

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION  
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198  
517.853.4000, Township Hall Room  
MONDAY, January 22nd, 2024, 6:30 pm

PRESENT: Chair Blumer, Commissioners Snyder, Brooks, McConnell, Shrewsbury, Scales and McCurtis

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Senior Planner Brian Shorkey

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER  
Chair Blumer called the January 22, 2024 regular meeting for the Meridian Township Planning Commission to order at 6:30pm.
2. ROLL CALL  
Chair Blumer called the roll of the Board. All board members present.
3. PUBLIC REMARKS  
Mr. Peter Trezise, 3818 Yosemite Drive, spoke and thanked the Planning Commission and Staff for everything during his time on the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission congratulated Mr. Trezise on his appointment to the Township Board.
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
**Commissioner Scales moved to approve the January 22, 2024 regular Planning Commission meeting agenda. Seconded by Commissioner McCurtis. Motion passed unanimously.**
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
**Commissioner Brooks moved to approve the Minutes of the January 8, 2024 Planning Commission Regular Meeting as amended. Seconded by Commissioner McCurtis. Motion passed unanimously.**
6. COMMUNICATIONS
  - A. None
7. PUBLIC HEARINGS
  - A. SUP #24001 – 2731 Grand River

Senior Planner Shorkey outlined his memo and described the application.

Commissioner Scales asked what type of restaurant is proposed. Senior Planner Shorkey said that was a question for the applicant. Commissioner Brooks asked why the application was in front of the Planning Commission. Senior Planner Shorkey said because of the drive-through. The Commission discussed a variety of traffic issues, including existing traffic, Dawn Avenue access, and how the traffic crosses through the drive-through lane. Chair Blumer invited the applicant to speak.

Mitchell Harvey, engineer for the project, discussed the proposal and site plan. Mr. Harvey informed the Planning Commission that the plans have been submitted to MDOT and that the redesign of the Grand River entrance was to meet MDOT's standards.

Commissioner Scales asked Mr. Harvey to describe the drive-through. Mr. Harvey described the drive-through movements in detail. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked about traffic from Dawn Avenue. Mr. Harvey said that the Dawn Avenue two-way access was being kept as a secondary way in and out of the site. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked Mr. Harvey for the expected breakdown between sit down and drive-through customers. Mr. Harvey guessed it would be about 60/40 or 70/30 in favor of drive-through customers.

Commissioner Brooks compared the project with the Starbucks location west on Grand River and said that he was concerned about traffic backing up onto Grand River Avenue. Commissioner Brooks asked if Dawn Avenue had been looked at as a possible main entrance. Mr. Harvey said that it had but that it would be difficult to accommodate the drive-through in that configuration. Commissioner Brooks asked if a customer could leave the site if the drive-through was full. Mr. Harvey said yes. The Commission continued to discuss traffic flow throughout the site.

Commissioner McCurtis asked about parking on the site. Mr. Harvey showed the relocation of parking spaces and pointed out that 22 spaces are provided where 21 are required. Commissioner McConnell asked if the applicant had considered reusing the existing building. Mr. Harvey said that it had but that it was not feasible. Commissioner Snyder asked if the site could be connected to the site under development to the west. Mr. Harvey said no; because of the existence of a retaining wall, the two sites were not at the same grade. Commissioner Brooks asked about the impact of traffic turning left from the site. Mr. Harvey said that there was a traffic light close to the west that would create breaks in the traffic. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked Senior Planner Shorkey about notices for the public hearing and if any residences were included. Senior Planner Shorkey said that he would have to verify, but he did not think any residential properties were within 300 feet.

Chair Blumer closed the public hearing and asked for a straw poll. After discussion, the Planning Commission indicated that they supported the application for the drive-through. The Planning Commission continued the discussing the application, including traffic and access management.

#### B. SUP #24002 – 1614 West Grand River

Senior Planner Shorkey outlined his memo and described the application. Senior Planner Shorkey pointed out that two resolutions were required for this application, due to the use itself and the size of the proposed building.

Commissioner McConnell asked about wetlands on the property and the natural feature assessment. Senior Planner Shorkey said that was on a different part of the property and did not affect the current application. Commissioner McConnell asked for elaboration for the reconfiguration of the Grand River access. Commissioner Brooks asked for clarification for the residential development to the north. Commissioner McCurtis asked about access for the residential development to the north. Senior Planner Shorkey explained and said that the development would not connect. Commissioner Snyder asked where the residential setback is measured from. Commissioner Brooks asked if the housing developer was notified. Senior Planner Shorkey said yes and that everyone within 300 feet received notice. Commissioner Scales asked if our fire trucks could reach the top of the three story building. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked for clarification of the building elevation drawings. Chair Blumer asked about the status of the residential development and said that he was concerned that the building would be incompatible with the residential development. Commissioner Snyder asked why the storage facility is not already an allowed use and why it is a special use. Senior Planner Shorkey pointed out that there are several special uses in the C-2 district.

Mr. Ammar Alkhafaji, the applicant, discussed the proposal and the site plan. Mr. Alkhafaji said that the entrance was suggested by MDOT; there will be an access from Central Park Drive in the future, but not at this time. The Planning Commission generally discussed setbacks and the building design.

Commissioner McConnell asked if a market analysis had been performed that demonstrated the need for the storage units. Mr. Alkhafaji said that there was a market analysis. Chair Blumer asked about the potential makeup of the clientele and how much might be commercial customers. Mr. Alkhafaji said that there was a mix of sizes of the storage units and expected that most customers would be residents. Commissioner Brooks asked if they had looked anywhere else in the township. Mr. Alkhafaji said that this was a unique property based on its size and its location on Grand River Avenue.

Chair Blumer closed the public hearing and asked if there was any more discussion. Commissioner McConnell said that the storage units were a natural spinoff of aging in place. Commissioner Brooks agreed and added that multiple residential residents need places to store stuff too. Commissioner Scales said that he had no issues with the proposal and agreed that was important to an aging community. Chair Blumer said that he originally had doubts about the size of the building, but that he had changed his mind after the discussion and that it would be a beneficial addition to the community. Commissioner Shrewsbury said that she was okay with the proposal but worried that the building would be difficult to remarket if the business failed.

Chair Blumer asked for a straw poll. After discussion, the Planning Commission unanimously indicated that they supported the application for the self-contained self-storage facility. Senior Planner Shorkey reminded the Planning Commission that he would be bringing them two resolutions at the next meeting.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. None

9. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Resolution of Appreciation – Jerry Richards

**Commissioner Scales read and moved to approve the resolution of appreciation for Jerry Richards. Seconded by Commissioner Shrewsbury. Motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Scales asked Senior Planner Shorkey to prepare a resolution of appreciation for Peter Trezise for the next meeting.

B. Election of Officers

Senior Planner Shorkey asked for a short recess so that he could retrieve the Planning Commission By-laws. Chair Blumer granted a five-minute recess.

After reconvening, Commissioner Scales nominated Commissioner Shrewsbury for the position of Chair. There were no other nominations and Commissioner Shrewsbury accepted the nomination.

Commissioner Scales nominated Commissioner Snyder for the position of Vice-Chair. There were no other nominations and Commissioner Snyder accepted the nomination.

Commissioner Scales nominated himself for the position of Secretary. There were no other nominations.

**Commissioner McConnell moved to nominate the slate of officers for 2024 as presented. Seconded by Chair Blumer. Motion passed unanimously.**

C. Planning Commission Liaison Assignments

Senior Planner Shorkey summarized the memo in the packet regarding liaison assignments. After discussion, the Planning Commission assigned the liaisons as follows:

- Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) – Commissioner McCurtis
- Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) – Commissioner Brooks
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA) – Commissioner Blumer
- Environmental Commission (EC) – Commissioner McConnell
- Economic Development Corporation (EDC) – Commissioner Scales
- Transportation Commission (TC) – Commissioner McCurtis
- Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) – Commissioner Scales

**Chair Blumer moved to accept the slate of liaisons assignments for 2024. Seconded by Commissioner McConnell. Motion passed unanimously.**

10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Township Board Update

None.

B. Liaison Reports

Commissioner Scales said that the EDC had met and set new goals for 2024.

11. PROJECT UPDATES

A. Project Report

Senior Planner Shorkey pointed out the project report in front of the Commissioner, handed out before the meeting.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

Mr. Josh Nahum spoke and said that he had applied for a couple boards. Mr. Nahum said that he appreciates the work that the Planning Commission does.

13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Brooks said that he is looking forward to discussing the work plan. Commissioner Brooks said that he would bring up parking requirements.

Commissioner Scales congratulated Culver's for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and thanked them for being a Township advocate. Commissioner Snyder agreed and said that Culver's helped Haslett Schools.

Chair Blumer thanked the Planning Commission for their assistance during his tenure as the Chair. Commissioner Shrewsbury thanked Chair Blumer for his service and leadership.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Blumer closed the meeting by proclamation at 8:35 pm.