

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 24, 2009**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Chair Wilcox, Secretary Jorkasky, Commissioners Beyea, Deits, Domas, Honicky,
Jackson, Klemans (7:02 P.M.), Reicosky
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

1. Call meeting to order

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

2. Approval of agenda

Commissioner Honicky moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

**Commissioner Deits moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2009.
Seconded by Commissioner Domas.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

4. Public Remarks

Chair Wilcox opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

5. Communications

- Township Board Update for the Regular Board meeting of August 18, 2009 was given by Principal Planner Oranchak

6. Public hearings

A. Zoning Amendment #09050 (Township Board), an amendment to permit medical offices by right in the RP (Research Park) zoning district.

Chair Wilcox opened the public hearing at 7:02 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 zoning amendment as outlined in staff memorandum dated August 20, 2009.
- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Honicky inquired if there was a definition of medical office or medical clinic.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded she will check into that inquiry.

Commissioner Honicky expressed concern with the possibility of a medical marijuana distribution center being considered a medical office.

Principal Planner Oranchak indicated she believed the traditional licensed medical personnel and physician in clinics is what is being discussed in this amendment.

Commissioner Klemans expressed concern that a clinic may be located near a residential area, as clinics can sometimes be open 24 hours.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that clinics are currently permitted by special use permit in residential zoning districts.

Commissioner Deits inquired about the trend of 120,000 square foot physician owned hospitals (e.g, Mid Michigan Physicians) similar to those on Lake Lansing Road.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that any clinic over 25,000 square feet would require a special use permit.

Commissioner Deits asked if there would be any need for a Research Park (RP) district in the event the Township develops a commercial planned unit development ordinance (CPUD).

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that issue is certainly something which can be discussed in the future. She noted the RP district has stricter requirements than the commercial districts (i.e., larger lot size).

Commissioner Reicosky inquired if part of the RP community was placed near Hagadorn Road and Mount Hope due to its proximity to Michigan State University.

Principal Planner responded in the affirmative; however, RP developments have not occurred over the years and other options have been made available.

Commissioner Deits added that the scale of research projects are generally quite small and are generally built in areas where there are tax incentives, such as brownfields.

Commissioner Reicosky requested staff provide information on a definition of clinic and hours of operation near residential districts.

Chair Wilcox closed the public hearing at 7:20 P.M.

- B. Zoning Amendment #09060 (Township Board), an amendment to permit outdoor cafes by right in the C-1, C-2 and C-3 (Commercial) districts.

Chair Wilcox opened the public hearing at 7:20 P.M.

- Summary of subject matter
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the proposed zoning amendment as outlined in staff memorandum dated August 20, 2009.
- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Jackson inquired if outdoor seating was permitted by right, but serving food or beverage is the subject of this zoning amendment.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that if a table and chairs is placed to service clients, the applicant is required to go through site plan review.

Commissioner Domas asked if the additional language in Section 86-403(c)(6) meant that additional parking may be required.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it could mean additional parking may be required; however, it has not been the experience that additional parking was necessary.

Chair Wilcox inquired if parking requirements are already included in site plan review.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded in the affirmative, while acknowledging it is still necessary as a message to the applicant that staff will be looking at parking.

Commissioner Reicosky inquired how outdoor seating affects the total capacity of a building.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it does not affect maximum capacity for occupancy purposes inside a building, but would affect the parking requirement. She added of the fourteen (14) cases which have been looked at, there has never been a need to increase parking.

Commissioner Reicosky inquired about temporary wind break or temporary shelter for outdoor activities.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded temporary structures would require a different review process.

Commissioner Deits stated outdoor seating should not be taken into consideration when adjusting parking as it is seasonal and when in use, non-vehicular traffic would be most likely to utilize outdoor seating.

Commissioner Honicky asked if alcohol served in an outdoor seating area would come under different regulations.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it is the responsibility of the business owner to have the appropriate license to serve alcoholic beverages.

Commissioner Beyea stated that relative to parking, he believed there was a difference with seating when a menu is being served v. a carryout situation.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded a distinction has not been made and they have been treated the same.

Commissioner Beyea asked if there have been any code enforcement complaints on the fourteen (14) establishments which have outdoor seating.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded in the negative.

Commissioner Klemans expressed support to not require additional parking for outdoor cafes.

Commissioner Jackson explained there was a case regarding parking before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), but it centered around a request to establish outdoor seating by reducing parking for a non-conforming building with insufficient parking. She added that the applicant had a cooperative agreement with a neighboring business to allow for overflow parking if needed.

Chair Wilcox closed the public hearing at 7:40 P.M.

7. Other Business

Commissioner Klemans inquired if there was wireless internet access in the Town Hall Room.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded she was unsure, but would find out.

Commissioner Beyea spoke to his mixed views on a paperless Planning Commission packet.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Need for a discussion on protocols to provide guidance to staff
- Receipt of material sooner by paperless method
- Printed material provided by staff to bring to the Planning Commission meetings allow for good deliberation and good public policy
- Documents larger than a yet to be determined number of pages should be mailed
- Site plans and any materials which contain graphics should be mailed
- Concern with public policy set by requiring Planning Commissioners to print their own packets
- Concern that all Planning Commissioners have a laptop capable of expanding areas on a map
- Guidance as to minimum memory storage for a laptop to accommodate all material in Planning Commission packets
- Township Hall Room needs wireless connections
- Security system with assigned security codes for Planning Commissioners
- Teleprompter which moves through the agenda so the public can follow the meeting
- Technical issues need to be accommodated to make the paperless packet concept work effectively
- Lack of necessity for wireless connection as attachments can be downloaded and saved with applicable software
- Wireless connection will allow access to online ordinances
- Site plans will be provided to Planning Commissioners in paper format
- Importance of public perception during the meetings relative to laptop use
- Barrier created between the public and Planning Commissioners by laptop screens
- Possibility of staff providing internet links to applicable ordinances under discussion
- Need for a combination of staff documents which are e-delivered and hard copy delivery
- Current packet as a test packet due to its size
- Suggestion for development of laptop etiquette
- Cost savings to the Township through the use of electronic packets
- Send packets both electronically and in hard format to begin the process
- Possible "opt out" option of going paperless
- Ordinance requirement for an applicant to provide a specific number of site plan copies for Planning Commissioners
- No ordinance requirement for an applicant to provide electronic copies of documents

8. Announcements

Commissioner Reicosky requested staff provide an updated report on activity for the light rail system.

Gail responded the project is in its infancy; however, there is a Township representative on the technical committee and the steering committee.

9. New applications

A. Zoning Amendment #09040 (Township Board), an amendment to permit extensions of special use permits and site plan reviews.

B. Zoning Amendment #09050 (Township Board), an amendment to permit medical offices by right in the RP (Research Park) zoning district.

C. Zoning Amendment #09060 (Township Board), an amendment to permit outdoor cafes by right the C-1, C-2 and C-3 (Commercial) districts.

10. Site plans received

A. Site Plan Review #09-98-06 (Paradigm Design), raze the Steak and Shake restaurant building and construct a new building for Gordon Food Service at 1850 Newman Road.

11. Site plans approved

A. Site Plan Review #09-99-14 (Wild Wings Café), landscape renovation associated with a new occupant, Wild Wings Café (formerly Bennigan's), at 2085 Grand River

B. Site Plan Review #09-92-15 (Okemos Montessori), add 20 parking spaces at 2746 Mt. Hope Road.

C. Site Plan Review #09-04 (Watershed Tavern), add an outdoor seating area at 5965 Marsh Road.

12. Public remarks

Chair Wilcox opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

13. Adjournment

Chair Wilcox adjourned the regular meeting at 8:04 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary