

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION
5000 Okemos Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Township Townhall Room
Monday, January 26, 2026, 6:30 pm

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Snyder

STAFF: Principal Planner Shorkey

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Romback called the January 26, 2026, regular meeting for the Meridian Township Planning Commission to order at 6:35 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.

Commissioner McConnell moved to approve the January 26, 2026, Regular Planning Commission meeting agenda. Seconded by Vice-Chair McCurtis. Motion passed unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice-Chair McCurtis moved to approve Minutes of the January 12, 2026 meeting as written. Seconded by Commissioner McConnell. Motion passed unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

No additional communications.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. None

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. None

9. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Parking Ordinance Discussion

Principal Planner Shorkey introduced the draft parking ordinance update and pointed out the changes since the last meeting.

Commissioner McConnell thanked Staff for the update and suggested that other parties may be involved in micromobility discussions. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would discuss this with Economic Director Clark to see if she had any feedback from the economic community. Commissioner Brooks said that micromobility might be appropriate for specific areas or sites, such as Trader Joe's. Commissioner McConnell suggested that schools might be seeing demand for micromobility. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would look into the school question. Chair Rombach asked about regulation of micromobility vehicles and noted that the Township was not requiring registration.

Commissioner Brooks asked about the gravel driveway language. After discussion, Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would remove the gravel driveway restriction from the draft ordinance. Commissioner McConnell asked if a gravel driveway would meet building code standards. Principal Planner Shorkey said that the Building Department does not approve driveways. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if an HOA could restrict a gravel driveway. Principal Planner Shorkey said that they can.

Commissioner Brooks asked about the parking maximum language and asked if the 20% maximum cap would lead to more variances. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he did not know and would have to research the question. Commissioner Brooks said that he is in favor of a parking maximum and that there needs to be some flexibility to limit the number of variances. Principal Planner Shorkey asked if 20% is too low of a cap. Chair Rombach asked if parking lot variances for parking spaces could be delegated to the Director. Principal Planner Shorkey said no.

Vice-Chair McCurtis asked about the parking requirements for Panda as reported by Staff. Commissioner Nahum suggested a higher maximum for parking spaces. Chair Rombach asked Principal Planner Shorkey to compare Joe's on Jolly with the proposed ordinance. Commissioner Shrewsbury said that a lot of recent development has been proposals on existing paved space and asked for examples of recent approvals and that she was inclined to go higher than 20% for the parking maximum. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if a future developer would have to comply with the current parking standards.

Chair Rombach discussed further restaurant redevelopment and suggested Anna's House and did not want to create a disincentive for future development with our parking ordinance. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would look into the Anna's House parking situation. After further discussion, Principal Planner Shorkey noted that sites with too much parking, based on the parking ordinance, would be nonconforming and unable to expand parking without a variance.

Commissioner McConnell said that shared parking should be encouraged when appropriate. Commissioner Nahum pointed out a correction in a table. Commissioner Shrewsbury pointed out a typo in the draft ordinance. Commissioner Brooks asked why certain land uses are exempt from the parking requirements. Commissioner Brooks said that he liked the 20% cap and thanked Staff for the native landscaping language in the ordinance.

B. Joint Board and Commission Meeting Discussion

After discussion, the Planning Commission confirmed that Commissioner Nahum and Commissioner Shrewsbury would be in attendance and the Joint Board and Commission Meeting on February 10, 2026.

C. Chicken Ordinance Update

Principal Planner Shorkey introduced the topic for discussion and said that it had been referred to the Planning Commission from the Board.

Commissioner McCurtis asked if the previous rooster ordinance and similar language could be used for this update. Commissioner McConnell said that of the question, the first point about expanding the zoning was straightforward and the other three points are quagmires. Commissioner Shrewsbury discussed the potential of baby rabbits and chickens and agreed that regulating baby rabbits and chickens could be a quagmire. Commissioner Shrewsbury asked about what calls Staff are receiving. Principal Planner Shorkey said it wasn't about complaints but about whether a resident could have a chicken.

Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if this ordinance applies to rabbits and chickens kept as pets inside the house. Principal Planner Shorkey said that the ordinance does not differentiate between indoor and outdoor rabbits. Chair Romback asked if there was a right to farm issue during the rooster update. Principal Planner Shorkey said yes.

Commissioner McConnell pointed out that we regulate the sex of the chickens but not the sex of the rabbits. Commissioner Shrewsbury pointed out that rabbits do not crow. Principal Planner Shorkey offered to look into a minimum age definition for chickens and rabbits. Chair Romback said that the final three points seem out of bounds for a Planning Commission. Commissioner McConnell said that a middle ground might be neighbor notification. Principal Planner Shorkey said that in those cases, there was a hearing involved. Discussion about HOA enforcement.

Commissioner Brooks asked if the township regulates dogs. Principal Planner Shorkey discussed our dog and kennel regulations and described the differences between dog and chicken regulations. Discussion about kennel regulations.

Chair Romback asked about the density allowed in the RB and RX districts. Principal Planner Shorkey pointed out the densities in the zoning ordinance. Commissioner Nahum said he had backyard chickens and that the setback requirements limit their impact on neighbors. Commissioner Nahum said that he didn't think there needed to be zoning restrictions as long as there is room for them. Commissioner McConnell asked if it is conceivable that there are lots too small to have chickens. Principal Planner agreed. Commissioner McConnell asked if the setbacks are working as well as we hope. Principal Planner Shorkey said that we have not had any variance requests for chicken coops.

Commissioner Shrewsbury asked if we should restrict slaughter of the chickens. Principal Planner Shorkey said that Staff could do that if the Commissioner wanted Staff to. Commissioner Nahum pointed out that it would be such a small number of animals that it wouldn't likely bother your neighbors.

Chair Romback questioned the need to change the chicken ordinance. Commissioner Brooks agreed that chickens could go into the RB district if there was room. Commissioner McConnell

said that presumably, the RB district was left out for a reason when the chicken ordinance was written. Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would research the question. By consensus, the Planning Commission indicated that they were not interested in pursuing points two through four on the memo. Chair Romback said that there was consensus on the first point, as well as the regulation of the age of chickens and rabbits.

Commissioner Brooks after if there are any other regulations that require neighbor notification. Principal Planner Shorkey said no and that site plans used to require neighbor notification but that the Township removed that requirement.

Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would write up a draft ordinance with updated language based on the conversation and have it back on the next agenda for further discussion. Principal Planner Shorkey also said that he would look into the definitions for chickens and rabbits.

10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Township Board Update

Principal Planner Shorkey said that the Authentix proposal was expected to be on the next Board agenda.

b. Liaison Reports

None

11. PROJECT UPDATES

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

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Romback called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner McConnell moved to adjourn the January 26, 2026 regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Brooks. Motion passed unanimously at 8:04.