

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 26, 2009**

APPROVED

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

PRESENT: Vice-Chair Reicosky, Secretary Jorkasky, Commissioners Beyea, Deits, Domas,
Honicky, Jackson, Klemans
ABSENT: Chair Wilcox
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

1. Call meeting to order

Vice-Chair Reicosky called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

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

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

**Commissioner Deits moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 12, 2009.
Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

4. Public Remarks

Vice-Chair Reicosky opened and closed the floor for public remarks.

5. Communications (None)

6. Public hearings

A. Special Use Permit #09061 (Meridian Township), a request to place fill in the 100-year floodplain to construct a gravel access road and culvert to service a proposed sanitary sewer force main.

B. Wetland Use Permit #09-06 (Meridian Township), a request to work and place fill in regulated wetlands for a gravel access road and culvert to service a proposed sanitary sewer force main.

Vice-Chair Reicosky opened the concurrent public hearings at 7:05 P.M.

- Introduction by the Vice-Chair (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation and applicants)
- Summary of subject matter
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the proposed special use permit and wetland use permit as outlined in staff memoranda dated October 22, 2009.
- Applicant
Director of Public Works and Engineering Ray Severy explained the project would relieve an overcapacity at the main lift station. He indicated all flow from the north and northeast of the Township will be picked up and decrease the flow from Ottawa Hills. Mr. Severy stated the

route chosen primarily follows a two track which traverses the Land Preservation property and was selected so there would be minimal environmental impact; only three trees need to be removed, two of which are partially dying ash trees. He stated the wetland and floodplain mitigation for the wetlands will be performed adjacent to Wetland F, designed by the Township's wetland consultant. Mr. Severy added the mitigation in the floodway will be back closer to Okemos Road.

Mr. Severy noted the route has several areas in the floodplain, primarily around the wetlands and near the Eberly Drain.

- **Public**
Carolyn Malmstrom, 5436 JoPass, East Lansing, added this area is a common recreational space and requested more discussion take place with the neighborhood on how residents can still utilize the area for recreational purposes.
- **Planning Commission discussion:**
Commissioner Honicky noted staff documentation did not delineate the natural gas line on the property. He recommended all future documents show the gas line.

Commissioner Honicky inquired if the gravel road would be larger than the two track currently there.

Director Severy responded the gravel pathway would be fourteen (14) feet wide. He added the long range plan would be to make that part of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Master Plan. Directory Severy noted the Ingham County Parks Department has submitted two grant applications to connect this portion of our pathway system to MSU's bicycle pathway system.

Commissioner Honicky believed the fourteen (14) feet would impact many more trees than the three (3) trees mentioned in the staff report.

Director Severy stated he walked the land with an Environmental Commission member and a Park Commission member and all three believed it was possible to construct the pathway fourteen feet wide, while acknowledging there were a few places which might need to be narrowed down to twelve (12) feet in an effort to avoid impact on larger trees. He stated the rationale for the width is that federal funding requirement for a pedestrian pathway is a twelve foot width and he desires a one (1) foot shoulder on each side of that.

Commissioner Honicky inquired if the species of trees classified this area as a climatic forest.

Director Severy responded he did not know.

Commissioner Beyea expressed concern that additional trees may need to be cut down and requested documentation as to what other trees would be identified as the pathway goes south.

Director Severy added the area being discussed where it goes south at the westerly end near Wetland F is not cleared out and has not been walked to determine what is actually there. He added the Environmental Commission member observed the trees are mostly ash and the access road can be diverted around trees.

Commissioner Beyea asked if it has been customary to replace trees when off-road pathways are constructed.

Director Severy stated he believed this is the first time construction of an off-road pathway would necessitate tree removal.

Commissioner Beyea requested identification of publicly owned property at the far west end of the project near Small Acres Lane.

Director Severy responded the property just east of the Mud Lake Drain at the far west end of the project is owned by the Eyde Company on the east side and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) on the west side.

Commissioner Beyea questioned if the Township has received all necessary permission for that particular piece.

Director Severy answered the Township has received an easement from MDOT and the easement from the Eyde Company is forthcoming.

Commissioner Beyea expressed concern about the deed restrictions or intended use restrictions for the Land Preservation property.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the only use restrictions would be the type of activity allowed by the public.

Commissioner Beyea asked whether gates of permanent structures would be placed at the ends of the trail.

Director Severy stated bollards would be placed at the end of Okemos Road to keep motorized traffic off the trail.

Commissioner Jackson asked for an explanation why it wouldn't be more beneficial to go closer to the railroad track in an effort to cause less disturbance to the floodplain.

Director Severy indicated moving closer to the railroad tracks would have required the removal of too many trees.

Commissioner Klemans requested discussion on recreational opportunities for residents from the neighborhood who would probably use the trail the most. She inquired if it would be a good idea to speak with the residents prior to construction of the fourteen (14) foot paved pathway.

Director Severy stated they will speak with the neighbors. He added the Township doesn't plow the entire 12 foot width in the winter, but could plow half for bikers/ walkers and leave the other portion for cross-country skiers. He suggested if that is the desire of the public, they need to contact his office for an appointment.

Commissioner Jorkasky inquired as to the estimated date of construction.

Director Severy responded the contractor stated he could start in early January providing all permits are in place.

Commissioner Jorkasky inquired if the clearing for the pathway could be fourteen feet and the one foot shoulder on each side of the pathway could remain natural since some residents like to run on a softer surface.

Commissioner Reicosky asked Director Severy for an explanation of directional boring.

Director Severy responded a drilling machine drills a thin rod into the ground horizontally. He added the hole is drilled (2"-3" in diameter) in one direction and brought back to the top of the surface at the other end. The pipe is laid out, fused together at the joints, then the end is hooked and pulled back through; compressing the soil around the pipe. This process allows for disturbance of the land only at the ends of the pipe.

Vice-Chair Reicosky suggested staff look for opportunities in the future to be collaborative in its efforts to preserve as much of the natural land as possible.

Vice Chair Reicosky closed the public hearing at 7:50 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Special Use Permit #09071 (Christopher Enright Architects), a request to construct a Belle Tire store at 2045 Grand River Avenue

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized changes to the site plan since the special use permit was last before the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Deits 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 #09071 (Christopher Enright Architects) with the following conditions:

1. **Approval is based on the submitted application materials and the revised plans prepared by Christopher Enright Architects, dated October 21, 2009, subject to revisions as required.**
2. **The applicant shall establish a joint access agreement with adjoining property owner(s); the Charter Township of Meridian shall be a party to the agreement.**
3. **A minimum of two bicycle parking spaces shall be shown on the site plan.**
4. **A connecting sidewalk shall be shown on the site plan leading from the pedestrian-bicycle pathway along Grand River Avenue to the building entrance.**
5. **All activities associated with the Belle Tire store shall be conducted entirely within the building.**
6. **No demolition, grading, fill, or construction shall begin until a building permit has been issued and approved by the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
7. **The applicant shall obtain all other necessary and applicable permits, licenses, and approvals from the Michigan Department of Transportation, Ingham County Drain Commissioner, and the Township prior to any construction on the site. All approval documents shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.**
8. **The applicant's stormwater management plan and calculations shall be approved by the Department of Public Works and Engineering.**

Seconded by Commissioner Klemans.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Updated site plan
- Applicant's desire to build a site which does not require variances
- Pedestrian circulation will be addressed during site plan review
- Bicycle parking will be addressed during site plan review
- Landscaping on the east end is truncated by the property line
- Unknown elements of the applicant's agreement with Meijer

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Beyea, Deits, Domas, Honicky, Jackson,
Jorkasky, Klemans, Vice-Chair Reicosky

NAYS: None

Motion carried 8-0.

- B. Special Use Permit #09051 (Meridian Township), a request to place fill in the 100-year floodplain to construct an off-road pedestrian-bicycle pathway north of Jolly Road and west of Okemos Road.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Township has an exclusive easement on the east side of the drain
- Receipt of an ICDC letter giving approval of the project

Commissioner Jackson moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby grants special use approval for Special Use Permit #09051 subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Approval is subject to the revised plans prepared by the Department of Public Works and Engineering, received by the Department of Community Planning and Development, dated September 29, 2009, and the associated materials submitted as part of Special Use Permit #09051, subject to revisions as required.**
- 2. The applicant shall obtain any applicable permits, licenses, and approvals from the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's office and the Township. Copies of all permits, licenses, and approval letters shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development prior to work starting on the project.**
- 3. No work shall take place in the regulated wetlands without first obtaining approval of Wetland Use Permit #09-05 from the Township.**
- 4. Fill placed in the floodplain as part of the project shall be protected against erosion.**
- 5. The applicant shall dispose of all compensating cut material to an upland location approved by the Director of Community Planning and Development.**

Seconded by Commissioner Domas.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Beyea, Deits, Domas, Honicky, Jackson,
Jorkasky, Klemans, Vice-Chair Reicosky

NAYS: None

Motion carried 8-0.

- C. Wetland Use Permit #09-05 (Meridian Township), a request to impact regulated wetlands to construct an off-road pedestrian-bicycle pathway north of Jolly Road and west of Okemos Road.

Commissioner Domas 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 #09-05 with the following conditions:

- 1. Approval is based upon the revised plans prepared by the Department of Public Works & Engineering, dated September 29, 2009, as well as the documents and materials submitted by the applicant in conjunction with Wetland Use Permit #09-05, subject to revisions as required.**
- 2. Wetland Use Permit #09-05 shall be subject to the applicant receiving approval of Special Use Permit #09051 for work in the 100-year floodplain related to the project.**
- 3. The applicant shall obtain any applicable permits, licenses and approvals from the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's office 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.**
- 4. All excess soil from excavation shall be placed at an upland location and shall be stabilized to prevent erosion to adjacent areas.**
- 5. All appropriate soil erosion and sedimentation control best management practices shall be installed and maintained until natural stabilizing vegetation has been established.**
- 6. Prior to construction, erosion control fencing shall be installed on both the east and west side of the wetland crossing along the edge of the disturbance area to prevent sedimentation from infiltrating into the wetlands. The erosion control fencing shall be maintained throughout the duration of the project and shall be removed after construction is completed and the area is stabilized.**
- 7. No straw bales shall be used for erosion control, unless in conjunction with sediment erosion control fencing.**
- 8. A detailed mitigation seeding and planting plan (species to be planted, species proposed in the seed mix, and numbers of plants and/or pounds of seed per species) shall be submitted for review and approval to the Director of Community Planning and Development prior to commencing any work on the pathway project.**
- 9. Annually for a period of five years, a written wetland mitigation monitoring report and photographic documentation shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.**
- 10. The first year's monitoring report shall include a surveyed wetland delineation to ensure the required amount of wetland was created.**
- 11. 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.**
- 12. Prior to work starting on the project, the applicant shall provide to the Department of Community Planning and Development written notice of commencement.**

13. 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.

14. 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 Honicky.

Planning Commission and staff discussion:

- Environmental Commission comments in support of the pathway project
- Township responsible for monitoring the progress of the wetland
- Mitigation review dependent upon wetland progress
- Small area being impacted in a large wetland

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Beyea, Deits, Domas, Honicky, Jackson, Jorkasky, Klemans, Vice-Chair Reicosky

NAYS: None

Motion carried 8-0.

8. Other Business

Commissioner Reicosky inquired if there was an opportunity to recognize the potential breadth of a project to address multiple uses.

Commissioner Beyea noted the discussion on the reuse of an abandoned car wash reaffirmed the urgency of moving forward with the Planning Commission's redevelopment ordinance, specifically in identifying areas of the community to be targeted for redevelopment. There will be additional opportunities for redevelopment and urged the Commission to diligently move forward on this issue.

9. Announcements (None)

10. New applications

- Special Use Permit #09-71081 (Court One), appeal of the Director of Community Planning and Development's approval of a minor amendment to permit construction of a baseball field at 2291 Research Circle.
- Special Use Permit #09081 (Grand Petro Mart), request to replace the existing building, increase the number of gasoline fueling islands and add a canopy at 743 Grand River Avenue.
- Zoning Amendment #09020 (Township Board), amendment to Chapter 86, Article VIII, Off-Street Parking and Loading, and other applicable sections of the zoning ordinance to establish bicycle parking regulations.

11. Site plans received

- Site Plan Review #09-95-17 (Court One), request for a minor amendment to add a baseball field at the Court One facility, 2291 Research Circle, Okemos.

12. Site plans approved (None)

13. Public remarks

Vice-Chair Reicosky opened and closed public remarks.

14. Adjournment

Vice-Chair Reicosky adjourned the regular meeting at 8:26 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary