

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

APPROVED

November 9, 2020

Meeting held virtually using the Zoom web conferencing application

7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners Premoe, Richards, McConnell, Hendrickson, Cordill, Shrewsbury, Trezise, and Blumer.

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Principal Planner Peter Menser, Information Technology Director Stephen Gebes, Multimedia Producer Samantha Diehl.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. PUBLIC REMARKS

- A. Jack Zhang, 4719 Powell Road, spoke in opposition to the proposed Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC).
- B. Jessi Adler, 1580 Hillside Drive, spoke in opposition to the proposed Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC).
- C. Cecelia Kramer, 4560 Oakwood Drive, stated there is a need for upscale rental options in Meridian Township and the concept plan available in the meeting packet for the proposed Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC) is a good looking project but needs more open space and commented the wetlands should not be counted as open space.
- D. Cindy Liu, 1575 Maiden Lane, spoke in opposition to the proposed Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC).
- E. Jodie Emerson, 4375 Arbor Drive, spoke in opposition to the proposed Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC).
- F. Raji Uppal, 6133 Cottage Drive, introduced himself as the Principal of DTN and noted the concept plan in the meeting packet would be a similar project like Aspen Lakes located in Holt and The Quarry located in DeWitt. The concept plan is a renter by choice concept that is not currently available in Meridian Township.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner McConnell moved to approve the agenda.

Seconded by Commissioner Cordill.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. September 28, 2020 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Richards moved to approve the minutes.

Seconded by Commissioner Premoe.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Hendrickson noted the four communications submitted in the November 9, 2020 meeting packet and thanked the participants who submitted the letters and emails.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC), rezone three parcels totaling 31.63 acres located on the east side of Central Park Drive, west of Powell Road, and north of Grand River Avenue from RA (Single Family-Medium Density) to RD (Multiple Family – maximum eight dwelling units per acre).

Chair Hendrickson opened the public hearing at 7:24 p.m.

Principal Planner Menser provided a thorough review of the proposal and reminded everyone the focus is on the rezoning of 31.63 acres from RA (Single Family-Medium Density) to RD (Multiple Family- maximum eight dwelling unites per acre) with four conditions and they would run with the land and would apply to the current owners and any future owners of the properties. A concept plan is included in the meeting packet but it should not be a part of the discussion during the rezoning process.

The applicants introduced themselves. Chuck Homan, 1317 Coolidge Road, Vice President, Construction & Development with DTN Management Company and Raji Uppal, 6133 Cottage Drive, Principle of DTN. They stated their intensions are to propose a renter by choice product, in a luxury project for Meridian Township. Their business has 50 years of experience in a conventional market for young professionals, families, and seniors. The proposed development would include 206 dwelling units with enclosed garages and no buildings greater than two stories.

Public Comments:

- A. Jessi Adler, 1580 Hillside Drive, spoke in opposition to Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC).
 B. Cecelia Kramer, 4560 Oakwood Drive, spoke with concern to Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC).
 C. Jack Zhang, 4719 Powell Road, allowed his eight year old daughter, Arianna, to speak in opposition to Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC).

Planning Commission Discussion:

- The MDOT Traffic Study stated traffic volume of 11,200 on Central Park Drive daily and proposed future development in the area could overwhelm the area.
- The applicant is asking for a density that exceeds what the Master Plan envisioned.
- The Traffic Study shows Central Park Drive as a four-lane road and it has been reconfigured to two lanes with a center turn lane. The Traffic Study does not reflect accurate information.

- The additional traffic from the proposed project traveling on Powell Road would create safety concerns when attempting to take a left onto Grand River, heading towards Williamston. Speed and visibility issues on Grand River would have to be addressed.
- This is an attractive project but the location of the project is not appropriate.
- The applicant's discussion centered around the development of the project and not focusing on the reasons for the rezoning request and it made it confusing for a focused discussion.
- The Planning Commission should consider the changing economic conditions and look at the Future Use Land Map to reevaluate current and possible future trends.
- The rezoning will run with the land and is it inappropriate.
- The rezoning request did not provide enough reasons why the current zoning is not sufficient.

A straw poll indicated the Planning Commission would not be in support of recommending approval of the proposed Rezoning #20050. A resolution will be provided at the next meeting on November 23, 2020.

Chair Hendrickson closed the public hearing at 8:19 p.m.

- B. Commercial Planned Unit Development #20-13034 (Meridian Mall Limited Partnership), amend commercial planned unit development approval to construct 2,500 square foot bank with three drive-up ATMs at 1982 Grand River Avenue.

Chair Hendrickson opened the public hearing at 8:20 p.m.

Principal Planner Menser provided an overview of the request.

The members of the Development Team were available on the zoom call. David Neuhoff, Meridian Mall Limited Partnership, 212 Shady Ridge Lane, Chattanooga, TN, is representing the Meridian Mall Development. He stated the proposed bank with three drive-up ATMs would reside on approximately one acre of property.

Jeff Kyes and Kevin Kalmbach Engineering Department with Kebs, 2116 Haslett Road. Jeff stated he has met with the Ingham County Drain Commissioner and MDOT and there are no concerns moving forward with this proposed project.

Public Comments:

- A. Amber Clark, Neighborhoods & Economic Development Director with Meridian Township, 5151 Marsh Road, expressed her support for the proposed Commercial Planned Unit Development #20-13034 (Meridian Mall Limited Partnership).
- B. Jessi Adler, 1580 Hillside Drive, expressed her support for the proposed Commercial Planned Unit Development #20-13034 (Meridian Mall Limited Partnership).

Planning Commission Discussion:

- The proposal is ideal for the purpose.
- There is a customer waiting for the project approval so they can move forward with the new business.

- The egress and ingress are already within the Meridian Mall property and there will be no substantial traffic flow issues impacting Grand River Avenue.
- The proposed project is a nice design but current green space will be gone and there is already so much underutilized space on the mall property.
- David Neuhoff stated that he understood the concerns relating to the green space being eliminated with the new proposal but negotiations are very difficult with anchor stores in the mall and taking underutilized parking space on the mall property is not an easy solution to the current situation.
- Grand River Avenue allows for excellent visibility for the proposed new business.
- Principal Planner Menser noted amenities could be added or recommended by the Planning Commission considering the discussion about adding additional bicycle parking spaces and benches on the property of the proposed Commercial Planned Unit Development.

Chair Hendrickson asked if the straw poll could be taken for two things at once. The Planning Commissioners should vote on the addition of the proposed amenities being discussed and then on the proposed project. A straw poll indicated the Planning Commission would be in support of recommending approval of the proposed amenities and the Commercial Planned Unit Development #20-13034 (Meridian Mall Limited Partnership). A resolution will be provided at the next meeting on November 23, 2020.

Chair Hendrickson closed the public hearing at 8:59 p.m.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

8. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development (MUPUD) ordinance review.

Commissioner Premoe noted the review of the MUPUD Ordinance is in progress and they will update the group soon. Principal Planner Menser further added the subcommittee should have a draft ready for review at the December 14, 2020 meeting.

B. Grand River Avenue project.

Commissioner Cordill provided an update on the project and referenced the letters attached in the meeting packet from Jeffrey Ross, Chair for the Corridor Improvement Authority and Steven Vagnozzi, Chair for the Meridian Transportation Commission. The other letter included in the meeting packet is from the Department of Transportation (MDOT) Lansing Transportation Service Center.

9. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Township Board update.

Principal Planner Menser provided a summary of the past three Township Board meetings that were held since the Planning Commission last met and noted the next Township Board meeting will be November 17, 2020.

B. Liaison reports.

- Chair Hendrickson provided an update from the October 14, 2020 and October 28, 2020 Zoning Board of Appeals meetings.
- Chair Hendrickson asked Commissioner McConnell to provide an overview of the Green Storm water Infrastructure Code Audit that was submitted in the meeting packet as he sits on the Environmental Commission.

10. PROJECT UPDATES

- A. New Applications - None
- B. Site Plans Received - None
- C. Site Plans Approved - None

11. PUBLIC REMARKS

A. Jessi Adler, 1580 Hillside Drive, wanted to thank the Planning Commission for their consideration regarding Rezoning #20050 (DTN 2013 LLC). She also wanted to note Powell Road is considered a scenic road and agreed the Grand River Avenue corridor is extremely busy and if motorists are traveling on Central Park Drive and need to turn left, traveling westbound there should be a left turn arrow installed to move traffic.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Premoe moved to adjourn the meeting.
Supported by Commissioner Shrewsbury.
VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Hendrickson adjourned the regular meeting at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Budzynski, Recording Secretary