

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

APPROVED

**December 10, 2018
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
517-853-4560, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Premoe, Trezise, Cordill, Scott-Craig, Ianni, Stivers, Richards, Shrewsbury, and Lane

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Principal Planner Peter Menser and Assistant Planner Justin Quagliata

1. Call meeting to order

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

2. Public Remarks

- A. Jessi Adler, 1580 Hillside Drive, voiced concerns regarding Special Use Permit #18081 and Special Use Permit #18101.
- B. Ari Adler, 1580 Hillside Drive, voiced concerns regarding Special Use Permit #18081 and Special Use Permit #18101.
- C. Quenda Story, 4526 Marlborough, voiced concerns regarding Special Use Permit #18081 and Special Use Permit #18101.
- D. Shinivas Shankariah, 2619 Coreopsis Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.
- E. Cecelia Kramer, 4560 Oakwood, voiced concerns regarding Special Use Permit #18081 and Special Use Permit #18101.
- F. James Gorenflo, 3037 Miller Road of Ann Arbor, applicant with Fox Nissan Automobile Dealership, addressed comments made at the November 26, 2018 Planning Commission meeting by the commission members and provided an update. The applicant was also available for questions regarding Special Use Permit #18101.
- G. Fred Hawley, 4543 Eastwood Drive, voiced concerns regarding Special Use Permit #18081 and Special Use Permit #18101.
- H. Mirza Baig, 2559 Lupine Court, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.
- I. Rajesh Nair, 3527 Myrtle Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.
- J. Jibu John, 3533 Myrtle Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.
- K. Abhijit Sarkar, 3539 Myrtle Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.
- L. Colin Schiefler, 2752 Berwyck Road of Grand Rapids, Director of Green Castle/Fox Nissan Automobile Dealership, provided an update and was available for questions regarding Special Use Permit #18101.
- M. Theresa Sanchez Weiss, 4598 Seneca Drive, spoke in opposition to Special Use Permit #18111.
- N. James Weaver, 4622 Seneca Drive, spoke in opposition to Special Use Permit #18111.

3. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Cordill moved to approve the agenda as written.

Supported by Commissioner Trezise.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

A. November 26, 2018 Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Richards moved to approve the minutes with minor revisions.

Seconded by Vice-Chair Scott-Craig.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

5. Communications

Principal Planner Menser noted additional communications were received after the Planning Commission meeting packets were assembled. He further noted that hard copies of communications were distributed to the Planning Commission at their places on the dais prior to tonight's meeting and would be included on the agenda for the December 17, 2018 Planning Commission meeting.

6. Public Hearings

Chair Ianni opened the public hearing at 7:40 P.M.

A. Rezoning #18140 (Thomas M. Hitch), rezone approximately 2.87 acres located at 2530 & 2540 Jolly Road from RA (Single Family-Medium Density) to PO (Professional and Office).

Principal Planner Menser provided a brief summary of the staff report.

The representative for the owner, Thomas Hitch, 601 Abbot Road, explained the request.

Public Comments:

- A. Brandon Bautista, 3528 Myrtle Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.
- B. Jessi Adler, 1580 Hillside Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.
- C. Shinivas Shankariah, 2619 Coreopsis Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.
- D. Rajesh Nair, 3527 Myrtle Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.
- E. Jibu John, 3533 Myrtle Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #18140.

Planning Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Richards noted if the property is rezoned PO (Professional and Office) then a buffer would need to be placed between the office and residential properties. If single family residential development takes place on the property a buffer would not be required between the adjacent properties.

The potential benefits of rezoning to PO could be lower noise levels, and that the businesses would be closed during holidays, weekends and evenings. During these times, outdoor lighting of a future development might not be as much of a concern.

Commissioner Premoe asked Principal Planner Menser if residential property values would be lowered in the area if office space is added. Principal Planner Menser did not speak to property values.

Vice-Chair Scott-Craig commented on how busy Jolly Road is and how difficult it can be to exit the property. There are topographical issues on the site making it expensive to grade the property for development. Vice-Chair Scott-Craig claimed the abandoned house on the property could be dangerous. He further noted it could be possible to develop houses on the property and they would sell like the other new houses in the area. He claimed office use would also be appropriate as a transition between uses.

Commissioner Cordill stated a change in zoning to PO would create “spot” zoning and questioned if this is the appropriate direction to take. Principal Planner Menser stated he will address this matter in the next staff report.

A straw poll indicated the Planning Commission would be in favor of recommending approval of Rezoning #18140 and staff was asked to prepare a resolution recommending approval for the next meeting.

Chair Ianni closed the public hearing at 8:35 P.M.

- B. Rezoning #18150 (Meridian Township), rezone the south four acres of Parcel I.D. #21-226-011 from RDD (Multiple Family) to C-3 (Commercial), located on the east side of Okemos Road, south of Central Park Drive.

Chair Ianni opened the public hearing at 8:36 P.M.

Principal Planner Menser provided a brief summary of the staff report and also acted on behalf of the Township to address questions.

Public Comments:

- A. Jean Wallick, 4989 Okemos Road, voiced concerns regarding Rezoning #18150.
- B. Jessi Adler, 1580 Hillside Drive, voiced concerns regarding Rezoning #18150 and asked if the land swap between Meridian Township and the Meridian Mall would be green space.

Commissioner Cordill asked Principal Planner Menser who could address the issues Ms. Jean Wallick had expressed. Principal Planner Menser stated the concerns would be shared with the Ingham Country Drain Commissioner’s Office and Meridian Township’s Engineering Department.

A straw pole indicated the Planning Commission would be in favor of recommending approval of Rezoning #18150 and staff was asked to prepare a resolution recommending approval for the next Meeting.

Chair Ianni closed the public hearing at 8:55 P.M.

The Planning Commission took a ten minute recess.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Special Use Permit #18081 (LaFontaine Automotive Group), construct new car dealership located at 1492, 1478, 1476, and 1448 Grand River Avenue.

Principal Planner Menser provided a summary of the revised site plan.

The applicant's representative, Gary Laundroche, 4000 West Highland Road, provided an update on the project and stated he was available for questions.

Commissioner Lane moved to adopt the resolution to approve Special Use Permit #18081 with the removal of condition #7 (the variance is no longer needed) and condition #17 to have additional and specific language to include: The exterior rear lighting on the north side of the building shall be turned off except for security purposes, during non-business hours, and utilize motion detectors. Supported by Commissioner Trezise.

Commissioner Premoe and Commissioner Richards shared concerns regarding how LaFontaine would enforce the prevention of test driving through the local residential subdivisions. The applicant's representative responded it would be addressed during the training of their staff members.

Vice-Chair Scott-Craig asked the applicant further questions regarding the proposed vehicle display pads and ramp at the front of the property lining Grand River Avenue. He wanted to reiterate the importance of retaining as much green space in front as possible to maintain the character of the surrounding area.

Commissioner Cordill asked about the height of the display pads. The applicant replied they are the height of the top of the curb.

VOICE VOTE:

YEAS: Commissioners Lane, Trezise, Richards, Stivers, Premoe, Shrewsbury, Cordill, Scott-Craig and Cordill

NAYS: NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

- B. Special Use Permit #18101 (Green Castle Properties, LLC.), construct 23,094 square foot new car dealership at 1614 & 1622 Grand River Avenue.

Principal Planner Menser provided a summary of the revised site plan.

The applicant's representative, James Gorenflo, 3037 Miller Road of Ann Arbor, with Fox Nissan Automotive Dealership, stated he was available to answer any questions.

Commissioner Richards moved to adopt the resolution to approve Special Use Permit #18101 (Green Castle Properties, LLC) and condition #16 shall be amended to have additional language to include: The exterior rear lighting on the north side of the building shall be turned off during non-business hours except for security purposes and motion detectors shall be used.

Supported by Commissioner Shrewsbury.

Vice-Chair Scott-Craig encouraged the addition of evergreen trees with the other proposed trees for better year-round screening between the business and the neighboring subdivision.

VOICE VOTE:

YEAS: Commissioners Richards, Shrewsbury, Premoe, Trezise, Cordill, Scott-Craig, Stivers, Lane and Ianni.

NAYS: NONE

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

Principal Planner Menser noted the requirement to suspend Planning Commission bylaw 5.12 to proceed with the Planning Commission agenda as approved.

Commissioner Richards moved to suspend Planning Commission Bylaw 5.12 to proceed with the evening's agenda.

Seconded by Commissioner Cordill.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously

C. Special Use Permit #18111 (Fedewa Holdings), construct two multiple family apartment buildings with a total of 13 units at 1730 Chief Okemos Circle.

Principal Planner Menser provided a summary of the revised site plan.

The applicant, Gerald Fedewa, 5570 Okemos Road, provided a review of changes made to his site plan and stated he was available for questions. Greg Fedewa was also in attendance to assist with the presentation.

Planning Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Richards asked where the decks were located. The applicant stated and they are located on the second floor and about 8½ feet off the ground. Commissioner Richards also asked what is on the third floor. The applicant described there are two bedrooms facing the rear side of the property with each having a 36 inch by 54 inch window. No living areas are provided on the third floor.

Commissioner Cordill expressed concern with the height of the buildings for the surrounding area.

Vice-Chair Scott-Craig expressed concern for the location of the decks on the west building and also wanted to know if Fedewa Holdings would build a fence as mentioned at the November 26th Planning Commission meeting to provide privacy for the surrounding homes in addition to the current natural tree line buffer. Mr. Fedewa said he would do this if necessary, though it would be a staggered fence so trees would not need to be removed.

A straw poll indicated the Planning Commission would be in favor of approval of Special Use Permit #18111 and staff was asked to prepare a resolution to approve for the next meeting.

8. Other Business-None

9. Township Board, Planning Commission Officer, Committee Chair, and staff comments or reports

Principal Planner Menser commented about the November 26, 2018 Planning Commission meeting and Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #18044 (Newton Pointe, LLC). The Planning Commission failed to approve a motion to approve the resolution so at the December 17, 2018 Planning Commission meeting the resolution will be brought back to recommend denial and it is important for the Planning Commission to note the reasons why so the Planning Commission can share them with the Township Board before the public hearing.

Commissioner Cordill raised a concern about traffic when trying to make a left turn onto Grand River Avenue from Dobie Road and Central Park Drive. Currently there is not a left turn light. With the future development planned, the problem could get worse. A traffic study could be done to see if a left turn light could be added for safety.

Motion by Commissioner Richards for the Township to send a letter of recommendation that a study be done on the intersection. The study should evaluate the left turn movement off Dobie Road and Central Park Drive onto Grand River Avenue to see if installation of left turn lights could be added for safety reasons.

Seconded by Commissioner Cordill.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

10. Project Updates

- A. New Applications - NONE
- B. Site Plans Received - NONE
- C. Site Plans Approved
 - 1. Site Plan Review #18-95-14 (Fred Piette Co. Inc.), 200 square foot building addition and parking lot reconfiguration at 4876 Marsh Road.

11. Public Remarks

- A. Jeanette Feintuch, 4606 Seneca Drive, spoke in opposition to Special Use Permit #18111 (Fedewa Holdings).
- B. Jessi Adler, 1580 Hillside Drive, wanted to show appreciation for the Planning Commission and for the automobile dealership's support and assistance through the special use permit process. Ms. Adler also requested clarification regarding LaFontaine and the discussion regarding striping, vehicle display pads for raised vehicles, and curb and gutter.
- C. Cecelia Kramer, 4560 Oakwood Drive, wanted to show appreciation for the Planning Commission and the automobile dealership's support and assistance through the special use permit process.
- D. James Weaver, 4622 Seneca Drive, spoke in opposition to Special Use Permit #18111 (Fedewa Holdings).

E. Chris Weiss, 4598 Seneca Drive, spoke in opposition to Special Use Permit #18111 (Fedewa Holdings).

12. Adjournment

Vice-Chair Scott-Craig moved to adjourn the meeting.

Supported by Commissioner Stivers.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Ianni adjourned the regular meeting at 10:34 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Budzynski
Recording Secretary