

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION MINUTES**

**APPROVED**

**MAY 14, 2012**

**5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
Town Hall Room, 517-853-4560**

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

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Deits called the work session meeting to order at approximately 7:15 P.M.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**3. Public Remarks**

None

**4. Discussion**

A. 2005 Master Plan Update

- Review of the Future Land Use and Implementation Chapters
- Line 230 is not up to date on the Urban Services District
- Status of “special study areas”
- Named study areas result of high number of variance requests due to non-conforming status of lots
- Zoning overlay district adopted in response to Lake Lansing study area
- Staff conducting research for possible zoning ordinance amendment regarding accidental destruction of non-conforming structures
- Rewrite Lines 12-15, Paragraph 2 Page 1, delete named special study areas
- Okemos Integrated Plan initiated by DDA but never formally adopted
- Planning Commission delayed consideration of zoning amendment for four properties outside the DDA but zoned commercial in anticipation of DDA adoption of Okemos Integrated Plan
- New ordinances such as MUPUD and C-PUD provide options other than variances in Okemos and Haslett study areas
- More options may be available through further regulatory changes identified generally in an Implementation chapter
- Work with the Okemos DDA, HUD/Grand River Corridor group, and Haslett Corridor Improvement Group to incorporate their interests
- Possibility of expanding DDA area
- Master Plan focus generally on redevelopment rather than one area such as the DDA

- Revise Line 11 “emphasis on residential” for consistency with revised goals and identify other options such as mixed use-residential that were not available in the 2005 Master Plan
- MUPUD represents changing vision
- Development type represents maturation of the Township
- Residential vacancy not high per 2010 census but bringing prices down
- Data on the number of approved but significant chunks of undeveloped lots in subdivisions
- The community will continue to be primarily residential
- Build-out analysis includes all land in the Township based on underlying density
- Many caveats in a build-out analysis, is one necessary?
- Portland as example of city to rural
- Put all data in a plan appendix
- Replace language of growth with language of sustainability
- Planning for an elderly population as opposed to a bigger population
- Two-wave population versus one-wave; boomers as first wave, need a second wave or young people
- Cooler downtown/Meridian Mall, smaller units to live in 5-10 years to take care of student loans
- Understand the character of the next population wave and the housing options they will desire
- Co-housing as an option particularly for an aging population
- Remember concept of regionalism and Lansing as center of Tri-County region
- Meridian Township’s place in the regional plan
- Sensible to have an urban center in Meridian Township for better flow, more efficient use of the corridor, transit lines populated all the way down the corridor. Not the center but a nucleus.
- Making it less difficult to try options for designs not on the ground now
- Developers avoid the Township because of rules and regulations
- Revised Goals and Objectives sent to the Township Board on Nov 14; the Board has not reviewed them in entirety; only USB portions
- Master Plan Future Land Use Chapter creates the vision for the future: options for Grand River such as multi-use; leave eastern the way it is, population does not warrant growth out there
- Immigration as the growth factor in the U.S. and Meridian Township
- Vision of dynamic downtown, preserved rural environment, road diets and opportunities for bicycling
- Commissioner Hildebrandt to prepare a draft “vision”
- Send information to staff to disseminate
- Move all data into an appendix with summary in the plan document
- General statement to show ample capacity available for at least the next 20-years. Without substantial population growth or new development, renovation and improvement of existing housing
- General statement explaining not all data in the document. One statement summary to make document more readable than discussion of population projections. “Given lack of substantial population growth renovation and improvement of existing housing, rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing commercial areas to attract younger generation.”
- Focus on sustainability. Future is management for sustainable development.
- Sustainability implies better efficiency in use of resources, shift in perspective and vision warranted by current realities
- Two-word phrase hadn’t expected to see as much of – Smart Growth
- Complete Streets is Smart Growth
- Line 832. Add “The presence of a thriving farmers market in Meridian and others nearby is an area that may bring a limited amount of specific agricultural activity to the Township in years to

come and this should be encouraged. The possibility of having small local specialty agricultural services in the eastern side of the Township that serve the farmers market and local agriculture should be something we would look for as an alternative to adding value in the eastern Township.”

- Revise ordinances to allow agriculture on smaller lots
- Visioning, pull data out into appendix, addition regarding agriculture
- Share ideas via e-mail to staff
- Elaborate on discussion of Greenspace Plan in the Master Plan
- Amend zoning ordinance to require SUP if site development encroaches into Greenspace Plan area
- Using Greenspace Plan to encourage making connections shown in the Plan
- Encourage applicants to abide by it and pay attention
- Greenspace Plan not an ordinance
- Line 218. Revise “advisable to investigate options to incentivize or otherwise promote compliance”
- Study the Hannah Farm MUPUD area.
- Road Commission position on Complete Streets – bike lane discussed in larger scope of overall plan, Township or developer fund widening. Loss of vehicle capacity with bicycle lanes.
- Alternative plan and strategy to get bikes to MSU
- Not necessary to have actual Complete Streets route in the plan but a guide for desired route
- Need to have some type of safe crossing across Hagadorn Road if a cross country trail ends at the railroad
- Hannah is the natural place for a bicycle crossing
- E-mail Gail with information for all commissioners
- Implementation Chapter not too much to do
- Very general statements about Smart Growth
- Scott-Craig to propose vision for bike trail east of Hagadorn Road along river/RR
- Hannah doesn’t work for bicycles unless the median is removed

**5. Public remarks**

None

**6. Adjournment**

Chair Deits adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Oranchak, AICP  
Principal Planner