

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
March 28, 2011**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Beyea, Cordill, Deits, Goodale, Jackson (7:02 P.M.), Scales
ABSENT: Commissioners Goldsberry, Honicky, Norkin
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Deits called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

Commissioner Cordill moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Scales.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Beyea moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 14, 2011. Seconded by Commissioner Goodale.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 5-0.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Deits opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

5. Communications (None)

6. Presentation: LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation

Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2011-2015

Director Maisner offered a comprehensive overview of the Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, highlighting staff's extensive outreach to the community through a variety of methods.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Appreciation to Director Maisner for her work on the park system over more than a decade
- Park system is the crown jewel for the community and the region
- Importance of matching goals and objectives between the Township's Master Plan and the Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Emphasize opportunities for redevelopment and connectivity between parks
- Low impact design as a best practice on any improvements made in the park system
- Encourage low lighting in the park system to comply with the Township's dark sky policy
- Power of path building has increased through the years to the point where a system of paths is now taking shape
- Quantifying the economic impact of the Farmers Market commerce on the community

7. Public hearings

- A. Planned Unit Development #11014 (Cameron Oaks Development Co. LLC), a request for a planned unit development consisting of 14 single-family detached home sites located on the east side of Okemos Road and west of the CN/Grand Trunk and Western RR in Section 16.

Chair Deits opened the public hearings at 7:29 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 proposed planned unit development as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 24, 2011.
- Applicant
Dennis Branoff, Cameron Oaks Development Co., LLC, noted interest was expressed in developing this property with homes in the \$275,000-\$300,000 range. He hoped the Planning Commission would agree that this development would be of low impact on the site.
- Public
John Esser, 5448 Okemos Road, East Lansing, read from a prepared statement expressing concerns with increased traffic along Okemos Road, pedestrian safety, inconsistency with current housing, the effect on wildlife in the area and the Township “bailing out” investors through approval of this proposal.

Mike McCurdy, 5458 Okemos Road, East Lansing, expressed concern that the rural nature of the area would be compromised with construction of this planned unit development (PUD). He also believed development would cause a safety concern for pedestrians and would increase flowage onto his property where his land is currently used for organic farming.

Steve Stier, 5317 Okemos Road, East Lansing, stated the land is beautiful open space and perfect habitat for the various species of wildlife which currently reside there. He urged the Planning Commission to consider the highest and best use for this property and the Township. Mr. Stier gave a brief history of previous proposed development on this site and believed it was a mistake to allow it in the first place.

Sybil Lee, 5375 Okemos Road, East Lansing, expressed concern that the increase in the size of the development would make traffic even more “treacherous.” She believed the quiet nature of the area would be altered with the six additional units from the original plan of eight (8) and detrimental to the entire area.

Doug Federeau, 5270 Okemos Road, East Lansing, expressed concern with the additional traffic and the need for completion of the sidewalk along north Okemos Road. He believed the developer is requesting the township, via zoning, help “bail” them out of an economic hardship. Mr. Federeau urged the Planning Commission to deny the PUD application.

- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Cordill noted the developer could construct more units per acre without requesting the PUD and reminded the public and fellow Commissioners what could be developed by right.

Commissioner Jackson inquired of staff how many acres of this property is actually buildable.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded there are six (6) acres of buildable area.

Commissioner Jackson inquired as to how many units could be built on the six (6) acres.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded eight (8) lots were developed based on the available upland. She added in a normal land division, ten (10) lots were possible, based on the RAAA district.

Commissioner Beyea inquired as to the history of what was approved by the Township.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated the original approval was a land division, with a road approved by the Ingham County Road Commission (ICRC); the ICRC overrode the Planning Commission denial, and a special use permit for work in the floodplain was approved by the Township Board on appeal from a denial by the Planning Commission. She indicated the final issue was approval of the extension of water and sewer based on a court settlement between the property owners and the Township.

Commissioner Beyea inquired as to the maximum number of splits allowed under the Land Division Act.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the yield plan represents ten (10) as the maximum number of lots, adding the applicant had to lay out a land division, meeting all the requirements of the Land Division Act.

Commissioner Beyea noted the lot lines as originally proposed would be under single ownership; whereas now there is continuity of open space. He inquired if the proposed plan would increase the integrity of the open space and wetlands in terms of their function.

Principal Planner Oranchak referred to the plan, showing that lots #10-#14 are much larger. She added with the exception of lot #12, the aforementioned lots are surrounded by common open space so the wetlands within the open space are not being used as individual lots.

Chair Deits inquired if the Ingham County Road Commission data on the number of vehicle trips noted in the staff report were vehicle trips per day.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded in the affirmative.

Chair Deits asked staff to comment on the impact, if any, of this change in the plan with respect to adjacent properties where there may be a flowage easement.

Principal Planner Oranchak referred the Planning Commission to the Drain Commissioner's letter where he approved the revised drainage plan. She noted the letter states the stormwater runoff calculations for the revision to 14 lots met the Drain Commissioner's standards and the additional homes would not affect the stormwater management plan. Principal Planner Oranchak indicated a flowage easement is for the flow to cross another property and refers to the Eberly Drain which is on the site and crosses onto adjacent sites.

Chair Deits stated there would be a larger amount of impervious surface by virtue of an increase in the amount of homes. He inquired if the expectation would be that the drainage plan would capture the additional runoff on the property.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that is generally the process and drainage can't flow off the property at a greater rate than it currently does.

Chair Deits asked for an explanation on the one exit.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the Township's subdivision ordinance allows for a maximum of 35 homes, acknowledging that this is not a subdivision, but a PUD.

Chair Deits asked staff for information on the interurban pathway which currently runs from southwest to northeast.

Principal Planner Oranchak indicated the interurban runs within the Consumers Energy right of way and noted the Planning Commission considered the pathway as part of a commission review. She stated interest was expressed in using a future water main easement as a possible connection from Cameron Oaks Drive to the interurban pathway.

Chair Deits asked staff to show where the easement is located.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the easement is not yet in place. She added the easement was requested by the Department of Public Works and Engineering to loop the water main in the future. She indicated that would allow other people on the line not to be effected in the event service is discontinued in a specific area as it would provide water from the other direction.

Chair Deits inquired if it was within the Planning Commission's purview to add a condition to make it possible to have the connector pathway.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it is possible as part of the PUD approval.

Commissioner Cordill expressed concern there is no pedestrian circulation in place on Cameron Oaks Drive to connect to Okemos Road

Commissioner Beyea indicated there were several public comments regarding the increase in traffic which will be generated by this development. He asked staff to expound the purview of the Planning Commission to accept or deny based on the traffic counts alone. Commissioner Beyea requested the comment address the impact as it specifically relates to Okemos Road and its relationship to the railroad track.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded staff used formulas contained in the Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) Trip Generation Manual. She stated the formula estimated under ten (10) vehicle trips per day per single family residential household. Principal Planner Oranchak indicated our PUD ordinance does not require a traffic study until trips generated reach 100 per peak hour, noting that trip end estimations for the proposed project are at 11 for the AM peak and 15 for the PM peak, well under the amount required for a traffic study.

Commissioner Beyea asked staff to comment on the potential hazard(s) for the ingress/egress on Okemos Road, given the proximity to the railroad track.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that as far as the numbers are concerned, they would not be considered an exceptional hazard.

Commissioner Beyea inquired if staff would look into public assertion that water is pooling and asked staff if there have been complaints. He also asked if a township engineer has looked at the area and assessed how the proposed increased density would change the flow and flooding of any adjacent properties.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded there have been no complaints to date and staff has not visited the site to investigate any complaints. She noted she has recently visited the site and, as expected for this time of year, there is water in the wetlands. She added she did not see anything out of the ordinary relative to water pooling, but acknowledged she did not inspect every property boundary.

Commissioner Beyea asked if the engineering staff could look into this issue further in light of comments made by the public.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that if a resident is experiencing water problems, they should provide the engineering staff with that information so it can be investigated.

Commissioner Jackson asked staff to point out the off road pathway that traverses the site from Okemos Road, northeast toward the Consumers Energy right of way. She added that this pathway is a projection from the Greenspace Plan before the improvements were in place and inquired if a similar pathway could be obtained through the approval process for this development.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded a pathway could be obtained through an easement that connects Cameron Oaks Drive with the interurban pathway.

Commissioner Jackson asked if the statement by the engineering department meant that they desired to have both the water main and the pathway in the same place.

Chair Deits inquired about the amount of upland open space.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated that while the upland remains at 6.1 acres, all upland areas from the previous plan were on individual lots. In the proposed PUD, the upland is now common open space.

Chair Deits inquired if there were areas on the lots up against a wetland in the buildable areas.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that none of the actual building sites are close to or within a wetland setback area.

Commissioner Beyea asked the builder to detail the type of product he is proposing.

Scott Auvenshine, Mayberry Homes, 16851 S. US 27, Suite 41, Lansing, stated the owner, Bob Schroeder, envisioned 2,400 to 3,000 square foot homes with large porches in a pedestrian friendly community.

Commissioner Cordill stated that she likes to see front porches, but wants them to be useable.

Mr. Auvenshine stated six (6) foot porches are constructed on all of Mayberry's models.

Chair Deits closed the public hearing at 8:27 P.M.

8. Unfinished Business

- A. Special Use Permit #11-88031 (Park Commission), amend the original special use permit for work in the floodplain to construct a fishing dock in the Central Park lake

Commissioner Scales 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 #11-88031 subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Approval is subject to the revised plans prepared by Progressive A/E dated January 19, 2011, and the associated materials submitted as part of Special Use Permit #11-88031, subject to revisions as required.**
- 2. The applicant shall obtain any applicable permits, licenses, and approvals from the Township and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality prior to any work taking place on the site. Copies of all permits, licenses, and approvals shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.**
- 3. No work shall take place in the regulated wetlands without first obtaining approval of Wetland Use Permit #11-1 from the Township.**
- 4. Fill placed in the floodplain as part of the project shall be protected against erosion.**
- 5. The final design of the compensating cut areas shall be subject to the review and approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development. A minimum cut to fill ratio of 2.5 to 1.0 shall be provided by the applicant.**
- 6. The applicant shall properly dispose of all materials from the compensating cut areas to an upland location subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
- 7. The disposed materials shall be protected from erosion and re-seeded subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**

Seconded by Commissioner Goodale.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Beyea, Cordill, Goodale, Jackson, Scales, Chair Deits

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

- B. Wetland Use Permit #11-1 (Park Commission), impacts associated with construction of a dock in the Central Park lake**

Commissioner Scales moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN, pursuant to Article 4 of Section 22 of the Township Code of Ordinances, hereby approves Wetland Use Permit #11-1 with the following conditions:

- 1. Approval is based on the revised plans prepared by Progressive A/E dated January 19, 2011, and the associated materials submitted as part of Wetland Use Permit #11-1, subject to revisions as required by the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
- 2. The Township Environmental Consultant shall conduct a site inspection and report findings and recommendations to the Director of Community Planning and Development.**

3. **Wetland Use Permit #11-1 shall be subject to the applicant receiving approval of Special Use Permit #11-88031 for work in the 100-year floodplain.**
4. **The applicant shall obtain all applicable permits, licenses and approvals from the State of Michigan and the Township. Copies of all permits, licenses and approvals shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.**
5. **No work (temporary or permanent) shall take place within wetlands beyond the 300 square foot area identified on the plans.**
6. **No wetland areas or natural vegetation strip shall be used for staging or storing equipment and materials related to the project.**
7. **Prior to any work taking place on the project, a soil erosion and sedimentation control plan shall be approved by the Department of Public Works and Engineering.**
8. **Erosion control fencing shall be installed at the edge of the disturbance area to prevent sedimentation. The erosion control fencing shall be removed after the disturbed area has been stabilized.**
9. **All appropriate soil erosion and sedimentation control best management practices shall be installed and maintained until natural stabilizing vegetation has been established.**
10. **No straw bales shall be used for erosion control, unless in conjunction with sediment erosion control fencing.**
11. **The applicant shall properly dispose of all materials from the mitigation area to an upland location subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
12. **The disposed materials shall be protected from erosion and re-seeded subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
13. **The approved mitigation plan for Wetland Use Permit #09-06 shall be amended to set aside a portion of the excess mitigation area for Wetland Use Permit #11-1, subject to the review and approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
14. **The wetland mitigation area shall be monitored annually for a period of five (5) years with a written status report and photographic documentation provided to the Department of Community Planning and Development.**
15. **Should the mitigation area fail to establish wetland vegetation after one growing season or fail to progress satisfactorily to a self-sustaining wetland as designed, the applicant shall conduct corrective measures as directed by the Director of Community Planning and Development to ensure successful wetland establishment.**
16. **Prior to work starting on the project, the applicant shall provide to the Department of Community Planning and Development written notice of commencement.**

17. A copy of the approved wetland use permit containing the conditions of issuance shall be posted in a conspicuous manner such that the wording of the permit is available for public inspection and continue throughout the duration of the project.

18. Upon completion of construction, the applicant shall contact the Department of Community Planning and Development for an inspection of the site to ensure compliance with the permit.

Seconded by Commissioner Goodale.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Applicant is the Parks and Recreation Department of Meridian Township
- Wetland mitigation monitoring will be the responsibility of the Department of Public Works and Engineering as it is creating the wetland mitigation area on the west side of Okemos Road
- The Township's environmental consultant will conduct the site inspections of mitigation areas and the project area

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Beyea, Cordill, Goodale, Jackson, Scales, Chair Deits

NAYS: None

Motion carried 6-0.

C. Zoning Amendment #11020 (Township Board), amendment to Section 86-440 Mixed Use Planned Unit Development

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the zoning amendment draft as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 24, 2011.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Township Board preference for its construction of the MUPUD
- Township Board awaiting Planning Commission recommendation on the MUPUD before it addresses the CPUD
- Issue of sketch plan v. concept plan
- Issue of effective date and expiration date
- Plan for the Planning Commission to work on the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification component at this meeting and focus on the amenity section at the next meeting
- LEED or other certification as an amenity
- Society of Environmentally Responsible Facilities (SERF) certification as an alternate to LEED
- SERF is less costly and time consuming than the LEED process
- Birth of SERF last year by a Lansing organization
- Acceptance of other types of certification as an amenity is at the discretion of the Township Board
- How to allow a builder a density bonus for a certification process which may take years to obtain
- Use of specific components of the certification standards without requiring the applicant to go through the certification process
- Reminder to focus on the outcomes and identify the benchmarks

- LEED provides a good template as the process has been in place for several years and has received national and international recognition
- LEED has the level of scrutiny and standards the Township desires
- Possible use of language in our ordinance which references building technologies delineated in LEED or related certification processes
- Suggestion to make density bonuses commensurate with the level of compliance with standards as certain amenities have more weight, cost and significance to the project site than others
- Intent of LEED and SERF are the same
- Another program to consider is American Society of Landscape Architects' SITES™, national guidelines and performance benchmarks for sustainable land design, construction and maintenance practices

9. Other Business

A. Discussion of 2005 Master Plan Update

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the Chair's proposed process timeline to prepare revised goals and information on Complete Streets as outlined in staff memorandum dated March 25, 2011.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Process timeline is effective if the Planning Commission is addressing only an update to the goals of the Master Plan
- Suggestion to look at a subsequent process for the topics of redevelopment, preservation of natural resources, sustainability and complete streets after the Master Plan goals are reviewed and established
- A formal public hearing is not necessary to acquire public input for establishing Master Plan goals
- Social media survey and an open discussion with the public are ways to receive public input
- Statute requires review of the Master Plan every five (5) years
- Statistics and demographics data from the 2010 census will become available over the next few years
- Concern that some components could be strengthened but will not be implemented if the goals are not formally acted upon first
- Appropriate for the Planning Commission to align the Master Plan goals with the Township Board Ends
- Need for public input through the formal public hearing process
- Planning Enabling Act mandates only one public hearing
- Consensus to place the Master Plan update timeline on the Township's website
- Suggestion to discuss removal of material related to completed tasks, redundancies and goals that are no longer relevant at the April 11th work session
- Request by the Chair to have Commissioners bring a list of goals which are not currently in the Master Plan to the April 25th meeting

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

Commissioner Scales requested wi-fi remain available in the Town Hall Room for use by commissioners during the meeting. Chair Deits suggested there be a future discussion to reconsider use of laptops by Commissioners during the Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Goodale announced he will not be in attendance at the April 11th Planning Commission meeting, but did support the use of laptops by Commissioners during Planning Commission meetings.

11. New applications

- A. Special Use Permit #11-07031 (Okemos/Grand River Group LLC), request to install a changing message sign at 2131 Grand River Avenue.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Change in the Township's sign ordinance as more of these requests come before the Planning Commission

12. Site plans received

- A. Site Plan Review #00-05-10 (Graff Chevrolet), amendment to add an approximate 400 square foot vestibule to the building at 1748 Grand River Avenue.
- B. Site Plan Review #11-00-09 (Ted Hu Architects), amendment for façade changes and parking islands at Okemos Auto Collection addressed as 2186 Jolly Road.

13. Site plans approved

- A. Site Plan Review #00-05-10 (Graff Chevrolet), amendment to add an approximate 400 square foot vestibule to the building at 1748 Grand River Avenue.
- B. Site Plan Review #11-01 (Jeffrey Scott Architects), amendment to add approximately 400 square feet to the Kroger store addressed as 4884 Marsh Road.

14. Public remarks

Chair Deits opened and closed public remarks.

15. Adjournment

Chair Deits adjourned the regular meeting at 9:32 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary