Grand River
- Keys: part of the system is broken (ZBA); need a tool that is not available now
- Need more time to tweak the pre-meeting. How to insure documentation of the pre-meeting truly reflects actual events
- Is the reduced time incentive enough for the developer?
- Change creates anxiety. Perhaps establish minimum standards for properties adjacent to residential uses

- Articulate design of corners and other important locations
- One process for identified priority areas another for other areas.
- PUD's are typically a dialogue; they take longer. Shorter, expedited process may not be a PUD. Something with more specifics like a form-based code.
- Start to apply in one area and see if it works.
- Tell the Board if an ordinance that applies to the entire Township cannot be created.
- There is an ordinance in there. It applies everywhere, it is negotiated and it deals with variances in a sensible way.
- PUD is secondary to the typical commercial regulations. It's there to override existing ordinances when necessary to keep the Township compact.
- Revert to the typical Planning Commission public hearing and eliminate the developer/neighborhood meeting. Makes residents too nervous.
- Continue to have a pre-application meeting for information purposes—public comments, developer may revise plans before it becomes costly.
- Informal pre-meeting still a good idea but the documentation part must be improved.
- The developer pays the price if there is no informal process—comments are not heard until the public hearing.
- “The developer is encouraged to hold an informal meeting with neighbors. The Township will provide contact information.”
- Alternative form of commercial development.
- If it can be done on a small property, why not make it possible everywhere? Fits more with sites we want to see redeveloped
- No option for walkable commercial or walkable urbanism. Variances do not produce the desired development but forced to get numerous variances.
- Rewrite the zoning ordinance section for more walkable, urbanized design is another option. This ordinance is a temporary, short term solution to get at more urban, walkable development with a future move to form-based code.
- What does the community really want—thriving commercial community or green space?
- Suggestion raised at the recent meeting to rewrite the ordinance. The C-PUD process raised alarm about input.
- Meridian Mall is the elephant in the room. What will its future be? What type of ordinance will facilitate its next iteration?
- Possibility the CATA project will terminate in East Lansing
- Urgency to get an ordinance on the books felt by the committee last year. C-PUD is one tool. Put the public hearing at the Planning Commission back in. Reconsider approach to pre-application meeting with the neighbors.
- Who are the participants?
- Contextual ordinance. Context greater than the actual project.
- Application to specific area—uniformity and consistency of design.

4. Public remarks

Chair Reicosky opened the floor for public remarks.

Martin Schwartz 2209 Kent, Okemos asked why not change the ordinance to reduce the 100 foot front yard setback from the centerline of Grand River.

Doris Schwartz, 2209 Kent, Okemos asked why not simply use the mixed use planned unit development ordinance in all commercial districts.

Ann Alchin, 2227 Hamilton Road, Okemos commented a traffic study is necessary to study the effect

of a specific project on the surrounding area.

Chair Reicosky closed public remarks.

5. Adjournment

Chair Reicosky adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Oranchak, AICP
Principal Planner