

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MINUTES
January 23, 2012
Town Hall Room**

APPROVED

5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198, 517-853-4560,

PRESENT: Chair Deits, Vice-Chair Jackson, Commissioners Honicky, Cordill, Norkin and Scott-Craig
ABSENT: Commissioners Scales and Goodale
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak
PUBLIC: None

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Deits called the work session meeting to order at approximately 7:20 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

3. Public Remarks

None

4. Discussion

A. 2005 Master Plan Update

- Science Magazine study out week of 1/20/12 on strategies for global warming.
- Urban Service Boundary vs. Urban Services Management Area
- Finality of Township Board's amendments to the Planning Commission's recommended proposal
- Boundary moved to anticipate serving subdivisions without public utilities.
- Public utilities may not be available to some areas regardless of problems
- EPA website says the average life of a septic system is approximately the same as a municipal sewer system
- EPA, "Not everyone must have sewers"
- EPA, "Septic systems can be the most cost effective and efficient waste water system"
- Township not liable if approves project with engineered system and the system fails
- Identify uses appropriate for areas lacking urban services
- Require applicant prove there is no other Township location for a particular use
- Impressed by example showing boundary defined by what would happen in side and outside the urban services area and specific conditions to move the boundary
- Concerned the Township is focused on sewer service to define the boundary line
- Define objectives
- Options to create a policy or and overlay over areas outside the urban service area
- Zoning overlay district may preclude specific uses such as nursing homes
- Create a new zoning district RR/USB and list of appropriate uses
- Monetary issue – outside the boundary the cost of development is totally on the shoulders of the property owner
- Set services that can be expected both inside and outside the boundary—libraries, public safety response times
- Different levels of service inside and outside the boundary
- Over 550,000 square feet of vacant commercial space in the Township
- Consider rezoning commercial areas east of Powell Road
- Long-standing commercial properties, rezoning resistance from property owners
- Overlay eliminates the conflict that occurs with individual property rezonings

- Explicitly state, “no extensions outside the urban services area”
- Smart Growth to define an area for maximum services
- Promote infill, restrict leap-frogging over undeveloped areas
- Expand boundary when infill is accomplished
- Smart Growth is budgeting, planning and working together
- Use vacancy rates as a policy element
- Create policy specifically stating how services will be provided to land outside the service area when catastrophic failure occurs
- Correct decision to extend utilities when consistent with Master Plan
- Safety the number one priority to extend
- Government’s role in providing a solution for private property owners
- Failed system a health concern for more than property owner
- Policy specifying the Township will provide financing and long-term payback for emergency extensions, place a lien to insure payback
- Buyers are well aware of consequences and assume risk of purchase in rural area
- Commitment to 2.5 minute response time will obligate Township to build new fire station
- Addressing potential impact on response times
- Educate about options for alternate systems where not services are available
- Without the Township’s proactive approach (Greenwood subdivision) will never get 50% or 80% property owner participation in an assessment district
- Preference for boundary down center of roads
- Specify growth potential within the urban services area
- Urban service boundary is a tool to implement Smart Growth policy, compact development
- Eliminate the boundary if a barrier to getting a policy in place, overlay instead
- Would require a process to amend the overlay
- Urban service boundary in the Master Plan as policy guide for future development
- Tri-County request to create a regional boundary to curb competition for mega-employers, prevent sprawl, promote Smart Growth
- To have a boundary or not is not the planning Commission’s decision
- Overlay is a policy consistent with Tri-County’s Smart Growth principles
- Create overlay with criteria (allowed uses) to guide land use different from the underlying zoning district
- Review the Township Board’s policies to create, justify, and amend the boundary
- Policy to describe conditions for development on both sides of the boundary
- Different sections of the Delhi Master Plan explain expectations for different areas
- Lake Lansing is a zoning example of an overlay zoning district
- Policy statements, why is the line here and what prevents or allows it to move
- Master Plan as basis for development policies
- Identify legitimate reasons for line’s original location and future amendments
- Policies for change: contiguity, density, land suitability, no leap-frogging of services
- Policies to encourage development within services area: density trading, PUD’s, public-private partnerships
- Outside the urban services area require applicant prove there is no land available
- Fee for services outside the urban services area
- Penalized twice—higher premiums and additional local fees
- Justification for line: prevent sprawl, strengthen urban services area, growth in areas that make sense, economic development packages in services area vacancy rates, limits to system capacity
- Business tools: EDC, LEAP, DDA

5. Public remarks

None

6. Adjournment

Chair Deits adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Oranchak, AICP
Principal Planner