

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
July 27, 2015**

**APPROVED**

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

PRESENT: Commissioners DeGroff, Ianni, Jackson, Scott-Craig, Tenaglia, Van Coevering  
ABSENT: Commissioners Cordill, Deits, Honicky  
STAFF: 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 Jackson moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Ianni.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the amended Regular Meeting Minutes and Work Session Minutes of July 13, 2015. Seconded by Commissioner Van Coevering.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

**4. Public Remarks**

Chair Scott-Craig opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

**5. Communications**

- A. Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett; RE: PRD #15-97014
- B. Lori Reyes, 4211 Southport Circle, Apt. 2C, Okemos; RE: SUP #15061 (Jacobs Engineering)
- C. Robert L. Trezise, Jr., President & CEO, Lansing Economic Area Partnership, 1000 South Washington Avenue, Suite 201, Lansing; RE: SUP #15081 (Judge)

Communications received and distributed at the July 13, 2015 meeting and placed on file:

- D. Ginger Yang, owner of Lotus Voice Integrative Therapies, LLC, 4994 Park Lake Road, East Lansing; RE: SUP #15061 (Jacobs Engineering)

**6. Public hearings**

- A. Special Use Permit #15081 (Judge), request to open a light manufacturing business at 1870 Grand River Avenue

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 Menser summarized the special use permit request as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 24, 2015.
- **Applicant**  
Lawrence Judge, Mitten State Malt, LLC, 2401 Graystone Drive, Okemos, explained malting, a three step process which takes place over a week period of time. He itemized the pieces of equipment to be used within the process. Mr. Judge intends to lease the proposed space for approximately two (2) years, with the intent to move to a larger facility once customers drive greater production.
- **Planning Commission discussion:**  
Commissioner Jackson inquired about the equipment which will be used for the one shipment once the barley is harvested, usually mid-August.

Mr. Judge responded he approximates the five to six tons of barley will be transported onto the site on a trailer behind his pickup stored in super sacks, which holds approximately one ton per sack. He indicated the finished product will leave the site in 50 pound bags via his pickup truck.

Commissioner Jackson inquired as to how the barley will be stored on site.

Mr. Judge replied it will stay in the supersacks which sit on pallets.

Commissioner Jackson indicated her mapping software did not clearly delineate the location of the building.

Mr. Judge responded the building is not easily visible from the road.

Commissioner Jackson noted the parcel has a Grand River address, but believed there is no frontage on Grand River Avenue.

Associate Planner Menser responded in the affirmative, stating there are no qualitative records to show how the building became its own "island" since it was originally constructed in 1931.

Commissioner Jackson thanked the applicant for his thorough and comprehensive explanation of the malting process.

Commissioner Tenaglia stated she believed the proposed SUP is a good use of the land. She inquired if time was of the essence, since the applicant stated the barley is harvested in August.

Mr. Judge responded the barley needs to sit for approximately two months after it is harvested before the malting process can commence.

Chair Scott-Craig inquired if the applicant was considering a building expansion in the future, as he was concerned about larger truck accessibility to the site.

Mr. Judge replied he did not believe a larger truck could access the building and the site would not work well to expand. He voiced appreciation there is access to a municipal water source as he viewed difficulty with establishing a food grade business with a well.

Chair Scott-Craig confirmed with the applicant that he would be renting the “back corner” of the building.

Mr. Judge responded in the affirmative, indicating the other tenant (sports facility) occupies the entire east side of the building. He indicated his facility will be walled off from the rest of the building. Mr. Judge stated water lines and drainage will need to be put in, as well as an overhead external door.

Chair Scott-Craig asked about the necessary venting which will need to be installed.

Mr. Judge responded there will be two vents needed, one for venting the kiln and the other for the heat source of the kiln, both with minimal malt smell during the use of the kiln. He stated during the steeping and germinating portion of the process, there are no odors emitted. Mr. Judge noted the faint malt smell may surface during the last two hours of the kilning process.

Mr. Judge offered information regarding the two types of barley grown in the United States: six row and two row (which refer to the number of kernels in the head of the barley). He grows two row, a product used exclusively by by craft brewers.

Chair Scott-Craig inquired as to Mr. Judge’s customer base.

Mr. Judge stated it is craft brewers and possibly home brewer supply stores. He noted there currently is no large-scale malter in Michigan.

Chair Scott-Craig closed the public hearing at 7:41 P.M.

- B. Rezoning #15030 (Sumbal), request to rezone approximately 1.4 acres addressed as 1998 Jolly Road from RR (Rural Residential) to RA (Single Family, Medium Density)

Chair Scott-Craig opened the public hearing at 7:41 P.M.

- Summary of subject matter  
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the rezoning request as outlined in staff memorandum dated July 23, 2015.
- Applicant  
Ghulam Sumbal, 1998 Jolly Road, Okemos, indicated he would like to use the second home on this parcel through provision of a shared driveway or an easement in order to avoid the position of attempting to purchase frontage for the home in the rear to obtain access from Summergate Lane. He stated it is his desire to split the parcel east to west.
- Planning Commission discussion:  
Commissioner DeGroff inquired as to the history of this “strange” situation.

Mr. Sumbal responded that approximately a year ago, he met with the Township Manager and Director Kieselbach regarding connecting the home in the rear to Township sewer. He stated he was instructed that he needed an eight inch 8" sewer line to the home in the rear but not to connect it.

Principal Planner Oranchak added this is a long standing non-conforming situation, as both structures were built in 1955. She indicated rezoning the property to provide an option for a lot split would make the property conforming and provide the owner the opportunity to use the second residence on the site.

Commissioner Ianni inquired as to the Township's position on splitting the lot east to west and granting an easement since the two (2) structures already exist.

Ms. Oranchak responded the Township's ordinance specifically states the frontage of a lot must be on a public street, so that option may require a variance. She added the Township has strict regulations on private roads and primary access through another parcel.

Commissioner Van Coevering asked if a curb cut on Jolly Road would be required if the lot was split north to south.

Principal Planner Oranchak specified that would generally be the case, as each residence is required to have its own access drive. She noted the applicant may need to obtain a variance to allow for a shared driveway. Ms. Oranchak was uncertain how the lots would be configured as it would require 80 feet of frontage on the west side of the parcel in order to access the home in the rear, and no scalable survey has been submitted.

Commissioner Van Coevering inquired of Commissioner Jackson (Planning Commission representative to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)) if she believed this issue was self-created, as that determination is one of the criteria used by the ZBA to ascertain whether a variance would be granted.

Commissioner Jackson offered it is her perspective it is not like a self-created situation.

Principal Planner Oranchak added the surrounding area is consistent with the request, although the next phase will be challenging if the rezoning is granted.

Commissioner Jackson identified one possibility as a north-south split with a variance request for the frontage.

Ms. Oranchak stated at this time, that is the only viable option. She indicated a variance would also be required for the shared driveway.

Commissioner Jackson noted the shared driveway could be available through the variance process, adding retaining the two residences on a single parcel is considered a non-conforming use and would no longer be "available."

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired if the rezoning is granted, would the subsequent issues take place as part of staff's process.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the land division to create the second parcel would be a staff level function and any variances required would go before the ZBA.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired if any other portion of the process would come back before the Planning Commission.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it would not.

Chair Scott-Craig stated if the parcel was divided north to south with access onto Summergate Lane, the land would provide for a more saleable property in the future.

Principal Planner Oranchak acknowledged it will be a challenging process to persuade the subdivision organization to sell some of its land defined as common space.

Chair Scott-Craig added Mr. Sumbal's application indicated he would be willing to offer property to make a connection between existing sidewalks. He noted this would provide young children walking to the elementary school with a preferred alternative to the temporary asphalt sidewalk close to the curb on Jolly Road.

Principal Planner Oranchak stressed that the Chair's suggestion is not something the ZBA can consider in its deliberations.

Mr. Sumbal expressed he was not interested in a north-south division, but has been working with the Township to give them five (5) feet of land to create a sidewalk connection along Jolly Road.

Commissioner Jackson stressed it is not within the Planning Commission's purview how the house on the back lot obtains access, as only the rezoning is before the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Ianni agreed the only issue before the Planning Commission this evening is the rezoning request. He stated the adjacent parcels are zoned RA and no harm would be caused to the surrounding parcels if the rezoning took place.

Commissioner DeGroff concurred it made sense to rezone the parcel to RA.

Commissioner Tenaglia expressed support for the rezoning and thanked Mr. Sumbal for his donation of property to Ferguson Park in the past.

Chair Scott-Craig closed the public hearing at 8:03 P.M.

**7. Unfinished Business (None)**

**8. Other Business (None)**

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

**A. Future Projects/New Applications**

- i. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #15054 (Forsberg), request for a MUPUD consisting of 21 apartment buildings (378 apartments), a leasing office and fitness center
- ii. Special Use Permit # 15051 (Forsberg) request for a group of buildings greater than 25,000 square feet in floor area (435,372 square feet)
- iii. Rezoning #15050 (Stockwell Development Group), request to rezone approximately nine acres located on the northwest corner of Grand River Avenue and Powell Road from PO (Professional and Office) to C-3 (Commercial)

B. Update of Ongoing Projects

- i. Site Plans Received – NONE
- ii. Site Plans Approved
  1. Site Plan Review #15-06 (Evan Neal), renovate the building and site at 2703 Grand River for occupancy by an O'Reilly Auto Parts store

**10. Public remarks**

Chair Scott-Craig opened and closed public remarks.

**14. Adjournment**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto  
Recording Secretary