

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 12, 2009**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Chair Wilcox, Secretary Jorkasky, Commissioners Deits, Domas, Honicky, Jackson,
Klemans, Reicosky
ABSENT: Commissioner Beyea
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

1. Call meeting to order

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

2. Approval of agenda

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

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Deits moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes and Work Session Minutes of September 28, 2009. Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Wilcox opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

5. Communications

- Township Board Update for the Regular Board meeting of October 6, 2009 was given by Principal Planner Oranchak

6. Public hearings

A. Special Use Permit #09051 (Meridian Township), a request to place fill in the 100-year floodplain to construct an off-road pedestrian-bicycle pathway north of Jolly Road and west of Okemos Road.

B. Wetland Use Permit #09-05 (Meridian Township), a request to impact regulated wetlands to construct an off-road pedestrian-bicycle pathway north of Jolly Road and west of Okemos Road.
Chair Wilcox opened the concurrent public hearings 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 special use permit and wetland use permit as outlined in staff memoranda dated October 8, 2009.
- Applicant

Director of Public Works and Engineering Ray Severy gave an overhead presentation on how the proposed special use permit and wetland use permit request would be key to linking the existing Jolly Road pathway to the existing east-west pathway. He added the Pathway Master Plan for future development extends the off-road pathway along the Smith Drain to Sower Boulevard and this is the first portion of the entire off-road pathway.

Mr. Severy added the wetland mitigation has already been completed. The 99 cubic yards of fill in the floodplain is replacing the material which will be taken out. He explained the Engineering Department will excavate down ten (10) inches, put in a six (6) inches sand and gravel base and four (4) inches of asphalt which will bring it up ten (10) inches and the finished grade will essentially be the same as it is currently.

- Public

Suzette Wasielewski, 2357 Coyote Creek Drive, Okemos, expressed concern that construction in this area has greatly diminished wildlife habitat. She inquired how far into the tree line the pathway grading would go and how many trees would be cut down, expressing concern that pathway users would be able to see into her home. Ms. Wasielewski stated there is consistent standing water next to the wetland designated on the map accompanying the letter noticing this public hearing and is resulting in tree loss due to root exposure.

Robert Kenney, 2345 Coyote Creek Drive, Okemos, spoke in opposition to the wetland use permit and special use permit as he did not see the need for the bike path. He spoke to protection of existing wildlife.

Mark Wisniewski, 2414 Kansas Road, Okemos, inquired if Consumers Power or the individual who leases the land had been contacted by the Township. He inquired as to who would pay the taxes to maintain the pathway. Mr. Wisniewski alleged that the Township needs his permission to construct an off-road pedestrian-bicycle pathway north of Jolly Road and west of Okemos Road.

- Planning Commission discussion:

Commissioner Deits inquired about public comment which alluded to an anticipated loss of trees.

Director Severy responded that no trees would be cut down for this pathway to be constructed.

Commissioner Reicosky inquired as to who will have the responsibility for maintenance of the proposed pathway.

Director Severy responded this pathway is on the Township Pedestrian Bicycle/Pathway Master Plan and maintenance will be performed by the Township and paid for with pathway millage money.

Director Severy added there is still a great deal of wildlife on the property. He added once the developer constructs buildings and paves parking lots, some of the wildlife will move to the natural habitat on either side of the pond and in the Consumers Energy right of way.

Director Severy responded to an earlier public question by stating the property from the pond south is owned by Forsberg Construction. He added there is a Consumers Energy right-of-way approximately 100 feet wide and the northern tip is owned by the Eyde Company.

Director Severy added the Township has worked with Consumers Energy over the past year on this project and has obtained a license from Consumers Energy to construct the pathway across its right-of-way.

Commissioner Honicky reaffirmed that maintenance of the pathway from Burcham to Okemos Road has been appropriately maintained as indicated by the Township.

Commissioner Deits noted that based on statistical data, placement of a pathway is not detrimental to the privacy of residents and does not lead to an increase in crime in the neighborhood.

Chair Wilcox closed the concurrent public hearings at 7:31 P.M.

- C. Special Use Permit #09071 (Christopher Enright Architects), a request to construct a Belle Tire store at 2045 Grand River Avenue.

Chair Wilcox opened the public hearing at 7:31 P.M.

- Summary of subject matter
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the proposed special use permit as outlined in staff memorandum dated October 8, 2009.

- Applicant
Chris Enright, 40900 Woodward Avenue, Suite 250, Bloomfield Hills, stated this building would be the fourth building with Meijer. He indicated the building is the standard building prototype in use over the last five (5) to ten (10) years. Mr. Enright presented an overhead photograph to demonstrate the materials and color to be used.

Mr. Enright stated, in response to a letter from the Planning Department, that it is the applicant's intent to comply with all criteria requested. He added Meijer wants the building moved to the west in order to increase some landscaping to the east as well as closing off one access point into the Meijer parking lot at the rear. Mr. Enright noted there is a recorded parcel which may necessitate compliance with setback requirements and require moving the building further to the west with a loss of additional parking spaces on the west end. He added a complicating factor of the project is that Meijer currently leases the land and the applicant would like to run the stormwater for this project into their system. The applicant's lease is different from Meijer's lease and it is the applicant's plan to detain water on the property and directly discharge the stormwater.

- Public
James Faught, representing 2049 West Grand River, Okemos, inquired as to how far the applicant would need to move the building to the west.

Mr. Enright responded approximately ten (10) feet.

- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Deits expressed concern with the propensity of vehicles to cut through the eastern most access into the Meijer parking lot and was appreciative that the applicant intended to remove it.

Commissioner Deits inquired if an updated site plan would be available to the Planning Commission prior to a vote on this special use permit.

Mr. Enright indicated an updated site plan would be provided to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Jackson commended the applicant on its stated commitment to retain current landscaping.

Chair Wilcox closed the public hearing at 7:46 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business (None)

8. Other Business (None)

9. Announcements

Commissioner Deits reported his attendance at a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) meeting on October 5th where revisions to its by-laws were discussed. He announced a fall festival which will involve local businesses entitled “Pumpkins and Pottery” to be held on Saturday, October 31st.

10. New applications

A. Special Use Permit #09061 (Meridian Township), a request to place fill in the 100-year floodplain to construct a gravel access road and culvert to service a proposed sanitary sewer force main.

B. Wetland Use Permit #09-06 (Meridian Township), a request to work and place fill in regulated wetlands for a gravel access road, culvert, and sanitary sewer force main.

11. Site plans received

A. Site Plan Review #09-95-17 (Court One), request for a minor amendment to add a baseball field at the Court One facility, 2291 Research Circle, Okemos.

12. Site plans approved (None)

13. Public remarks

Chair Wilcox opened public remarks.

Mark Wisniewski, 2414 Kansas Road, Okemos, alleged that the Township has had no communication with Consumers Energy relative to construction of an off-road pedestrian-bicycle pathway north of Jolly Road and west of Okemos Road. He spoke to construction work only on weekends for tree removal on the “circle project.”

Ann Zimmerman, 2344 Coyote Creek Drive, Okemos, expressed concern with crime if the pathway is implemented and inquired if there were statistics available. She spoke to standing water in the area and the fact it gets worse with continued construction.

Suzette Wasielewski, 2357 Coyote Creek Drive, Okemos, spoke to the loss of tree line through to Jolly Road.

Chair Wilcox closed public remarks.

15. Adjournment

Chair Wilcox adjourned the regular meeting at 7:59 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary