

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
December 15, 2014**

**DRAFT**

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill, Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson, Scott-Craig, Van Coevering  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Principal Planner Oranchak, Associate Planner Wyatt

**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 amended as follows:

- **Remove Agenda Item #3: Approval of minutes for December 8, 2014**

**Seconded by Commissioner Cordill.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

**4. Public Remarks**

Chair Jackson opened the floor for public remarks.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, expressed appreciation to Commissioner Van Coevering for her thorough analysis and editing of Chapter 9 (Community Facilities) of the Master Plan. He voiced appreciation to Commissioner Hildebrandt for her service to the Planning Commission and urged Commissioner Hildebrandt's reappointment to the Planning Commission.

Steven Alafazanos, 2165 Louisa Drive, Belleair Beach, Florida, representative for MF Okemos, noted that based on Planning Commissioner comments at the November 24, 2014 public hearing, a revised site plan is before the Commission this evening.

Chair Jackson closed public remarks.

**5. Communications**

- A. Randy Weiss, 2062 Tomahawk Circle, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- B. Gloria Anderson, 4565 Manitou Drive, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- C. Richard Isomaki, 4317 Tacoma Boulevard, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- D. Leszek Gawarecki, 4568 Tacoma Boulevard, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- E. Deb Lee Gould, 1745 Hamilton Road, Suite 330, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- F. Janie Bruen, 4466 Tacoma Boulevard, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- G. Mary Hanna, 4518 Manitou Drive, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- H. Richard and Annette Weiser, 1939 Oneida Drive; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- I. Joe and Elaine Hauptman, 2068 Tomahawk Circle, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- J. Margie Peacock, Owner, Hamilton House, 1846 Hamilton Road, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- K. Jason W. Johnson, 1931 Oneida Drive, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- L. Jenny Hauptman, 2004 Yuma Trail, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- M. Barbara Hansen, 1801 Birchwood, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- N. Sally Light, 1975 Tomahawk Road, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)

- O. Nathan Nelson, 1938 Navaho Trail, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- P. Tacoma Hills Homeowners Board of Trustees, 2134 Lagoon Drive, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- Q. Brenda Joseph, 2031 Hamilton Road, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- R. Laurie K. Sommers, 4292 Tacoma Boulevard, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- S. Cynthia Picklo, 1940 Pawnee Trail, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)
- T. Jessica Gevers, 1917 Nahavo Trail, Okemos; RE: SUP #14121 (Fedewa)

## 6. Public hearings

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

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing at 7:06 P.M.

- Introduction by the Chair (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation and applicants)
- Summary of subject matter  
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the special use permit request as outlined in staff memorandum dated December 11, 2014.
- Applicant  
Jerry Fedewa, 5570 Okemos Road, East Lansing, noted the proposed project is a good example of infill development, citing nearby parks and shopping. He indicated he was the builder of the existing adjacent condominium project to the west and the condominium project to the north and slightly east. Mr. Fedewa noted his willingness to work with the Weiss and Hauptman families (adjacent neighbors) on landscaping to screen their view of the building. Mr. Fedewa stated he could make this six-unit development a five-unit project which would eliminate the need for any variances. He believed the renters would be individuals working at the university.
- Public  
Bryce Hauptman, 2004 Yuma Trail, Okemos, believed the project is not harmonious with the intended character of the area. He expressed his strong opposition to the multiple family townhouse complex as it does not blend in with the predominantly single story family owned homes in the area. Mr. Hauptman believed the proposed project will adversely affect the existing neighboring uses and will decrease property values. He expressed strong opposition to the project.

Joe Hauptman, 2068 Tomahawk Circle, Okemos, voiced opposition to the proposed project as he believed it would be intrusive to the adjacent property owners' privacy and is not harmonious with the surrounding properties.

- Planning Commission and staff discussion:  
Commissioner Ianni inquired as to the penalty which would be imposed if the applicant failed to provide a proper buffer and landscaping.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the approved site plan and approved landscape plan are backed by a performance guarantee.

Commissioner Cordill inquired what happens if the landscaping dies.

Principal Planner Oranchak replied the property owner is always responsible for the maintenance of an approved landscape plan and must replace any dead or dying landscape

material.

Commissioner Cordill noted the topography to the south is significantly lower than the subject parcel and asked why the building was placed so far south on the property. She expressed concern that the building was placed parallel rather than perpendicular to Hamilton Road. She suggested moving the building to the north and placing it perpendicular on the parcel.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired if the proposed project would have balconies or decks.

Mr. Fedewa responded they are decks accessed through a sliding door off the dining room, noting the base of the deck on the ground floor is approximately six (6) feet high. He addressed the slight discrepancy between the elevations between the proposed project and the properties to the south. He acknowledged several requirements compete against one another on this parcel and believed the project may be able to move forward if one of the units are removed and the detention could be relocated to the east side, allowing for the building to be moved to the north. He expressed concern with "splitting" the units, stating the Ingham County Road Department (ICRD) desires to have the entrance offset from the one across the street.

Commissioner Scott-Craig voiced confusion at the Road Department's decision on the driveway, based on a previous project where the Road Department compelled the Planning Commission to move the driveways to be across from one another. He inquired if there was a possibility of rotating the building so the back is to the west and the driveway is in the eastern corner.

Mr. Fedewa responded that because of the number of lanes, the ICRD was concerned about the turn out. He added the original proposal showed the driveway in the middle and the ICRD's engineers specifically wanted the driveway in the location shown on the drawing. Mr. Fedewa requested clarification as to the layout proposed by the Planning Commissioner is turning the building.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired if the project would fit on the parcel if it was reduced to five (5) units in one continuous structure and rotated 90 degrees.

Mr. Fedewa responded that configuration would not fit given all the setback requirements.

Commissioner Scott-Craig asked the applicant what setback requirement would not be met.

Mr. Fedewa responded his first impression was that there must be fifty (50) feet from the rear property line and 85 feet from the front property line and the parcel is 160 feet in depth.

Commissioner Scott-Craig spoke to the removal of walnut trees which secrete toxins and kill nearly all conifer species, noting he would not object to their removal if it is necessary to install the conifer screening.

Commissioner Honicky suggested rotating the building 45 degrees which would remove the view into the Tacoma Hills property owners' rear yards.

Mr. Fedewa indicated he would investigate the idea of rotating the building, stating there is a balance needed to make it both functional and aesthetically appealing.

Commissioner Honicky believed the main issue to be the height of the building. He inquired

if the applicant had a different design which would be lower in height.

Mr. Fedewa noted the proposed building is only six (6) feet taller than the building currently on the property. He thought some well-placed 12 foot conifer trees among six (6) foot conifers would address privacy issues.

Commissioner Deits made a comparison of the proposed plan with concerns expressed for the project located on the northeast corner of Hagadorn and Mt. Hope Road. He noted the solution reached was to build a MUPUD, which allowed greater flexibility. He also addressed the dentist office building on the roundabout at the corner of Hamilton and Marsh Roads, which resulted in a building designed to look like a single family residence which was harmonious with the character of the area. He was unsure whether relocation of the building on the site would make the building harmonious with the nearby homes.

Commissioner Hildebrandt reiterated earlier Commissioner comment regarding the need for tools in place to move the building closer to the road. She believed the plan to be harmonious with existing buildings on Hamilton Road. She inquired as to the location of a similar condominium development previously built by the applicant.

Mr. Fedewa responded Brattin Woods is just north of Haslett Road on the east side of Okemos Road.

Commissioner Hildebrandt offered statistics that 33% of the population rents their dwellings and the majority of young adults and senior citizens who are retiring do not wish to own single family homes. She believed this is a direction in which the Township needs to go to be vibrant and alive, adding downtown Okemos is a good place to start.

Commissioner Van Coevering inquired as to who maintains the property.

Mr. Fedewa replied all maintenance other than snow removal is performed by his company.

Commissioner Ianni inquired if the applicant would have a problem installing privacy fences for the neighbors if requested.

Mr. Fedewa indicated installation of a privacy fence would not be a problem.

Commissioner Deits offered statistics on the trajectory of looking into the neighbor's back yards.

Mr. Fedewa welcomed concerned individuals to visit Brattin Woods to observe the height of the decks.

Commissioner Scott-Craig suggested the biggest conifers be planted as densely as practical for privacy purposes.

Commissioner Honicky suggested staggering the look of the units from the back.

Mr. Fedewa stated there is not much room to stagger the look from the back and expressed concern about sight distance with staggering the garages.

Commissioner Van Coevering inquired as to how many windows are in the back of each unit.

Mr. Fedewa responded there has been a reconfiguration of the windows in the last few days.

Chair Jackson requested an explanation on the difference between a balcony and a deck.

Mr. Fedewa "guessed" a balcony implied a sliding door out onto a deck area, while a deck may be construed as a walkout sliding door with a possible stair system to step down to the ground.

Commissioner Cordill requested elevation plans be viewed on the overhead while discussing the special use permit (SUP) request.

Chair Jackson inquired if the Township has any enforcement oversight regarding the landscaping once the occupancy permit has been granted.

Principal Planner Oranchak replied a condition can be placed in the SUP approval regarding landscaping which would be translated into the site plan. She noted during site plan review, the landscaping will be much more detailed (species, number of plants, placement, etc.) She added that once the site plan is approved, the proprietor is required to maintain it on a continual basis.

Upon Commissioner Honicky's inquiry, Mr. Fedewa explained the concept of cultured stone.

Commissioner Cordill inquired if the applicant would consider moving the project to the north 23 feet, as the setback requirement to the north is 85 feet and the proposed setback is 108 feet.

Mr. Fedewa responded in order to meet the objectives of the Drain Commissioner, he is working with the current standards for drainage, adding the proposed project provides for drainage which is less than the current drainage, balancing that with some back yard. He stated the detention has been placed in the front, but there needs to be convenient accessibility to getting in and out of the garages. Mr. Fedewa indicated he would need to speak with his engineers to ascertain how much the building could be moved to the north.

Commissioner Cordill believed if the applicant downsized the project from six (6) units to five (5), there would be less need for additional parking spaces.

Principal Planner Oranchak commented there would still be a need for three (3), as 25% of ten (10) would be rounded up.

Commissioner Ianni believed privacy fences should be installed on an "as requested" basis, but would like to see one on the east side as requested by that homeowner.

Commissioner Deits added that once the building is moved closer to the street, it becomes much larger in the context of Hamilton Road. He stated most of the buildings on Hamilton are set back farther and not as obtrusive on either side of the road itself and would "loom" into the street.

Commissioner Cordill inquired as to the average setback for properties on Hamilton Road.

Commissioner Hildebrandt noted the condominiums across the street are significant set back from the road, while acknowledging the ones next door are perpendicular to the street and landscaped "around."

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing at 8:24 P.M.

**7. Unfinished Business**

- A. Special Use Permit #14111 (MF Okemos), request for a fast food drive-through window in a new retail building at 2049 Grand River (former Northwest Tire site)

Associate Planner Wyatt summarized the SUP request as outlined in staff memorandum dated December 11, 2014.

**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 #14111 subject to the following conditions:**

1. Approval is based on application materials submitted by MF Okemos, LLC; site plans prepared Westwood Professional Services, Inc., dated December 8, 2014; and building elevations prepared by Harris Associates, LLC, dated October 17, 2014, subject to revisions as required.
2. The final site plan, landscape plan, building elevations, building materials and colors, shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development. Brick, stone or masonry products should cover no less than 60 percent of each building facade.
3. The applicant shall secure all applicable variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
4. The trash dumpster shall be enclosed on four sides; the enclosure (3 sides) shall be constructed with masonry products to match the building.
5. All mechanical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, generators, and similar systems shall be screened from view by an opaque structure or landscape material selected to complement the building. Such screening is subject to approval by the Director of Community Planning and Development.
6. Site and building lighting shall comply with Article VII in Chapter 38 of the Code of Ordinances and shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development. LED lighting shall be used where feasible.
7. Final utility, grading, and storm drainage plans for the site shall be 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.
8. The applicant shall obtain all necessary permits, licenses, and approvals from the Michigan Department of Transportation, Ingham County Drain Commissioner, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and the Township. Copies of all permits, licenses, and approval letters shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.
9. Copies 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.
10. Any future modifications to the drive-through lane shall require a modification to Special Use Permit #14111.

Seconded by Commissioner Van Coevering.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Subject property is currently vacant
- Developer has expertise in redevelopment of brownfield property
- This infill development project is on a smaller lot in an established commercial area and does not have much greenspace for landscaping
- Fire Department expressed a need for the access to the Meijer parking lot on the south side
- Expectation (as shown on the site plan) that there will be a connection to the Meijer parking lot is shown on the site plan

**The seconder offered the following friendly amendment:**

- **Add Condition #11: The applicant shall obtain access to the Meijer parking lot on the south side of the property.**

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

Continued Planning Commission and applicant discussion:

- Only consideration before the Planning Commission is the drive-through window on the site
- Subject site is a poor location for a drive-through window
- Concern with absence of loading/unloading space
- Mattress Store is for display purposes only; no pick-ups or delivery are performed
- Deliveries for the proposed Jimmy John's can be scheduled before the store opens to avoid traffic and circulation issues
- Subject property is an intensely developed prime piece of real estate on Grand River
- Township recently approved a drive-through "just down the road"
- New corporate model for Jimmy John's is to have a drive-through window
- Commissioner preference to add a condition to keep the trees

Continued Planning Commission discussion:

- Concern with turning left onto Grand River Avenue
- Subject site is not a good location for a drive-through window
- Nearby Meijer exit is right turn only for a specific reason
- Left hand turn in that "stretch" of Grand River Avenue is hazardous
- Drive-through businesses across Grand River Avenue each have another exit
- Jimmy John's is noted for their delivery, not drive-through
- Applicant's belief the customers who will frequent the establishment are familiar with the traffic pattern and will exit accordingly
- Six unmet requirements contained in the staff memorandum which will require a variance or need to be changed
- Applicant is used to a process where variance requests come first and then the redesign happens dependent upon variance denials
- Zoning Board of Appeals has limited ability to accommodate the unmet requirements
- Possibility of reversing the drive-through window traffic flow to accommodate the exit at the southeast corner into the Meijer parking lot
- Reversing the drive-through window traffic flow would require pick up by the driver reaching across the passenger side of the automobile
- Flipping the building would make stacking of cars problematic
- Possible option to condition the approval on a right turn only onto Grand River Avenue
- Concern with making a left hand turn into the property
- Use of Meijer access to avoid left turns onto Grand River

**Commissioner Honicky offered the following friendly amendment:**

- **Add Condition #12: The three deciduous trees depicted on the site and landscape plans as of 12/15/2014 (Revision 12/08/14) for preservation (30" and 36" oak on the northwest corner and the 24" hickory on the northeast corner of the property), if viable, shall be preserved.**

**The friendly amendment was accepted by the maker and seconder of the main motion.**

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Deits, Ianni, Van Covering

NAYS: Commissioners Cordill, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Scott-Craig,  
Chair Jackson

Motion failed 3-5.

**Commissioner Honicky moved [and read into the record], NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIN hereby denies Special Use Permit #14111. Seconded by Commissioner Hildebrandt.**

**Commissioner Hildebrandt offered the following friendly amendment:**

- **Add an additional WHEREAS clause which states: WHEREAS, the project will adversely affect the existing roadway traffic.**

**The friendly amendment was accepted by the maker.**

**Commissioner Deits offered the following friendly amendment:**

- **Amend the fifth WHEREAS clause by deleting: "including the elimination of several mature trees on the site"**

**The amendment was accepted by the maker and seconder of the main motion.**

Continued Planning Commission discussion:

- Commissioner belief the resolution to deny does not adequately convey it is solely a drive-through issue upon which the denial is based
- Request for the drive-through window is causing the request for certain variances

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

NAYS: Commissioners Deits, Ianni, Van Covering

Motion carried 5-3.

[Chair Jackson recessed the meeting at 9:18 P.M.]

[Chair Jackson reconvened the meeting at 9:26 P.M.]

**B. Commission Review #14083 (Planning Commission), amendments to the Goals and Objectives section of the 2005 Master Plan**

Principal Planner Oranchak reported all changes agreed upon at the December 8<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting have been incorporated into the document.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Goal 7, Objective A, Strategy 5: Preference to leave the word infill in the strategy
- Infill v. redevelopment



- Infill development is addressed in Goal 7, Objective D, Strategy 1
- Planning Commission consensus to amend Goal 7, Objective A, Strategy 5 to read: Establish ordinances providing incentives for development that emphasize redevelopment, infill development, alternative energy, and building materials reuse.
- Planning Commission consensus to remove capital letters for Goal 6 IN THE INTRODUCTION TO THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
- Planning Commission consensus to send staff typographical corrections
- Planning Commission consensus to add new Strategy 3 for Goal 3, Objective D which reads: Continue to adopt Township ordinances and zoning practices to facilitate efficient decision making and to incorporate greater flexibility where appropriate
- Strategies in this document should appear in the appropriate chapters within the Master Plan
- Preference to model after the Kalamazoo Master Plan: Introduction, Opportunities, Action Plan
- Introduction would be the goals, opportunities would be the objectives, strategies would be the action plans
- Terminology used would be defined by the chapter format
- Implementation plan should be based upon the identified strategies
- Chapters would be the objectives as there are not separate chapters for items which are not in the goals
- Argument could be made that everything else in the document is an appendix to the goals and objectives
- Current introduction is a snapshot of today and is very large
- Midland's organization is very similar to Meridian's current structure
- Each goal could be turned into a chapter
- Chapter contains information that supports the goal
- Staff to provide information updates (data, charts and graphs) to the Planning Commission during January
- One function of the State Demographer's office is to consult and work with local units of government
- Commissioner Van Coevering to report back on her meeting with the State Demographer
- Data currently organized in topical chapters should be reorganized into a goal directed set of chapters which allows the goals to be supported by the information
- If data does not support one of the goals, it should not be in the Master Plan

## 8. Other Business

### A. Master Plan Update – Chapter Discussions

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

Commissioner Hildebrandt announced it is her last meeting as a Planning Commissioner and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve the public.

Commissioner Scott-Craig reported his attendance at the Transportation Bonanza, stating it is a fantastic program and urged fellow Commissioners to attend next year.

Commissioner Cordill inquired about the new application for Commercial Planned Unit Development #15-13034 noted on the agenda as having a drive-through window.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated there is not yet a tenant for the outlot at the Meridian Mall.

## 10. New applications

- A. Special Use Permit #15-88231 (St. Martha Church), minor amendment to reduce the building addition size at 1100 Grand River Avenue
- B. Commercial Planned Unit Development #15-13044 (Whole Foods), minor amendment to add 3,600 square feet to the building at 2750 Grand River Avenue
- C. Commercial Planned Unit Development #15-13034 (Meridian Mall), major amendment for work in the floodplain to construct a 7,000 square foot building with drive-through window at 1982 Grand River Avenue

**11. Site plans received**

- A. Site Plan Review #15-15 (Dawn Avenue Associates), roof addition, redesign of the parking lot and stormwater management plan at 4884 Dawn Avenue
- B. Site Plan Review #15-04-2 (Whole Foods), modification to an approved site plan to add 3,600 square feet to the building at 2750 Grand River Avenue
- C. Site Plan Review #15-88-13-2 (St. Martha Church), modification to an approved site plan to reduce the building addition size at 1100 Grand River Avenue

**12. Site plans approved (None)**

**13. Public remarks**

Chair Jackson opened and closed public remarks.

**14. Adjournment**

Chair Jackson adjourned the regular meeting at 10:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto  
Recording Secretary