

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 11, 2016**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill (7:02 P.M.), DeGroff, Ianni, Jackson, Opsommer, Scott-Craig
ABSENT: Commissioners Honicky, Tenaglia, Van Coevering
STAFF: Principal Planner Oranchak, Associate Planner Wyatt

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Scott-Craig called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

Commissioner Opsommer moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner DeGroff moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 28, 2016. Seconded by Commissioner Opsommer.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened the floor for public remarks.

Robert Pairolero, 1536 Haslett Road, Haslett, and a member of New Hope Church, addressed the explosive growth of the church's congregation in the last five (5) years. He spoke in support of Special Use Permit #16051, highlighting the many outreach activities New Hope Church supports on a regional, national and international level.

Lynn Ochberg, 4383 Maumee Drive, Okemos, spoke in support of the update to the Pedestrian-Bicycle Pathway Master Plan. She specifically addressed the gap on the south side of Mt. Hope Road between Maumee and Okemos Roads which has existed for thirty-five (35) years. Ms. Ochberg noted residents in the area have no safe way to walk to their voting precinct at the old Central School without either walking in the street or crossing Okemos Road at a "dip" to utilize the sidewalk on the north side.

Leonard Provencher, 58254 Buena Parkway, Haslett, spoke in support of the pathway renewal millage later this year, and expressed appreciation to the Commission members for their review of the bicycle portion of the plan. He believed continued renewal of this millage demonstrates the interest residents have in the Township's pathway system.

Chair Scott-Craig closed public remarks.

5. Communications (None)

6. Public hearings

- A. Special Use Permit #16051 (New Hope Church), request to construct a 42,000 square foot church on 13.5 acres addressed as 2170 Saginaw Highway (M-78), the northeast corner of Saginaw Highway and Newton Road

Chair Scott-Craig opened the public hearing at 7:09 P.M.

- Introduction by the Chair (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation and applicants)
- Summary of subject matter
Associate Planner Wyatt summarized the special use permit (SUP) request as outlined in staff memorandum dated April 8, 2016.
- Applicant
Mark Kring, Senior Pastor, New Hope Church, 1340 Haslett Road, Haslett, addressed the rapid growth of the church since its inception in the fall of 2007, approximating 10% per year. He indicated the church researched available property within Meridian Township which would allow New Hope to continue to expand as needed. Pastor Kring stated New Hope's future vision is to have the church continue to serve the community (e.g., open the facility to Women, Infants and Children (WIC) recipients). He believed the designated piece of land will fit the church's need well.
- Public
Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, believed it will be necessary to increase bicycle parking in the future if the church's long-term mission is to provide education services. He requested to be noticed when the site plan review for this project is held.

Mike Bristor, 649 Earliglow Lane, Haslett, an elder for New Hope Church, urged the Planning Commission to support the SUP request.

Marina Ionescu, 6233 W. Lake Drive, Haslett, inquired where the contamination is coming from and how long the Township has known about it.

- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Cordill believed the site lends itself to a church. She voiced concern with the ingress and egress off Saginaw Highway due to the 55 mile per hour speed limit. Commissioner Cordill was satisfied the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) will address this issue through creation of a deceleration/acceleration lane, as evidenced by the proposed taper road reference. She requested the exterior have more of a masonry look which would blend better with the nearby residential area. Commissioner Cordill noted she will be following the proposed project as there is a priority conservation corridor covering the portion of the site located primarily south of vacated Towner Road.

Commissioner Jackson requested an explanation of the change in the contamination data from 2007 to now.

Jeff Kyes, KEBS, Inc., 2116 Haslett Road, Haslett, indicated that based on the last available report, there is minor contamination on the site which is not migrating, adding that type of contamination can be moved around on the site as long as it is protected and a cap is placed over it. He noted the Township will be provided with a better report on how to handle it in the near future. Mr. Kyes added he has spoken with MDOT and the department plans to make changes on Saginaw Highway, requesting the driveway for the proposed development be shifted 85 feet to accommodate the change, identified as a crossover. He added the fifty (50) foot taper is being constructed at MDOT's request. Mr. Kyes stated the next plan submitted to the Township will show the required 26 foot drive aisles

Chair Scott-Craig inquired about the intent of the Township's Pathway Plan to expand the pathway along Saginaw Highway to ten (10) feet, although the submitted plan shows only seven (7) feet in width.

Mr. Kyes replied the current Township Pedestrian-Bicycle Pathway Plan clearly requires seven (7) feet, which is shown on the site plan. He indicated he will speak with both the Township engineering staff and his client regarding construction of a ten (10) foot pathway. Mr. Kyes offered there is sufficient space for the desired pathway expansion, noting the pathways will end one (1) foot inside the MDOT right-of-way. He stated there is already a nine (9) foot paved shoulder on M-78, currently located outside of the travel lane.

Chair Scott-Craig stated there needs to be sufficient room for turn off as the speed limit on Saginaw Highway is 55 miles per hour.

Mr. Kyes added the proposed curb is 4-1/2 feet off the existing asphalt.

Gary Post, Associate Pastor at New Hope Church, 1340 Haslett Road, Haslett, indicated AKT Peerless conducted a Phase I Environmental Site Analysis (ESA) for new Hope Church and was the same company which performed a Phase I and Phase II ESA in 2007 related to the former uses on the site. He noted remediation for the low level of contamination discovered is covered in the draft due compliance plan explaining remediation can be either transportation of the soil to a Type 2 facility from the subject site or leaving it on site in the same general area. Mr. Post added the Phase I ESA states there is "no unacceptable exposure risk" at the property that cannot be managed through reasonable precautions. He believed the issue relative to the previous brownfield plan may have been that brownfield money was available for the previous project. Mr. Post stated New Hope Church is not eligible for brownfield money, nor are they interested in trying to obtain brownfield money, adding if there is a cost for remediation, New Hope Church will cover that cost.

Mr. Bristol pointed out the contaminated areas are contained on the two northern parcels. He stated since the original Phase I and Phase II ESA's were conducted in 2007, they were too old for prospective buyers in 2016. Mr. Bristol believed the new ESA especially important given the known contaminants on the parcel to the west which previously housed the old movie theater, and the necessity of determining those contaminants had not migrated to the subject parcel.

Chair Scott-Craig added the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) will oversee the environmental issues and will be the final arbiter.

John Scott-Craig addressed the fourth wetland on site in an area proposed for future parking.

Jeff Kyes replied there is an existing culvert under the old Towner Road and it appears the water will be confined in the ditch. He stated the culvert is not something the applicant will consider during this phase of the project.

John Scott-Craig inquired as to the number designated in the ordinance for required parking spaces. He asked if the designated number was the minimum required or the maximum allowed.

Associate Planner Wyatt believed the number to be the minimum required.

Chair Scott-Craig believed one of the Township's goals is to limit the number of parking spaces in an effort to reduce the impervious surface generated by parking.

Associate Planner Wyatt indicated, based on the parking calculations supplied by staff from plans of five (5) other churches in Meridian Township, it appears the formula used to calculate parking is not "up to speed" with church needs. She added the Township has not required any of the five (5) churches listed to obtain a variance to exceed the minimum number of parking spaces.

Principal Planner Oranchak added churches built in recent years have also stated the same thing. She acknowledged this section of the ordinance is very old, written at a time when families were larger and traveled to church together in one (1) vehicle. Ms. Oranchak stated this is one of several issues in the zoning ordinance which need to be revised.

Chair Scott-Craig pointed out the impervious surface percentage for this first phase is very low, but calculations for future phases on this same site will change.

Commissioner DeGroff inquired if the applicant would need to come before the Planning Commission or Township Board for approval if they chose to construct an addition(s) in the future.

Associate Planner Wyatt responded if the request was for an addition over 2,000 square feet, it would need to go to the Planning Commission and Township Board through the major amendment process. She noted if the request was for an addition less than 2,000 square feet, it would be reviewed by the Director of Community Planning and Development for approval or denial.

Commissioner DeGroff asked if the applicant desired additional parking to coincide with the future additions, would that request come before the appropriate approving bodies.

Associate Planner Wyatt's recollection was if the request is for an increase in the use which generates more than ten percent (10%) additional parking, it would necessitate going through the major amendment process.

Commissioner DeGroff asked what would be the impervious ratio on the site if all future anticipated additions and parking were added.

Mr. Kyes responded he did not believe the ratio would exceed 50%, well below the 70% impervious surface limit.

Commissioner DeGroff inquired of the applicant if they had knowledge of the intended uses for future additions.

Mr. Bristol responded the church does not intend to house any children's education programs during the week, but will continue with bible studies during the week and services on the weekends. He stated the additions are anticipated to deal solely with anticipated growth.

Dr. Pairolero pointed to the layout on the overhead projector, demonstrating how the architect designed the church for anticipated future growth relative to seating in the sanctuary and administrative offices.

Commissioner DeGroff noted there was earlier mention of opening up the church for use by various groups, and inquired as to those types of uses.

Dr. Pairolero replied WIC is currently allowed to use the church as a "distribution" center, where formula, diapers, etc. are given to individuals in need. He added it is the church's intent to continue that practice at the new location.

Chair Scott-Craig closed the public hearing at 8:08 P.M.

- B. Special Use Permit #16041 (Meridian Township), request to work in the 100-year floodplain of the Smith Drain associated with improvements to the drain

Chair Scott-Craig opened the public hearing at 8:08 P.M.

- Summary of subject matter
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the special use permit request as outlined in staff memorandum dated April 8, 2016.
- Planning Commission discussion:
Chair Scott-Craig stated there is water which currently spills onto Jolly Road from businesses to the south. He hopes the enlarged pipe will be of adequate size and strength to address the current conditions

Principal Planner Oranchak stated the Smith Drain flows from south of I-96, so a very large area is encompassed in the Smith Drain which impacts the subject location.

Chair Scott-Craig pointed out the cut-to-fill ratio is “usually” 1-1, and the proposal has a ratio of 19,452 to 123.

Principal Planner Oranchak added the fill area is the wetland mitigation for the wetland use permit request, which is why it is adjacent to a wetland, thereby increasing the wetland area.

Commissioner Jackson addressed the negative impact of the water in the area on the integrity of Jolly Road itself. She believed it important to understand how essential it is for this work to be done for the welfare and safety of many residents. She inquired as to the timeline for completion of the proposed work as it is her understanding completion of this work will impact the proposed Forsberg development project

Principal Planner Oranchak replied she believed the pipe replacement under Jolly Road is scheduled for 2016, which will require the ponds to be constructed prior to pipe replacement. She added it is her understanding the improvements on the Forsberg property will transpire in Phase 2, so this project will be completed before commencement of Phase 2.

Commissioner Jackson asked if there were several phases to the drain work.

Principal Planner Oranchak replied there are several phases for this portion of the drain work in which the ponds have to be constructed first before the drain pipe under Jolly Road can be removed and replaced.

Commissioner Cordill asked for the current depth of the pond.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated the pond is currently the primary detention area for the drain. She stated the additional ponds will increase the detention holding capacity for the drain.

Commissioner Cordill inquired as to the difference in the depth once work is completed.

Principal Planner Oranchak indicated there is no work being considered to the existing pond as all work will focus on creating additional ponds. She stated she will provide additional information on pond depth in the staff report for the next meeting.

Commissioner Jackson added the fill component has to do with regulating the flow from one retention pond to another.

Principal Planner Oranchak clarified in this case, the fill has to do with the wetland mitigation being performed on the edge of the existing pond in the Smith Drain. She noted the 123 cubic yards of fill is the mitigation area for wetland impacts. Ms. Oranchak added the ponds are where the 19,452 cubic yards of cut is taking place.

Commissioner Jackson spoke to the existing pathway.

Principal Planner Oranchak added the existing pathway which runs from Okemos Road to Hulett Road is located just north of the two (2) ponds proposed to be constructed. She added there will be temporary fill to shore up the pathway during construction which will later be removed.

Chair Scott-Craig closed the public hearing at 8:24 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business (None)

8. Other Business

A. Pedestrian-Bicycle Pathway Master Plan Review

Chair Scott-Craig stated Chief Engineer Ishraidi gave a presentation on the Pedestrian-Bicycle Pathway Master Plan during the work session prior to tonight's regular meeting of the Planning Commission. He noted the Township is requesting input from the Planning Commission during this review process.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Commissioner preference for the memo to Engineering regarding the Planning Commission's ideas and recommendations to be placed in the record
- Map is online in order for the public to provide comment and input
- Township residents provided millage money for the Township's pathway system and is a critical component of the Master Plan
- Newton Road project, discussed during the work session, currently shows a seven (7) foot wide pathway on the east side, adjacent to the Sierra Ridge subdivision
- Pathway millage money will fund the paved shoulders
- Diligence in having the resolutions reference the Pathway Master Plan in order for the conditions to reflect the Master Plan to ensure developers fill in the gaps
- Engineering is accepting comments through the month of April and will then transmit those findings to the Township Board

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

Commissioner Ianni, once again, announced the Okemos Education Foundation (OEF) will host a Civil Rights Symposium entitled "The Legacy of Emmett Till: Understanding History from Four Perspectives" on Tuesday, April 19, 2016 beginning at 7:00 P.M. in the Okemos High School Auditorium. He stated admission is free to the public. Commissioner Ianni indicated more information is available at www.oefsite.org.

Commissioner Opsommer provided an in-depth report on the discussion held at the Environmental Commission's April 6th meeting. He noted the Township is hosting two events as part of its rebranding campaign, one on April 28th and one on May 5th, both beginning at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Room of the Municipal Building. Commissioner Opsommer announced the Meridian Recycling Event will be held on Saturday, April 23rd from 9:00 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. at Chippewa Middle School. He also reported the Love a Park Day Event will be held the same day from 9:00 A.M. until noon and interested residents can either call 853-4610 or email greenway@meridian.mi.us to volunteer. Commissioner Opsommer reminded the citizenry of the grand opening of Whole Foods on April 13th beginning at 8:45 A.M.

Chair Scott-Craig announced a letter was sent to all participants who attended the meeting last May inviting them to attend the April 21st meeting with McKenna & Associates (consultant) to hear comments regarding the Township Master Plan Update. He reported his attendance, along with Commissioner Honicky and Principal Planner Oranchak, at an affordable housing symposium held at

Michigan State University. He also reported his attendance, along with Commissioners Jackson and Opsommer, at the meeting of the Friends of Meridian Pathways last Thursday.

A. New Applications (None)

B. Update of Ongoing Projects

i. Site Plans Received

- Site Plan Review #16-05 (Chick-Fil-A), request to construct a Chick-Fil-A restaurant north of Meijer

ii. Site Plans Approved

- Site Plan Review #16-03 (Meridian Township Parks), request to develop Towner Road Park at 2055 Towner Road
- Site Plan Review #16-04 (Kellie Murphy), request to occupy an existing building at 5000 Marsh Road with a new business (Kellie's Consignment)

10. Public remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened public remarks.

Marina Ionescu, 6233 W. Lake Drive, Haslett, inquired if the report given during tonight's Planning Commission work session on the Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Master Plan will be available online.

Chair Scott-Craig replied the report was in a verbal format, but there will be additional opportunities to provide input. He also indicated the actual plan is depicted on the Township's website.

Principal Planner Oranchak added the reasons for the scheduled discussions is to make changes to the current plan. She noted at this point in time the 2016 update is an idea, but is not conclusive as responses from the public and other board and commission members are still be considered for input into updating the plan.

Chair Scott-Craig suggested a copy of the updated plan can be obtained from Assistant Township Manager/Director of Public Works and Engineering Derek Perry

Chair Scott-Craig closed public remarks.

11. Adjournment

Chair Scott-Craig adjourned the regular meeting at 8:39 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary