

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 28, 2014**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson, Salehi, Scott-Craig
ABSENT: Commissioner Cordill
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak, Associate Planner Richard Brown, Associate Planner Peter Menser

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Jackson called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

Commissioner Scott-Craig moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Hildebrandt.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Scott-Craig moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 14, 2014. Seconded by Commissioner Ianni.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Jackson opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

5. Communications (None)

6. Public hearings

A. Special Use Permit #14061 (Kincaid Henry Bldg. Group, Inc.), a request to develop a commercial kennel (dog day care and spa facility) at 1284 Grand River Ave.

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing at 7:03 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 (SUP) request as outlined in staff memorandum dated April 25, 2014.
- Applicant

Chris Rau, Kincaid Henry Building Group, 934 Clark Street, Lansing, introduced the rest of the “team.” He noted the owners, Janice and Dean Milligan, are currently running a dog day care and spa on the west side of town and will be bringing essentially the same facility, with minor modification, to Meridian Township. Mr. Rau noted the parking layout was patterned after the existing facility and was then cross referenced with the regular children’s day care criteria contained in the Township’s code. He added the exterior materials (hardy board siding with brick façade) were used to help better fit in with the residential feel of the area. Mr. Rau addressed the need for variances for the height of the fence and dumpster enclosure.

- Public

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, expressed concern with clients traveling north on Cornell, making the left hand turn onto Grand River Avenue and then having the navigability to turn into the entrance of this business. He also questioned whether there was adequate setback at the intersection of Cornell Road and Grand River Avenue to facilitate all the turning dynamics given that this location is where there is a change from a three land road to a five lane road on Grand River Avenue.

Dave Ledebuhr, 4767 Cornell Road, Okemos, spoke in support of the special use permit request. He indicated he is the property owner on both sides of the proposed development. He stated most of his concerns will be addressed during site plan review. Mr. Ledebuhr noted the characterization of this project as a “commercial kennel” would necessitate such a commercial use to be located on commercially zoned property. He believed this “stretch” of road along Grand River Avenue is more suited for commercial use rather than rural residential.

Mr. Ledebuhr encouraged the Planning Commission to support staff’s recommendation for construction of a seven (7) foot wide pathway on the north side of Cornell Road. He expressed concern with the location of the driveway so close to the intersection of Cornell Road and Grand River Avenue as cars are often stacked at that light, suggesting its location be placed further west on the Grand River Avenue side of the property. Mr. Ledebuhr also voiced concern with lighting of the outdoor playground area at night, nighttime lighting around the outdoor patio and the type of fence material to be used. He inquired as to the zoning designation of the current doggie day care on the west side of Lansing.

Mr. Rau responded the fence will be made out of wood from the west building corner and approximately 10-15 feet to the north and the remainder around the play area would be chain link, all ten (10) feet in height.

Adam Bertram, Economides Architects, 912 Coolidge, East Lansing, availed himself for Planning Commission and public questions. He clarified his firm has had preliminary conversations with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) relative to the driveway on Grand River, and it was their understanding the current location of the proposed driveway meets MDOT’s regulations for distance from the intersection. Mr. Bertram noted his company will have additional conversations regarding this issue prior to a final determination. In response to the question on outdoor lighting in the evening, he indicated the applicant’s intent is to let the dogs have use of the lighted outdoor play area for the final time at approximately 8:00 PM., adding the play area will be shielded to minimize light “over the fence” during that time.

Janice Milligan, 235 Leland Place, Lansing, owner of Doggie Day Care and Spa, availed herself for Planning Commission questions. She responded to earlier public inquiry by stating it is her intent to only light the outdoor play area in the evening for safety of the dogs and would be turned off after the dogs are put to bed between 9:00-9:30 P.M. Ms. Milligan noted the wooden fence would be used “in the front” to prevent the dogs from reacting to traffic and people by barking, adding the chain-link fence is used in the back for air flow and to prevent a “hot box.” She stated it is her intent to keep as much of the area as natural and green as possible. Ms. Milligan clarified the zoning designation of her current facility is light industrial, required for use of a commercial kennel by Delta Township.

- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Honicky noted there is an immediate “drop off” into wetlands behind the proposed site. He questioned the storm system to be utilized (i.e., handling of sewage disposal and storm water runoff).

Ms. Milligan responded she uses a metal “pooper scooper” with a spade and then dog waste is disposed of into a waste container which is ultimately disposed of by a contracted waste management company. For other waste (i.e., dog urine, loose stools), it is mopped up and then the water is poured down the drains within the facility.

Commissioner Honicky inquired if there will be two systems; one for storm water runoff and one for sewage disposal as he did not see those two systems outlined in the plan.

Ms. Milligan responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Rau pointed out the location of the sewage drain field, the septic tank within the leach field and the storm detention system.

Commissioner Ianni inquired as to the amount of noise which will be generated by this business.

Ms. Milligan responded that dogs sometimes bark, but did not believe there would be excessive noise as evidenced by employee retention at the current facility over the years. She did not believe there would be more noise than that emitted by a child day care or from the Grand River Avenue traffic. Ms. Milligan noted that sometimes the environment is not a good fit for all dog types (i.e., stressed), and discussion takes place with the owner to determine whether the dog should remain.

Commissioner Hildebrandt inquired if MDOT is the entity which determines the location of the drive.

Associate Planner Menser responded the driveway must meet MDOT specifications.

Commissioner Hildebrandt inquired who decided to close Cornell Road as a drive and why that decision was made.

Mr. Bertram responded a discussion with the Ingham County Road Department resulted in the need to “push” the drive on Cornell Road as far north as possible and the grade in that area is the lowest point on the site (868 feet above mean sea level), which would necessitate numerous potential retaining walls. He noted it is the applicant’s intent to have minimal grading work performed in an effort to keep the site as natural as possible.

Commissioner Hildebrandt requested the Chair speak to whether there will be issues at the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) with the variances which will need to be requested by the applicant.

Chair Jackson explained the ZBA has a set of standards which deals with how a particular facility fits within the community and then gauge how the requested exceptions impact that “fit.” She indicated she would not presume to determine how each member would weigh those requested exceptions.

Commissioner Hildebrandt addressed the fact that pedestrians/bicyclists cannot “trigger” the light at the intersection of Grand River and Cornell Road and inquired if staff would work with MDOT in an effort to acquire such a trigger.

Associate Planner Menser responded he will work with the Township’s Engineering Director to obtain a response for the next Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Scott-Craig addressed wetland and greenspace setbacks, an expressed concern in the staff memorandum. He indicated his reading of the drawings appear to satisfy both of those issues.

Associate Planner Menser explained staff is unclear where the setback for wetland 23-15B would be located (probably off the site and not shown on the plans), indicating the setback would be verified during the site plan review process.

Commission Scott-Craig requested an explanation for water traveling through the stormwater drain pipe which comes out of the ground, leaving the site and flowing into the wetland.

Associate Planner Menser explained stormwater “daylighting” into the wetland is a fairly normal practice for these types of projects. He stated the Township’s environmental consultant will review the plans to determine if a wetland use permit will be required.

Commissioner Deits inquired as to the address for this property.

Associate Planner Menser responded it is 1248 Grand River Avenue.

Commissioner Deits asked why that is not the front yard.

Associate Planner Menser answered it is the front yard.

Commissioner Deits added that staff’s answer means there is no variance because the “thing” is not in the front yard.

Associate Planner Menser explained that with the property being a corner lot, previous practice has treated corner lots as having two (2) front yards.

Commissioner Deits noted the applicant implied commercial kennels are only allowed in rural residentially zoned districts and inquired if they are allowed in other zoning districts within the Township.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated staff will peruse the zoning ordinance to obtain that answer.

Commissioner Deits inquired if there would be a drain located in the outdoor “hardscape” and asked if that drain would be connected to the storm system or into the sewage system.

Ms. Milligan responded there is no drain as it is the applicant’s intent to mop up and take care of any dog waste.

Commissioner Deits expressed concern there is no drain in the play area in the event it rains and there is no opportunity to clean up dog waste before it is washed away. He believed it more advantageous to have a drain in the play area that is sloped into the sewer system.

Mr. Bertram commented that if a drain was placed in the play area, a rain event would flood the septic system and overburden it.

Commissioner Deits asked the applicant’s representative if he was comfortable with waste going into neither system.

Mr. Bertram expressed comfort given the applicant’s standard operating procedures (SOP).

Commissioner Deits explained special use permits “go with” the property and not the owner, and the issue could be problem with a different owner.

Commissioner Deits noted the site had been occupied by some type of development at one point in time. He inquired if there is any requirement on that site, given a prior use of unknown origin, to ascertain if it is contaminated.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded staff will look into that issue.

Commissioner Salehi inquired of the applicant why it was determined that the fence needed to be ten (10) feet in height.

Ms. Milligan responded their original location was in Okemos off Jolly Road and contained a six foot fence which was not sufficient in height to keep all dogs contained on premises. She determined additional height was needed as a safety feature for a development on busy Grand River Avenue.

Commissioner Salehi asked if there was ever a situation where staff would let the dogs outside after the owner left in the evening.

Ms. Milligan replied there was not, except in the case of a fire emergency.

Commissioner Salehi asked if there would be any lighting illumination coming from the play area in the evening.

Ms. Milligan answered there would be no illumination in the play area after the conclusion of classes in the evening.

Commissioner Salehi asked if there would be any windows on the north side of the building which could be opened and allow noise to escape.

Ms. Milligan responded fresh air is let into the building on nice days, but barking is discouraged through a variety of methods.

Commissioner Salehi inquired of Commissioner Scott-Craig if he walked to what would be the back of the building when he visited the current site on Saturday.

Commissioner Scott-Craig replied he was on the east side near the parking lot, but drove half-way down the drive toward the main road, turned off the car, leaned out the window and could not hear any barking.

Commissioner Salehi inquired as to why the dog training would not be allowed in the event the business change ownership or ceased operation at the proposed location.

Associate Planner Menser replied the ordinance specially states a commercial kennel is permitted by special use permit in rural residential. The ordinance does not address any related commercial activities, ancillary sales or dog training and staff believed dog training to be an ancillary use to the commercial kennel.

Commissioner Salehi believed it to be advantageous to allow cars to turn south on Cornell Road out of the subject property. He expressed concern with cars exiting onto eastbound Grand River during the evening rush hour, specifically due to the speed of traffic and asked the applicant to explore an egress onto Cornell Road.

Commissioner Salehi asked if St. Martha Parish had the ability to share its private force main.

Associate Planner Menser explained the Township has consistently not allowed St. Martha's private force main to be tapped to service other establishments.

Commissioner Deits clarified that a prohibition on sharing the St. Martha private sewer system was a condition of the installation of the sewer.

Commissioner Salehi inquired as to how the pathway would traverse across the wetland.

Associate Planner Menser indicated Planning staff has not yet seen the exact specifications, but Engineering staff is adept at finding alternatives.

Principal Planner Oranchak added there will be a need to obtain a wetland use permit.

Commissioner Hildebrandt stated she lives east of the proposed site and walked to the site over the weekend. She indicated some of the sidewalks going across wetlands east of the site are caving in on themselves.

Associate Planner Menser responded the Engineering Department has specific criteria used to determine when a sidewalk needs to be repaired.

Commissioner Deits spoke to a previous case for ancillary use when Dr. Tenaglia desired to add manicures in her existing dental practice and the subsequent conversation regarding signage with respect to the two uses.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that situation would be handled during site plan review.

Ms. Milligan explained there was no intent to have signage for the training classes.

Chair Jackson noted the discussion regarding the height of the fence will occur at the ZBA. She asked the applicant if her current doggie day care is a stand-alone facility.

Ms. Milligan responded in the affirmative.

Chair Jackson asked the applicant if there were two entrances at her current facility.

Ms. Milligan responded there is only one entrance.

Chair Jackson asked if the proposed facility would have the same capacity for dog care.

Ms. Milligan answered essentially the same footprint of the existing facility will be used for the one proposed in Meridian Township.

Chair Jackson asked if 18 vehicle parking spaces was sufficient to house 50 dogs cared for by six (6) employees.

Ms. Milligan responded in the affirmative as the dogs are simply dropped off and the owners leave immediately. She noted in the ten (10) years at the current location, she has not had any parking problems.

Chair Jackson inquired as to how often the wetland map is updated, since wetlands do change over time.

Principal Planner Oranchak explained the Township does not update the map since a wetland delineation is only good for three (3) years.

Chair Jackson asked when the Township wetland map was printed.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it was printed in 1991.

Commissioner Salehi inquired as to where the air conditioning compressors are located, what size they are and how much noise they make.

Mr. Bertram replied they will be located on the east side of the building, “large house” size or smaller.

Commissioner Salehi asked if the air conditioning units are the same size as those at the current facility.

Ms. Milligan answered air conditioning was not installed during construction, so window units were installed in the gym and the overnight room. She noted the area of installation will be earmarked for employee parking.

Commissioner Honicky asked staff to revisit where the runoff of the outdoor play area will flow as there is a great deal of e coli which is found in wetlands and a variety of other areas, indicating contamination of the wetlands can happen when it rains and washes the contaminants off the concrete play area. He asked staff to work with the applicant’s representatives to think of other ways of managing water runoff from the outdoor play area.

Commissioner Salehi addressed the dog park in Legg Park to be placed on the August, 2014 park millage ballot and believed the applicant’s method of picking up and then mopping dog excrement will be a step beyond what will transpire in the park.

Associate Planner Menser reiterated dogs will not go outside during rain events.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing at 8:15 P.M.

- B. *Special Use Permit #14051 (Meridian Township), a request to work in the 100-year floodplain associated with construction of a paved pathway in Wonch Park, 4555 Okemos Road
 Chair Jackson opened the public hearing at 8:15 P.M.

- Summary of subject matter
 Associate Planner Brown summarized the special use permit (SUP) request as outlined in staff memorandum dated April 24, 2014.
- Applicant
 Jane Greenway, Parks and Land Management Coordinator, noted the pathway is just one component of an overall redevelopment for Wonch Park. She indicated Wonch and Ferguson Park across Okemos Road are two of the busiest parks within the Township. Ms. Greenway stated both parks are located on the “gateway” to Meridian Township from the south. She specified the project has been reviewed by the Universal Access Advisory Board, adding the pathway will provide significantly better accessibility along the Red Cedar River as well as paved access to the playground. Ms. Greenway noted many river pathways (e.g., Heinz Parkway in metropolitan Detroit) become flooded in the Spring, indicating engineers and landscape architects were consulted to take that element into consideration when designing the pathway.

Ms. Greenway discussed the use of pervious pavement for this narrow pathway, but cost and future maintenance did not lend itself to use of such material, given the silt residue from the river flooding which would “plug up” the system. She indicated walking, paved pathways, river access and bathrooms are top needs listed when surveys and grant public hearings are conducted regarding parks and those components were sought within the grant application for Wonch Park.

Planning Commission discussion:

Commissioner Deits asked for the location of the new bridge to be pointed out on the site plan and how that would be accessed. He inquired of staff how someone would access the new pathway from the bridge.

Associate Planner Brown acknowledged Planning staff has mentioned to Parks staff they should consider a direct tie-in at some point rather than have pedestrians using the parking lot and competing with cars. He noted this grant application addresses only the 2100 lineal feet and the next phase will add a direct tie-in to the pathway system.

Commissioner Deits asked about the possibility of accessing the pathway from the parking lot using all paved surface to do so.

Ms. Greenway responded those non-motorized connections will be completed during later phases.

Mr. Brown added Commissioner Deits desire to have that connection made would mean altering the request as additional fill and cut would be needed because the aforementioned area is in the floodway as well. He reinforced Parks is addressing what is allowed in the grant at the present time.

Commissioner Honicky inquired if the downed trees in the park which obstruct the pathway will be removed.

Associate Planner Brown indicated six (6) dead trees will be removed and no living trees will be impacted from the project.

Ms. Greenway added the park was walked in the fall prior to the December ice storm, acknowledging all of the Township's parks are in need of reforestation, pruning and trimming. She noted part of the overall Parks Master Plan includes the planting of many trees.

Commissioner Hildebrandt inquired if the grant was tied to a paved pathway.

Ms. Greenway responded in the affirmative, indicating the applicant must be very specific when requesting the grant, including construction details.

Commissioner Hildebrandt offered feedback that, in general, she is not a fan of paved park pathways, acknowledging Wonch Park is different because of its connection to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). She inquired if the Parks Master Plan included signage in the downtown area designating the location of the river pathway, etc.

Ms. Greenway responded indicated the Township is considering way-finding signs throughout the Township.

Commissioner Scott-Craig believed if the riverwalk is geared toward walkers and those individuals with mobility issues, he preferred residents leave their bicycles at the front of the park and make the riverwalk for pedestrians only. As park property was the home of Wonch Battery circa 1960, he expressed concern with what may be uncovered during excavation.

Associate Planner Brown pointed out on the map where the business was located on the land and believed problem soils do not exist where excavation for the pathway would occur.

Commissioner Salehi inquired why an environmental assessment had never been performed on this property.

Ms. Greenway stated there was no reason to perform an environmental study. She stated staff was in touch with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) who indicated an environmental report was not necessary.

Commissioner Salehi believed an environmental assessment should be performed at some point to allay any concerns regarding the soils.

Commissioner Salehi asked where the 600 cubic yards of cut will be placed.

Ms. Greenway indicated that decision is not made until the grant is awarded and a contractor is selected. She acknowledged the specifications require the cut to be placed in an upland area, noting there is testing required during the permitting process.

Commissioner Salehi asked for a “sense” as to the amount of foot traffic in Wonch Park.

Ms. Greenway responded the park is heavily utilized for lunch, playground activity and fishing, noting the rented pavilion is in high demand. She indicated numbers were obtained from the Parks and Recreation survey.

Commissioner Salehi spoke in support of this paved pathway proposal while acknowledging the 2010 survey revealed unpaved trails as the number two park system enhancement priority.

Ms. Greenway added Meridian Township does not have many paved trails, but those are the most utilized walking trails in the park system.

Commissioner Salehi believed Ferguson Park trail would receive heavier usage if its trail was paved.

Commissioner Deits reiterated Wonch Park is a well-used “little gem” in our community. He shared a story about Gas Works Park near where he lived in Seattle, Washington.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing at 8:44 P.M.

- C. *Commission Review #14043 (Meridian Township), a request for Section 61 review for location, character and extent of a paved pathway to be located in Wonch Park, 4555 Okemos Road
Chair Jackson opened the public hearing at 8:44 P.M.

- Summary of subject matter
Associate Planner Brown summarized the commission review as outlined in staff memorandum dated April 24, 2014.

- Planning Commission discussion:

Commissioner Salehi asked if Section 61 Review approval can be made contingent upon an environmental study establishing non-contamination of soils relative to possible industrial chemicals.

Associate Planner Brown reminded Commissioners a Section 61 Review only considers the character, location and extent of the paved pathway. He believed consideration of potential contaminated soils would be more appropriate as a recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Department during the special use permit process.

Commissioner Salehi believed potential contaminated soils is relevant to the location.

Ms. Greenway added there is language written into the construction plans and standard Township specifications for immediate notification in the event contaminants are found in the soil.

Commissioner Honicky added the Red Cedar River is contaminated with various organisms which travel from farms further upstream and when the river floods, the residual silt is layered on the affected land near the bridge. He believed this issue is why you would want a paved surface.

Commissioner Hildebrandt stated her preference not to vote on an agenda item the same night as the public hearing. She requested the time frame be backed up in the future so the Planning Commission considers an issue sooner.

Associate Planner Brown clarified the Parks Department did not find out they were awarded the grant until November, 2013 and time was needed to put the drawings together, prepare the paperwork for the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and the bidding process, all the while adhering to the timeline set by the DNR.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing at 8:55 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. *Special Use Permit #14051 (Meridian Township), a request to work in the 100-year floodplain associated with construction of a paved pathway in Wonch Park, 4555 Okemos Road
Commissioner Scott-Craig moved to suspend Planning Commission Bylaw 6.4a to consider Special Use Permit #14051 the same night as the public hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

Commissioner Scott-Craig 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 #14051 subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is subject to the revised Wonch Park Pathway plan prepared by the Meridian Township Department of Public Works & Engineering, dated March 25, 2014, and the related materials submitted as part of Special Use Permit #14051, subject to revisions as required.
2. The applicant shall obtain all permits and approvals from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Township prior to any work taking place related to the project. A copy of all permits and approvals shall be provided to the Department of Community Planning & Development.
3. The applicant shall obtain all necessary variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals prior to any work taking place related to the project or revise the plans so no variances are required.
4. In no case shall the impoundment capacity of the floodplain be reduced.
5. Fill placed in the floodplain as part of the project shall be protected against erosion pursuant to a soil erosion permit from the Department of Public Works & Engineering.
6. The applicant shall properly dispose of all excess materials from the compensating cut areas to an off-site location subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning & Development.
7. The disposed materials at an off-site location shall be protected from erosion and re-seeded subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning & Development.

Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Salehi, Scott-Craig, Chair Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried 8-0.

- B. *Commission Review #14043 (Meridian Township), a request for Section 61 review for location, character and extent of a paved pathway to be located in Wonch Park, 4555 Okemos Road
Commissioner Honicky moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, FOR THE REASONS STATED HEREIN INCLUDING THE MEMORANDUM OF COMMISSION REVIEW #14043, DATED APRIL 24, 2014, WHICH BASES ARE HEREBY FURTHER ADOPTED, THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN approves the location, character and extent of the proposed paved pathway in Wonch Park. Seconded by Commissioner Scott-Craig.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Salehi, Scott-Craig, Chair Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried 8-0.

C. Commission Review #12053 (Planning Commission), 2005 Master Plan amendment

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized proposed amendments to the 2005 Master Plan as outlined in staff memorandum dated April 24, 2014.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Urban services boundary (USB) on the map incorporated Planning Commission consensus to date, but further discussion is needed on Areas 2, 4 and 5
- Area 2 is adjacent to current extended services in a built-up area
- Board inclusion of Areas 4 and 5 was preventative in nature to allow for flexibility of sewer line extension in the event of septic system failure
- Board inclusion of Areas 4 and 5 also due to input by the Ingham County Health Department (ICHHD) as well as a recent legal opinion which indicated the Township may be held responsible for correction of groundwater contamination
- Inclusion of Areas 4 and 5 does not mandate immediate extension
- Area 2 is in the north part of the Township and located east of Green Road, north of Haslett Road
- Areas 4 and 5 are in the southern half of the Township and along Grand River Avenue, east of Cornell Road and west of Van Atta Road
- Members of the Board and Planning Commission have stated the USB is about planning for growth and development
- A comment at the last Planning Commission meeting relative to this being about public safety was incorrect
- If case law is being taken into account, then anywhere there is a threat to public safety due to sewage spillover, the Township will have to become involved on some level; therefore, case law is not an argument for sewer extension
- Serious consideration was given in how to apply for expansion of the USB if necessary
- Advance expansion seems unnecessary
- A comment at the last Planning Commission meeting relative to most of the areas being built out to the capacity of the underlying zoning was inaccurate
- Despite repeated requests, the Planning Commission has not received an attorney's opinion on the Georgetown Payback District; therefore, Area 5 cannot even be considered
- Attorney advice was about consideration of the Georgetown Payback District as a contractual obligation of the Township separate from the planning process and Area 5 cannot be considered based on reasoning using planning criteria
- Preference to hear the attorney's opinion from her specifically in lieu of another Planning Commissioner's interpretation of the attorney's opinion
- Adjacency is not a reason for sewer line expansion
- With the exception of Area 1, the original line drawn by the Planning Commission was placed where sewer/water currently exists
- A "straight-forward" process agreed to by the Planning Commission and the Board is in place if expansion of services beyond the Planning Commission's original line is desired
- USB should be used as a development planning tool to encourage development on the western side of the line
- Planning Commissioner request for the Board to apprise the Planning Commission why the amendment process for water/sewer line extension is not adequate
- Staff preference for the Planning Commission to provide its desired USB via communication to the Board v. a resolution
- If agreement can be reached on the USB, a public hearing will still need to be held
- Comments from Planning Commissioners indicate there is consensus that Areas 2, 3, 4 and 5 are not acceptable inclusions within the USB

- USB as a tool to guide developers with a sense of where the Township desires growth and infill to occur
- Planning Commissioner preference to make a statement on the delineation of the USB through resolution
- Rationale for the USB line drawn by the Planning Commission was previously conveyed to the Board through sending a Planning Commission representative to a Board meeting
- Planning Commission representative failed to convince the Board to use the Planning Commission USB line
- An open dialogue may lead to more of a compromise
- Dialogue has taken place over many months and no one has changed their opinion

Commissioner Hildebrandt moved to delineate the urban services management area as depicted by the blue line on Map 8-12 titled “Urban Services District” dated April 24, 2014. Seconded by Commissioner Salehi.

Commissioner Deits offered the following friendly amendment:

- **Add: The Planning Commission will send a Commissioner to represent them to the Board to explain this decision.**

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

Planning Commission discussion:

- Planning Commissioner preference for more, if not all, of the Planning Commissioners to go before the Board to offer rationale for the line drawn
- USB drawn by the Planning Commission ignores the public health concerns raised by the Township in terms of potential wide spread septic failure
- Planning Commission compromised by including the Ponderosa subdivision within the USB since it was last sent to the Township Board
- If this issue is legitimately one of a public safety concern, then every citizen within the Township deserves access

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-1 (Ianni).

8. Other Business (None)

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

Commissioner Deits requested an explanation as to why a motion to suspend the rules to consider a Section 61 Review the same night as the public hearing is not needed, but required for a special use permit.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it is the way the bylaws are written. She noted the bylaws state the need for a motion to suspend the rules on the same night as the public hearing for zoning issues, but not Master Plan issues.

Commissioner Deits suggested an amendment to the Planning Commission bylaws for consistency in order to prevent “awkward” situations.

Commissioner Hildebrandt reported her attendance at the Carriage Hills Study presentation last week at Michigan State University and expressed appreciation for the thoughtful, interesting presentations. She believed the presentation could serve as a template to springboard creative input from the community as a whole. She spoke with Wanda Bloomquist who suggested a joint meeting with the Williamstown Township and the Meridian Township Planning Commissions to have open dialogue about common concerns and a shared border.

Commissioner Salehi inquired if feedback had been received from Attorney Jeff Sluggett on the issue of whether a failure to approve a resolution means a denial.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded she has not. She believed that issue will be discussed during the Planning Commission's session with the Township Attorney.

Chair Jackson noted the session with the Township Attorney has been postponed and a new date has not yet been set.

Principal Planner Oranchak added she is waiting for dates of availability from the Attorney.

Commissioner Scott-Craig announced there will be public presentation on the Carriage Hills Study on May 7, 2014.

Chair Jackson voiced her appreciation for the cooperative nature of the various groups of individuals who were involved in the Carriage Hills Study presentation.

Commissioner Scott-Craig reported his attendance with some fellow Commissioners at a downtown meeting which discussed the high cost of free parking for businesses. He spoke to an invitation received by Planning Commissioners for the MSU Federal Credit Union groundbreaking ceremony on Tuesday, May 13th at 6:00 P.M.

Commissioner Deits announced the Grand River corridor project recently wrapped up its last series and believed the corridor project will be beneficial for the entire greater Lansing area. He noted this plan envisages downtown Meridian as a very significant urban center going forward.

10. New applications (None)

11. Site plans received (None)

12. Site plans approved (None)

13. Public remarks

Chair Jackson opened public remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, spoke to established animal welfare standards with respect to temperature ranges and urged the Planning Commission to inquire if there are established county, state or federal standards which will be adhered to. He asked what on-site monitoring systems will be put in place, since it is his impression the animals will be unattended overnight.

Relative to the bus rapid transit system (BRT), he again inquired if the system will require additional millage from Meridian Township residents.

Chair Jackson closed public remarks.

14. Adjournment

Chair Jackson adjourned the regular meeting at 9:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary