

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
January 27, 2014**

**APPROVED**

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill, Deits (7:03 P.M.), DeLind, Hildebrandt, Honicky (7:01 P.M.), Ianni, Jackson, Salehi, Scott-Craig

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Director of Community Planning and Development Mark Kieselbach, Principal Planner Gail 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 7-0.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Commissioner Cordill moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2014. Seconded by Commissioner Scott-Craig.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

**4. Public Remarks**

Chair Jackson opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

**5. Communications**

- A. Cara Yeager, 1355 Cove Court, Okemos; RE: SUP #13121 (Meridian Township)
- B. Raymond & Kathleen Creps, 2099 Haslett Road, Haslett; RE: SUP #14011 (Green)

**6. Public hearings**

- A. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #14-05054 (DTN), request to revise the space allocation for commercial and office uses in the Hamptons of Meridian

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing at 7:02 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 mixed use planned unit development (MUPUD) as outlined in staff memorandum dated January 23, 2014.
- Applicant

Allen Russell, DTN Management, 1690 Mack Avenue, Haslett, addressed the proposed plans for expansion of the Red Haven Restaurant, which wishes to use the majority of additional space for a catering kitchen and catering storage.

- Planning Commission discussion:

Commissioner Honicky noted the staff analysis stated if this request is approved, the square foot breakdown of neighborhood commercial and professional office (PO) district uses will be permanent and is not dependent upon a specific occupant. He noted if the restaurant decided to relocate elsewhere, the approved commercial footprint would remain. Commissioner Honicky inquired whether any change would come before the Planning Commission if there was a subsequent occupant who desired a different arrangement.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded in the affirmative with the qualifier that it would not be necessary if the requested change was to office since PO is the use allowed by the underlying zoning district.

Commissioner Honicky requested an explanation of the on-site signs which designate a two-hour commercial parking limit.

Mr. Russell stated it is a function of managing the parking lot for mixed use to ensure that residents do not monopolize the parking spaces close to the building. He noted a carport is provided for every apartment and additional designated parking for residents on the back of the north/south island and along the south end of the south island.

Commissioner Ianni inquired of the applicant if the proposed expansion would significantly increase traffic which would impact the intersection of Mt. Hope and Hagadorn Roads.

Mr. Russell stated the traffic study for this site satisfactorily addressed staff review of the parking and the modification will not be an issue.

Commissioner Deits pointed to this development as a successful example of mixed use. He suggested a recommendation to the Board to provide flexibility such as “not to exceed 65% commercial” which would allow the applicant to lower the percentage of commercial without returning to the Township.

Commissioner Salehi believed a specific percentage for a split would be artificial.

Chair Jackson noted the primary concern over the specificity relative to the split is the underlying zoning for the mixed use is PO. She believed the previous suggestion of adding flexibility in small increments makes sense than setting a “hard” limit.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired if all MUPUDs with PO as the underlying zoning have a percentage determination or if it is specific to a particular development.

Principal Planner Oranchak believed it is specific to the underlying PO zoning. She noted at its onset, there were limited types of commercial uses which could be located in a professional office MUPUD and then only by special use permit. Principal Planner Oranchak stated flexibility as to the types of uses was subsequently added, subject to Board approval as to the breakdown between the types of uses.

Commissioner Scott-Craig asked why there is any limit at all.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the MUPUD states the commercial district is “whatever is allowed” in the underlying zoning district by right or by special use permit. She indicated the text relative to the PO zoning district was specifically modified so there could be additional types of commercial uses allowed, while retaining some space for office.

Commissioner DeLind inquired as to why the amount of commercial/office can't be at the discretion of the developer.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the ordinance states the amount of commercial/office is at the discretion of the Board. She indicated if it is a desire of the Planning Commission to make a change to allow the developer to make that determination, it would require a change in the ordinance through the zoning amendment process.

Commissioner Ianni asked what the zoning designations were for the surrounding properties to this area.

Principal Planner Oranchak answered there is an apartment complex to the east, an office directly to the north, Waterbury Place to the northeast (PO zoned MUPUD), MSU farms to the west and the railroad and a research park building to the south.

Commissioner Ianni inquired if rezoning this property would be considered spot zoning.

Principal Planner Oranchak indicated any rezoning would require a zoning amendment and a separate discussion to determine if a rezoning would be applicable.

Commissioner Cordill believed expanding commercial space on the first floor with office above is ideal in a MUPUD with an underlying PO zoning.

Commissioner Hildebrandt expressed appreciation for this community owned business which returns money back into the community.

Commissioner Deits added the restaurant focuses on local produce and agricultural products. He noted the underlying PO requirement was a Board initiative. He asked how the MUPUD relates to the underlying zoning.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that whatever uses are designated in the underlying district would then be allowed.

Commissioner Deits asked if the land would still be a mixed use property.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Deits indicated if a rezoning would facilitate the efficient utilization of that space, he would be in favor of such action at some future date, especially given the current overload of office space.

Scott-Craig asked if C-1 would be the likely rezoning designation.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Ianni noted that rezoning this property in the future would eliminate the need for the applicant to return each time a different configuration is requested.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated the Board would make the final decision on this action as well.

Chair Jackson inquired of the applicant if rezoning to C-1 would add flexibility to this site.

Mr. Russell believed it an interesting proposition which would require future discussion.

Chair Jackson asked if the current office on the southern end facing Hagadorn Road would be eliminated.

Mr. Russell responded that much of that current office space is presently vacant due to Spartan Net moving to a larger location in the Township. He noted he is currently in talks with prospective tenants for a portion of that vacant space.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing at 7:35 P.M.

B. Special Use Permit #14011 (Green), request to expand an institution for human care at 2077 Haslett Road

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing at 7:35 P.M.

- Summary of subject matter

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the special use permit (SUP) request as outlined in staff memorandum dated January 23, 2014.

- Applicant

Brenda Greene, 6622 White Clover Drive, East Lansing, spoke to the outdated nature of the adult foster care facility located at 2077 Haslett Road for the last 20 years. She stated she and her husband currently operate an assisted living facility in DeWitt, one on Edson Road in Haslett, as well as 100 rental units in the City of Lansing. Ms. Greene would like to totally remodel the existing building, constructing an addition in the back which will not be visible from the road to provide 24 hour care to elderly residents aged 55 years and older.

- Planning Commission discussion:

Commissioner Salehi inquired if the applicant approached the neighbor to the east about the renovation given the close proximity of the proposed addition.

Ms. Greene indicated she has not approached the neighbor to the east, only the neighbor to the west.

Commissioner Salehi asked staff if the neighbor to the east was given notice, and if so, when.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded over two (2) weeks ago.

Commissioner Cordill asked if the location of the project on the property is included in the notice.

Principal Planner Oranchak answered the notice includes the nature of the project with accompanying map of the location, the address, etc. but not necessarily all the details. She added staff contact information is also supplied in case the noticed parties have questions regarding the project.

Chair Jackson added the same noticing process for the neighboring properties transpires when variances are applied for at the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Commissioner Ianni believed the applicant's experience with caring for local senior citizens is a "bonus" to the development of this facility. He stated the applicant has thoroughly thought through the expansion to improve the quality of the building. Commissioner Ianni indicated the license is scheduled to expire in February, 2014 and asked the applicant if she is applying for a new license before operations begin.

Ms. Greene responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired if the pathway noted in the staff report was part of the pathway constructed by the Township scheduled for completion possibly by the end of this year.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated the applicant will likely be required to install the pedestrian bicycle pathway section along their frontage and then the Township will fill in the remaining section.

Commissioner Scott-Craig noted a parking lot with ten (10) parking spaces seems small, given employees, visiting physicians, etc. and the ability to walk to the bus stop will be important.

Ms. Greene responded there will be two (2) full-time staff, she is there part time, and visiting physicians and family members will come and go throughout the week.

Commissioner Scott-Craig asked if the parking lot will be illuminated.

Ms. Greene responded the parking lot will utilize halogen lights.

Commissioner Scott-Craig addressed the requirement for bicycle parking in the event staff wanted to utilize it.

Commissioner Scott-Craig noted the staff report indicated the previous special use permit (SUP) expired, voicing that he was not aware of their expiration.

Principal Planner Oranchak explained that SUPs have termination dates with a specific amount of time to activate it and perform the construction.

Commissioner Scott-Craig asked if a SUP is permanent, once activated, and remains with the property.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hildebrandt inquired if staff investigate other facilities owned by the applicant to see if complaints have been filed (e.g., residents wandering off, etc.)

Principal Planner Oranchak responded such investigation does not typically happen, although staff is generally aware of complaints.

Ms. Greene added she received her license for the Haslett location in June, 2012 and special gating was placed in front of the building to prevent residents from wandering away.

Commissioner Deits expressed concern with non-residential use in residential that is less than half of the size of the minimum required by Township ordinance. He acknowledged that the proposed use is an existing one and the Township should not “inappropriately use” the Zoning Board of Appeals to adjust its ordinances to allow for flexibility. Commissioner Deits asked if there was a way to eliminate the variance for the parking lot by reconfiguring the parking spaces to make them shorter.

Principal Planner Oranchak did not believe there was any way to “get to” five (5) feet.

Greg Petru, KEBS, Inc. 2116 Haslett Road, Haslett, added the current plan has a 23 foot drive and 20 foot parking spaces. He stated taking the aisle down to 20 feet to get the five (5) feet would not meet code. Mr. Petru indicated five (5) feet could be gained by taking away the sidewalk adjacent to the building. He did not believe this project needed the full 23 foot drive.

Commissioner Deits stated his preference for a variance for the width of the drive instead of encroachment on the setback, especially given the project is too large for the small parcel. He believed it necessary to have a sufficient turning radius for the ten (10) parking spaces.

Commissioner Salehi believed there is a 50 foot setback requirement on the east side of the property, adding the length of the addition is 119 feet. He expressed continued concern that the property owner to the east is aware of the proposed project. Commissioner Salehi believed the large property to the south is undeveloped so the impact of this project would be minimal.

Commissioner Salehi inquired if the previous SUP that was not acted upon was a similar site plan to the one before the Planning Commission.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that it was not. She indicated it was a more compact plan.

Commissioner Salehi expressed concern with the air conditioning condensers on the east side and the noise it would generate.

Roger Donaldson, Architect, 4787 Tartan Lane, Holt, stated the new condensers are much quieter than the older models, being a high energy efficient unit.

Commissioner Salehi asked the applicant to outline the proposed landscaping screening.

Mr. Donaldson responded the landscaping screening will be addressed during site plan review, but will consist of screenings, planting, etc.

Commissioner Salehi asked what the proposed plant species will be.

Mr. Petru responded there will be five (5) evergreens and a shrubbery row in between the pine trees.

Commissioner Deits recommended fencing around the air conditioning condensers to mitigate their closeness to the property line.

Mr. Donaldson responded the fencing will be incorporated into the plan.

Commissioner Salehi inquired if the air conditioning condensers could be placed on the west side of the building.

Mr. Donaldson responded the west side is drawn for parking and a sidewalk.

Chair Jackson noted there is one ingress/egress and inquired if the site plan is reviewed by emergency personnel prior to approval.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated emergency personnel will look at the proposed plans.

Commissioner Cordill expressed concern over the significant size of the addition which more than doubles the square footage of the existing building.

Commissioner Ianni stated the property has been in its current use for some time as an adult foster care center and one of the neighboring home owners has indicated no objection with the request to expand. He did not believe the proposed development would be hazardous to the surrounding uses if the addition is well screened and the applicant attempts to mitigate noise to the extent possible.

Commissioner Salehi believed it important to note the location of the house on the property to the west is far north on the property.

Commissioner Deits pointed out the house to the east is designed such that the garage is on the east side and closer than it might otherwise be.

Howard Greene indicated he and his wife have been in the adult care business for four (4) years, with a similar business in DeWitt and Haslett. He indicated his intent that once the building is remodeled and the business is operational, they plan on remaining in the community for many years.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing at 8:19 P.M.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

- A. Commission Review #12053 (Planning Commission), 2005 Master Plan amendment  
Director Kieselbach summarized the 2005 Master Plan amendment as outlined in staff memorandum dated January 24, 2014.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Board reduced the boundary in Area #1 as it previously included county park property
- Area #2
  - Board rationale that public water is currently available on Shoemith
  - Board rationale that Ingham County Department of Environmental Health would require homes to connect to public water if their wells failed as the line is in the road right-of-way
- Area #3
  - 2007 Board approval of the Haslett Preserve PUD (north of Haslett Road, west of Meridian Road) with intent to have public water and sewer serve the site
  - Applicant of the original PUD intends to return to the Township and propose development on the site
- Appreciation for information on the Township Board changes
- Planning Commissioner submission of a four page document outlining his concerns with Board action on redrawing certain boundaries within the urban services management area (USMA)
- For properties which have the old style septic fields which fail, the Health Department is looking for a one (1) to one and one-half (1-½) acre parcel to place a new septic field on that lot
- New septic field systems don't fit on the smaller lots
- Some commercial properties are pumped and hauled, as the system can't adequately accommodate the amount of waste produced
- Health Department recommendation of sanitary sewer for Areas #4, #5 and #6
- Area #3 is "extreme" sprawl
- Differing view on Areas #4, #5, and #6 from the Board
- Concern the cost of public utilities will be borne by the home owners
- Cost of public utilities can be financed through an assessment district for the whole subdivision
- In the event of a failed well or septic system, the county can require an individual homeowner to hook up if located close enough to existing public utilities
- Planning Commissioner belief the Georgetown Sewer Payback District is the single largest piece of infrastructure development that has ever been proposed in Meridian Township
- Planning Commissioner concern the Georgetown Sewer Payback District will eliminate the eastern rural third of the Township and is not on the table for discussion
- USMA should consider how the Township is envisioned 20 years from now
- If the "line" is shown on the map, water and/or sewer will be extended to serve those properties at some point in the future
- Concern with impact on all tree roots if a sewer line is laid down Van Atta Road
- Concern with the location of the line, as drawn, down Grand River Avenue as all properties within 300 feet of that sewer line would be required to hook up at the time of a failed system
- Planning Commissioner belief the urban services boundary (USB) is not down Grand River Avenue, but 300 feet north of Grand River Avenue (an addition of 300 acres of land not delineated on the map)
- Request for work session meetings to discuss the Master Plan goals and objectives as well as the map revision
- Full Planning Commission schedule will likely require a work session on an off Planning Commission meeting Monday



- Suggestion by the Chair to remove USMA from the February 10<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission agenda
- Planning Commissioner preference to keep the USMA on the agenda on unfinished business and then not act upon it if work has not yet been completed
- Noticing requirement for Planning Commission work sessions
- Progress on map revision and goals and objectives will require work session(s)

**It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to hold a work session on this topic on February 3, 2014 at 7:00 P.M.**

**8. Other Business (None)**

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

Commissioner Scott-Craig expressed concern that three (3) days is not sufficient time to review information for the public hearing on establishing definitions and standards for the use of medical marihuana tentatively scheduled for February 10, 2014.

Director Kieselbach noted staff can provide the Board draft on the definitions and standards for the use of medical marihuana to all Planning Commissioners as soon as possible.

Commissioner Deits announced a summary report presentation on the Grand River Corridor project will be held on February 26, 2014 at 5:30 P.M. at the Hannah Community Center in East Lansing. He added the draft report is available for review and comment at [www.migrand-charrette.com](http://www.migrand-charrette.com).

Commissioner Scott-Craig suggested information regarding the summary report presentation be placed on the Township website.

**10. New applications**

- A. Rezoning # 14020 (Hagan), request to rezone 3698 Okemos Road from RR (Rural Residential) to PO (Professional and Office)
- B. Special Use Permit #14-13111 (Meridian Township), request to construct a pedestrian-bicycle pathway across the Red Cedar River on the west side of Okemos Road

**11. Site plans received**

- A. Site Plan Review #14-01 (Meridian Mall Limited Partnership), request to construct a 19,000 square foot addition onto the Meridian Mall building addressed as 1982 Grand River Avenue

**12. Site plans approved**

- A. Site Plan Review #13-99-26 (Mercer), request to remove the outdoor pool and re-landscape at the Marriott Towne Place Suites Hotel addressed as 2855 Hannah Blvd.

**13. Public remarks**

Chair Jackson opened and closed public remarks.

**14. Adjournment**

Chair Jackson adjourned the regular meeting at 8:57 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto  
Recording Secretary