

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION
5000 Okemos Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Townhall Room
Monday, April 13, 2026, 6:30 pm

PRESENT: Chair Rombach, Vice-Chair McCurtis, Commissioners Brooks, Nahum, McConnell, Snyder and Shrewsbury

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Principal Planner Shorkey

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Rombach called the April 13, 2026, regular meeting for the Meridian Township Planning Commission to order at 6:30 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Rombach called the roll of the Board. All Board members were present.

3. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Rombach asked for approval of the agenda.

Commissioner McConnell moved to approve the April 13, 2026, Regular Planning Commission meeting agenda as amended. Seconded by Vice-Chair McCurtis. Motion passed unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner McConnell moved to approve Minutes of the March 23, 2026 meeting as written. Seconded by Commissioner Shrewsbury. Motion passed unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Communication from Ben Hoogerheide in packet re: ZA #26002.
Email handed out from a resident re: ZA #26002.

Commissioner Brooks said that people that come before the Planning Commission to make a comment have to give their name and address and asked if in email communications, is the name and address required to be an official comment. Principal Planner Shorkey said no and that that all emails were kept for all applications.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. SUP #26007 – Tailgaters

Principal Planner Shorkey opened the discussion. Principal Planner Shorkey pointed out the correct site plan placed in front of the Commissioners and said that because of the updated site plan, the information about the parking spaces in the memo was incorrect and that the Applicant no longer needed a variance for the number of parking spaces. Principal Planner Shorkey said that two more bike spaces were required and that the number of fuel stations would require a variance for the six extra fuel stations.

Commissioner Snyder asked if this is the same property previously heard about a storage facility. Principal Planner Shorkey said that it was. Commissioner Nahum asked Principal Planner Shorkey to show the property on the parcel viewer. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if the applicants plan to connect to the streets on the neighboring property to the north. Principal Planner Shorkey said that the applicant has reached out to Grand Reserve for the connection. Commissioner McConnell pointed out another stub on the drive layout.

Commissioner Nahum asked about the notification and if neighbors were informed. Principal Planner Shorkey described the notification process. Vice-Chair McCurtis asked if there was any concern about the additional fuel stations beyond the variance. Principal Planner Shorkey said that the traffic study took the additional pumps into account. Vice-Chair McCurtis asked about the traffic assessment. Principal Planner Shorkey said that the recommendations from the traffic assessment were in the memo and shown on the plan. Commissioner Nahum asked if the Commission was to evaluate the plan as if the variance was approved.

Commissioner Brooks asked why this application was a special use permit. Principal Planner said that it was for the gas station and the drive-thru. Commissioner Brooks discussed the parcel layout on the property. Commissioner Brooks asked if the Planning Commission was involved when parcels are joined. Principal Planner Shorkey said no. Commissioner Brooks asked if the parking took the parking changes proposed into consideration. Principal Planner Shorkey said yes.

Vice-Chair McCurtis asked about the right turn taper as proposed on the plan and its design. Principal Planner Shorkey showed the road design on the plan. Commissioner Brooks asked if there was a discussion about not having an entry on Grand River. Principal Planner Shorkey said no, they are utilizing existing curb cuts. Jeff Haddad, Applicant for Tailgaters, said that they were going from two curb cuts to one. Chair Romback asked if they were using the Bank of America entrance. Mr. Haddad said no, that was a separate site. Commissioner Brooks asked if there was any thought about consolidating the drives. Discussion about Grand River access.

Commissioner McConnell discussed the pathways on the plan and asked for Mr. Haddad to describe the circulation on the site. Commissioner McConnell asked about the businesses proposed and the pathway connections. Mr. Haddad described the business and the pathway and road connectivity. Commissioner McConnell asked about the stub. Mr. Haddad said that there were no plan for the northern parcel but they wanted to keep their options open.

Chair Romback challenged the idea that the proposed application was similar to the DeWitt location. Mr. Haddad said that the traffic engineer took the different areas into consideration. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked about the number of parcels and the acreage of the site. Mr. Haddad discussed the future parcel configuration and the size of the site. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked about the development of the future northern parcel and the constraints.

Principal Planner Shorkey discussed the development potential of the future northern parcel. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked about the proposed detention basin location.

Commissioner Nahum confirmed the road name for the proposed Grand Reserve connection. Commissioner Nahum asked if it was expected that people would travel across from Hamilton Road to the site. Mr. Haddad said that was the location that MDOT required for the entrance to the site. Commissioner Nahum asked about the movement across Grand River from Hamilton. Mr. Haddad said that left turns in were permitted. Commissioner Nahum asked for the need for the additional fuel stations. Mr. Haddad said that less than 16 stations would underserve the site and that the development would be an economic benefit to the community. Commissioner Brooks asked what the economic benefit was. Mr. Haddad described the proposal. Principal Planner Shorkey said that it would be the only gas station on the north side of Grand River between Williamston and East Lansing and that the Township saw that as a benefit.

Chair Romback asked if there were any other residents in the notice area and how many letters were sent out. Principal Planner Shorkey guessed 12 to 15 and mentioned the public notice. Commissioner McConnell asked about the circulation of the traffic on the site and how the drive-thru was proposed to be used. Mr. Haddad explained the site layout and the drive-thru configuration. Vice-Chair McCurtis asked about the best way to enter the site from the east and asked if the entrance was big enough for a left turn. Commissioner Brooks asked about the utilization of the parking lots for existing Tailgater locations. Mr. Haddad gave the number of parking spots. Commissioner Brooks asked how often the parking lots were full. Mr. Haddad said enough to justify the requested 80 spots.

Emily Johnson, Tailgaters, spoke and said that she was confident that all 80 spots would be used and said that on the weekend there were 20 employees. Ms. Johnson spoke about the community benefit question and talked about how Tailgaters would fit in next to Grand Reserve.

Commissioner Nahum asked about signage. Mr. Haddad described the proposed signage. Commissioner Nahum asked if any EV stations were proposed. Mr. Haddad said no, but they had the ability if there was demand in the future. Chair Romback asked if that was true on this site. Mr. Haddad said that was the same intent on this site. Commissioner McConnell suggested that there was an uptick on bike riders and more and more were electric and encouraged Mr. Haddad to think about that. Mr. Haddad said that they were adding to bike spaces.

Chair Romback complimented Ms. Johnson's presentation and discussed restaurants. Commissioner Snyder asked if there was a proposed monument sign on Central Park Drive. Principal Planner Shorkey said that signage would be reviewed during site plan review.

After a straw poll, the Planning Commission indicated that they supported the application. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would come back with a resolution to support.

B. ZA #26002 – Chicken Regulation Update

Principal Planner Shorkey opened the discussion and presented information on the number of parcels in the Township where backyard chickens are allowed and how many more would be added if the ordinance was approved. Commissioner Brooks suggested that the sizes of the parcels could be taken into consideration in the future. Chair Romback asked about the densities of the RB and RX districts. Principal Planner Shorkey gave that information. Commissioner Brooks asked if the RB district was proposed for the Central Park development.

Principal Planner Shorkey said no, that was multiple-family. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked about the zoning of Grand Reserve. Principal Planner Shorkey said it was zoned RA.

Chair Romback pointed out that the ordinance would allow chickens on smaller lots. Principal Planner Shorkey said yes but the standards in the regulations still apply. Commissioner Snyder asked how many home owner associations allow backyard chickens. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he had no idea.

Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if chickens would no longer be counted as regulated once they are past their egg laying age. Principal Planner Shorkey said chickens were counted once they start laying eggs. Chair Romback suggested something saying that the ordinance is subservient to HOA rules. Principal Planner Shorkey said that was not necessary because it is and that he hesitated to put such language into ordinance form. Chair Romback discussed his HOA rules. Principal Planner Shorkey said that HOA language was suggested at the beginning of the process. Commissioner Shrewsbury said that it was not the job of the Township to enforce the rules of HOAs. Principal Planner Shorkey agreed.

Commissioner McConnell discussed the process of registering backyard chickens and the difference between registration and permits. Principal Planner Shorkey showed the Commission the Chicken and Rabbit Registration Application on the Township website. Discussion about registrations and permits.

After seeing no public comments and officially closing the public hearing at 7:49, the Planning Commission indicated that they supported the application. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would come back with a resolution to support.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. ZA #26001 – Parking Ordinance Update

Principal Planner Shorkey opened the discussion and pointed out that the only remaining question was about the 20% parking maximum. Principal Planner Shorkey suggested that the 20% maximum language was not needed since the CIA and the DDA both opposed the language and a parking maximum was already in the parking ordinance for general commercial developments.

Commissioner Brooks addressed the points raised by the DDA and spoke in favor of the 20% maximum. Commissioner McConnell asked if there are any other regulatory requirements. Principal Planner Shorkey discussed the comment about other regulatory requirements from the DDA and how that might apply. Commissioner Brooks asked if it is possible that the 20% maximum could be waived if state or federal parking requirements require more spaces. Principal Planner Shorkey said that would be okay.

Commissioner Shrewsbury asked how many commercial uses would not apply under the general commercial requirements. Principal Planner Shorkey discussed Tailgater's parking calculations. Commissioner Nahum discussed the approval process and asked if the Planning Commission should solicit comment from the Board. Principal Planner Shorkey said no. Chair Romback said it sounded like one more amendment. Principal Planner Shorkey asked if the Commission was ready for a resolution with the amendment and said there were no other questions. Commissioner McConnell asked if it was worth sending the final draft to the other

boards. Principal Planner said no, it was their amendment and that was acknowledged at the DDA. Discussion about regulatory parking requirements.

Chair Romback asked if the proposed ordinance gave a mechanism to speed up the development process. Principal Planner Shorkey said there was no mechanism that could get around variances if necessary.

After a straw poll, the Planning Commission indicated that they supported the parking ordinance as amended. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would come back with a resolution to recommend support.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Mass Timber Discussion

Principal Planner Shorkey opened the discussion and pointed out the attachments in the packet. Principal Planner suggested that mass timber could be added as an amenity in the MUPUD and the CPUD ordinance and that it would be difficult to add mass timber as an incentive in other commercial zoning districts.

Commissioner McConnell said that he supported amending the PUD ordinances as a first step. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if it would be done to incentivize mass timber. Principal Planner Shorkey agreed and discussed how mass timber could be added. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if there were any other places in Michigan that have done this. Commissioner McConnell said that East Lansing added mass timber to their ordinance. Principal Planner Shorkey said that Staff would research that. Commissioner McConnell asked about a previous example of the tallest mass timber building.

Commissioner Brooks asked if a PUD can be done along the Grand River corridor. Principal Planner agreed. Commissioner Brooks asked if adding this to the PUD ordinance would affect the Grand River corridor. Principal Planner Shorkey said no, that it would take a lot of work to incentivize mass timber in the Grand River corridor. Commissioner Nahum suggested adding mass timber as a level 2 amenity in the MUPUD ordinance. Principal Planner Shorkey showed the Commissioner the list of amenities in the MUPUD ordinance. Commissioner McConnell said that MSU may be willing to assist with ordinance language.

Principal Planner Shorkey said that Staff would return with an update and more discussion at the May meeting.

10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Township Board Update

Principal Planner Shorkey updated the Planning Commission on the Board activities from their April 7th meeting.

b. Liaison Reports

Commissioner Nahum said that the ZBA did not meet. Commissioner McConnell highlighted the activities of the Environmental Commission.

11. PROJECT UPDATES

Principal Planner Shorkey said that there was no report.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Nahum commented further on recent Board discussion about data centers.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Romback called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Brooks moved to adjourn the April 13, 2026 regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Seconded by Commissioner McConnell. Motion passed unanimously at 8:13.