

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
August 25, 2014**

**APPROVED**

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill, Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Jackson, Salehi, Scott-Craig,  
Van Coevering  
ABSENT: Commissioner Ianni  
STAFF: Principal Planner Oranchak

**1. Call meeting to order**

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

**2. Approval of agenda**

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

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Commissioner Cordill moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 11, 2014. Seconded by Commissioner Scott-Craig.**

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 (None)**

**7. Unfinished Business (None)**

**8. Other Business**

**A. 2005 Master Plan Update**

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized information provided in the packet on the 2005 Master Plan Update.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Discussion on how to engage members in the community in a dialog regarding the different sections of the Master Plan
- Use of layman's terms to define a Master Plan
- How best to identify groups which should be involved in a survey for the Master Plan
- Suggestion to use the Neighborhood Organization list as a starting point to engage members of the community

- Posting on the front page of the Township website which announced a public hearing at the Planning Commission on October 27<sup>th</sup> regarding the language contained in the Master Plan's Goals and Objectives
- Procedure used to obtain feedback was the 63 day review process utilized for the urban services management district
- Goals and Objectives have been posted on the Township website for public review and linked to the public hearing
- Participation in the 2003 National Citizen Survey was the most recent survey conducted prior to adoption of the 2005 Master Plan
- Option of no longer having a date in the title of the Master Plan (e.g., 2005 Master Plan)
- Frequent changes need to be made to the Master Plan
- 1998 survey referenced in the 2005 Master Plan was conducted specifically for the Master Plan process
- Public participation may include another survey
- Previous survey was a telephone survey and the findings were incorporated into a booklet
- Request for Planning Commission review of that booklet's summary
- Consultant hired to produce and organize the booklet
- Inquiry if the Township is at the end of the National Citizen Survey cycle and if it will be conducted again
- Preference for use of layman's terms within the wording of the Master Plan document
- Preference to take the first step in this process by instituting a Survey Monkey with the preliminary set of open ended questions
- Availability of resources for compilation and analysis of results to open ended questions
- Results of open ended questions could be used to create multiple choice questions sent to a much larger group of residents within the Township
- Definition of the Master Plan for the public
- Commencement of the process by targeting open ended questions at representatives from neighborhood associations and possibly school districts
- Possible use of volunteers (i.e., 9 Planning Commissioners) at voting precincts during the November 4<sup>th</sup> election to obtain responses to measured subjective questions
- Concern with targeting only select groups of residents within the Township
- Targeting only select groups of residents will not produce meaningful results
- Necessity of reaching out to other Boards and Commissions to get all parties involved
- Inquiries to other Boards and Commissions for guidance on how to get the business community involved
- Need for a variety of methods to obtain input, i.e., survey included in water bills
- Individuals on well and septic do not receive water bills
- Possible use of the *Meridian Monitor*, a quarterly publication distributed to all households
- Communications Director to speak before the Planning Commission on September 8<sup>th</sup>
- Use of the online goals and objectives to shape individual answers
- Possible use of a separate direct mailing to all properties in conjunction with an online method
- Online survey questions could be used as a means to point residents to the online goals and objectives which could be used to shape their answers
- Notice on the Township website could direct residents to the survey
- Residents who receive notification on the Master Plan goals and objectives will comment through the Township website utilizing an online response system
- Broad questions should be geared toward defining goals and objectives
- Survey is another outreach to a broader audience apart from the public hearing

- Goals and objectives section of the Master Plan is different from the remaining sections, which have more targeted functions as part of a land use document
- Land use specifics should be driven by the Goals and Objectives
- Initial set of questions will be much broader
- Involvement by the greater community must be more than holding a public hearing
- Interest in reaching residents who reside in an extended care facility
- Demographics will drive what the Township should do in the next 5-10 years relative to land use
- Master Plan is a living document and goals and objectives should be continually reviewed
- Over two (2) years of work on a document approved by the Board needs to come to a conclusion by holding a public hearing and assimilating it into the Master Plan
- Inquiry if the next step by the Planning Commission (after inclusion of the goals and objectives chapter that has already been worked on) should be to again review the goals and objectives
- Poorly designed outreach questions do more damage than no outreach
- Timelines for many other governmental entities' Master Plans are longer than Meridian Township's
- Most other governmental entities with Master Plans have utilized consultants
- Another review of the goals and objectives is not productive
- Most issues which come before the Planning Commission are land use related
- Need for development of a method to solicit continuous public input on the Master Plan
- Actively soliciting citizen input does not run counter to moving forward with the next step of the public hearing process for the goals and objectives
- Reminder of financial, time and staff limitations which lead to the need for prioritization
- Use of the goals and objectives which will be the subject of the October 27<sup>th</sup> public hearing as a starting point for the 2015 Master Plan Review
- Need to ascertain how strategies in the goals and objectives relate to other sections of the Master Plan
- As more information from stakeholders is gathered through this process, the goals and objectives can be augmented and changes can be incorporated
- Possibility of patterning the Master Plan update after the system used for the Board Policy Manual
- Concern with the availability of resources for a yearly update of the Master Plan
- Reminder that the Master Plan is a "living" document
- Preference to place data as an appendix, so the body of the document can be easily updated
- Any modification to the Master Plan must go through the entire process
- Addressing individual areas of the Township would be the first step towards form based code
- Master Plan has been a document over the last 30 years which assumed a majority of single family homes, regular and consistent growth in population and continuation of those trends for the Township which is now not the case
- Need for a new Master Plan document in terms of its structure, layout, content and the way it is used
- Identification of what needs to change in the current Master Plan document
- Need to identify how the Master Plan fails to address current and upcoming conditions of the Township
- Possible strategy to go through the Master Plan by chapter to see where it does and does not align with goals and objectives

- Only two chapters (implementation and future land use) are used to help develop ordinances and design land uses in the Township
- Commissioner belief the Infrastructure chapter should also be reviewed
- Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) states the Township must look at its Master Plan at least every five (5) years
- MPEA allows you to update the Master Plan more frequently if desired
- Preference to divide Meridian Charter Township into sections for optimal contact coverage regarding input on the Master Plan
- Staff suggestion to wait until presentation by the Communications Director as she will likely provide input on options and possibly what should be the first undertaking
- Suggestion to have members of the respective homeowner associations saturate each section by distributing a flyer to every entity (homeowners, renters, businesses, etc.) for optimal coverage
- Possible use of neighborhood coffee hours similar to those used by politicians
- Commissioner preference to commence discussion using the Section Groups Map provided in the packet or Natural and Manmade Barriers Map as there are potential similar characteristics for the individual delineated sections
- Another way to consider what the Township consists of by identifying names for sections of the Township (i.e., Lake Lansing community, downtown Okemos, Towar Garden area, eastern third, etc.)
- Natural and Manmade Barriers Map appear to be divided along roads and railroads
- Flexibility to realign the boundary of the Section Groups if agreed upon
- Consensus to begin discussion using the Section Groups Map
- Possible use of subcommittees to work on changes to the “look” of each specific chapter
- Suggestion to identify each item that is data based or data driven to be included in the appendix
- Proposed Master Plan goals and objectives online as a separate document
- Planning Commissioners to submit three (3) chapter choices to staff for the Chair’s subcommittee assignment

**It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to individually read through the 2005 Master Plan Chapters and identify three (3) preferences for chapter-by-chapter review assignments. It was also a consensus to listen to the presentation by the Communications Director prior to taking definitive steps on the Master Plan.**

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

Commissioner Deits announced the first week in October is Lansing Maker Week, a regional happening with entrepreneurial events held throughout the greater Lansing area (fab lab, young people incubation, fashion incubation, food incubation, etc.) He noted more details are available at [www.lansingmaker.com](http://www.lansingmaker.com).

Commissioner Deits also indicated the Ingham County Road Department (ICRD) has put Hannah Boulevard on a “road diet” by installing a left hand turn lane on Hannah Boulevard at the entrance to the Michigan Athletic Club, thereby eliminating the ICRD as an impediment to placing roads on a road diet in the future when a similar situation arises. He added several trees were removed to install this extra lane. Commissioner Deits stated local input was not solicited by the ICRD prior to construction of the additional lane, although such work has land use implications.

**10. New applications**

- A. Special Use Permit #14081 (Hunnicut), request to place fill in the 100-year floodplain of Lake Lansing associated with reconstruction of a seawall
  
- B. Special Use Permit #14091 (Boomer Group), request to construct a 107-room hotel in a 56,651 square foot building

**11. Site plans received (None)**

**12. Site plans approved**

- A. Site Plan Review #14-87-02 (Courtesy Ford), request to amend an approved site plan to construct a 3,000 square foot addition at 1830 Grand River Avenue

**13. Public remarks**

Chair Jackson opened and closed public remarks.

**14. Adjournment**

Chair Jackson adjourned the regular meeting at 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto  
Recording Secretary