

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION 2023
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
MONDAY, October 23rd, 2023, 6:30 pm

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Community Development Director Schmitt, Senior Planner Brian Shorkey

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Blumer called the October 23rd, 2023 regular meeting for the Meridian Township Planning Commission to order at 6:30pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Blumer called the roll of the Board. All board members present.

3. PUBLIC REMARKS

Eric Furseth spoke in opposition to REZ #23030.
Ed Gillespie spoke in opposition to REZ #23030.
Vince Lione spoke in opposition to REZ #23030.
Shawn O'Brien spoke in support of REZ #23030.
Barbara Curtis spoke in opposition to REZ #23030.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Trezise moved to approve the October 23rd, 2023 regular Planning Commission meeting agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Richards.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Chair Blumer, Vice-Chair Trezise, Commissioners McConnell, Richards, Scales, Snyder, Brooks, Shrewsbury, McCurtis

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 9-0

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Scales pointed out a correction in the September 11th minutes.

Commissioner Scales moved to approve the Minutes of the September 11, 2023 Planning Commission Regular Meeting as amended. Seconded by Vice-Chair Trezise.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

Commissioner Scales said that he noticed a correction in the September 24th minutes but could not find it. Senior Planner Shorkey told Commissioner Scales that he could email him and the Planning Commission could approve the minutes with the understanding that correction would be made. Commissioner Shrewsbury suggested that the language about straw polls be

reworked so that they don't sound like official actions. Senior Planner Shorkey said that he would rework that.

Commissioner Scales moved to approve the Minutes of the September 25, 2023 Planning Commission Regular Meeting subject to Commissioner Scales' corrections and the amendments as discussed. Seconded by Commissioner Vice-Chair Trezise.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Email from Christine Goodrick Beavers Re. REZ #23030
- B. Email from Dr. Greg Gavrillides Re. REZ #23030
- C. Email from Jesse and Sarah Green Re. REZ #23030
- D. Email from Ray and Pat Hammerschmidt Re. REZ #23030
- E. Email from Stephen Boyd Re. REZ #23030
- F. Email from Brian Pillar and Erica Phillipich Re. REZ #23030
- G. Email from Betty Caldwell Re. REZ #23030
- H. Email from Betty Caldwell Re. REZ #23030
- I. Email from Betsy Montgomery Re. REZ #23030
- J. Email from Jeff Nicholson Re. REZ #23030
- K. Email from Linn Hildebrandt Re: Master Plan Update
- L. Email from Melissa Straus Re: Master Plan Update
- M. Email from Michael Grasseschi Re: Master Plan Update
- N. Letter from Rachelle VanDeventer Re: Master Plan Update

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. ZA #2023-06 – CV: Conservancy District

Senior Planner Shorkey outlined his memo and described the amendment. Chair Blumer opened the floor.

Eric Furseth spoke in opposition to ZA #2023-06.

Chair Blumer closed the floor and asked the Planning Commission if there were any comments. After hearing none, Chair Blumer asked Senior Planner Shorkey what was next. Senior Planner Shorkey said that Staff would prepare a resolution of approval for their next meeting

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

REZ #23030 – Park Lake Road

Director Schmitt spoke about the application and described the updated conditions from the applicant. Director Schmitt pointed out that there were resolutions for both support and denial in the packet for the Planning Commission's consideration, depending on how they wanted to vote.

Commissioner Scales read the resolution recommending denial of REZ #23030 and moved for its approval. Seconded by Commissioner Snyder.

Commissioner Brooks after for clarification of the discussion. Commissioner Scales said that the Planning Commission's job was making a recommendation on the rezoning request, not deciding whether the project should occur and that the project did not seem to conform to the Master Plan.

Chair Blumer said that the rezoning had received more comment than any application he had previously seen and that one major concern was traffic. Chair Blumer said that there was no sign that traffic improvements were included in the conditions and that he agreed with Commissioner Scales that the rezoning did not conform with the Master Plan.

Commissioner Brooks asked why the rezoning contradicts the Master Plan. Community Development Director Schmitt said that he did not think that it did. Commissioner McCurtis said that this was not a straight decision because the rezoning seems to straddle the line of the Master Plan. Director Schmitt agreed.

Vice-Chair Trezise pointed out the current split zoning on the property and said that he was concerned about wetlands and drainage issues and that he wasn't sure any development was possible even if the rezoning was approved. Director Schmitt said that the site is buildable where shown on the concept drawing and the applicant had performed a wetland delineation to confirm that. Vice-Chair Trezise said that there were still drainage issues.

Commissioner McCurtis said that the Township has had to clear up other drainage issues and asked if this wasn't another drainage issue. Community Development Director Schmitt said that they didn't know for sure yet because none of the engineering has been performed since the applicant isn't at site plan yet. Commissioner McCurtis said that he is hesitant to recommend approval because of the drainage issues.

Commissioner Brooks said that wetland and drainage are part, but that this is just one step in the development process before the project can be built. Commissioner Brooks said that the Master Plan is a living document and being updated right now. Commissioner Brooks said that one difficulty of development is the lack of local control and that the applicant is making a good proposal. Commissioner Brooks said that denying the rezoning before the project is reviewed would restrict this opportunity. Commissioner Scales said that the application still goes forward even if the Planning Commission votes no and reiterated that he believes that the rezoning is not compliant with the Master Plan.

Chair Blumer described the rezoning process and agreed that the application would still go forward even if the Planning Commission votes no and that the Board has the final decision. Chair Blumer said that the Planning Commission should consider not just the Master Plan but also on whether a project is right for the community.

Commissioner McConnell said that he was on the fence about conformance with the Master Plan and pointed out that the Master Plan calls for walkable and bikeable communities. Commissioner McConnell asked if a site plan would be reviewed by the Road Department. Director Schmitt said yes. Commissioner McConnell said that a rezoning doesn't trigger a road review and that road improvements wouldn't be required until site plan review. Commissioner McConnell suggested that cut through traffic might be a larger issue and that it might be addressed in the Master Plan.

Chair Blumer said that he was concerned about flooding and asked if the applicant had studied that. Director Schmitt said that no engineering had taken place on the site yet. Chair Blumer pointed out past improvements that the Road Department had made to address flooding and asked if this project would set them back. Director Schmitt said that would be looked at when engineering takes place.

Chair Blumer called the question.

VOICE VOTE

YEAS: Chair Blumer, Vice-Chair Trezise, Commissioners Richards, Scales, Snyder, Shrewsbury

NAYS: Commissioner Brooks and McConnell

Motion carried: 7-2

9. OTHER BUSINESS
2024 Planning Commission Schedule

Director Schmitt detailed the draft 2024 schedule and asked for a vote on the attached resolution.

Chair Blumer moved to approve the 2024 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule resolution. Seconded by Commissioner McCurtis.

VOICE VOTE YEAS: Chair Blumer, Vice-Chair Trezise, Commissioners McConnell, Richards, Scales, Snyder, Brooks, Shrewsbury, McCurtis

NAYS: None

Motion carried: 9-0

10. MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Director Schmitt reminded the Planning Commission that their November 13th meeting was the public hearing for the Master Plan.

11. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
A. Township Board Update

Director Schmitt said that the Board was set to adopt the RRC text amendments. McConnell asked about manufactured versus mobile homes in the RRC amendments. Director Schmitt said that we could look at that.

B. Liaison Reports

Commissioner McCurtis said that he had attended the Transportation Commission meeting and that there was a presentation by CATA on the Redi Ride program.

Vice-Chair Trezise said that he had attended the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority meeting and that they had discussed the first redistribution for American Homes.

Chair Blumer said that he had attended the DDA meeting and that he had giving his packet to Senior Planner Shorkey in case anyone wanted to look at it. Chair Blumer said that the DDA discussed proposed DDA entry signs and state financing.

Commissioner Scales said that he attended the MEDC meeting and heard an update for the Village of Okemos project.

12. PROJECT UPDATES
A. Project Report

Senior Planner Shorkey pointed out the updated project report in the packet.

13. PUBLIC REMARKS

Eric Furseth thanked the Planning Commission for their decision and encouraged them to look at stormwater on every project.

14. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Snyder said that a rezoning changes the character of an area and asked about available land for development in the Township. Senior Planner Shorkey said that he was working on that and that he would return at a later date with that information. Further discussion about development potential of the Park Lake property.

Commissioner Shrewsbury asked for a formal outline for the application process to be presented at the public hearing.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Blumer asked if there was any opposition to adjourn the meeting. Hearing none, Chair Blumer closed the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.