

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
February 22, 2016**

APPROVED

**5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill, DeGroff, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson, Opsommer, Scott-Craig, Tenaglia, Van Coevering
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Director of Community Planning and Development Mark Kieselbach, Associate Planner Martha Wyatt

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Scott-Craig called the regular meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

Commissioner Cordill moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.

Without objection, Commissioner DeGroff suggested Agenda Items #7A and #7B be heard before Agenda Items #6A, #6B and #6C.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner DeGroff moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2016. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened the floor for public remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, announced a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Community Conversation will be held on March 22, 2016 from 6:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Room of the Meridian Municipal Building. He urged the public to come out and express their opinion on this issue.

Chair Scott-Craig closed public remarks.

5. Communications

A. Kathleen Rogan, 5612 Ventura Place, Haslett; RE: SUP 16021 (Szuma)

Communications received and distributed at the February 8, 2016 meeting and placed on file:

A. Karen Burye, 5659 Ventura Place, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)

- B. Mary Patterson, 5617 White Ash Lane, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- C. Bob and Pat Blakeman, 5607 White Ash Lane, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- D. Patricia and Brett Bean, 5532 Silverleaf Court, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- E. Jan and Ciney Rich, 5538 Silverleaf Court, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- F. The Ebert Family, 1058 Buckingham, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- G. Scott & Elaine Lyon, 1158 Teakwood Circle, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- H. Darcie Zubek, 5637 Ventura Place, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- I. Steve and Valerie Alexander, 5528 Silverleaf Court, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- J. Timothy and Kimberly Ziegler, 1217 Ascot Place, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- K. Jeff and Kelly Jacobs, 5587 Whiteash Lane, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)
- L. Kathleen Rogan, 5612 Ventura Place, Haslett; RE: SUP #16021 (Szuma)

6. Public hearings

- A. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #15024 (T.A. Forsberg/Westpac Michigan), revised request to develop a mixed use planned unit development north of Jolly Road, west of Jolly Oak Road and north of Farrins Parkway and
- B. Special Use Permit #15101 (T.A. Forsberg/Westpac Michigan), request to construct a group of buildings greater than 25,000 square feet in gross floor area

Chair Scott-Craig opened the public hearings at 7:20 P.M.

Associate Planner Wyatt summarized the revised mixed use planned unit development (MUPUD) and special use permit (SUP) requests as outlined in staff memoranda dated February 19, 2016.

- Applicant
Mr. Forsberg, 4725 Mohican Lane, Okemos, stated the idea behind the revised development proposal was neighborhood connectivity through the commercial mixes and park system. Mr. Forsberg defined the neighborhood as the intersection of Okemos and Jolly Roads traveling west to Hagadorn Road, adding it correlates with the food innovation district. He pointed out Michigan State University has defined a food innovation district as a strategic geographic concentration of food oriented businesses and services designed to broaden the marketplace for existing and new growth in mature stage food related companies. Mr. Forsberg characterized a food innovation district as a place for growers, producers and distributors to come together in a concentrated area and provide a place for consumers to be connected with their local food systems.

Mr. Forsberg provided a Powerpoint presentation on the Okemos Pointe MUPUD, noting the current area of industrial use for the past 60 years has been changed into a market place in an effort to bring connection to nearby neighborhoods. He added the new mixed use building next to the market place will house commercial on the first floor and the current commercial building will be repurposed into the food innovation district. Mr. Forsberg offered several depictions of the repurposed industrial building into the market space as well as the pedestrian plaza. He highlighted the Flint Farmers Market as an example of a place to meet in the community.

Will Randle, WestPac of Michigan, 919 West University Drive, Suite 700, Rochester, offered slides of the high points of the design overlay changes. He focused on the two primary areas of changes, updates to the buildings in the back and the parking in the park group, due to the location of the wetland. Mr. Randle added these changes allowed the buildings to be constructed further away from the property line in the rear of the development and the addition of parking spaces. He noted the marketplace in lieu of the fitness center will serve as the major amenity for the project. Mr. Randle stated one (1) of two (2) of the buildings previously located in the greenspace was moved to Jolly Oak Road (mixed use building) and the other west of the entry road to allow for the proposed improvements.

Mr. Randle displayed the revised site map on the overhead which showed the rerouting of the trail system proposed to run through the center of the development. He noted their intent is to have all trails and all traffic flow from the community down to the marketplace. Mr. Randle shared there is approximately 20,000 square feet of greenspace associated with the marketplace which will house a covered terrace around the edge and back of the building with dining patios, artisan tents for seasonal vendors, food truck locations and an amphitheater. He offered sketch concepts of the combination of the mixed use building tied into the marketplace viewed from different angles on the site.

- Public

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, stated the MUPUD is a progressive design concept and would be a welcomed addition to the Township. He spoke to the benefit of the marketplace concept in that area of the Township. Mr. Provencher voiced his support for the design of the covered bicycle parking and storage, noting a bicycle repair station would be a good amenity within the development. He complimented Associate Planner Wyatt on the non-motorized aspect of the MUPUD. Mr. Provencher offered his belief that on the mixed use building labeled M10, fiber cement would be the better choice for longevity than the use of softwood lap.

Elizabeth Whiston, 2364 Fieldstone, Okemos, expressed concern with the close proximity of this development to her home, stating she does not want “somebody right behind” her. She inquired at what point the development will be finalized.

- Planning Commission discussion:

Chair Scott-Craig inquired as to how the major amendments mentioned by staff are handled.

Associate Planner Wyatt replied that depending on the type of major amendment, it would come back to the Planning Commission to commence the major amendment process.

Commissioner Jackson requested the applicant designate the four (4) wetlands.

Mr. Randle complied with her request.

Chair Scott-Craig noted the four (4) wetlands are labeled as A, B, C and D, and inquired if wetland D was the pond.

Mr. Randle explained D is the “fringes” around the pond that qualify as a wetland, and the smaller wetland proposed to be filled is an “appendage” to wetland C.

Commissioner Van Coevering asked if the marketplace was going to be just food or will it have other retail product.

Mr. Forsberg replied the marketplace it will contain food based businesses and compatible uses, including a commercial demo kitchen.

Mr. Randle added weddings are a prevalent use at the Flint Farmers Market and could be a popular use at Okemos Pointe.

Commissioner Van Coevering asked that if there would be a different price point on the apartments, given the addition of commercial space on first floor and two floors of apartments above the commercial space.

Mr. Forsberg responded pricing will be the same.

Commissioner Van Coevering inquired as to the reaction from the Ingham County Road Department (ICRD) to the proposed on-street parking.

Mr. Forsberg explained they plan to discuss the on-street parking with the ICRD in an attempt to work out a solution, adding that the Township ordinance allows parking on the street. He noted there currently is overnight parking on Jolly Oak Road, as it is not a restricted parking area. Mr. Forsberg expressed his preference for some dedicated spaces in the front to give it a more urban feel in the area.

Commissioner Van Coevering requested the timeline for the review of the Smith Drain.

Mr. Randle stated the permit application for the entire Smith Drain project will be filed tomorrow. He noted the goal is to get the Jolly Road crossing repaired before Michigan State University (MSU) students come back for the fall semester. Mr. Randle added the marketplace will not be in the first phase of construction.

Commissioner Van Coevering asked when the hours of operation for the marketplace will be reviewed.

Associate Planner Wyatt responded there are no restrictions on hours in the C-2 zoning district and could be looked at during site plan review.

Mr. Randle added it is their intent to speak directly with the vendors as they approach the developer as the days or hours of operation have not yet been determined. He indicated some consideration is being given to inside setups which would allow for consolidation in a specific area for the businesses which desire longer hours.

Commissioner Van Coevering stated she was impressed with the changes and the project looks like a point of destination. She believed it beneficial to keep the parking requirement

down to what is actually needed as “overparking” would detract from the attractiveness of the site. Commissioner Van Coevering noted the development demonstrates a MUPUD.

Commissioner Honicky spoke in support of the marketplace concept. He believed food trucks and other summer vendors will accent a stable number of merchants (e.g, butcher, baker, etc.). Commissioner Honicky voiced his appreciation for the “wage earners” ability to occupy designated apartments. He suggested one (1) or two (1) of the buildings contain elevators to address some of the components in the mix of population who would benefit from them. Relative to the pet issue, he suggested if dogs are allowed, there be a specific place for them to walk with a “facility” to provide dog mittens to pick of animal waste.

Commissioner Ianni stated the amenities and trailways benefit everyone in the community, and fostering small business growth and development helps promote entrepreneurs (e.g., food businesses, food trucks) in the area.

Commissioner Cordill requested the sequencing of phases for this project, beginning with the first phase.

Mr. Randle pointed to the eight (8) buildings which will consist of Phase 1. He explained that depending upon the “lease up” of Phase 1, they anticipate to immediately roll into Phase 2. Mr. Randle stated the timeframe for the first opening phase is 18-24 months, with a total project completion time of four (4) years in order to bring together the details for the 50-60 anticipated vendors.

Commissioner DeGroff voiced appreciation for the marketplace concept in lieu of a membership based fitness center to address the true spirit of a MUPUD.

Commissioner Jackson asked for a definition of corten metal.

Mr. Randle explain corten is corrugated steel panels which are allowed to patina to create a contrast with the other materials on a building to enhance the modern mountain architecture.

Commissioner Jackson asked for the percentage of impervious surface for the revised site plan.

Associate Planner Wyatt believed both plan versions showed approximately 53%.

Commissioner Jackson asked if it is the applicant intends to meet the 50% glass requirement in the commercial components.

Mr. Randle replied it is their intent to meet the 50% glass requirement; however, the proposed plan is in the initial conceptual stage and no drawings have been completed to address that Township standard.

Commissioner Jackson inquired if it is the applicant’s intent to meet the landscaping requirements.

Mr. Randle replied in the affirmative.

Chair Scott-Craig inquired if there are plans for an on-site leasing office.

Mr. Randle replied the leasing office will be incorporated into the 6200 feet on the first floor of the mixed use building.

Chair Scott-Craig expressed appreciation for the lack of density per acre in this project and the marketplace concept. He requested an update on the environmental contamination issues.

Mr. Randle explained that when the soil borings for the Phase I buildings were being conducted, the boring crew noticed diesel fuel odor in the cores which triggered a new Phase 1 environmental assessment. He noted that enough information was obtained which justified a Phase 2 environmental assessment, which has now been completed. Mr. Randle mentioned that he received an email after work hours today which indicated preliminary lab results showed fuel type residues above the guidelines. He relayed there is an issue but at this point in time, the extent of the issue is unknown. Mr. Randle added a complete update will be provided to the Planning Commission at the next meeting as they will then have a full assessment of the brownfield plan. He emphasized the applicant wants to be proactive in fully disclosing all known elements of the brownfield.

Chair Scott-Craig addressed the importance of understanding the Smith Drain repair in this area. He reminded Commissioners of a previous discussion in August concerning the depth of the drain and the possibility of a protective fence for the safety of children in the project and adjacent neighborhoods.

Mr. Randle clarified the trail is between the proposed housing and the drain. He was unsure how this issue is addressed in other portions of the trail system.

Mr. Forsberg added it is their plan to have sufficient landscaping around the drain as they view it as an asset for pedestrians using the trail. He stated if there is any safety hazard involved with the depth of the drain, it will be addressed.

Mr. Randle felt confident their insurance carrier will help them take the necessary precautions relative to pedestrian safety concerning the depth of the drain.

Chair Scott-Craig noted there was also previous discussion about driveways which cross the drain and there would be subsequent guardrail issues to be dealt with as well. He asked for an update on the proposed wetland fill and mitigation.

Mr. Randle explained it is their intent to apply for the wetland use permit (WUP) so it will “happen” at the same time as the Board approval process for the SUP and MUPUD.

Chair Scott-Craig indicated the first step in the WUP process is to go before the Environmental Commission for a recommendation.

Chair Scott-Craig expressed appreciation for the greater than 40 foot building setbacks, as he believed residential setbacks to be appropriate for this development, adding the MUPUD ordinance allows for waivers on this issue. He addressed the parking setbacks, stating those issues are less important than the buildings themselves. Chair Scott-Craig was appreciative the buildings have been moved “well-away” from the boundary lines.

Chair Scott-Craig requested an explanation of the issue with the trail.

Mr. Forsberg explained they are working with the Department of Public Works and Engineering to alter the original Township Pathway Master Plan in order to not have the trail cross the wetland (which would require an expensive boardwalk and subsequent maintenance). He stated the proposed revision would bring the dedicated trail into the development, and would “carry” the trail into the commercial use for pedestrian connectivity. Mr. Forsberg stated he is also working with the Ingham County Drain Commissioner’s (ICDC) Office and the Township on the trail which not only goes along the pond, but also the Township’s sewer line. He noted the ICDC and the Township both need access “back there” for the vacuum trucks, and there is a partnership being formed to provide a sufficient base underneath the trail to withstand the weight of the trucks.

Chair Scott-Craig asked the applicant if there was any connectivity planned with a trail which leads into their property from another community to the west.

Mr. Forsberg responded the aforementioned connection has been met with great resistance from the residents on Kansas Street.

Chair Scott-Craig stated the Kansas Street residents will have to decide if they want the connectivity to walk to the marketplace. He asked if the existing tenants in the building to house the commercial kitchen intend to remain at that location.

Mr. Randle replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Jackson spoke to the applicant’s use of the word “community” relative to taking care of the maintenance of Water Lily Way and providing transportation to three (3) different big employers in the area. She requested their definition of what community is being referred to in that context.

Mr. Randle replied it would be the privately held apartment community.

Commissioner Jackson inquired if all the residential living units would be rentals.

Mr. Randle replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Van Coevering asked if input from Coyote Creek residents was received when the charrettes were held for the revised plan as she recalled several residents voicing concern when the Okemos Pointe project was before the Planning Commission in August, 2015.

Mr. Randle explained the only charrette held since last August took place in December and focused on the redevelopment of the mixed use building and related components.

Commissioner Van Coevering asked if there had been any communications from Coyote Creek residents since the meeting in August.

Associate Planner Wyatt replied no additional communications have been received.

Chair Scott-Craig closed the public hearings at 8:27 P.M.

- C. Rezoning #16-14060 (Meridian Hospitality, LLC), request to amend voluntarily offered condition of Rezoning #14060 to develop the site as an “all-suites” hotel

Chair Scott-Craig opened the public hearing at 8:27 P.M.

Director Kieselbach summarized the amended rezoning request as outlined in staff memorandum dated February 17, 2016.

- Applicant
Mr. Pierson, McClelland and Anderson, 1305 S. Washington Avenue, Lansing, attorney for Meridian Hospitality, stated the other available hotel brands did not desire an all-suites hotel at the proposed location. He noted the market clearly showed the area is not a destination for anybody but business travelers (i.e., nights, weeks, monthly stays). Mr. Pierson added the adjoining development heard earlier this evening presents a transitional opportunity for this type of development and would bring more customers to the adjoining retail center. He expected the type of people who stay at this hotel to be the same as those who would stay at the “all-suites” hotel. Mr. Pierson clarified the change to the special use permit (required for a hotel) would be a minor amendment.
- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Honicky inquired if dogs will be staying with the travelers.

Mr. Pierson replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Honicky asked if there will be a landscaping adjustment made to provide for dogs to be walked and for the disposal of dog waste.

Mr. Pierson responded those issues will be addressed and in the same manner as it is handled at other hotels.

Commissioner Ianni stated his main concern was how the proposed development would affect traffic. He commented the staff report indicated it would have no effect on traffic.

Commissioner Cordill asked if the number of hotel rooms will be the same.

Mr. Pierson replied the size of the site limits the number of rooms and offered a range of 107-112 units. He noted the steep slope on the property to the north and to the west, as well as the parking layout, limits the buildable area.

Chair Scott-Craig indicated the previous approval had a 3 year time limit to begin the project and inquired if that would be sufficient for the new developer.

Mr. Pierson believed the previous time frame will work as the applicant does not plan on any other changes.

Chair Scott-Craig asked if there would be a restaurant (s) inside the hotel.

Mr. Pierson stated there are gathering areas, meeting rooms and conference facilities inside the hotel. He added that since there are already restaurants nearby, there is no need for food accommodation.

Chair Scott-Craig asked if some of the rooms will be suites.

Mr. Pierson believed at least 25% of the rooms will be suites.

Commissioner Jackson requested clarification that this rezoning request only asks to remove the condition of the all-suites type of hotel and retain the condition of the rezoning to C-2 with a maximum of 135 rooms.

Associate Planner Wyatt noted Commissioner Jackson's understanding was correct.

Mr. Pierson added all other C-2 uses have been eliminated except a hotel use.

Chair Scott-Craig closed the public hearing at 8:39 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Special Use Permit #16021 (Szuma), request to establish a group day care home for not more than 12 children at 1211 Ascot Place, Haslett

Commissioner Tenaglia moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby approves Special Use Permit #16021 (Szuma) with the following conditions:

- 1. Approval is based on the application and materials submitted by the applicant subject to revisions as required.**
- 2. The applicant shall obtain and maintain all necessary permits, licenses and approvals from the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Township.**
- 3. The maximum attendance for the group day care home shall not be more than 12 unrelated children at any one time.**
- 4. The hours of operation for the group day care home shall be limited to between 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.**

5. **Signage may not be utilized on the site to identify the group child care home.**
6. **Child pick-up and drop-off procedures in the A.M. and P.M. will include use of the applicant's driveway as the primary vehicle parking area. Vehicles shall not be parked on the north side of Ascot Place.**

Seconded by Commissioner DeGroff.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Applicant has met all the state requirements and will be regulated by the state to maintain licensure
- Condition #5 addresses the neighbor's objection to any signage
- Commissioner encouragement for a meeting between Ms. Rogan and the applicants to discuss the issue of the fence to their mutual satisfaction
- License requirements state that the 12 children must be unrelated

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, DeGroff, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson, Opsommer, Tenaglia, Van Coevering, Chair Scott-Craig

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Special Use Permit #16031 (Fann), request to establish a group day care home for up to 12 children at 4628 Manitou Drive, Okemos

Commissioner Tenaglia moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby approves Special Use Permit #16031 (Fann) with the following conditions:

1. **Approval is based on the application and materials submitted by the applicant subject to revisions as required.**
2. **The applicant shall obtain and maintain all necessary permits, licenses and approvals from the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Township.**
3. **The maximum attendance for the group day care home shall not be more than 12 unrelated children at any one time.**
4. **The hours of operation for the group day care home shall be limited to between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.**
5. **Child pick-up and drop-off procedures in the A.M. and P.M. will include use of the applicant's driveway as the primary vehicle parking area. Vehicles shall not be parked on the west side of Manitou Drive.**

Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

Planning Commission:

- Applicant is regulated by the state and has met all the state criteria
- Child care contracts between the applicant and parents contain language addressing the staggered drop off and pick up times which should allay traffic concerns expressed by neighbors

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, DeGroff, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson, Opsommer, Tenaglia, Van Coevering, Chair Scott-Craig
 NAYS: None
 Motion carried unanimously.

8. Other Business (None)

9. Township Board, Planning Commission officer, committee chair, and staff comment or reports

Commissioner Ianni announced the Okemos Education Foundation is holding a Civil Rights Symposium called the Legacy of Emmett Till on Tuesday, April 19, 2016 beginning at 7:00 P.M. in the Okemos High School Auditorium. He stated admission is free to all interested persons and more information is available at www.oefsite.org.

Commissioner Opsommer provided an extensive update on the February 3rd Environmental Commission meeting, including the Board of Water and Light Solar Array at Burcham Park and a green theme presentation by Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) on Tri-County's Water Policies and Programs Guide.

Chair Scott-Craig announced TCRPC will hold a meeting this Wednesday afternoon regarding a transportation plan update, and Planning Commissioners are invited to attend. He stated the Township's MUPUD ordinance language "needs some attention" and suggested Commissioners work together to provide ideas at the next work session regarding proposed changes regarding amenities: what are amenities, what is the definition of an amenity, what current amenities should be eliminated, what amenities should be added, etc.

Commissioner Van Coevering inquired if staff has researched other communities' MUPUD ordinances which they could recommend Commissioners review prior to the work session as potential models for changes to Meridian's MUPUD ordinance.

Director Kieselbach added the contract for the Master Plan with McKenna Associates has been reviewed by the Township Attorney and signed by the Supervisor and Clerk. He spoke with Sally Hodges from McKenna and one item of discussion was for McKenna to provide the names of some communities which they believe have good MUPUD ordinances.

A. New Applications

- i. Tentative Preliminary Plat #16012 (Mayberry Homes), a request to develop a 25-lot subdivision, Silverstone Estates, located on 25.5 acres east of Powell Road

- ii. Rezoning #16012 (Provision Living), a request to rezone approximately 8.66 acres from C-2 (Commercial), PO (Professional and Office), and RA (Single Family, Medium Density) to RD (Multiple Family-8 du/a), located south of Hammond Farms

Upon request of the Chair, Director Kieselbach summarized the plat process, commencing with the tentative preliminary plat through final plat approval by the Board. In response to inquiries, he clarified Planning Commission input into the layout of the plat.

B. Update of Ongoing Projects

- i. Site Plans Received - None
- ii. Site Plans Approved - None

10. Public remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened public remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, inquired as to the demographic being targeted for the living spaces in MUPUD #15024. He asked how appropriate the proposed units would be for seniors, as there are very limited handicap parking spaces. Mr. Provencher asked if the proposed number of handicap parking spaces met established ADA requirements.

Chair Scott-Craig closed public remarks.

11. Adjournment

Chair Scott-Craig adjourned the regular meeting at 9:01 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary