

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
March 23, 2009**

**APPROVED**

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

PRESENT: Chair Wilcox, Secretary Jorkasky, Commissioners Beyea, Deits, Domas, Honicky, Jackson, Klemans, Reicosky  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Wilcox called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. She welcomed new Commissioner Adrienne Domas.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Deits.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Commissioner Honicky moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 9, 2009 as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Reicosky.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Public Remarks**

Chair Wilcox opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

**5. Communications**

- Township Board Update for the Regular Board meeting of March 17, 2009 was given by Principal Planner Oranchak

**6. Public hearings**

A. Zoning Amendment #09010 (Planning Commission), an amendment to Sections 86-129, 86-187, 86-188, and 86-189 to update appeal procedures and add an appeal procedure for minor amendments to special use permits.

Chair Wilcox opened the public hearing at 7:03 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 proposed zoning amendment as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 19, 2009.
- Planning Commission discussion:  
Commissioner Reicosky inquired as to consideration for a definition of the term “minor” amendments.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the special use permit section of the ordinance defines a major amendment and states that anything else is a minor amendment.

Commissioner Jackson pointed to the need for clarity in Section 86-187 to ensure the “or administrative official” language contained in the section heading is added to the subsections whenever it speaks to appeals of decisions made by the Director of Community Planning and Development.

Commissioner Deits asked who, other than the Director of Community Planning and Development, would be administrative officials charged with enforcement of the zoning ordinance

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it would be a code enforcement official or housing inspector.

Commissioner Jackson asked if the request for an appeal would still be sent to the Director of Community Planning and Development or to the specific administrative official.

Principal Planner Oranchak explained that it would go to the Department of Community Planning and Development.

Chair Wilcox expressed concern that in Section 86-187(1)(d)(4), the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) refers the decision back to itself since only the ZBA is able to interpret the provisions of the chapter.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated the Director of Community Planning and Development also interprets, but indicated staff would look at the language more closely to determine the necessity for inclusion in the ordinance.

Chair Wilcox closed the public hearing at 7:15 P.M.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Public Remarks**

Andrew Bacque, Atwell-Hicks, 500 Avis Drive, Suite100, Ann Arbor, spoke to the vision, how the vision relates to the property, how Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #09014 (Capstone) relates back to the vision for a village with diversity. He expounded on the “thinking” process for creation of this development with a street environment. Mr. Bacque stated the Eyde family sees this property development as a legacy project.

Planning Commission and applicant discussion:

- Creation of an internal roadway would allow control of development on both sides of the street
- Village concept would incorporate both vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the same spatial environment through design
- Intention to provide green infrastructure, but not pedestrian districts where automobiles are prohibited
- Retailers will not lease commercial space if vehicular access is prohibited
- New urbanism and smart growth movement intent to create a balance between the automobile and the pedestrian
- Streetscapes are designed so traffic speeds are conducive to the pedestrian
- Conversations with the Ingham County Parks Department about linking to pathways crossing the Red Cedar River to allow pedestrians to walk through the village and possibly split the bicycle traffic out to run along the track area
- Use Davis, California as an example of a bicycle friendly town

- Set the minimum criteria which ensures the principles of the place being created by identifying the primary open space locations with connections between them
- “Big box” development does not fit with the vision of the landowner for a village concept
- Two and one-half year (2-1/2) year investment by the property owner for development of this land as a village concept
- Possible timeline for development of other portions of the site
- Market conditions affect development timeline
- Focus by developer on marketing the senior component next
- Capstone is one of the first student housing developers to incorporate student housing product and models into the new urbanist format
- Diversity in new urbanist products fosters civic discipline and behavioral accountability
- Goal of the design is to give students a sense of ownership of the street
- Goal of management to establish expectations of high maintenance standards
- First Capstone development designed with high level of density using new urbanism principles
- Area rezoned conditioned on use as a mixed use planned unit development (MUPUD)
- Land west of the drain is in the 81 acres considered part of the MUPUD
- Land east of the drain is separate and zoned RAA
- Portion of the greenspace is in a conservation district which will remain open to passive public use
- Greenspace is a visual and aesthetic amenity which could encompass pathways
- Use of diverse types of street trees
- Number of parking spaces determined by the fact that each student wants to have a car on-site
- Number of bicycles per U shaped bicycle rack to determine overall number of spaces available to park bicycles
- Student component is 238 units out of 1,159 maximum units allowed
- Remaining 921 units available for remaining 65 acres at a density of 14 units per acre

B. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #09014 (Capstone), a request to develop a mixed use planned unit development consisting of 229 multiple family residential units in seven buildings.

**Commissioner Jackson moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby recommends mixed use planned unit development approval for Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #09014, subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Approval of the mixed use planned unit development design is in accordance with the site plans prepared by KEBS, Inc. dated March 19, 2009; building elevations and floor plans submitted by the applicant at the public hearing dated February 9, 2009. All plans are subject to revisions as required.**
2. **MUPUD #09014 (Capstone) to construct a group of six apartment buildings with 238 units shall be contingent on the approval of SUP #09011 (Capstone).**
3. **Approval is subject to the following amenities for size of structure as depicted on the plans (four are required): community center/gym/clubhouse; recreational resources (ice skating, hot tub); two outdoor gathering spaces; covered and uncovered bicycle racks; a covered bus shelter; balconies; street side planters; and an outdoor eating space. The size, capacity, and location of amenities shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**

4. **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 buildings shall be comprised of brick or masonry products.**
5. **The final design of the trash compacter enclosure shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
6. **A location shall be set aside and identified on the site plans for use by residents to deposit recycling materials.**
7. **Site accessories such as railings, benches, trash and recycling receptacles, exterior lighting fixtures, and bicycle racks shall be of commercial quality, and complement the building design and style. Final design and location shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
8. **Any future building additions or expansions to the buildings will require modification to the special use permit and mixed use planned unit development, subject to the approval of the Township Board.**
9. **No more than one person may occupy each of the 674 bedrooms in the complex.**
10. **Prior to the issuance of any permit, including, but not limited to, a grading permit or building permit, the applicant shall submit a report describing site conditions as they impact the installation of a permeable concrete system, including but not limited to existing soil conditions and the depth of the water table. The report shall be reviewed by the Department of Public Works and Engineering to determine the site's suitability for the installation of a permeable concrete system.**
11. **Prior to any work occurring on the site, including but not limited to grading, the applicant shall provide written notification to the Department of Public Works and Engineering of intent to begin work. The applicant shall provide the Department a reasonable time to schedule a staff person to be on site to observe all work associated with the installation of a permeable concrete system. The applicant shall not begin work until written confirmation has been received from the Department of Public Works and Engineering that the proposed work time table is acceptable. A Department of Public Works and Engineering staff person shall be on site to observe the installation of the permeable concrete system.**
12. **A porous pavement maintenance plan shall be submitted to the Director of Community Planning and Development after the permeable concrete system has been installed which shall include but not necessarily be limited to periodic vacuum sweeping. Proper maintenance of the porous pavement shall be required and documented in a report to be submitted to the Department of Public Works and Engineering at least two times in each calendar year.**
13. **The parking lot shall be designed in accordance with the requirements of Section 86-756 Design and Construction Requirements.**
14. **A land clearing permit shall be required at the time of site plan review. A plan shall be submitted clearly indicating all trees to be preserved on the subject site. If deemed necessary by the Director of Community Planning and Development, the trees shall be properly protected prior to the commencement of grading or construction activities**

- related to the proposed mixed use project. Tree protection shall be provided as outlined in Section 22-179 of the Code of Ordinances.
15. The trees proposed to be preserved, as shown on the Existing Tree Plan dated January 9, 2009, shall not be removed unless approved by the Director of Community Planning and Development.
  16. All existing debris found on the subject site and other debris resulting from clearing, grading, or construction activities related to the proposed project shall be removed from the site and shall be properly disposed.
  17. Street trees shall be installed along Hannah Boulevard. 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.
  18. Landscaping shall generally comply with the provisions of the Code of Ordinances, including the mixed use planned unit development standards as outlined in Section 86-440(d)(4) and other applicable sections of the Ordinance pertaining to landscaping.
  19. Site and building lighting shall comply with Article VII in Chapter 38 of the Code of Ordinances and shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development. Streetlights shall not exceed 15 feet in height. LED lighting shall be used where feasible.
  20. 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.
  21. The applicant shall apply for and receive a variance from the requirement for a minimum of 50 percent window area on the first floor of a mixed use planned unit development building abutting a public street or redesign the buildings to comply with the ordinance.
  22. 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.
  23. The applicant shall obtain all necessary permits, licenses, and approvals from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, 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.
  24. The utility, grading, and storm drainage plans for the site 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.
  25. 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 Reicosky.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Appreciation for applicant's willingness to incorporate Planning Commission suggestions
- Appreciation for included condition which limits one person per bedroom
- Necessary pretreatment of stormwater on the site
- Reduction in parking spaces if four (4) bedroom units were reduced to three (3) bedrooms
- Alternative of a redesign to the stormwater system if soils are unsuitable for permeable concrete installation through engineering provision
- Permeable concrete not a portion of the surface calculation on the site
- Concern with additional parking up to the natural park area in the northern portion of the proposal
- Natural park area appears to be a design afterthought
- Belief that perception of use by the public and balance between pedestrians v. vehicles have not been adequately addressed in the plan
- Interior parking lots have excessive impervious surface and landscaping is underrepresented
- Possibility of reducing the number of parking spaces for the four bedroom units to two (2)
- Concern with legality of one person per bedroom limitation
- Enforcement of the one person per bedroom limitation
- Applicant's earlier statement that it can regulate the number of persons per bedroom through the lease document

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

NAYS: Commissioners Beyea, Domas, Honicky, Klemans

Motion carried 5-4.

- C. Special Use Permit #09011 (Capstone), a request to place fill in the floodplain of the Red Cedar River and Hannah Farm Drain and to construct a group of buildings greater than 25,000 square feet in gross floor area.

**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 #09011 (Capstone) with the following conditions:**

1. **Approval is based on the submitted application materials and the revised plans prepared by KEBS, Inc., dated March 19, 2009, subject to revisions as required.**
2. **The applicant shall receive the required approval from the Meridian Township Director of Public Works and Engineering and permit from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for work in the floodplain. Copies of the Director's approval and the MDEQ permit shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.**
3. **The applicant shall obtain all other necessary permits, licenses, and approvals from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Ingham County Drain Commissioner, Ingham County Road Commission, and the Township prior to any construction on the site. All approval documents shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.**
4. **No grading, fill, or construction shall begin until a building permit has been issued and approved by the Director of Community Planning and Development.**

- 5. Special Use Permit #09011 (Capstone) to construct a group of buildings greater than 25,000 square feet in size shall be contingent upon approval and implementation of the MUPUD #09014 (Capstone) and SUP #09011 for work in the floodplain.**

**Seconded by Commissioner Reicosky.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Beyea, Deits, Domas, Honicky, Jackson, Jorkasky, Klemans, Reicosky, Chair Wilcox

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

## **8. Other Business**

### **A. Future Zoning Amendment: Redevelopment**

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the proposed zoning amendment to redevelop commercial and office properties by establishing a planned unit development as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 19, 2009.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Possible vision for the overall design of the Township
- Master Plan speaks to implementation of smart growth principles
- Board direction to focus on the problematic older areas for redevelopment
- Information may be obtained from the DDA relative to redevelopment of the Okemos Village area
- Challenges of redevelopment
- Consideration of a definition for redevelopment
- Concern with relaxation of current ordinances relative to setbacks and roof heights without adequate transition zones to protect adjacent residential areas
- Vision for redevelopment needs to incorporate coexistence between redevelopment site and surrounding residential areas
- Redevelopment identified in the Master Plan as a topic for consideration
- Specific areas in the Master Plan identified for future studies (e.g., Grand River Corridor, Haslett Village, Okemos Village) which are in older commercial areas surrounding by residential
- Older areas zoned commercial which are on one of the major intersections in the Township usually result in the need for variances before the Zoning Board of Appeals in order to allow use of the land
- Situation discussed at the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Economic Development Corporation meetings to make a viable use available for land redevelopment in a more streamlined process for applicants
- Inquiry if Master Plan amendments are needed as well as zoning amendments for creation of redevelopment standards
- Consideration of Master Plan studies as complete with a committee report as an introduction for zoning ordinance preparation
- Opportunity for the Planning Commission to plan v. just development review
- Flexible standards through establishment of a planned unit development (PUD) similar to a mixed use planned unit development (MUPUD) for office and commercial sites
- Establishment of ground rules and criteria for applicability to specific sites
- Site specific investigation to identify problems
- Possible cafeteria style amendment(s) as every solution may not apply to every site
- Exploration of both a form based and designed based ordinance
- Report from the Okemos Downtown Development Authority (DDA) recommends creation of

- a “C2P” zoning category
- Staff recommendation for a small committee to conduct a preliminary investigation
- Small committee would conduct interviews with stakeholders who have an interest in this type of redevelopment process (e.g., ZBA Chair, DDA, EDC, MABA, developers), collect information and bring it back to the Planning Commission for discussion
- First task of small committee could be creation of a mission statement with specific goals and objectives
- Board directive for the Planning Commission to create an ordinance which establishes a commercial planned unit development (CPUD), recommend eligibility criteria and proposed standards and guidelines for a variety of site layout and design elements
- Board intent to provide an option for developers to use

**Commissioners Beyea, Deits, Domas and Reicosky volunteered to be on the small committee which will collect information to bring back to the full Commission for discussion.**

#### **9. Announcements**

Commissioner Reicosky requested staff provide a brief overview of the various available pervious pavement systems.

Chair Wilcox expressed appreciation for the newly designed Township website as well as the new television monitors in the Township Hall Room.

#### **10. New applications**

- A. SUP 09-08041 (Delta Dental), a request to work in the 100-year floodplain to expand and reshape the existing pond; add wetlands; construct a bridge, boardwalk, dock, and observation deck; and, provide a compensating cut for the proposed fill.
- B. <sup>1</sup>SUP #09021 (Woods Marathon), request to install a changing message sign at 2104 Hamilton Road.

#### **11. Site plans received (None)**

#### **12. Site plans approved (None)**

#### **13. Public remarks**

Chair Wilcox opened and closed public remarks.

#### **14. Adjournment**

Chair Wilcox adjourned the regular meeting at 9:51 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto  
Recording Secretary

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note the Planning Commission may make a decision regarding SUP #09021 the same night as the public hearing.