

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

**DRAFT**

**February 13, 2023**

**5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198**

**517.853.4000, Town Hall Room, 6:30 P.M.**

**PRESENT: Chair Blumer, Vice-Chair Trezise, Commissioners Shrewsbury, McConnell, McCurtis, Scales, Brooks, Snyder, Richards**

**ABSENT: None.**

**STAFF: Senior Planner Brian Shorkey, Communications Specialist Danneisha McCole**

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Blumer called the regular meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Chair Blumer called the roll of the Planning Commission. All present.

**3. PUBLIC REMARKS**

Chair Blumer opened public remarks at 6:33 pm.

Greg Fedewa, 7030 Clement Rd., requested a change in zoning of vacant lots at 5921 and 5929 Okemos Rd. from RX to Multi-Family.

Chair Blumer closed public remarks at 6:35 pm.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Vice-Chair Trezise moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Snyder.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. January 23, 2023 Regular Meeting

**Commissioner McConnell moved to approve the Minutes of the January 23, 2023 Planning Commission Regular Meeting as submitted. Seconded by Vice-Chair Trezise.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

**6. COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Letter from Country Side Estates re: Urban Service Boundary

Commissioner Snyder asked where Country Side Estates is located.

Commissioner Richards stated it's between Van Atta Rd, and Meridian Rd. north of Newman Rd.

Chair Blumer noted this letter is worth further discussion during the Master Plan Discussion.

B. Letter of Introduction from Michael A. Eschelbach

Vice-Chair Trezise noted this letter is a request for a zoning change on properties located on Dobie Rd. near faith Lutheran church.

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS-NONE**

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE**

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

A. Email from Jessica Worful re: Potential Rezoning at 5677 Cade St.

Senior Planner Shorkey noted this property is currently zoned Professional Office while everything to the south is zoned RB-Residential. The property is currently used residentially. The owner cannot make improvements she would like to unless the property is rezoned as residential. He explained if the Planning Commission agrees with the request they may initiate an administrative rezoning.

Jessica Worful, 5677 Cade St., Haslett, MI, explained her neighbor is a chiropractor and a block away is a dentist office. She believes she may have been grouped in the professional office zoning on accident as all of her other neighbors are zoned residential.

Chair Blumer asked Ms. Worful what improvements she would like to make to the property.

Ms. Worful replied she would like to build an addition to the home to accommodate her family.

Chair Blumer asked if the size of the property would support the additions.

Ms. Worful replied she believes it would.

Senior Planner Shorkey noted the property appears to be large enough, but cannot speak to the setbacks at this time.

Chair Blumer asked what staff's perspective is on this issue.

Senior Planner Shorkey replied if the Planning Commission is amenable to her request to initiate an administrative rezoning they could do so through a motion.

Commissioner McConnell asked what the difference is between an administrative rezoning and another kind of rezoning and how this fits in the Master Plan.

Senior Planner Shorkey replied from a master plan perspective this rezoning should be ok. From a zoning perspective Ms. Worful cannot build an addition on her property as she is zoned professional office.

**Commissioner McCurtis moved that the Planning Commission initiates the rezoning of 5677 Cade St. from PO to RB. Seconded by Commissioner Snyder.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

## **10. MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

### **A. Public Comment Themes**

Senior Planner Shorkey reported he is looking for feedback on public comment themes and Master Plan goals and objectives. He asked the Planning Commission what themes they are interested in acquiring further information on.

Commissioner Shrewsbury stated it may be helpful to give a one paragraph description of the Master Plan purpose to give context to residents.

Commissioner Richards noted it could be helpful to residents if there was a way to alert them when a parcel they are close to may be rezoned. He also noted there is a lot of unused commercial parking that should be addressed in the Master Plan, specifically at the Meridian Mall. He noted there should be community input on moving the Urban Service Boundary.

Chair Blumer noted it would be helpful to have a terms and abbreviations definition section included with the Master Plan for residents.

Commissioner McConnell concurred with Commissioner Richards on his points about mall parking lots and the Urban Service Boundary.

Commissioner McCurtis brought up concerns about the communication received from Country Side Estates concerning moving the Urban Service Boundary and its effects on the township's aesthetics.

Chair Blumer noted number eight on the memo "increasing mixed-uses" should be expanded to "preservation of existing mixed-uses" as well.

Vice-chair Trezise suggested looking into incentives to encourage infill development. He noted not moving the Urban Service boundary can also have negative effects on the township.

Commissioner Scales asked what outreach developed the current list on the memo, as there is not a lot of comments on Saginaw Highway Corridor.

Senior Planner Shorkey replied the Community Planning and Development department met with the Communications department to create a feedback form that was published on the township website. He explained the list on the memo came from comments submitted through that form.

Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if time could be set aside at a meeting to seek community input.

Commissioner Snyder asked how frequently the Master Plan is revised.

Senior Planner Shorkey replied every five years.

Vice-chair Trezise stated it may be helpful to communicate a general understanding of the differences between a Master Plan and the Zoning Code.

Senior Planner Shorkey replied the Master Plan recommended consolidating residential districts. As a result, last year two ordinance amendments were brought to the table, one that rezoned seven parcels, and the other eliminated two residential districts.

Commissioner McCurtis noted some neighborhoods in the township are dark and lacking sidewalks making them unsafe at night.

Senior Planner Shorkey replied that is a good point to be looked at.

Commissioner Scales suggested it would be helpful if Planning Commission members used the books, *'The Township Guide to Planning and Zoning'* published by Michigan Township Association, and *'Planning and Zoning Essentials'* published by the Michigan Association of Planning.

Commissioner Brooks suggested making goals such as "creating better engagement in our community" or "cross collaboration between communities" as meeting those goals may lead to the input staff is seeking.

Commissioner Snyder asked if there is a place in the Master Plan to include Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. She noted Master Plan topics brought up by residents may be a result of limited means of community input.

Commissioner McConnell noted there is a discussion planed for March 7<sup>th</sup> on one of the Okemos PICA's and would be a good opportunity to gather community input on the Master Plan.

Commissioner Shrewsbury suggested using a flyer at events, such as the farmers market, that contains a QR code that would allow residents to easily give community input from a mobile device.

Commissioner Brooks suggested corridor studies be conducted on Marsh Rd. and Okemos Rd.

Commissioner McConnell suggested the Planning Commission stay informed on which corridors are being looked at by the township so as to develop a master plan that is supportive to the Corridor Improvement Authority's goals.

Commissioner Brooks asked about the recent increase in the amount of people working from home and how that could be incorporated into the Master Plan.

Commissioner Snyder noted that with so many people working from home now, they no longer need to move somewhere purely because it's close to their place of work. As a result the township needs to remain an attractive place to live regardless of your employment.

Commissioner Brooks brought up the communication earlier in the meeting from Jessica Worful and how flexible zoning may be appealing to people who want to start a business in their home.

Vice-Chair Trezise replied that a good approach may be to create a streamlined process that will allow residents to make and receive such a request.

- B. Goals and Objectives  
NONE

## **11. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Township Board Update

- Senior Planner Shorkey reported the Township Board will be holding a board meeting on March 7<sup>th</sup> where they will meet with the developers of the Village of Okemos and Residents.

Commissioner McConnell

- Attended February 7<sup>th</sup> Township Board Meeting where the board discussed the issue of recreational marijuana, including discussion on curbside service of recreational marijuana

- B. Liaison Reports

Vice-Chair Trezise

- Attended February 2<sup>nd</sup> Economic Development Corporation meeting where there was discussion on the Corridor Improvement Authority receiving a tax increment finance district, as well as discussion on how to renew Meridian Township's status as a "Redevelopment Ready Community"

Chair Blumer

- Attended February 6<sup>th</sup> Downtown Development Authority where a quorum was not present

## **12. PROJECT UPDATES**

- A. Project Report  
NONE

## **13. PUBLIC REMARKS**

Chair Blumer opened public remarks at 8:07 pm.

Cecelia Kramer, 4560 Oakwood Rd., Okemos, MI spoke about the letter from Mike Eschelbach as well as an accompanying document addressing the requested rezoning of property at Faith Lutheran Church, 4515 Dobie Rd.

Chair Blumer closed public remarks at 8:07 pm.

#### **14. ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Scales moved to Adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner McCurtis.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

Chair Blumer adjourned the regular meeting at 8:15 pm.