

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

**APPROVED**

**September 26, 2016  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Honicky, Jackson, Lane, Scott-Craig, Tenaglia, Van Coevering  
ABSENT: Commissioners DeGroff, Ianni, Opsommer  
STAFF: Director of Community Planning and Development Kieselbach

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Scott-Craig called the regular meeting to order at 7:06 P.M.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**Commissioner Honicky moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Commissioner Lane moved to approve the July 25, 2016 Special Meeting Minutes, the September 12, 2016 Work Session Meeting Minutes and the September 12, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

**4. Public Remarks**

Chair Scott-Craig opened the floor for public remarks.

Jack Zhang, 4975 Powell Road, Okemos, voiced opposition to Special Use Permit #16091 as he was concerned with safety, privacy and the decrease in property values for his parcel adjacent to the subject site.

Aaron Hanson, Ellison Brewery & Spirits, 4903 Dawn Street, Okemos, availed himself for Planning Commission questions regarding the Industrial Zoning District (Section 86-345) amendment proposal.

Chair Scott-Craig closed public remarks.

**5. Communications**

A. Jack Zhang, 4975 Powell Road, Okemos; RE: Concerns regarding Special Use Permit #16091

**6. Public hearings**

A. Special Use Permit 16091 (Stockwell Development Co., LLC), request to construct an approximately 12,000 square foot shopping center with two (2) drive-through windows at 1560 Grand River Avenue.

Chair Scott-Craig opened the public hearing at 7:11 P.M.

- Introduction by the Chair (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation and applicants)
- Summary of subject matter  
Director Kieselbach summarized the special use permit (SUP) request as outlined in staff memorandum dated September 22, 2016.
- Applicant  
Ken Stockwell, Stockwell Development Co., LLC, 4277 Okemos Road, Okemos, stated two (2) drive-through windows are being requested for the shopping center as the focus of retail today is on service and convenience. He noted the plan is to attract an upscale restaurant within the development.

Jeff Kyes, KEBS, Inc., 2116 Haslett Road, Haslett, indicated the applicant is working toward the bypass lane for the second drive-through window in order to comply with Township regulations. He noted the 12 parking spaces will likely be eliminated to allow for the bypass lane. Mr. Kyes mentioned they will also extend the service drive along the frontage of the property as deemed necessary by Director Kieselbach. He stated the applicant will commence the process to obtain the necessary wetland use permit. Mr. Kyes explained the 1.25 acre wetland on the property to the east will receive the discharge which overflows into the catch basin on Powell Road and travels to the county drain. He explained the applicant has requested more parking than required in order to avoid parking problems associated with successful restaurants.

- Public  
Jack Zhang, 4975 Powell Road, Okemos, continued to express concern with safety, privacy for his family and home value as they plan to construct a house on the property he owns adjacent to the subject parcel. He suggested construction of a fence between the two properties as a solution to his concerns.

Planning Commission discussion:

Commissioner Tenaglia requested Mr. Zhang show Commissioners on the overhead projector where he plans to build the house on his property. She inquired where Mr. Zhang proposed the fence to be located.

Mr. Zhang responded it would be at the back of his property between his parcel and the subject parcel.

Commissioner Van Coevering asked staff if the only issue before the Planning Commission is the drive-through windows.

Director Kieselbach responded in the affirmative, as the parking and service road will be reviewed by staff during site plan review if the special use permit (SUP) is approved.

Commissioner Van Coevering asked if the concerns expressed by the public could be taken into consideration for the purpose of this public hearing.

Director Kieselbach replied only if there was concern about noise emanating from the drive-through speakers or headlights shining into the neighbor's home.

Commissioner Honicky stated the property has significant elevation with a drop off between the subject parcel and Mr. Zhang's property. He asked how the applicant intends to carry the service drive from the Sparrow Medical facility through to Powell Road, given the topography of the land.

Mr. Kyes responded the site has severe grade and there is a 22 foot drop to Mr. Zhang's property. He added there is intent to move a significant amount of dirt, flattening it to create a viable commercial site. Mr. Kyes noted the wetlands have been delineated and flagged and will be protected where applicable.

Commissioner Honicky stated by flattening the land and using the dirt from the hill to fill in the "pit", the applicant will be able to construct a frontage road through to Powell Road with the commensurate curb cut to the east.

Mr. Kyes clarified that when the rest of the site is developed, the applicant will focus on circulation, indicating a desire for cross parking agreements for optimum traffic flow.

Commissioner Honicky inquired if the applicant had spoken with Sparrow Medical as he believed Sparrow's driveway would be the "normal" exit for the drive-through window.

Mr. Kyes clarified the traffic flow on the subject site is not all a one-way system and there is not a designated exit for the drive-through windows.

Commissioner Honicky asked if the house on the corner of Powell Road and Grand River Avenue would be razed and included in a different portion of the development.

Mr. Kyes replied the house will be removed as development moves forward in the future. He stated that eventually all the parcels would be tied together through use of the service drive in order to keep cars from having to travel onto Grand River if they want to visit another business in the development or to prevent stacking from occurring at the exits.

Commissioner Honicky inquired if the frontage road would be two-way.

Mr. Kyes responded in the affirmative. He noted the drive-through windows would have one-way traffic for optimal traffic flow on the property.

Commissioner Tenaglia inquired if the applicant would be amenable to move the building closer to Grand River Avenue, given the concerns expressed by the neighbor. She noted the drive through would then be farther away from Mr. Zhang's property.

Mr. Kyes responded Township ordinance requires a 100 foot setback for commercial property which abuts residential. He noted the building is currently shown 160 feet from the property line and the Township's landscape requirements mandates shrubbery three (3) feet in height around parking. He did not perceive placement of a fence on the property line as beneficial, given the

subject site is 22 feet above Mr. Zhang's property. Mr. Kyes reminded Planning Commissioners the ordinance allows for a 60 foot rear setback if the applicant plants a double row of conifers.

Chair Scott-Craig inquired about the number of required parking spaces.

Director Kieselbach responded multi-tenant commercial is a minimum of 61 parking spaces with a maximum of 67 spaces. He noted the applicant is proposing 107 spaces and may need a variance for the number of spaces as it is more than allowed by ordinance.

Mr. Kyes added it is difficult to gauge the appropriate number of parking spaces without knowing the users and their respective parking needs.

Chair Scott-Craig inquired if the Township's traffic consultant reviewed the traffic study for this project.

Director Kieselbach replied the Township's traffic consultant is retiring and did not offer comment. He indicated the Township will need to find a different traffic consultant.

Chair Scott-Craig pointed out the letter from the Ingham County Drain Commissioner (ICDC) regarding the detention pond.

Mr. Kyes had not seen the letter prior to it being in the packet. He stated he did not agree with the decision in the letter stating an easement will need to be obtained, as he believed the catch basin on Powell Road makes the easement unnecessary. Mr. Kyes indicated he will have a conversation with the ICDC on this issue.

Chair Scott-Craig stated the wetland use permit generally goes to the Environmental Commission prior to it coming to the Planning Commission and inquired of staff if the process has changed.

Director Kieselbach explained Stockwell Development must make application which is then sent to the Township's environmental consultant for recommendation and forwarded on to the Environmental Commission for review. After the Environmental Commission's review, that body will make a recommendation to the Planning Commission since the Planning Commission is the determining body on this land use and subsequent wetland land use permit.

Chair Scott-Craig inquired about the right turn taper for westbound Grand River Avenue mentioned in the traffic study, as the speed limit on Grand River Avenue is 50 miles per hour.

Mr. Kyes did not have an issue with installation of the taper if the traffic study determines a necessity for it.

Director Kieselbach added the Township submitted the proposed project to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for comment and are awaiting a response.

Chair Scott-Craig asked why two (2) drive-through windows are being requested, as they are auto centric in nature and do not promote the Township's goal of walkability.

Mr. Stockwell noted volume of business is approximately 30% higher with a drive-through window, adding it is a noticeable trend in retail. He believed drive-through windows are warranted as it is considered a service (e.g., Baryames Dry Cleaners, pharmacies).

Amanda Hopper, 5485 Martinique Circle, East Lansing, representative with Stockwell Development, explained drive-through windows are considered a service which caters to millennials.

Commissioner Jackson inquired if the drive-through windows will function as stand-alone drive-through establishments only or establishments with both a drive-through and sit down.

Mr. Stockwell offered a dry cleaner or a pharmacy as examples. Ms. Hopper noted a drive-through window could be installed after a tenant is secured, but she believed now is the time to install drive-through windows in order to market the space with that feature.

Commissioner Honicky sees drive-through windows as part of our multi-tasking lifestyle that is anti-walkability and anti-bicycle and pedestrian friendly. He believed having a “central” district similar to Carriage Hills, Haslett Village Square and downtown Okemos will be the only way for walkability and bikeability to be a “regular” feature.

Commissioner Jackson acknowledged the way the applicant is channeling traffic attempts to minimize the conflicts between patrons who park in front and drive-through traffic. She pointed to the dedicated pedestrian pathway from the edge of the road to the building and bicycle parking in front.

Chair Scott Craig closed the public hearing at 7:51 P.M.

**7. Unfinished Business (None)**

**8. Other Business**

**A. Industrial Zoning District (Section 86-345) Amendment Proposal**

Director Kieselbach summarized the proposed industrial zoning district amendment proposal as outlined in staff memorandum dated September 19, 2016.

**Commissioner Van Coevering moved to initiate a zoning amendment to add instructional centers, mobile food vending units and outdoor seating to the industrial zoning district. Seconded by Commissioner Tenaglia.**

Planning Commission, staff and applicant discussion:

- Amendment speaks to the Planning Commission’s earlier discussion on the Master Plan relative to flexibility
- Staff to research potential conflict between state prohibition on smoking in the brewery and placement of benches for workers to sit and possibly smoke near where food is being served
- Concern with legislating a smoking prohibition on private property
- No language in the Township’s mobile food ordinance which prohibits smoking nearby
- Light and heavy industrial is allowed in the industrial district

- Concern whether food consumption in an outdoor eating area adjacent to a foundry limits the industrial activity which can take place nearby Small patio is an attempt to revitalize the industrial area
- Staff will research any restrictions and provide the results prior to the public hearing
- Applicant is attempting to reutilize an industrial zoned area for food consumption
- Ellison Brewery is licensed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as a food production facility
- State license carries stringent health standards
- Brewery patrons appreciate the fact it is set back and secluded
- Patio will be approximately 12 x 20 feet with three (3) to four (4) tables
- Concern that outdoor seating will limit the area to other industrial businesses in the future
- Foundry has met its expansion limit

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Honicky, Jackson, Lane, Tenaglia, Van Coevering, Chair Scott-Craig

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

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

A. New Applications

1. Rezoning #16040 (Sumbal), request to rezone approximately nine acres located at 2267 Saginaw Highway, 6217 Newton Road, and 6219 Newton Road from PO (Professional and Office), RD (Multiple Family), and RA (Single Family, Medium Density) to C-2 (Commercial).

B. Update of Ongoing Projects

i. Site Plans Received - NONE

ii. Site Plans Approved

1. Site Plan Review #16-08 (Chris Humphrey), construct a drive-through ATM in the Meijer parking lot at 2055 Grand River Avenue

**10. Public remarks**

Chair Scott-Craig opened and closed public remarks.

**11. Adjournment**

Chair Scott-Craig adjourned the regular meeting at 8:05 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto  
Recording Secretary