

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room
Monday, September 9, 2024, 6:30 pm

PRESENT: Chair Shrewsbury, Vice Chair Snyder, Commissioners Blumer, Brooks, McConnell, Rombach, and Scales

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Principal Planner Brian Shorkey

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Shrewsbury called the September 9, 2024, regular meeting for the Meridian Township Planning Commission to order at 6:29 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Shrewsbury called the roll of the Board. All board members were present.

3. PUBLIC REMARKS

Chair Shrewsbury opened public remarks at 6:30 pm

Chair Shrewsbury closed public remarks at 6:30 pm

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Shrewsbury asked to add to the update of the Planning Commission’s meeting calender to Unfinished Business.

Commissioner Scales moved to approve the September 9, 2024, regular Planning Commission meeting agenda as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Blumer. Motion passed unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Scales asked that his comment at the last meeting, thanking the public for voting for him, be added to the minutes.

Chair Shrewsbury asked that Commissioner McConnell’s absence be added under roll call.

Commissioner Blumer moved to approve the Minutes of the August 12, 2024, Planning Commission Regular Meeting as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Scales. Motion passed unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Director Schmitt re: Planning Commission Schedule

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. SUP #24023 – Okemos Gateway

Principal Planner Shorkey gave an overview of the application and the work that has taken place to date. Principal Planner Shorkey noted that this site plan approval will be a new building and subject to approvals through MDOT, Ingham County Drain Commission, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and various Township offices.

Ammar Alkhafaji, representing the applicant, stated that the application is the same as was approved for Medical Marijuana.

Chair Shrewsbury opened the public hearing at 6:37 pm

Chair Shrewsbury closed the public hearing at 6:38 pm

Chair Shrewsbury conducted a straw poll, all members of the Commission indicated their support for the Permit.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Calendar Updates

Chair Shrewsbury stated that the communication from Interim Manager Schmitt recommended moving the October 14th meeting to October 7th due to Indigenous Persons Day, moving the location of the meeting on October 28th to the Central Fire Station Community Room, and moving the November 11th meeting later into the month due to Veteran's Day. She then stated that the November meeting has already been changed to November 18th and recommended updating the calendar to reflect the October changes.

Commissioners agreed to these changes by consensus.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Planning Commission Discussion

i. Planning Commission Bylaw Update

Principal Planner Shorkey outlined the discussion process, that a Public Hearing about this discussion will be October 7th and Action will be taken on October 28th, and that the Planning Commission is allowed to amend their own bylaws without it going through Board approval.

Commissioner Scales asked to change the language to define quorum as a majority of those appointed instead of stating a specific number. Vice-chair Snyder and Chair Shrewsbury concurred. Chair Shrewsbury added that, for Master Plan decisions, to change the language to define two-thirds of the Commission instead of stating a specific number.

ii. Current Land Use Update

Principal Planner Shorkey gave data regarding the current land uses, noting that this may not reflect what the areas are zoned.

Commissioner Scales asked why outdoor recreation and cemetery are combined. Principal Planner Shorkey indicated that he used the existing groupings, and that the cemetery acreage is likely a negligible percentage if separated out.

Commissioner Scales asked how institutional use is defined. Principal Planner Shorkey clarified that it is government, schools, and hospitals.

Commissioner Rombach asked how cooperative arrangements are defined. Principal Planner Shorkey clarified that they are zoning arrangements between Meridian Township and other communities, citing College Fields as an arrangement with City of Lansing and Costco as an arrangement with City of East Lansing.

Commissioner McConnell asked if the recent zoning change is reflected in the data presented. Principal Planner Shorkey stated that is not yet because he has not received a PUD proposing anything, but he stated when it occurs, it will significantly change the Single-Family Residential numbers.

Commissioner McConnell asked if some of the areas of low-density single-family residential could be subdivided. Principal Planner Shorkey indicated that it could, but that it is still single family residential after subdivision unless it is rezoned.

Commissioner McConnell asked if the totals of developable open space outside of the USB are held by developers or by a relatively small number of individuals. Principal Planner Shorkey stated that they could be and he will research it, but also that wetlands are not represented on the map.

Vice Chair Snyder asked about the difference between two of the charts. Principal Planner Shorkey and Chair Shrewsbury clarified that the leftmost table shows the total amount of the types of land uses within the USB as compared to how much of those land uses are outside of the USB, the rightmost table shows the total of each land use type across the acreage of the township, and the middle two tables show the total of each land use type outside and inside the USB category, respectively.

Commissioner Rombach asked if, compared to similar communities, this land use plan is appealing to developers with regards to Township goals. Principal Planner Shorkey answered that when he looks at a map of Meridian Township, he observes large amounts of residential area, a distinct commercial core, areas where development is in progress but that site plans have not been approved. He said that the map doesn't show amenities and natural features, and he has never worked in a community with this much recreational areas and stringent wetlands protection. Principal Planner Shorkey said that when future planning and zoning plan reviews come up, this map will be useful to determine the

discrepancies between what has been and is being done and what the Township may want to be done in the future and inform how to address that.

Commissioner Scales remarked that the map is a great start to the discussion, and he can see that Saginaw is a buildable area and the east part of the Township reflects the goal to keep that area rural.

Chair Shrewsbury indicated that she would like a future conversation presenting how the developable areas are proposed to be developed.

Commissioner McConnell noted that he is struck by the visual that about half of the residents are living on about nine-tenths of the residential area of the township. Principal Planner Shorkey acknowledged Commissioner McConnell's statement and clarified that he counts duplexes as single-family residential.

Commissioner Brooks commented that development seems to happen in large swaths, and noted interest in small patches or development like in the downtown Okemos area. He indicated he would be interested to see the density of single-family housing broken down and to consider some of those areas would be viable for multi-family residential or greater density residential. Principal Planner Shorkey stated that he could reflect density in groupings of half-acre and under, half-acre to two acres, two to five acres, five to ten acres, and greater than ten acres.

10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Township Board Update

Principal Planner Shorkey reported that there was a hearing 2025 budget, action on SUP 24-17 – Haslett Gallery, and discussion about Ordinance 2024-06 for Dobie Rd rezoning.

Commissioner Blumer asked if there has been resolution regarding the fire equipment difficulties. Principal Planner Shorkey stated that he has no further information.

B. Liaison Reports

Commissioner McConnell reported that the Environmental Commission created a study group to examine the 2024 Greenspace Master Plan and, with the help of staff, determine if changes need to be made. He gave an overview of the 2025 budget proposals related to the Environmental Commission

Commissioner Scales reported that the EDC had an update on the Village of Okemos and that they confirmed that the cost of the updates exceeds \$10 million, that the developer cannot finance it, and that the Township does not have the funding available, so the project is indefinitely delayed for the foreseeable future. Commissioner Scales gave a memo to Principal Planner Shorkey that was given to the EDC. Principal Planner Shorkey thanked Commissioner Scales and discussed information availability.

11. PROJECT UPDATES

A. Project Report

Principal Planner Shorkey stated that there are no definitive updates, though some of the projects are being discussed.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

Chair Shrewsbury opened public remarks at 7:35

Chair Shrewsbury closed public remarks at 7:35

13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Brooks thanked Principal Planner Shorkey for his work. Other Commissioners concurred.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Shrewsbury called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 pm

Commissioner Scales moved to adjourn the September 9, 2024 regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Romback. Motion passed unanimously.