

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION 2023  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room  
MONDAY, November 13th, 2023, 6:30 pm

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

ABSENT: Commissioner McConnell

STAFF: Community Development Director Schmitt, Senior Planner Brian Shorkey

- 1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER  
Chair Blumer called the November 13, 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. Commissioner McConnell absent, all other members present.

3. PUBLIC REMARKS  
None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
**Vice-Chair Trezise moved to approve the November 13, 2023 regular Planning Commission meeting agenda. Seconded by Commissioner McCurtis.**

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

**NAYS: None**

**Motion carried: 8-0**

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
Commissioner Scales pointed out a correction in the October 25, 2023 minutes. Senior Planner Shorkey said that he would correct the minutes. Commissioner Shrewsbury pointed out a correction in the October 25, 2023 minutes.

**Vice-Chair Trezise moved to approve the Minutes of the October 25, 2023 Planning Commission Regular Meeting as amended. Seconded by Commissioner McCurtis.**

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

**NAYS: None**

**Motion carried: 8-0**

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. None

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. REZ #23034 – 4660 Marsh Road, PO, Professional and Office, to C-2, Commercial

Senior Planner Shorkey outlined his memo and described the application and the reasons for the rezoning request. Shorkey noted that although the application is for C-2, C-1 would work as well and that the Planning Commission had the authority to recommend either category. Senior Planner Shorkey discussed the difference between the C-1 and C-2 districts.

Chair Blumer asked if Staff intended to condense the commercial districts in the future. Senior Planner Shorkey said that language to that effect is in the Master Plan but that no work has been done. Commissioner Brooks asked Senior Planner Shorkey to show the zoning for the surrounding area and discussed the surrounding zoning and future land use map categories. Commissioner McCurtis asked about the character of the subject property and clarified that the entire parcel is under consideration for rezoning. Commissioner Scales discussed the businesses in the building and asked if this is a new hair salon. Senior Planner Shorkey said that it was and that it was the trigger for the rezoning. Commissioner Scales asked how Staff found out about the new salon. Senior Planner Shorkey said that the applicant had applied for a building permit. Commissioner Scales asked what Staff does when a business is found out of compliance. Director Schmitt said that normally a permit would be denied but that this was a borderline case.

Chair Blumer invited the applicant, Tamara Noe, to address the Commission. Ms. Noe introduced herself. Chair Blumer asked if Ms. Noe had received any complaints from neighbors about the businesses in the building. Ms. Noe said no. Chair Blumer asked Ms. Noe to describe the types of businesses in the building. Commissioner Scales asked for the name of the new hair salon.

Commissioner Richards asked Senior Planner Shorkey for any information before 2019 and asked when it went from residential to office zoning. Senior Planner Shorkey said November 2015. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if the Planning Commission had been supportive of the change in 2015. Senior Planner Shorkey said that he didn't have that information but that it would be easy to check.

Commissioner Brooks asked for the zoning of the surrounding properties. Commissioner Richards asked if the application was for C-2 and asked if Staff was recommending C-2 or C-1. Staff said that no recommendation was being made but that C-1 would work and be less intense. Planning Commission and Staff discussed uses in the C-1 and C-2 zoning and the surrounding existing land uses.

Chair Blumer asked Staff if the request complies with the surrounding zoning and the Master Plan. Senior Planner Shorkey said pointed out that all of the property to the west was zoned C-2 but that the future land use designation is R3. Commissioner Brooks asked if the C-1 district would meet the needs of the applicant. Senior Planner Shorkey confirmed that it would. Commissioner Richards asked Ms. Noe if there was a specific reason that she asked for C-2 instead of C-1. Ms. Noe said that she was okay with either. Commissioner Shrewsbury discussed land uses allowed in the C-1 and C-2 land uses.

Commissioner Shrewsbury said that she was comfortable with the C-1 zoning. Chair Blumer asked if anyone in the public wanted to speak. Hearing none, Chair Blumer asked for a straw poll.

Commissioner McCurtis asked why the application was for C-2. Senior Planner Shorkey explained the application process. Commissioner Scales said that the Commission should consider the character of the area and asked if the Commission was being asked to change between C-1 and C-2. Discussion about zoning compliance about the land uses in the area.

Chair Blumer closed the public hearing and called for a straw poll. Commissioner Scales asked about the possibility of a bar in the C-1 district. Senior Planner Shorkey said that a bar would not be allowed because there is a 500-foot separation requirement from churches. The Planning Commission indicated that they unanimously supported recommending approval of the application to rezone the property from PO, Professional and Office, to C-1, Commercial.

Commissioner Shrewsbury said that she had asked for a hearing process to be included in the packet. Senior Planner Shorkey said that Staff was working with the Communications Department on that document and described the approval process for Ms. Noe.

#### B. SUP #23035 – Elevation 4 Floodplain

Senior Planner Shorkey outlined his memo and described the application for the floodplain crossing.

Commissioner McCurtis asked if the floodplain fill would result in any more water. Senior Planner Shorkey said no because the applicant is creating more capacity with their compensating cut. Commissioner Scales asked if the application complies with state law. Senior Planner Shorkey said that the application to the state was in the packet and that the applicant could speak about that further. Chair Blumer asked for the location of the compensating cut on the site plan.

Commissioner McCurtis clarified that the need for the cut is the Pathway. Chair Blumer invited the applicant to speak, represented by Allan Patrick of Kebs Inc. Commissioner Scales asked about the status of the state permits for the floodplain cut. Mr. Patrick said that the application packet had been sent to EGLE. Chair Blumer asked if the cut is adjacent to the floodplain, was it enlarging the floodplain. Mr. Patrick said yes. Commissioner Scales said that he did not have a problem with an application, especially since it is for a Pathway and that it is consistent with his understanding of the law. Chair Blumer said that it was a restricted area and that it would not have large effect.

Chair Blumer asked if there was any public comment on the application. Hearing none, Chair Blumer closed the public hearing.

Chair Blumer said that he agreed with Commissioner Scales and that it was a relatively small area.

Chair Blumer called for a straw poll. After discussion, the Planning Commission unanimously indicated that they supported the application to allow the Pathway to be built in a floodplain.

#### C. 2023 Meridian Township Master Plan

Director Schmitt outlined his memo and asked the Planning Commission to open the public hearing and defer conversation the Master Plan until later in the meeting.

Chair Blumer opened the public hearing. Commissioner Scales asked Director Schmitt to review the response of the Board. Director Schmitt said that the Board has not reviewed the draft Master Plan and was waiting for the Planning Commission's action. Chair Blumer noted the large number of comments from the public. Hearing no comment, Chair Blumer closed the public hearing.

#### 8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ZA #2023-06 – CV: Conservancy District Updates

Senior Planner Shorkey outlined his memo and described the application for the text amendment.

**Commissioner Shrewsbury moved to approve the resolution to recommend approval of ZA #2023-06. Seconded by Commissioner Brooks.**

Vice-Chair Trezise asked Senior Planner Shorkey if the amendment applied just to decks and not structures. Senior Planner Shorkey said that home improvements were included if the cut was less than ten cubic yards and that moving decks to allowed uses was necessary to keep them from being special use permits. Chair Blumer asked if there was a definition for what constituted a deck. Senior Planner Shorkey said that the zoning ordinance did not define it, but that it was defined in the Michigan Building Code. Commissioner Scales asked where the definition was tied in. Senior Planner Shorkey said that the application would apply after the deck was applied for during the building permit process.

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

**NAYS: None**

**Motion carried: 8-0**

9. OTHER BUSINESS

None

10. MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Director Schmitt reminded the Planning Commission that their November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting was the public hearing for the Master Plan and described the approval process. Director Schmitt asked the Planning Commission to read the draft Master Plan and prepare to make a final recommendation to the Board at the December meeting.

Commissioner Snyder asked about accessibility of the draft Master Plan. Director Schmitt said that he would discuss this with the Communication Department and the current format of the draft Master Plan was chosen for its accessibility. Commissioner Snyder asked if there could be an audio format for the document. Commissioner Snyder said that she had previously asked for a native land acknowledgement in the Master Plan. Director Schmitt said he would finalize the language and include it.

Commissioner Trezise said that it is not readily apparent how to access the draft Master Plan on the Township website. Director Schmitt said that he would discuss this with the Communication Department.

Chair Blumer noted the large number of public comments and that it was interesting how consistent the comments were. Chair Blumer asked if there was anyone who wanted to address the issue. Hearing none, Chair Blumer asked if there was anything else.

Commissioner Brooks complimented Staff for the work on the Master Plan. Commissioner Scales said that the Master Plan update process had gone more smoothly than in the past and thanked Staff for their assistance.

11. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Township Board Update

Director Schmitt updated the Planning Commission on Board activity; framework for CIA TIF approved, RRC housing updates approved, expected to take up marijuana licensing standards, held a study session on status of senior center. Director Schmitt said that they Township had applied for the state's CDBG MSHDA housing grant for home rehabilitations and that more information would come in the future. Director Schmitt said that the Board recognized their volunteers of the year, Steve Thomas and Vice-Chair Trezise.

Commissioner Brooks asked if there had been a CIA meeting in the fall. Director Schmitt said one was coming up.

B. Liaison Reports

Chair Blumer said that he went to the DDA meeting; they did not have a quorum but the members in attendance heard a presentation from the Drain Commissioner's office.

Commissioner Scales said that he went to the EDC meeting and that he also attended the Board's study session on the senior center.

12. PROJECT UPDATES

A. Project Report

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

13. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

14. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Brooks commented on a pothole behind the Drain Commissioners site on Marsh Road and asked if Staff had any update. Director Schmitt said that Staff would reach out again.

15. ADJOURNMENT

**Chair Blumer asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion by Commissioner Richards to adjourn, unanimously approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.