

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

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Principal Planner Shorkey

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Vice-Chair McCurtis called the July 13, 2026, regular meeting for the Meridian Township Planning Commission to order at 6:30 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Vice-Chair McCurtis called the roll of the Board. All Board members were present except Chair Rombach.

3. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair McCurtis asked for approval of the agenda.

Commissioner McConnell moved to approve the July 13, 2026, Regular Planning Commission meeting agenda as written. Seconded by Commissioner Nahum. Motion passed unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Brooks moved to approve Minutes of the June 22, 2026 meeting as amended. Seconded by Commissioner McConnell. Motion passed unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

None

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. SUP #26017 – Sheetz

Principal Planner Shorkey summarized the memo and pointed out the resolution recommending approval in the packet. Chair Romback arrived at 6:42.

Commissioner Brooks questioned whether the additional fuel stations pending in the variance were necessary, and Principal Planner Shorkey advised that SUP evaluation standards do not include evaluating additional variances.

Commissioner McConnell observed that the special use permit designation itself signals the need for heightened scrutiny, as outlined in the approval criteria, and identified economic welfare of the surrounding community as the central consideration. Principal Planner Shorkey noted that the practical alternative to the proposed development is a vacant lot, which could pose a greater detriment to community economic well-being.

Commissioner Brooks clarified his position that the variance for additional fueling stations is unnecessary given that gas station revenue is largely derived from non-fuel sources, and that environmental welfare concerns related to fuel pumps warranted caution. Brooks further noted that Sheetz operates electric charging stations at other locations, adding to his skepticism regarding the need for the variance.

Commissioner Shrewsbury cautioned that site plan variances fall outside the Commission's jurisdiction; the Commission's role is to evaluate the SUP against the established criteria. Shrewsbury noted that the site plan does meet those criteria and that approval is therefore the Commission's appropriate course of action. Principal Planner Shorkey added that if the SUP is approved but the ZBA denies the requested variance, Sheetz would be required to amend their site plan accordingly, and thus Sheetz would have to bring their amended SUP back in front of the commission for re-approval.

Vice-Chair McCurtis noted that Sheetz is developing a location at Abbot and Saginaw in East Lansing and asked how the proximity of two sites might affect the company's internal market share and the economic welfare of the surrounding community. Principal Planner Shorkey responded that Sheetz's presence before the Commission reflects an internal determination that the location is economically viable. McCurtis followed up regarding potential pricing variation across townships; Shorkey expressed confidence that pricing would be generally comparable across the area.

Alex Siwicki, representing the applicant, addressed the Commission and confirmed that the application reflects extensive internal analysis to validate the site's viability. Siwicki further confirmed that a cannibalism study had been conducted with respect to neighboring Sheetz locations and that the analysis supported the viability of both sites.

Chair Romback asked whether the applicant's analysis accounted for incoming fuel stations in addition to existing competitors; Mr. Siwicki confirmed that Sheetz makes every effort to incorporate anticipated nearby developments into their analysis.

Commissioner Brooks asked whether SUP approval would influence the ZBA's decision on the variance request; Commissioner Nahum clarified that the ZBA's determination is independent of SUP approval, and Principal Planner Shorkey confirmed this.

Vice-Chair McCurtis moved to adopt the resolution to approve SUP #26010 to allow the construction of a new gas station, convenience store, and restaurant at the property at 1930 and 1878 West Grand River Avenue, subject to the conditions found in the resolution to approve. Seconded by Commissioner McConnell. Motion passed unanimously.

B. SUP #26018 – 7Eleven

Principal Planner Shorkey summarized the memo and explained the updates since the public hearing.

Chair Romback confirmed with Principal Planner Shorkey that public notices had been sent for the prior meeting only and that no second notice had been issued for the current meeting.

Commissioner Brooks expressed concern for residents in the immediately adjacent area, noting that despite its non-conforming commercial zoning, the residential use warrants consideration in evaluating the project's neighborhood impact. Commissioner Nahum agreed, asserting that these concerns implicate SUP evaluation criterion #4, which requires that a project not adversely affect or be hazardous to existing neighboring uses. Nahum further noted that long-term proximity to fuel pumps poses potential adverse health effects. Principal Planner Shorkey clarified that the fuel tanks themselves are located on the western portion of the property, more than 200 feet from the residential property line. Commissioner McConnell requested more information regarding emissions associated with fuel refueling operations.

Mandy Gauss, engineer for the applicant, confirmed that the fuel tanks are double walled for added protection against leaks and emissions, and reiterated that the tanks are situated over 200 feet from the residential property line. Commissioner Nahum asked about anticipated daily fuel volume as it relates to environmental impact. John Krupka, representing the applicant, offered to provide a ballpark estimate at the next meeting. Commissioner Nahum noted that his concern stems from a belief that current estimates may understate actual fuel sales volume.

Commissioner Brooks asked who determines fuel storage tank sizing. Ms. Gauss responded that 7-Eleven makes that determination based on the number of dispensers, with tanks sized to require refilling approximately every two days. Brooks followed up on tank capacity; Gauss confirmed the site would have two 20,000-gallon tanks.

Commissioner McConnell asked the applicant to walk through the site rendering with respect to the right-in, right-out access design and how drivers would be directed. Ms. Gauss explained that a slightly raised center island, combined with signage designating right-turn-only exits, would guide traffic flow and reduce potential conflicts. McConnell expressed concern that motorists might disregard the signage and make left turns regardless. Mr. Krupke responded that the design had been reviewed and approved by MDOT with these concerns had been taken into account.

Vice-Chair McCurtis asked about entrance driveway signage. Mr. Krupke confirmed that clear directional signage would be provided.

After discussion, Principal Planner Shorkey said that based on the conversation, he would return with two resolutions at the next meeting.

C. REZ #26013 – Singh

Principal Planner Shorkey opened the discussion and summarized the memo. Shorkey pointed out that there were two resolutions in the packet, one for approval and one for denial.

Chair Romback clarified that prior work completed on the site before approval should be characterized as nonconforming rather than illegal.

B.K. Singh, the applicant, addressed the Commission and provided history regarding his projects on the site.

Commissioner Nahum noted that the applicant is seeking a structured compromise under which existing site utilities would be inspected, with a request to waive the requirement for connection to township water and sewer. Principal Planner Shorkey confirmed that these matters fall under the jurisdiction of the Township Board rather than the Planning Commission and are therefore not included in the resolutions before the Commission.

Vice-Chair McCurtis stated he was not fully convinced by the prior work completed on the site and expressed concern that approving the Special Use Permit would place an undue burden on the township.

Chair Romback asked whether the current resolution was the appropriate vehicle for staff to revise language from "illegal" to "nonconforming"; Principal Planner Shorkey confirmed he could amend the second item in the resolution accordingly. Nahum observed that the applicant's primary motivation appears to be obtaining a certificate of occupancy for the duplex, but that the applicant does not appear willing to take the necessary steps to achieve that, making rezoning unlikely to meaningfully advance that goal.

Commissioner Shrewsbury concurred, noting that she would only support a resolution with the applicant's requested conditions if those conditions would serve as a genuine motivator for compliance. She expressed concern that denial of the resolution could result in the required inspection going uncompleted and continued noncompliance on the site. Shrewsbury concluded that there appear to be unresolvable issues preventing the applicant from obtaining a certificate of occupancy.

Commissioner Brooks stated that in light of prior ZBA decisions and the work completed on the site, he was not comfortable approving the request.

Commissioner McConnell expressed concern that the applicant's testimony referenced verbal approvals from township staff as justification for proceeding with nonconforming work, noting that such representations cannot be verified.

Chair Romback confirmed he would join the Commission in supporting the resolution to deny the rezoning.

Vice-Chair McCurtis moved to adopt the resolution to recommend denial of REZ #26013 to rezone the property at 2020 M-78, approximately 1.1 acre, from RR, Rural Residential to RDD, Multiple-Family Residential, Maximum 5 Units Per Acre. Seconded by Commissioner Brooks. Motion passed unanimously.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Township Board Update

Principal Planner Shorkey updated the Planning Commission on recent Board activities. Commissioner Nahum clarified the Board's rehearing of the Chicken Ordinance.

b. Liaison Reports

None

11. PROJECT UPDATES

Principal Planner Shorkey pointed out the updated project report in the packet.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Principal Planner Shorkey discussed the upcoming Planning Commission schedule and said that he may cancel the August 10th meeting.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Romback called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Vice-Chair McCurtis moved to adjourn the July 13, 2026 regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Seconded by Commissioner McConnell. Motion passed unanimously at 8:43.