



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION – WORK SESSION
August 28, 2017 6PM



1. Call meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.
2. Approval of agenda
3. Discussion
 - A. Master Plan update
4. Public Remarks
5. Adjournment

All comments limited to 3 minutes, unless prior approval for additional time for good cause is obtained from the Chairperson.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Township Manager Frank L. Walsh, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4258 - Ten Day Notice is Required. Meeting Location: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864

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To: Planning Commission

From: *Peter Menser*
Peter Menser
Senior Planner

Date: August 24, 2017

Re: Draft Master Plan

The Planning Commission last discussed the draft Master Plan at its August 14, 2017 regular meeting. At the meeting the Planning Commission reviewed several proposed revisions to the draft Master Plan identified at the joint meeting with the Township Board on July 24, 2017. The Township Board reviewed the proposed revisions at its August 15, 2017 regular meeting. Both the Planning Commission and Township Board agreed to make the following revisions:

- The Central Fire Station and Okemos Post Office properties will remain in the Mixed Use Core Category on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
- Reclassification of the first tier of parcels north of the Haslett Potential Intensity Change Area (PICA) located on the east side of Marsh Road, north of Haslett Road, south of Lake Lansing Road to MR (Residential 5.0-14.0 dwelling units per acre) on the FLUM.
- The Service Center shares a parcel with park property, which the Existing Land Use Map accurately reflects, therefore the Service Center designation of Institutional will remain unchanged.

At its meeting on August 15, 2017 the Township Board proposed three additional changes to the FLUM, which are outlined as follows.

Future Land Use Map

1. Lake Lansing Road/Marsh Road intersection

The proposed FLUM identifies several properties currently used for commercial purposes along Lake Lansing Road, east of Marsh Road, in the R3 residential category. The Township Board concurred with the Planning Commission the parcels should be reclassified to commercial, with the inclusion of three (3) additional parcels. The first map on the following page displays the properties that the Planning Commission and Township Board agreed to reclassify to the commercial category. The second map on the following page shows the properties agreed upon, along with the three (3) additional parcels proposed for reclassification to the commercial category by the Township Board.

Map provided in the August 14th, 2017 packet



Map displaying the Township Board's proposed modification



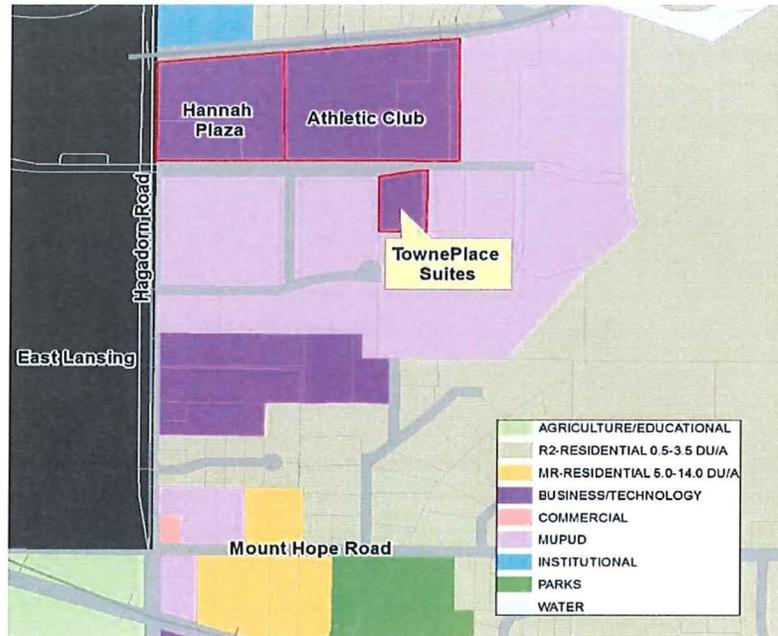
2. Lake Lansing Road/Birch Row Drive Intersection

The proposed FLUM identifies three (3) parcels currently used for commercial purposes along the east side of Lake Lansing Road, south of Birch Row Drive, in the R3 residential category. The map below shows the area under consideration for reclassification to the commercial category.



3. Hannah Plaza, Sparrow Michigan Athletic Club, and TownePlace Suites

The proposed FLUM identifies the Hannah Plaza shopping center, Sparrow Michigan Athletic Club, and Town Place Suites hotel in the Business/Technology category. The Township Board proposes reclassifying this area to the Mixed Use Planned Unit Development (MUPUD) category. The map on the following page shows the area under consideration for reclassification to the MUPUD category.

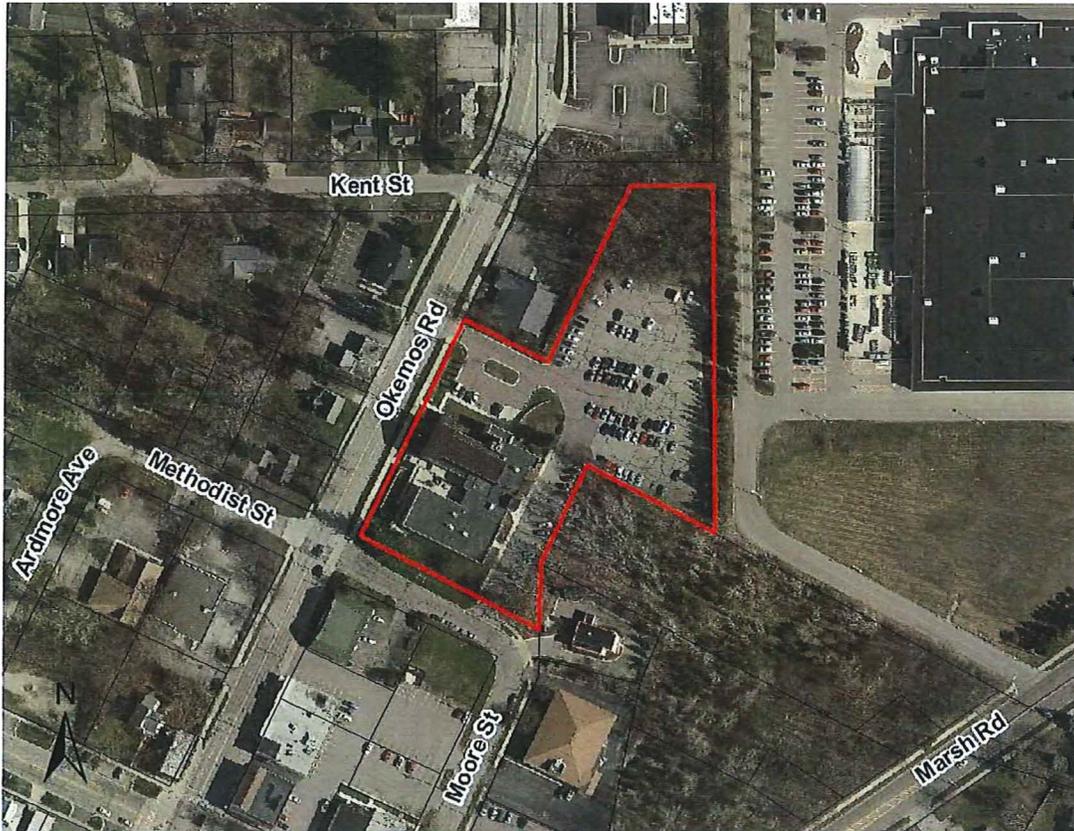


Okemos Potential Intensity Change Area (PICA)

1. Okemos Community Church

Staff received a communication from the Senior Pastor of Okemos Community Church expressing concern with the proposed Okemos PICA. The Okemos PICA map depicts creation of green space, the extension of Moore Street to the north with pedestrian/bicycle pathways, and retail buildings to the east of the envisioned Moore Street pathway. These elements overlap the existing church parking lot. The PICA maps in the draft Master Plan are conceptual renderings; the development scenarios depicted are only examples of many potential options. The Planning Commission may consider the comments from Okemos Community Church and determine if changes are needed to the Okemos PICA map. One option may be to add disclaimer language on the pages in the draft Master Plan where the PICA maps are located to better explain that the maps are only conceptual.

Okemos Community Church property

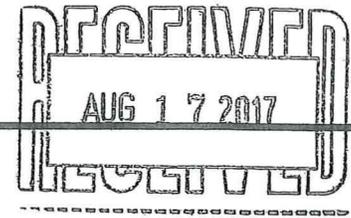


It is important that the Planning Commission and Township Board generally agree on the content of the draft Master Plan prior to scheduling a public hearing. After the Planning Commission recommends approval of the Master Plan to the Township Board, if the Board proposes changes to the content of the plan (other than grammar, typographical, or formatting), the Planning Commission must consider the changes and hold a new public hearing. Grammatical and formatting changes can be made without triggering additional public hearings.

Attachment

1. Communication from Pastor Rick Blunt from Okemos Community Church dated August 16, 2017.

G:\Community Planning & Development\Planning\Master Plan Updates\Draft Master Plan July 2017.pc3



Peter Menser

From: Rick Blunt <rblunt@okemosocc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 5:32 PM
To: Frank Walsh; Ronald Styka; Julie Brixie; Phil Deschaine; Patricia Herring Jackson; Dan Opsommer; Kathy Ann Sundland; Peter Menser
Cc: Deb Federau; Lee Mcallester; Stephanie Sheffer; Richard Ahti
Subject: Master Plan Draft Concerns: Parking for Okemos Community Church

Dear Meridian Township Board Members and Planning Commission Members,

I write **on behalf of Okemos Community Church** where I am Senior Pastor. The church is located at 4734 Okemos Road, where we have been located for more than 175 years. Indeed we celebrated our 175th anniversary a year before the township celebrated theirs. We have history in the area that predates the township, and we have been on this site before there was a township. The chapel in Meridian Historical Village is a to-scale replica of our initial building.

With that history, you can image our surprise to discover that the Land Use map in the proposed Master Plan envisions removing virtually all parking for Okemos Community Church. Of course, such a change would then put the church in violation of ordinances which require a certain number of parking spaces per seat in the sanctuary. Your own land use map proposal would create conflict between your ordinances and your vision. This may well be an oversight, but it has serious ramifications for our congregation and the greater Meridian Township community.

I write to **request you reconsider and change the proposed Land Use Map for the Okemos PICA.**

Please see **page 28 of the Proposed Master Plan.** Okemos Community Church is the **blue U-shaped building** on the **corner of Methodist Street** (named after us, as we were originally a Methodist Church) **and Okemos Road.** The **proposed green tree-lined extension of Moore Street** to the north would run through our primary parking lot (on the north end of the extension). That green walkway combined with the **proposed triangular pink retail buildings envisioned to the east** of the northern block of the green walkway, (between the walkway and Meijer) **take up all of our existing primary parking lot.**

We would be left with a few handicapped parking spaces in the small lower parking lot on the north side of the building. It is unclear from the map if we would also lose the 14 spaces directly across from the main entrance, which is on the east of the building. (Note: we have already given up parking on Okemos Road, when the road widened and took parking on Okemos Road, and led to us redesigning the main entrance to the east side of the building.)

It also appears that the plan **seeks to take our Okemos Road driveway** (north of the building) and turn it into a public road, cutting through our parking lot and connecting with Marsh Road.

The loss of any parking would be very detrimental to the church. If anything, we will need to expand parking as we continue to grow and serve the community even more.

While we understand that this is simply a vision, we also understand that **the Master Land Use Plan could be used against us in the future.** For instance, the primary parking lot will need to be redone in the near future due to cracks and failing foundation. We are already in the planning stages for this maintenance. If the Master Plan envisions no parking, it is possible that permits to do such maintenance could be denied, or at least involve lengthy variance requests.

Friends, **Okemos Community Church is an asset to Meridian Township.** We are good neighbors. We house the Okemos Food Pantry. Our building is widely used by many community groups who are not affiliated with our congregation (music groups, recitals, school groups, alcoholics anonymous, boy scouts, Kiwanis and more). Indeed, the township itself has used our parking lot for events like Okemos Days and races. This congregation makes considerable financial contributions to a variety of area groups, agencies, and ministries which care for our neighbors and residents. **We assume that you really do not want to have a Master Plan that harms and hampers the oldest church in the township,** which is still thriving and making a difference in the lives of many people.

I would be happy to speak with, exchange emails with, or visit with any of you. My contact information is below. If it is helpful for your process, we can easily produce hundreds of names on a petition. If necessary, we can generate lots of letters and many speakers at both the Planning Commission and Township Board meetings.

Specifically, **we request you modify the Okemos PICA Land Use Map so that our current parking remains as parking in the Master Plan.**

If you want to be most helpful and forward thinking, allowing room for the potential growth and expansion of the church in the future would be most desirable. Having a thriving faith community which serves the community at the heart of the Okemos community would be a win-win for everyone. Should the PICA come to be as you envision, there would be more ways for OCC to connect and serve even more residents, including those within walking distance along with those who would drive or bike to the building. (Even now, if there were a CATA stop near the church it would really benefit Food Pantry patrons who currently have to get off at Meijer, cut through their parking lot, cross the berm to our parking lot and walk up the hill to the church.)

Thank you for your careful consideration of this request. I am happy to answer questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Rick Blunt

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Rev. Rick Blunt
rblunt@OkemosOCC.org



Worship: **Sundays @ 10:00am** • 517.349.4220
4734 Okemos Rd., Okemos, MI 48864 • Mail: P.O. Box 680, Okemos, MI 48805