

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION
5000 Okemos Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Townhall Room
Monday, March 23, 2026, 6:30 pm

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Snyder

STAFF: Principal Planner Shorkey and Economic Development Director Amber Clark

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Romback called the March 23, 2026, regular meeting for the Meridian Township Planning Commission to order at 6:31 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Romback called the roll of the Board. All Board members were present except for Commissioner Snyder.

3. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Romback asked for approval of the agenda and asked that items 7.A. and 8.A be swapped.

Commissioner McConnell moved to approve the March 23, 2026, Regular Planning Commission meeting agenda as amended. Seconded by Vice-Chair McCurtis. Motion passed unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice-Chair McCurtis moved to approve Minutes of the March 9, 2026 meeting as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Nahum. Motion passed unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Communication from Woodhull Township in packet.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Moved to Item 8)

A. ZA #26001 – Parking Ordinance Update

Principal Planner Shorkey opened the discussion. Principal Planner Shorkey said that the main question was about the proposed maximum parking number and said that options were provided for discussion. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he had attended the CIA meeting

and that the CIA was in favor of no parking maximum, stating that a parking maximum might deter new businesses from the Township.

Director Clark spoke to the Planning Commission about the position of the CIA on the Parking Ordinance Update.

Commissioner Brooks asked what businesses have requested variances for less parking than required. Director Clark said that businesses usually ask for less parking. Principal Planner Shorkey said that developments under PUDs go under because of the flexibility in the development but to his knowledge, no regular development had ever been granted a variance for less parking than required. Commissioner Brooks asked why there are parking minimums. Principal Planner Shorkey said that the Township just went through a parking minimum update and that a certain amount of parking is required for the viability of businesses. Discussion about parking regulations and trends.

Commissioner Brooks asked if parking has to be done in this way. Principal Planner Shorkey said no, Staff was open to backing up and having more discussions, but Staff had the impression that the Planning Commission was ready for the public hearing for the ordinance. Commissioner Brooks said it would be helpful if the CIA had any ideas for parking in the Grand River corridor. Director Clark said that they could add it as a discussion item.

Commissioner Nahum said that he was open to discussing the removal of parking minimum after more research. Principal Planner Shorkey pointed out parking maximums were reduced when the parking minimums were updated and the 25% overflow parking for multi-family development was removed.

Commissioner Nahum asked if the CIA discussed any other maximum number. Director Clark said no and that the CIA opposed maximums and that they did not think that a developer would underpark themselves on purpose and would not build extra parking without a good reason.

Vice-Chair McCurtis asked what it costs businesses for parking. Director Clark said tenants could pay for their share of parking in their leases and new businesses pay to construct their parking. Commissioner McConnell asked about cases where parking had to be added. Principal Planner Shorkey discussed past parking developments and their causes. Chair Romback discussed processes and asked about decision making. Commissioner McConnell asked if there was any way to encapsulate parking overflow restrictions. Principal Planner pointed out sections about deferred parking in the ordinance.

Commissioner Nahum asked about businesses asking for less than minimum parking. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he knew of no variances where a business had asked for less than required parking.

Commissioner Brooks asked if the Township has ever considered constructing a municipal parking lot. Principal Planner Shorkey said that it has not been considered and that would require a Board action and was beyond the scope of the Zoning Ordinance. Principal Planner Shorkey pointed out that shared parking agreements are allowed by the Parking Ordinance. Discussion about shared parking. Commissioner Shrewsbury discussed the ordinance update and the development process. Principal Planner Shorkey discussed the process and the difference between a site plan and a special use permit and involvement. Discussion.

Commissioner McConnell said that the only time he remembered people bringing up parking was for day cares. Commissioner Brooks asked if it was because the day cares were in a

neighborhood and people were noticed. Principal Planner Shorkey said yes and that they had seen a group day care application in the past couple years where parking was brought up during the public hearing. Commissioner Shrewsbury said that those issues seemed to be more about traffic flow than parking. Chair Romback said he wished to avoid such regulatory issues.

Principal Planner Shorkey said that the Planning Commission could continue to discuss the ordinance and would prepare a resolution when the Planning Commission was ready. Commissioner McConnell said that he was delighted that the CIA had discussed the ordinance and asked if the DDA could as well and suggested waiting until feedback is received. Commissioner Brooks discussed trends in development and suggested that he would like to discuss alternative ways of doing this. Principal Planner Shorkey asked for direction from the Planning Commission. Commissioner Brooks brought up shared parking and allowing developers to offload parking minimums in return for contributions to a shared parking fund. Principal Planner Shorkey said that was not possible without a variance. Chair Romback asked about a shared vision from the other committees and writing ordinances around that. Discussion about incentives.

Chair Romback discussed the framing of the parking ordinance. Commissioner Brooks said the frame is the Master Plan. Principal Planner Shorkey said that updating the parking minimums went toward some of the environmental goals in the Master Plan.

Principal Planner Shorkey asked what the Planning Commission wanted to do next. Chair Romback said to have another discussion at the April 13 meeting.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Moved to Item 7)

A. REZ #26006 – Tekchandani

Principal Planner Shorkey opened the discussion and pointed out the resolution to recommend approval.

Chair Romback asked if the applicant had any comments. Hearing none, Chair Romback asked for a motion.

Vice-Chair McCurtis moved to adopt the resolution to recommend approval of Rezoning #26006 to rezone the Subject Property, approximately 0.5 acre in size (Subject Property) located at 2936 Jolly Road from C-1 (Commercial) to RB (Single-Family Residential), seconded by Commissioner Nahum. Motion passed unanimously.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Mass Timber Discussion

Principal Planner Shorkey opened the discussion and said that he had attended the CIA meeting on February 8th to discuss mass timber and the potential of incentivizing it for commercial developments.

Commissioner McConnell said that he recollected discussing Playmakers as a mass timber construction. Director Clark spoke and gave more background about mass timber projects and the benefits of mass timber construction.

Commissioner Brooks asked if mass timber takes up more space in a building. Commissioner Nahum said that one advantage is that you don't have to cover it with drywall. Commissioner Brooks asked about the building code requirements. Commissioner McConnell discuss incentives in PUD developments and asked about East Lansing's mass timber ordinance update. Principal Planner Shorkey said that East Lansing's ordinance was for extra stories in their downtown area and not directly translatable. Director Clark discussed East Lansing's ordinance. Principal Planner Shorkey discussed how mass timber could be added as an incentive to the PUD ordinances.

Commissioner Brooks asked about speed limits. Director Clark and Principal Planner Shorkey discussed traffic calming. After discussion, Commissioner McConnell said that he was delighted that the CIA was discussing the ordinance.

Principal Planner Shorkey asked the Planning Commission about next steps. Commissioner McConnell suggested PUD amenities. Chair Romback said that he would expect such a request to come from the business community. Principal Planner Shorkey said that no one is proposing to mandate mass timber construction. Director Clark discussed the CIA's thought process behind mass timber construction. Commissioner Nahum asked for more information and resources about mass timber construction. Commissioner Brooks asked if there are ordinance mechanisms that would restrain the ability to achieve the corridor vision. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he could look into that and asked for clarification.

Vice-Chair McCurtis said to keep it simple and give the Planning Commission a framework to work from. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked for locations where the Planning Commission would have leverage and said that there are certain amenities that developers tend to gravitate towards. Discussion about PUD incentives.

Principal Planner Shorkey said that Staff would return with an update and more discussion.

10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Township Board Update

Principal Planner Shorkey said that the Tekchandani rezoning was moving forward at the next meeting. Commissioner Nahum said that the Board had approved the Central Park application. Discussion.

b. Liaison Reports

Commissioner Nahum said that the ZBA did not meet in March.

Commissioner McConnell reported on the activities of the Environmental Commission.

Commissioner Brooks asked if he was still on the CIA and that he is not listed on the website. Principal Planner Shorkey said that the CIA does not have a seat for a Planning Commissioner and that Commissioner Brooks would be the representative if the CIA talks about anything relating to the Planning Commission.

11. PROJECT UPDATES

Principal Planner Shorkey pointed out the updated project report.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Romback suggested more restaurants on the Grand River corridor. Director Clark said that a new restaurant had opened at Grand River and Central Park Drive.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Romback called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner McConnell moved to adjourn the March 23, 2026 regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Seconded by Vice-Chair McCurtis. Motion passed unanimously at 8:18.