

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2015**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Commissioners DeGroff, Deits, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson, Scott-Craig, Tenaglia, Van Coevering

ABSENT: Commissioner Cordill

STAFF: Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Principal Planner Oranchak

1. Call meeting to order

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

2. Approval of agenda

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

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Tenaglia moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2015. Seconded by Commissioner Deits.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened the floor for public remarks.

Jerry Fedewa, G.S. Fedewa Builders, 5570 Okemos Road, East Lansing, spoke to the changes made to Special Use Permit (SUP) #14121 as a result of comments and discussion during the public hearing on this request.

Chair Scott-Craig closed public remarks.

5. Communications

A. Elaine Hauptman, 2068 Tomahawk Circle, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)

B. Betty Tesner, 1909 Tahoe Circle, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)

6. Public hearings (None)

7. Unfinished Business

A. Special Use Permit #14121 (Fedewa), request to construct a 6-unit multiple family townhouse complex at 2043 Hamilton Road

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the proposed changes to the special use permit (SUP) request as outlined in staff memorandum dated January 22, 2015.

Commissioner Ianni 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 #14121 (G. S. Fedewa Builders) to

construct a single multiple family building consisting of five townhouse units subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Approval is granted in accordance with the site plan prepared by BRS Engineering dated January 20, 2015, and elevation plans and floor plans dated November 18, 2014, subject to revisions as required.**
- 2. The applicant shall obtain all necessary variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals prior to work taking place related to the project or revise the plans to comply with zoning ordinance standards.**
- 3. Black walnut trees shall be removed from the site and hazardous trees posing a threat to abutting properties shall be removed or appropriately pruned.**
- 4. Landscape material shall be interspersed among existing trees along the south property line to create a dense buffer between the site and abutting single-family residences to the south. On the west side of the site, within the sphere of influence of black walnut trees, plant material shall be installed on top of a four to five foot tall sandy berm. The landscape plan submitted for site plan review shall include plants tolerant of proximity to black walnut trees such as Norway Spruce. Species and location of plant material shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
- 5. A maximum six foot tall privacy fence shall be installed along the east property line. Fencing materials and design shall be submitted with the site plan review application. Fence materials and design shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
- 6. Street trees shall be required along Hamilton Road and shall be depicted on the landscape plan submitted for site plan review. Species and location of trees shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
- 7. Buried construction or other materials and debris found on the subject site, and debris resulting from clearing, grading, or construction activities related to the proposed project shall be removed from the site and be properly disposed.**
- 8. Site and building lighting shall comply with Article VII in Chapter 38 of the Code of Ordinances and are subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development. LED lighting shall be used where feasible.**
- 9. The final site plan, building elevations, and landscape plan shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
- 10. Utility, grading, and storm drainage plans for the site are subject to the approval of the Director of Public Works and Engineering and shall be completed in accordance with the Township Engineering Design and Construction Standards.**
- 11. The applicant shall obtain all necessary permits, licenses and approvals from the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's office, Ingham County Road Department and the**

Township. Copies of all permits, licenses, and approval letters shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.

12. A copy of the site plan information and construction plans for the project that exist in an AutoCAD compatible format shall be provided to the Township Engineering staff.

Seconded by Commissioner Van Coevering.

Planning Commission, staff and applicant discussion:

- Concerns expressed by neighbors and Planning Commission comments during the public hearing have resulted in a redesign of the project
- Development is a good infill project near the downtown Okemos area
- Project is within walking distance of parks and downtown shopping
- Option to redesign the drainage pond to accommodate future parking spaces
- Possible option to redesign the drainage pond along the east side of the property to ensure the needed capacity remains
- Traffic report does not provide information on the net change in traffic from one development to another on the same parcel of property
- Concern with approval of this SUP with future parking and bicycle parking in the retention area
- Site changes will be made during the site plan review process
- Moving the building back five (5) feet to its original location will eliminate the need for the retention area variance
- Planning Commissioner belief the question before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will be whether the applicant will be held to the standard for the extra parking
- ZBA has the authority to grant the exception
- Moving the building five (5) feet toward the road causes a variance for the driveway
- Confidence in staff to place the building where it is best situated
- Ongoing responsibility of the property owner to maintain landscaping is subject to code enforcement regulations
- Landscape buffers and natural screenings as mechanisms to make the project harmonious with the surrounding area
- Applicant has met with the Hauptman's on their property to address their concerns
- No citizens have attended this meeting to object to the project
- Drainage along the side is only one (1) foot in depth, evaporates and can be moved back, allowing for parking spaces with a drainage pipe underneath
- Applicant's preference not to apply for any variances
- Adjoining neighbors will receive notification for site plan review if they wish to attend and comment
- Applicant provided several hypotheticals regarding placement of the building on the site based on comments from the last Planning Commission discussion of this issue
- Appreciation to Dr. Kielbaso for his knowledge and expertise in resolving some of the concerns
- Appreciation to Mr. Fedewa for his efforts and cooperation with the neighbors for resolution to their concerns

The seconder offered the following friendly amendment:

- **Add condition #13: The building will be moved five (5) feet to the south in accordance with site plans prepared by BRS Engineering dated January 20, 2015.**

The friendly amendment was accepted by the maker of the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners DeGroff, Deits, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson,
Tenaglia, Van Covering, Chair Scott-Craig

NAYS: None

Motion carried 8-0.

8. Other Business

A. Okemos Town Center Mixed Use Planned Unit Development (MUPUD) Concept Plan

Director Kieselbach summarized the Okemos Town Center MUPUD Concept Plan as outlined in staff memorandum dated January 15, 2015.

Brent Forsberg, TA Forsberg, Inc., 2422 Jolly Road, Okemos offered history on the subject parcel, displaying photographs on the overhead projector of its industrial use. He spoke to the need for multi-family housing stock in the area to accommodate the influx of new employees for Delta Dental and Jackson National Life.

Mr. Forsberg addressed life-style needs of the “renters by choice” demographic. He outlined several aspects of the site which promoted connectivity, spoke to the modern mountain architecture (building design) and the repurposing of older buildings.

Planning Commission and applicant discussion:

- Appreciation for adding new types of architecture to the community
- Applicant is working with Delta Dental and Jackson National Life to determine the appropriate product mix
- Product mix will include housing suitable for empty nesters
- All units will be leased
- \$1,000 to \$2,500 as a potential price point
- Appreciation for this project as infill development
- MUPUD ordinance was designed to exchange flexibility and density for commercial and office mixed use
- Concern that 95% of this development is multi-family housing
- Concern with the large number of alterations in setbacks which will be requested
- Applicant is requesting a 20% increase in density
- Planning Commissioner statement that four (4) out of the last five (5) MUPUDs have been multi-family housing developments “disguised” as mixed use
- Applicant believed the MUPUD was the best tool to use in order to meet Township requirements
- Project will create synergy with the surrounding uses
- 35 foot height limit in the current Professional and Office (PO) designation would require one story of the building to be removed
- Requested C-2 designation allows for a 45 foot height limit
- Life Style Center would not be allowed in the PO designation
- Applicant’s intent to have a private business lease the fitness center space
- Clean up of the area will improve the Township
- Some units should be ADA compliant to attract a more diverse population
- Applicant has not yet determined the types of unit mix for housing, but will be considered at the appropriate time
- Water Lily Way, as shown on the map, does not currently exist

- Several years ago, one of the initial PO site plans incorrectly labeled half of Jolly Oak Road as Water Lily Way
- Ferrins Parkway will remain a private road due to its width and the property owner will maintain the road
- Water Lily Way to Jolly Road does not require a new curb cut
- Planning Commissioner belief if this project is approved as a MUPUD, it will be a change in Planning Commission policy
- For quite some time, the Township has needed to look at form based code and a redevelopment planned unit development ordinance
- Lack of validity to the “argument” that because there are businesses nearby, it should be a MUPUD (e.g., rezoning of the old central fire station and MARC to C-2)
- Pond, fitness center and connectivity to the existing pathway system are amenities
- “Mix” must take the surrounding community into consideration
- Site was remediated in 1995 when the construction company closed down
- Phase I and possibly Phase II environmental will be part of the construction underwriting requirement for the financiers
- Project will generate a large amount of traffic
- Traffic study will be submitted as part of the rezoning request
- Study will include the possibility of a shuttle service
- Consideration of a pedestrian walkway or walkable lane across the highway
- First market rate product in this market for the developer in an effort to diversify its portfolio
- Developer has identified the Jackson National Life demographic as the primary market for this development, with some overlap into other market uses
- Rezoning to a multiple family category wouldn’t work due to multiple setback constraints and building size restrictions
- This 40 acre site has less than 20 acres of buildable property
- Project cannot be a planned unit development (PUD) as there must be a minimum of 50% upland and open space
- Possible times for Planning Commissioner tours of the Okemos Town Center property

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

Chair Scott-Craig polled members of the Planning Commission for interest in attending various training sessions. He addressed the Planning Commission having one Commissioner attend other Boards and Commissions meetings (Zoning Board of Appeals and Economic Development Corporation). Chair Scott-Craig announced he will represent the Planning Commission at the Township Board meeting on the Appeal of Special Use Permit #14111 (Former Northwest Tire Site). He reminded fellow Commissioners the next Environmental Commission Green Themes talk will be held on February 4, 2015, and a talk will be held at the Okemos library on February 5, 2015 titled “GMOs, a Miracle or Menace.”

Principal Planner Oranchak reported she has spoken with staff people from various communities and received interesting information on the cost of consultants and request for proposals relative to their Master Plans, noting she is working on compiling the data for distribution to Planning Commission members.

10. New applications (None)

11. Site plans received (None)

12. Site plans approved (None)

13. Public remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened and closed public remarks.

14. Adjournment

Chair Scott-Craig adjourned the regular meeting at 8:59 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary