

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

**April 24, 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 Brooks, McConnell, McCurtis, Scales, Shrewsbury, Richards, Snyder (arrived at 6:32pm)**

**ABSENT:**

**STAFF: Director of Community Planning and Development Tim Schmitt, Senior Planner Shorkey**

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Blumer called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Chair Blumer called the roll of the Planning Commission. Commissioner Snyder was absent, all others present.

**3. PUBLIC REMARKS**

Chair Blumer opened public remarks at 6:30 pm.

Lynne Page, 3912 Raleigh Drive, Okemos commented on SUP #23011 – Haslett Gallery. Page noted that she believes that marijuana commerce will negatively impact children & has significant public health and safety implications. She believes that the medical marijuana leases are place holders for recreational marijuana.

Chair Blumer closed public remarks at 6:36 pm.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Commissioner Scales moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner McCurtis.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. March 27, 2023 Regular Meeting

**Vice-Chair Trezise moved to approve the minutes of April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 as amended. Seconded by Commissioner McCurtis.**

**Commissioner Shrewsbury noted a minor typo with staff prior to the meeting.**

**VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously with friendly amendments**

**6. COMMUNICATIONS**

A. NONE

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. SUP#23010

Senior Planner Shorkey outlined SUP#23010 – MSU to Lake Lansing Pathway Phase 2

Senior Planner Shorkey noted that this is from the Meridian Township Engineering Department, continuing from Phase 1 brought before the Planning Commission in 2022.

The Meridian Township Engineering Department has applied for a Letter of Floodplain Amendment from FEMA & applied to the Michigan Environment Great Lakes Energy (EGLE) Department for the state permit. Any approval the Planning Commission could give would have to be on the condition of the EGLE state permit. Based on calculations provided by the Meridian Township Engineering Department, there is no expected increase in flood level.

Commissioner McCurtis inquired about materials and setup in this project.

Senior Planner Shorkey noted that these material amounts may fluctuate based on need, but they are leaning towards the 10ft of HMA pavement as their primary building material.

Chair Blumer inquired under whose authority is this being built, and why is it coming before the Planning Commission.

Senior Planner Shorkey noted that it is a SUP because of the floodplain crossing, and it is under the township's authority but they require a state permit for the floodplain crossing.

Vice-Chair Trezise inquired about construction timelines.

Senior Planner Shorkey noted that the hope is to start it this year, but they have to wait on proper permits for a definite answer.

Commissioner Brooks inquired about safety concerns around the rail.

Chair Blumer opened the floor to public comments on SUP #23010 at 6:44pm.

Bruce Peffers, 4932 Sioux Way, Okemos raised concern on maintaining the vernal pools along the proposed pathway.

**Chair Blumer called for a straw vote on the approval of this special use permit #23010. By unanimous consent, the Planning Commission indicated support for SUP #23010.**

B. SUP #23011

Senior Planner Shorkey outlined SUP#23011 – Haslett Gallery (Herbana) 2119A Haslett Road

Senior Planner Shorkey noted that this application is identical to SUP #19131, which was one recommended for approval by the Planning Commission in 2019.

Commissioner McCurtis inquired about the odor control of the business.

Senior Planner Shorkey noted that the applicant's system for odor control was outlined in their marijuana application.

Applicant Benjamin Joffe, 334 E Washington St, Ann Arbor stated that there would be no processing or cultivation of marijuana at this site, thus eliminating the main cause for odor that is typically experienced at similar sites.

Commissioner Snyder inquired on the specific date that SUP #19131 was approved.

Director of Community Planning and Development Tim Schmitt noted that all SUP applications involving marijuana licenses were approved by the Township Board in March, April and May of 2020.

Commissioner Richards made note of the hearing process for previous SUP applications, and made a friendly request to follow the process as it has been done previously.

Commissioner Scales requested that the applicant educate him on the process of medical marijuana.

Applicant Joffe outlined the overall marijuana licensing process as requested, highlighting the safety and security of using a medical marijuana facility as opposed to "grey/black market" sellers.

Vice-Chair Trezise inquired on how the applicant would control who is looking to purchase product at this store.

Applicant Joffe stated that all customers are ID'd before being granted access to the purchase floor.

Commissioner McConnell noted the question of volatility in general, but specifically in industrial zones, and asked the applicant on how he sees this topic in terms of the business maturing and its own volatility.

Applicant Joffe responded that there have been noted instances of the volatility that the Planning Commission raised concerns about, and further outlined the topic. He did make note that his client was not a leveraged cannabis organization.

Commissioner Richards inquired about different levels of approvals, from local to state.

Applicant Joffe responded that this is different in each municipality, and further outlined on this.

Commissioner Richards inquired on the curbside pick-up status of this location, as there have been concerns about having an armed guard in the parking lot.

Director Schmitt stated that the medical marijuana ordinance was written before the state allowed curbside service, therefore Meridian Township would not allow curbside pickup for any applicants at this time.

Commissioner McCurtis inquired about the difference between adult-use marijuana and recreational marijuana.

Applicant Joffe explained the terms, that they are both the same thing, and then restated that this would be a medical-use only facility.

Commissioner Richards stated he would like to hear from staff on this topic in a more detailed approach.

Director Schmitt stated that, with this being a medical-use only facility, it would have no interaction with recreation-use ordinances. He further stated when the Board makes a decision on recreation-use, they will be able to outline any interaction between the licenses that further.

Commissioner Richards inquired on litigation in the state that ties medical-use and recreational-use marijuana together.

Director Schmitt stated that yes, there is litigation for that purpose.

Commissioner Scales inquired about the lottery process previously utilized by the Commission.

Director Schmitt stated that the lottery system was not needed, as in the 2023 application window there was one application per overlay district.

Chair Blumer opened the floor to public comments on SUP #23011 at 7:16pm.

Lynne Page, 3912 Raleigh Drive, Okemos commented on SUP #23011. Ms. Page noted that the traffic study was from 2019, and inquired whether that was acceptable for this current SUP. She also made comment on the applicant's statement that the packaging would not be done in facility. She reminded the Commission that this was not a binding statement.

Chair Blumer requested that verbiage be added mentioning the packaging of the marijuana product, so it's not done on-site.

Commissioner Shrewsbury noted that the ordinance already enforces the odor requirement, and she raised concern that putting that level of detail on a legally permitted business would need a valid reason, and also make sure it was setting precedent for any future applicant.

Commissioner Snyder showed support for Commissioner Shrewsbury's comments, while also requesting the discussion happen at this meeting instead of waiting two weeks.

Commissioner Brooks questioned if, as a Planning Commission, it is within their scope to set stipulations such as the one mentioned above.

Director Schmitt responded that it was, and further outlined that process.

Commissioner Richards inquired if applicants have the ability to transfer licenses.

Director Schmitt stated that no, the ordinance doesn't have a transfer provision.

Commissioner Richards continued and asked if there would be a review of any building within the odor ordinance. He also recommended that the township has a 3<sup>rd</sup> party expert inspect the airflow of the building.

Director Schmitt stated that the Mechanical Inspector would review those topics if it got to building permit.

Commissioner Snyder encouraged those who have an opposition to dispensaries to visit one, as there are concerns that are typically raised in opposition that can be quelled by visiting one first hand.

Chair Blumer supported Commissioner Snyder's comments.

Commissioner Scales noted that this SUP will set the groundwork for any future SUP of this nature, so the Planning Commission should take careful time and consideration in its review process.

Vice-Chair Trezise inquired how many facilities this company is currently running, and if they have had any licensing or compliance problems.

Applicant Joffe stated that they are running at least four, and that there have been no such problems.

Commissioner Scales requested the addresses of the applicant's clients other businesses, so the Planning Commission could visit if they wished to.

Commissioner Snyder inquired about the medicinal uses of medical marijuana.

Applicant Joffe outlined his knowledge on the topic.

**Chair Blumer called for a straw vote on the approval of this special use permit #23011.**

STRAW VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Snyder, Brooks, McCurtis, Shrewsbury; Vice-Chair Trezise; Chair Blumer

NAYS:

Abstain: Commissioner Richards, Scales, McCurtis

Results: 6-0-3

## 8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. SUP #23004 – Schultz Veterinary Clinic Expansion

Senior Planner Shorkey summarized the public hearing for this Special Use Permit. He noted that the Township Engineering Department did look more into the pathway discussed, and that it will meet township standards.

He noted that there were no further concerns or public comments.

**Commissioner McConnell moved to adopt Special Use Permit #23004 with the amendments to the resolution as noted. Commissioner Trezise seconded.**

ROLE CALL VOTE: YEAS: Chair Blumer; Vice-Chair Trezise; Commissioner Shrewbury, McConnell, McCurtis, Scales, Brooks, Snyder, Richards

NAYS: None

Results: 9-0

## 9. OTHER BUSINESS

NONE

## 10. MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Senior Planner Shorkey outlined where staff was currently at with the Master Plan update.

### A. Goals and Objectives – Handout

Members of the Planning Commission gave general feedback to the proposed Master Plan updates.

Commissioner Snyder suggested moving the bulleted section from “Maintaining Outstanding Public Services” to “Preserving and Strengthening Residential Neighborhoods”, and also suggested language in potentially both sections.

Commissioner Shrewsbury suggested a mission statement.

Commissioner McConnell suggested a land acknowledgement in the main land use planning document.

Commissioner Brooks inquired about how home-owner associations (HOAs) fit into the township’s housing development plan.

Senior Planner Shorkey noted that HOAs are outside our regulations, however the more stringent regulation between the HOA and township prevails.

Commissioner Brooks suggested a planning requirement for sidewalk walkability.

Commissioner McCurtis seconded Commissioner Brooks comments, extending the suggestion to residential areas as well.

## **11. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **A. Township Board Update**

Senior Planner Shorkey announced that the sign ordinance is expected to be approved on April 25th, 2023. He also stated that the Cade Street rezoning is coming back to the Board in two weeks for final adoption.

### **A. Liaison Reports**

Vice-Chair Trezise

- Attended the Zoning Board of Appeals 04/19/23 Meeting, where they approved a Sparrow Clinic sign on an Eyde Building. He also attended the most recent Brownfield meeting, where they discussed the reimbursement agreement for Haslett Village Square.

## **12. PROJECT UPDATES**

- A. Commissioner Scales noted that the Township Board will be taking up the issue on proper training over Robert's Rules of Order.

## **13. PUBLIC REMARKS**

Chair Blumer opened public remarks at 8:13 pm.

NONE

Chair Blumer closed public remarks at 8:13 pm.

## **14. ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Blumer moved to adjourn.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

**Chair Blumer adjourned the regular meeting at 8:13 pm.**