

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 13, 2015**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill, DeGroff, Deits, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson (7:03 P.M.) Scott-Craig, Tenaglia (7:04 P.M.), Van Coevering
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Principal Planner Oranchak, Associate Planner Peter Menser

1. Call meeting to order

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

2. Approval of agenda

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

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Ianni moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 23, 2015 and the Work Session Meeting Minutes of March 9, 2015, March 16, 2015 and March 23, 2015. Seconded by Commissioner DeGroff.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened the floor for public remarks.

Brent Forsberg, 2422 Jolly Road, Okemos, summarized changes made to Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family, LLC) and urged Planning Commissioners to approve the request so that this project may move forward to the Board.

Ann Zimmerman, 2344 Coyote Creek Drive, Okemos, voiced her continued opposition to Rezoning #15010.

Steven Freemire, 3622 Kansas Road, Okemos, expressed appreciation for the applicant's proposed changes, but continued to voice opposition to Rezoning #15010.

Jay Murthy, 2483 Robins Way, Okemos, voiced his appreciation for changes made to Rezoning #15010, but was still in opposition to the proposed project.

Chair Scott-Craig closed public remarks.

5. Communications

- A. Ken & Brenda Miller, 3681 Kansas Road, Okemos; RE: Opposition to Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- B. Eric Brauher, 1830 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)

- C. Michael Gillengerten, 6286 Sunhollow Lane, Haslett; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- D. Shaun Dickey, 1830 W. Grand River Ave., Okemos; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- E. Oral Surgery Associates of Lansing, 4201 Okemos Road, Okemos; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- F. Dennis Vandecar, 1078 Bonanza Drive, Okemos; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- G. Allene & Wesley Hood, 1150 Scenic Lake Drive, Okemos; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- H. Jay & Cathleen Heath, 2607 Robins Way, Okemos; RE: Opposition to Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- I. Valerie Nilson, 2565 Robins Way, Okemos; RE: Opposition to Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- J. Nancy McKeague, Senior Vice President, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, 2112 University Park Drive, Okemos; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- K. James Sherman, 2610 Robins Way, Okemos; RE: Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- L. Rona Moore, 2513 Lupione Court, Okemos; RE: Opposition to Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- M. Tim Lilleboe, 2299 Knob Hill, Apt. 10, Okemos; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- N. Chengfeng Yang, 2556 Robins Way, Okemos; RE: Opposition to Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- O. Petition in opposition to Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- P. Marty & Leigh Holmes, 880 Nicole Circle, Okemos; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)
- Q. Tim Daman, President & CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, 500 E Michigan Ave # 200, Lansing; RE: Support for Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family LLC)

6. Public hearings

- A. Special Use Permit #15-83251 (Kroger) request to construct gas station with a 254 square foot transaction kiosk and 8 fueling stations at 4884 Marsh Rd.

Chair Scott-Craig opened the public hearing at 7:08 P.M.

- Introduction by the Chair (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation and applicants)
- Summary of subject matter
Associate Planner Peter Menser summarized the rezoning request as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 5, 2015.
- Applicant

Stephen Webster, Kroger Company of Michigan, 37704 Hillstech Drive, Farmington Hills, offered that Kroger has 1,500 gas stations nationwide, with 64 stations in Michigan, three (3) of which are currently within the Lansing market. He indicated Kroger owns and operates its own gas station facilities, with hours commencing 30 minutes after the main store opens and closing 30 minutes before the main store closes, adding the gas station will not be open when the main store is not. Mr. Webster noted the kiosk will sell gum, cigarettes and lottery tickets as well as outdoor sales of oil, windshield wiper fluid, etc. He noted the proposed project complies with all setback and special use permit requirements set in Meridian Township's Code of Ordinances.

- Planning Commission and staff discussion:
Commissioner Honicky inquired if all exits and entrances were accounted for in the trip generation calculation.

Associate Planner Menser responded there are six (6) curb cuts on Newman Road, but the trip generation is based on actual usage and access points and trip generation are not related in the traffic study.

Commissioner Cordill asked staff to point out on the overhead projector where the pumps are located and how they align.

Associate Planner Menser demonstrated on the overhead projector the location of the pumps and how traffic would flow.

Commissioner Deits requested clarity on the location of the parking spaces on the west side of the project.

Associate Planner Menser responded the parking in question is for the nearby Kentucky Fried Chicken establishment.

Commissioner Deits noted the applicant has proposed trees to the east and west of the facility, but did not provide a landscaping plan, precluding the Commission's ability to understand the applicant's intent.

Mr. Menser indicated landscaping would be covered during site plan review.

Commissioner Deits inquired if the project should be conditioned on the placement of those trees.

Mr. Webster responded they would be providing landscape trees in the parking lot area.

Commissioner Deits asked the applicant if he would be comfortable with the Planning Commission conditioning the special use permit upon planting of a single rows of trees to the west and a double row of trees to the east of the site.

Mr. Webster responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Jackson inquired about the concrete slab to the east and south.

Mr. Webster responded the concrete mat is a mat for the underground storage tanks.

Commissioner Jackson indicated the proposal shows no new curbs cut off Newman Road, and she requested an explanation as to how the service station would be accessed from the “service drive.”

Associate Planner Menser pointed out on the site plan where the landscape islands are located and the access between each.

Commissioner Cordill inquired if there will be directional signage in the parking lot for the cars entering the gas station.

Mr. Webster responded there currently is no directional signage in the existing parking lot.

Tom Frank, Real Estate Manager, Kroger Company of Michigan, 10399 Grand River Avenue, Novi, believed the addition of the fuel center will greatly eliminate cars cutting diagonally across the parking lot of the shopping center in order to get close to the other stores. He added Kroger is governed by a reciprocal easement agreement with Target and the other small shops which will require the “north-south service drive” to be repaved, bringing it up to truck grade paving. Mr. Frank explained there are two easements with adjacent properties: one with the shopping center located to the north and one with Kohl’s behind Kroger. He noted these provide two additional access points without traffic accessing the main thoroughfares. These access points were not included in the trip generation calculation.

Commissioner Honicky inquired if there are plans to have stop signs on the access drive from Kohl’s through to the gas station right next to the Kroger building.

Mr. Frank responded that if it is the wish of the Planning Commission, the applicant will install stop signs.

Commissioner Honicky asked if all access roads were going to be preserved.

Mr. Frank responded there are no changes planned to any access roads.

Commissioner Cordill asked the hours of the Kroger Store.

Mr. Frank responded the hours are from 7:00 A.M. until midnight.

Commissioner Jackson asked for the motivation behind placing the fuel center in this location, given the fact there are at least three (3) gas stations within two blocks of the proposed site.

Mr. Frank responded the fuel center is viewed as an adjunct to the grocery store. He outlined Kroger’s customer loyalty program through calculating “fuel points” for each grocery store receipt, culminating in a .10 cent reduction in the price of fuel for every 100 points accumulated within a month.

Commissioner Jackson requested staff clarification on the terms for fueling station, fuel dispenser and nozzles.

Associate Planner Menser stated the ordinance defines a fueling station, adding that the term fuel dispenser is synonymous with fuel pump.

Commissioner Jackson inquired if the ordinance limits the number of fuel pumps to ten (10).

Associate Planner Menser responded the ordinance limits the number of fuel stations to ten (10). He indicated there will be two nozzles at each of the seven (7) proposed fueling stations.

Commissioner DeGroff requested clarification as to the criteria to be used to make a determination on the special use permit request.

Associate Planner Menser responded the special use permit criteria is delineated in Section 86-124 of the township's Code of Ordinances.

Chair Scott-Craig noted there is confusion relative to the north/east and south/west elevations, believing it was turned 90 degrees on the drawings presented by the applicant.

Chair Scott-Craig stated the traffic study was poorly constructed for readability. He indicated that while Newman Road is only one block long, the traffic study addressed traffic at the intersection of Newman Road and Grand River Avenue but ignored the traffic at Newman Road and Central Park Drive. He believed this project will add traffic to the Newman Road/Central Park Drive intersection and the traffic engineer should have included those statistics as well as a general map.

Commissioner Van Coevering inquired as to the subject of the minor amendment.

Associate Planner Menser responded the minor amendment is for the size of the existing special use permit for the shopping center.

Chair Scott-Craig closed the public hearing at 8:32 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Rezoning #15010 (Forsberg Family, LLC), request to rezone approximately 39.46 acres from I (Industrial), PO (Professional and Office), RR (Rural Residential), and C-2 (Commercial) to C-2 (Commercial) with an offer of conditions to develop as a mixed use planned unit development and restrict density to no more than 18 dwelling units per acre. The site has frontage on Kansas Street and Jolly Oak Road

Principal Planner Oranchak clarified the applicant has amended its request and has removed the six (6) acre parcel which abuts Kansas Street from rezoning.

Commissioner Tenaglia moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby recommends approval of Rezoning #15010 to rezone approximately 33.42 developed and undeveloped acres located north of Jolly Road, west and north of Jolly Oak Road and north of Farrins Parkway and addressed as 2398 Jolly Road, and 2360 and 2362 Jolly Oak Road to C-2 (Commercial) with the voluntary offer of a condition limiting development to a mixed use planned unit development with a restriction of no more than 18 units per acre as allowed under the density bonus provisions in the ordinance.

Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Applicant has demonstrated good faith effort throughout the entire process
- Project is a good use of undeveloped property in the area
- Project will add benefit and value to the community
- Applicant has been very responsive to the concerns of both the Planning Commission and the public
- Project will aid in developing connectivity within the community
- Project is better because of public involvement
- Removal of the six (6) acre RR parcel from the rezoning request is a “game changer”
- No development is not an option as the applicant could develop this property by right
- Development by right would result in additional traffic in the area
- Project will subsequently come before the Planning Commission for a public hearing on the mixed use planned unit development (MUPUD) request
- Concern the development has no mixed use in it
- Use of the property meets a market need which is beneficial to the Township
- Area is suited to a walkable community
- Necessity of a continued sensitivity to the property owners to the west as the project moves forward
- Some improvements will be made to the Jolly Road/Okemos Road intersection
- Continued concern over additional traffic in the Jolly Road/Okemos Road area
- Proposed project fits within the context of the Jolly Road/Okemos Road corner
- Addition of the proposed project has distinguishing features which will make that corner a true MUPUD
- There is no demand for additional professional office in the area
- Planning Commission is making a recommendation for rezoning to the Township Board through this resolution

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, DeGross, Deits, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson, Tenaglia, Van Covering, 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 Honicky noted an article in today's *Lansing State Journal* regarding desirable attributes for areas in which to retire listed only 13% of people viewed walkability as important. This statistic led him to request data which supports that millennials desire walkability as a significant amenity when looking to locate/relocate.

Commissioner Deits offered to compile data to address Commissioner Honicky's inquiry.

Commissioner Jackson announced the Community Resources Commission is hosting a bowling fundraiser on Sunday, April 19th at City Limits Bowling Alley.

Commissioner Tenaglia reported her attendance at the last Meridian Economic Development Corporation (EDC) meeting where she alerted members the Planning Commission will be holding work session groups regarding the Master Plan and will solicit their input. She stated she has met with Commissioner Jackson and Associate Planner Menser to work on updates to the Township's sign ordinance.

Commissioner Deits reminded residents of the May 5th Election, stating it is not too late to request an absentee ballot.

Chair Scott-Craig reported the Governing Michigan Leadership Forum program will be held on April 18th at the Kellogg Center from 8:30 A.M. until 4:30 P.M., and the featured speaker will be Governor Snyder. He stated one of the sessions is titled Community and Social Media Based Approaches (approaches to acquiring public input), an issue discussed at length among Planning Commissioners at several meetings.

Commissioner Van Coevering added she has previously attended this forum sponsored by *Governing Magazine* and a wealth of information can be obtained. She noted that Planning Commissioners are considered governmental employees for the purpose of this forum, so attendance would be free of charge.

10. New applications

- A. Special Use Permit #15031 (BBI Holdings LLC), request to establish a child care center at 2172 and 2190 Association Drive with a request for a decision the same night as the public hearing
- B. Wetland Use Permit #15-01 (BBI Holdings), request to impact regulated wetlands for the construction of a child care center at 2172 and 2190 Association Drive with a request for a decision the same night as the public hearing
- C. Special Use Permit #15041 (Triestram and Dorner) request to construct a 128 square foot deck in the 100-year floodplain at 4303 Tacoma Boulevard with a request for a decision the same night as the public hearing

11. Site plans received

- A. Site Plan Review #15-03 (BBI Holdings), request to develop a 13,000 square foot child care center at 2172 and 2190 Association Drive

12. Site plans approved

- A. Site Plan Review #15-01 (Fedewa), request to develop a 5-unit townhouse project to be located at 2043 Hamilton Road

13. Public remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened public remarks.

Jay Murthy, 2483 Robins Way, Okemos, asked what assurance the Commission can provide during the MUPUD process that the six (6) acres of RR property cannot be requested to be rezoned.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded a property owner always has the right to submit a rezoning application, which would go through the same process as this review.

Ann Zimmerman, 2344 Coyote Creek Drive, Okemos, questioned why traffic was considered during the rezoning request. She also inquired as to why letters of support by people who were not residents of the Township or did not own businesses in the Township were considered part of the record.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated public comment is open to anyone and is not limited to residents of the Township.

Ms. Zimmerman spoke to photos she had taken which depict marked trees within the wetland, and offered history of tree removal for property upon which Coyote Creek was built which resulted in the water being rerouted onto the association's property.

Brent Forsberg, 2422 Jolly Road, Okemos, clarified that Coyote Creek did not have sufficient retention on its own and at the request of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner, Mr. Forsberg provided, at his cost, room in his detention pond for Coyote Creek drain water.

Chair Scott-Craig closed public remarks.

14. Adjournment

Chair Scott-Craig adjourned the regular meeting at 8:37 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary