

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**APPROVED**

**August 24, 2020**

**Meeting held virtually using the Zoom web conferencing application**

**7:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT: Commissioners Premoe, Richards, McConnell, Hendrickson, Cordill, Trezise, Clark, Shrewsbury, and Blumer.**

**ABSENT: None**

**STAFF: Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Principal Planner Peter Menser, Information Technology Director Stephen Gebes, Multimedia Producer Samantha Diehl.**

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

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

**2. PUBLIC REMARKS - None**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Premoe moved to approve the agenda.

Seconded by Commissioner Shrewsbury.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. August 10, 2020 Regular Meeting**

Commissioner McConnell moved to approve the minutes.

Seconded by Commissioner Cordill.

A friendly amendment was made after noting a few minor spelling corrections.

VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

**5. COMMUNICATIONS - None**

**6. Public Hearing - None**

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Planned Unit Development #20014 (Okemos Land Investment LLC), develop Silverleaf planned unit development consisting of 150 detached single family homes on approximately 94 acres located on the north side of Bennett Road, west of Hulett Road.**

Principal Planner Menser noted the concerns discussed at the previous meeting regarding the lot sizes and setbacks for the proposed development. He also noted Commissioner Cordill asked for information on lot sizes. The staff memo provided a table comparing similar developments to assist

the Planning Commission in further discussion of the proposal.

A Planned Unit Development Ordinance (PUD) allows for flexibility regarding lot area and setbacks. Principal Planner Menser noted lot specific setbacks within a project can be a challenge to administer for staff and could be confusing to residents interested in building because the standards are different throughout the project compared to a more uniform buildable area on the lot.

The Bennett Road pathway concern was voiced by a resident at the previous meeting and Principal Planner Menser explained the developer is responsible to build the pathway along the front of the project on the north side of Bennett Road. A gap of approximately 635 feet from the end of the project to get to Bennett Woods Elementary will remain. The gap in the pathway will eventually be constructed as the area is developed however Township staff will discuss options for what can be done in the near future to ensure safety for a walking and biking route for children to get to Bennett Woods Elementary school safely.

Motion by Commissioner Premoe to recommend approval of the proposed Planned Unit Development #20014.

Supported by Commissioner McConnell.

Planning Commission Discussion:

- Concern was raised about the part of the development in phase III, conventional condominiums where the lot frontage of 3,500 square foot minimum seems too small compared to the rest of the project.
- Other neighborhoods in similar developments are doing well with similar setbacks and lot sizes.
- Access to the Bennett Woods Elementary property might be available through another route. Suggestion to seek a non-motorized path access along Sophiea Parkway near an unnamed stub street that heads south, east of Laforet Circle which leads into a pathway that crosses over a stream and enter the rear of the school property. Another pathway noticed was south of LaForet Circle and heads towards the school bus garage- students do not have to walk on Hulett Road. Another suggestion would be where Silversage Way turns from eastbound to southbound to possibly add a pathway between lot #128 and #129.
- The pathway is required to be built because it is part of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Master Plan.
- The 5-foot side yard setback seems too minimal. Do not allow air conditioners in the side yard setbacks. The noise from air condition condensers would be disruptive for neighbors. Require sound-proof walls on sides of the condos to enhance noise reduction.

Applicant comments:

- Bob Schroeder, owner of Mayberry Homes and David Straub explained the reasons for the setbacks by allowing the flexibility to build and making customers happy. Mayberry Homes have won four national awards.
- Rear setbacks are defined so there are no issues with encroachment of common space.
- Mayberry Homes is an award winner, top Home Energy Rating Service (HERS) builder in the state of Michigan. They seal and soundproof their walls by using blown-in insulation and are air tight.

Motion by Commissioner Cordill to amend the setbacks: increase the side yard setbacks to 7.5 feet and increase the rear yard setback standard to 10 feet.

Supported by Chair Hendrickson.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

YEAS: Commissioner Cordill, McConnell, and Chair Hendrickson.

NAYS: Commissioner Premoe, Shrewsbury, Richards, Blumer, Clark, and Trezise

MOTION FAILS: 6-3

Motion by Commissioner McConnell for the amendment: The applicant shall provide a non-motorized connection way to Bennett school pending the completion of the pathway along the north side of Bennett Road to the school, to be approved by the Director of Community Planning and Development.

No Support

MOTION FAILS

ROLL CALL VOTE:

YEAS: Commissioner Premoe, Cordill, Shrewsbury, Richards, Blumer, Clark, Trezise and Chair Hendrickson

NAYS: Commissioner McConnell

MOTION PASSES: 8-1

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development (MUPUD) ordinance review.**

Principal Planner Menser noted the last amendment change was in 2018 when density and building height was increased for downtown Haslett and Okemos and everything else remained the same. The Planning Commission received the ordinance language for review and Principal Planner Menser noted some of the challenges experienced with the ordinance in the past.

- Developers complain the process takes too long, an average of 4-7 months.
- The amenities offered are weak
- The commercial space is minimal.

Principal Planner Menser will provide more examples of MUPUD's at a future meeting for the staff to review.

Planning Commission Discussion:

- The promised amount of commercial space provided in projects is not always utilized for various reasons.
- Many amenities should be considered expectations and additional things should be offered.
- Amenities are poorly defined and difficult to enforce if violated. Definitions need to be stated more specific
- Developers should not go to the Economic Development Commission (EDC) for a grant to pay for the amenities to justify the MUPUD.
- Legal restrictions for poorly defined amenities made to be more significant. Define amenity, not part of structure but aesthetic or comfort enhancement to the proposed project.

- Project to fit into public realm and attached commercial spaces need to be more inviting to the public outside of the project.
- The MUPUD appears to be used to get around the limitation of multi-family dwellings of 14 per acre by adding a small piece of public or commercial space then the dwelling numbers can be greatly increased.
- Create another classification of multi-family dwelling units for certain areas.
- Potential to assign penalties for failure to meet the conditions or non-compliance, consult with the Township Attorney.
- The market influences the availability of commercial space. The Planning Commission should not dictate what goes into the commercial spaces.
- Define more clarity for expectations of the MUPUD's.

Chair Hendrickson asked the Commission to submit any suggestions or changes to Principal Planner Menser by Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> so he can add them to the packet for the next meeting for further discussion.

**9. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. Township Board update.

Principal Planner Menser provided a summary of the August 18th, 2020 Zoom Township Board meeting and noted the next Township Board meeting will be September 1, 2020.

B. Liaison reports.

- Commissioner Premoe provided an update on the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority meeting held on August 20, 2020.
- Commissioner Cordill attended the joint meeting of the Transportation and Corridor Improvement Authority on August 20, 2020 and provided an update. Chair Hendrickson noted the Commission would like to see a copy of the letter from the meeting and Director Kieselbach said he would email a copy of the letter to the Planning Commission.
- Commissioner Trezise attended the Economic Development Corporation meeting and the Downtown Development Authority meeting earlier in August and provided an update from those meetings.
- Chair Hendrickson introduced Mark Blumer as the newest member of the Planning Commission. Commissioner Blumer has been an attorney for 50 years and recently retired. He was recently appointed by Supervisor Styka to the Planning Commission.

**10. PROJECT UPDATES**

- A. New Applications- None
- B. Site Plans Received - None
- C. Site Plans Approved

1. Site Plan Review #20-05 (Hudson Senior Living), construct 147,721 square foot senior apartment building with 133 units at 1673 Haslett Road.

**11. PUBLIC REMARKS - None**

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Trezise moved to adjourn the meeting.

Supported by Commissioner McConnell.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Hendrickson adjourned the regular meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Budzynski, Recording Secretary