

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

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill, DeGroff, Deits, Ianni, Scott-Craig, Tenaglia (7:06 P.M), Van Coevering
ABSENT: Commissioners Honicky, Jackson
STAFF: Principal Planner Oranchak, Associate Planner 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 DeGroff moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Ianni.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Ianni moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 12, 2015. Seconded by Commissioner Cordill.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened the floor for public remarks.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, identified parcels he believed do not fit the criteria for inclusion in the Corridor Improvement Authority.

William Kirkman Green, 5473 Okemos Road, East Lansing, spoke in support of Rezoning #15060 (McCurdy).

Chair Scott-Craig closed public remarks.

5. Communications

- A. Elaine Hauptman, 2068 Tomahawk Road, Okemos; RE: Special Use Permit #14101 (Fedewa)¹
- B. Neil Bowlby, President, LINC, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett; Re: Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA)

6. Public hearings (None)

7. Unfinished Business

¹ Upon inquiry, staff provided clarification regarding the corrected site plan.

A. Rezoning #15060 (McCurdy), request to rezone 5458 Okemos Road from RAAA (Single Family Low Density) to RR (Rural Residential)

Planning Commission discussion:

- Planning Commissioner belief this case is similar to a recent rezoning request which was approved
- Need for consistency in the Planning Commission's decision making
- The proposed rezoning centers around non-conforming use
- Planning Commissioner belief the proper forum would be for the Township Board to allow this type of use in the RAAA zoning district
- Rezoning will likely make more problems for the area
- Trend for more "checkerboarding" of uses in the future (e.g. Detroit)
- Policy and ordinance based issues regarding pocket agricultural uses
- Previous case mentioned earlier was a default RR zoning where this case is an affirmative decision to rezone to RR
- Four (4) rabbits and chickens are currently allowed in residential zones
- Quantity v. nature of the type of animal
- Planning Commissioner preference to allow the Board to answer the policy question
- In the case previously compared, this area has a very different development pattern than the Hiawatha neighborhood
- Planning Commissioner opposition to the process, not the goats
- Reading of the Board minutes seemed to indicate the Board asked the applicant to request the rezoning as a means to solve the code violation with the keeping of goats
- Reminder that the Township Board is requesting the Planning Commission's advice on this rezoning request
- Planning Commissioner belief neighbor's support for this rezoning request is relevant
- All uses within the RR zoning category would be allowed by right if this rezoning request was approved
- No limit to the number of goats allowed in the RR zoning district, and the applicant has indicated he plans to engage in a small commercial operation selling goat milk and goat cheese
- Special use permit (SUP) process is more appropriate than a rezoning in this instance, although one is not currently available in our ordinance
- Planning Commission should look at land use when considering a rezoning request, thoroughly vetting all possible uses permitted within the zoning category
- Reminder that the zoning runs with the property, irrespective of the current owner
- Concern with what all future owners would have a right to do within the RR zoning category
- Surrounding residential subdivisions were developed according to the Master Plan, and this rezoning would be contrary to the Master Plan
- Township will not move forward with any legal process until this issue is resolved
- E-mail complaint about the keeping of goats is not subject to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request as determined by the Township Attorney

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to place this item on for action at its November 9, 2015 meeting.

B. Zoning Amendment #15070 (Planning Commission), amend Section 86-2 Definitions and Section 86-438 Wireless Communication Facilities Overlay District to comply with federal and state regulations.

Commissioner Cordill moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby recommends approval of Zoning Amendment #15070, to amend Section 86-2 Definitions and Section 86-438 Wireless Communications Facility Overlay District of the Code of Ordinances to ensure consistency with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, P. A. 110 of 2006. Seconded by Commissioner Ianni.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Amendment would bring the Township into compliance with state law
- Concern with language in Section 86-438 (c) (2) c. 1. regarding the restriction in adding height when there is no restriction to the height itself
- Section 86-438 (c) (2) c. 1. is a requirement in state law

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, DeGroff, Deits, Ianni, Tenaglia, Van Coevering, Chair Scott-Craig

NAYS: None

Motion carried 7-0.

8. Other Business

A. Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA)

Associate Planner Menser summarized the proposed CIA concept as outlined in staff memorandum dated October 22, 2015.

Chris Buck, 2642 Loon Lane, Okemos and Economic Development Corporation Chair, noted this is an opportunity to have a group of volunteers help vet the future of the CIA and collaborate with neighboring municipalities.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Township Board will approve the final CIA boundary
- Staff will review if the boundary meets all the criteria outlined in state law
- Concern with forfeiting local control over development in the Township with a CIA inter-local agreement
- CIA would review the project and provide an informal recommendation to the Planning Commission and Township Board
- Meridian Township is under no obligation to join neighboring communities
- Single family residences on Grand River Avenue would likely be affected by a CIA
- Property within the CIA must be contiguous
- Planning Commissioner recommendation to have a substantial reduction along the eastern edge
- Planning Commissioner recommendation to stop on the south side at the east end near Northwind Drive
- Planning Commissioner recommendation to stop on the north side at the west end of the driving range
- Planning Commissioner suggestion for staff to review the possibility of the boundary being contiguous with the Okemos Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- Discussions have taken place for some time about expanding the Okemos DDA and many of the areas listed in the CIA have been considered for inclusion in the expanded Okemos DDA
- Planning Commissioner suggestion to make the CIA the Okemos DDA
- Proposed boundary does not mean that all lands contained within will be rezoned to commercial, but would provide more uniformity for lighting and use of form based code

- Planning Commission inquiry if the street can connect the corridor, since the bridge over the railroad tracks essentially has not property on either side of Grand River Avenue
- Staff response there is no clear guidance in the state act regarding this situation, and it appears it could be separate pieces
- Municipalities are allowed to have more than one (1) CIA
- Industrial area is included, which does not have mixed use or high density, but is currently thriving
- Planning Commissioner preference that all meetings (even unofficial) where Meridian Township is in attendance should have minutes, and those minutes should be posted in the Township
- Appreciation to the Planning staff for its responsiveness to Planning Commissioner questions asked at the work sessions on this issue

Commissioner Ianni moved to recommend The Township Board proceed with adopting a resolution of intent to create a Corridor Improvement Authority. Seconded by Commissioner DeGroff.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, DeGroff, Deits, Ianni, Tenaglia, Van Coevering, Chair Scott-Craig

NAYS: None

Motion carried 7-0.

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

Commissioner Ianni announced the Okemos Education Foundation (OEF) Awards Banquet will be held on November 19, 2015 at the Kellogg Center with a social house commencing at 5:30 P.M. and the dinner program at 6:30 P.M. He indicated information and ticket purchase can be found at www.oefsite.org.

Chair Scott-Craig announced a Transportation Forum, sponsored by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), was held at the Hannah Center in East Lansing, noting this forum was attended by several Township Board members.

Commissioner Deits reported the Ingham County Trails and Parks Task Force held a public meeting in the Town Hall Room on Thursday, October 15th which was well attended, with many suggestions offered, most notably water trails. He remarked the usefulness of trails increase rapidly as more connections are made.

A. Future Projects/New Applications

- i. Special Use Permit #15141 (Chvala), request to work in the 100-year floodplain to construct at pond at 5384 Van Atta Road
- ii. Wetland Use Permit #15-02 (Chvala), request to impact wetlands to construct a pond at 5384 Van Atta Road
- iii. Zoning Amendment #15080 (Township Board), proposal to amend Section 86-473 Street Trees

B. Update of Ongoing Projects

- i. Site Plans Received – NONE
- ii. Site Plans Approved - NONE

10. Public remarks

Chair Scott-Craig opened and closed public remarks.

14. Adjournment

Chair Scott-Craig adjourned the regular meeting at 8:13 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary