

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2013**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill, Hildebrandt, Ianni, Jackson, Norkin, Salehi, Scott-Craig
ABSENT: Commissioner Deits, Honicky
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 Ianni moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Scott-Craig.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

3. Approval of Minutes (None)

4. Public Remarks

Chair Jackson opened the floor for public remarks.

Jeff Kyes, KEBS, Inc., 2116 Haslett Road, Haslett, representative for CBL Properties, clarified that Meridian Mall has a prospective tenant who desires to use 30,000 square feet of the existing building and add approximately 18,650 square feet to the current structure. He indicated he believed the CPUD process the best way to expand tenants at the mall. Mr. Kyes indicated that once the CPUD is approved, he will work towards adding different amenities as new tenants desire to locate within the mall.

Chair Jackson closed public remarks.

5. Communications (None)

6. Public hearings

A. Rezoning #13050 (Planning Commission), rezone 1404, 1408, 1416, 1422, 1434, 1438, 1443 and 1449 Haslett Road from PO and C-2 (Commercial) to RB (Single Family -High Density)

Chair Jackson opened the public hearings at 7:04 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 rezoning request as outlined in staff memorandum dated October 17, 2013.
- Public

Dave Otis, 1404 Haslett Road, Haslett, speaking on behalf of his mother who owns two of the subject parcels, spoke in support of the rezoning. He indicated rezoning approval would allow owners the ability to make security and maintenance changes to the homes, noting these properties have had a residential use for over 70 years.

- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Ianni inquired if the Land Use Map could be changed for these parcels as a result of the rezoning to reflect the current use.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded she will check into that request.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired as to back half of the lots along Carlton Street not being included in this request.

Principal Planner Oranchak noted none of the properties on Carlton Street are part of this request. She indicated the Carlton frontage is zoned RB and the back area is Land Preservation property.

Commissioner Scott-Craig believed the three lots, depicted on the map as white squares and zoned C-2, would be logical candidates to be rezoned. He also believed the three properties on Carlton Street should be rezoned.

Principal Planner Oranchak explained one of the lots on the street is a former church and is being used for business purposes, one of the lots is the church parking lot, and the third lot is a single family home. She was unsure when the applicants were making contacts with property owners if they did or did not contact the individuals who own those parcels.

Commissioner Scott Craig believed it would be good to have consistency for the entire neighborhood.

Principal Planner Oranchak suggested not holding up this rezoning, but have planning staff inquire of other nearby property owners if they had an interest in rezoning their property in the future.

Chair Jackson inquired as to how the C-2 property between 1408 and the RB on Carlton Street is currently being used.

Principal Planner Oranchak indicated they are back yards of the property along Carlton Street, with split zoning which appears to go down through the rear of the property.

Chair Jackson asked if the rear yards were excluded when the request was made to rezone the property which is now zoned RB.

Principal Planner Oranchak did not know exactly how that rezoning transpired in 1978, but believed what was determined at that time to be appropriate lots for the RB district were left. She surmised that one block of land was kept for C-2 development due, in part, to its proximity to the railroad tracks.

Chair Jackson noted that the back zoning district lines in question are landlocked.

Chair Jackson inquired if the two back lots are owned separately from the ones which front Carlton Street.

Principal Planner Oranchak believed ownership to be the same for the parcels which have split zoning through the rear.

Chair Jackson inquired if there was good reason to keep the Land Preservation property zoned C-2.

Principal Planner Oranchak did not necessarily see a need, but believed that issue should be directed to the Land Preservation Advisory Board prior to Planning Commission initiation of any type of rezoning for that parcel.

Chair Jackson indicated the staff report noted the possibility of two parcels which do not meet width and acreage requirement for RB being used as residential with a variance.

Principal Planner Oranchak indicated a variance may not be needed if the lot of record has 40 feet of lot width and meets all the setback requirements. She spoke to the distinction between a non-conforming lot/structure and a non-conforming use.

Commissioner Hildebrandt asked if there was a good reason not to rezone the three (3) houses with frontage on Carlton.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the three homes are zoned residential with split zoning in the rear. She stated that if the Planning Commission desired to include those lots, the process would need to start over, with noticing for a new public hearing.

Commissioner Hildebrandt suggested that staff include these homes in its outreach efforts to inquire as to property owner desire for a rezoning.

Chair Jackson added that with exploring rezoning for the properties on Carlton, the Township moves further away from the problems associated with spot zoning.

Commissioner Salehi inquired if this situation was a rarity within the Township.

Principal Planner Oranchak believed this situation was a result of creating a Master Plan in the 1970's when the planning philosophy was that the Township was growing and the non-residential portion of Haslett Road would expand. She thought the belief was that such an action would make it possible to obtain additional land for parking in an effort to create viable businesses. Principal Planner Oranchak noted those designations for non-residential uses have continued over several decades.

Commissioner Salehi wondered how many similar instances there are Township wide.

Principal Planner Oranchak believed other such instances may be found in the older sections of the community, recalling review a few years ago for locations on Lake Lansing Road and Marsh Road.

Commissioner Salehi suggested downtown Okemos.

While Principal Planner Oranchak acknowledged downtown Okemos does contain properties that are zoned commercial or office and used for residential purposes, the Township has not received any rezoning requests.

Commissioner Cordill suggested amending the agenda to place this issue on unfinished business in order to take a vote this evening.

Commissioner Norkin believed there will be a four-fold increase in the number of trains on the C & N railroad over the next five to ten years and believed it made sense from a long term planning perspective to keep the parcels commercial. He assumed it would become undesirable to reside next to the railroad track in the future and suggested those property owners take their property values into consideration once that happens.

Commissioner Salehi asked if there would be a reason for the Township to oppose a homeowner's request to rezone the property upon which their home is located to residential.

Chair Jackson responded the Master Plan would be one reason.

Commissioner Norkin added that if an individual purchased commercial property on the other side of the street with the understanding that the entire area would be commercially developed, they may object to a rezoning request.

Commissioner Cordill believed the commercial area is neighborhood oriented and the businesses would benefit from a solid residential base.

Chair Jackson stated she has not seen any evidence that these C-2 zoned parcels would become more highly commercialized. She reiterated the significance of the community's preference to use these older homes for residential purposes over the last 70 years.

Commissioner Salehi did not believe this request would strand any commercial property.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearings at 7:37 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Commercial Planned Unit Development #13034 (Jeff Kyes), request to establish the Meridian Mall C-PUD and add approximately 18,650 square feet onto the Meridian Mall to accommodate a new tenant

Commissioner Scott-Craig moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby recommends approval of Commercial Planned Unit Development #13034, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The recommendation for approval is based on the updated Existing Amenities Plan dated October 10, 2013, Current Pervious/Impervious Plan, Current Parking Totals Plan, Site and Utility Plan, Storm and Grading Plan, Demolition Plan and Landscape Plan dated September 10, 2013; prepared by KEBS, Inc.; and an elevation plan and a photometric plan dated September 13, 2013 prepared by Herschman Architects Inc., subject to revisions as required.**

2. **Approval is subject to one or more amenities. The applicant proposes to apply existing amenities including the CATA transit stop, pedestrian access to Marsh Road and Central Park Drive, public seating benches, bike racks, and underground utilities and proposed amenities of public seating benches, covered bike racks, planter and pavers and permanent open space.**
3. **Consideration should be given to additional amenities, for example; benches near the transit stop to improve the experience of transit users and the use of green building products and techniques.**
4. **The requested waiver for light pole height should be granted provided LED lighting is used for new or relocated poles and when fixtures are replaced.**
5. **The requested waiver for a parking reduction should be granted provided it is, to some extent, tied to the additional bicycle parking per Section 86-760(h) and additional landscaped islands are installed to offset the parking lot's heat island effect.**
6. **The character and quality of the building materials and general architectural design should be compatible with the most recent additions to the mall building.**
7. **Brick, stone or masonry products should cover no less than 60 percent of the building addition's façade that provides the main entrance to the building. Eliminate or significantly reduce the amount of Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EFIS) that is proposed.**
8. **Site accessories such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, exterior lighting fixtures for streets and buildings, and bicycle racks should be considered for commercial quality, and being complementary with the building design and style.**
9. **Where new landscaping, including street trees, is installed, it should be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development and the Ingham County Road Department, as applicable.**
10. **Any future building addition or expansion should require modification to the Commercial Planned Unit Development #13034.**

Seconded by Commissioner Ianni.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Seven different parcels and owners created Meridian Mall
- Future changes will require modification to the CPUD
- Opportunity for future minor amendments which would be handled by the Director of Community Planning and Development
- Amenities added over time provides more flexibility within the CPUD
- Square footage of the existing mall is approximately one million feet
- Waiver for light pole height would allow consistency with existing light pole height of 35 feet
- Light pole height and lighting plan is included as part of the photometric plan noted in condition #1

- Waiver is also being requested for a reduction in the number of parking spaces
- Suggestion that the applicant participate in the October 24th charrette
- Planning Commission is approving the establishment of a CPUD and approving an addition as the first project of the CPUD
- Improved amenity discussion is geared toward the whole CPUD development
- Reminder that the mall property includes restaurants, bank, movie studio, etc.
- EFIS is a manufactured stucco type of material used as an exterior finish on the building
- Concern that the applicant meets the 60% masonry requirement

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

NAYS: None

Motion carried 7-0.

8. Other Business (None)

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

Commissioner Scott-Craig spoke to the new central fire station issue being returned to the Planning Commission. He inquired if the Township Attorney could be available to the Planning Commission when the public hearing is repeated. Commissioner Scott-Craig indicated the Township Attorney's opinion regarding the millage money being attached to that particular property has not been received in writing. He also inquired if members of the Board would be available at that Planning Commission meeting to answer questions regarding the Board's intention. Commissioner Scott-Craig addressed the necessity of re-noticing the continuation of the public hearing for the plasma center.

Chair Jackson shared correspondence received from Economic Development Chair Marsha Madle relative to Planning Commission transmission of the Master Plan Goals and Objectives and from Christine Tenaglia.

Chair Jackson inquired if Planning Commissioners were available to hold another work session on the Master Plan Goals and Objectives on November 4, 2013.

Commissioner Scott-Craig announced the upcoming charrettes: October 24th kick-off in the Chippewa Middle School at 6:00 P.M., October 28th in the Township Hall at 5:00 P.M. and the wrap-up on October 30th at 6:30 P.M. in East Lansing's Hannah Community Center.

Principal Planner Oranchak noted the areas of interest to be discussed at those charrettes will be Meridian Mall, Grand River Avenue and consideration of the bus rapid transit system.

Chair Jackson added the Planning Commission, Township Board and Tri-County Regional Planning Commission are all interested in receiving as much public participation and input as possible. She noted this is a part of the larger Grand River/Michigan Avenue Transportation Corridor.

10. New applications

- A. Special Use Permit #13141 (Wooledge), request to work and place fill in the 100-year floodplain at 2700 Mt. Hope Road

- B. Special Use Permit #13-01081 (Consumers Energy), request for a minor special use permit amendment to enclose the gas regulator station at 4671 Marsh Road

11. Site plans received (None)

12. Site plans approved

- A. Site Plan Review #13-10-06 (DTN Management), revision to Waterbury Mixed Use Planned Unit Development to add a canopy to the office building

13. Public remarks

Chair Jackson opened and closed public remarks.

14. Adjournment

Chair Jackson adjourned the regular meeting at 8:16 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary