

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
AGENDA**

Wednesday, April 1, 2015

**Town Hall Room
Meridian Municipal Building
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864**

Work Session

1. Call the work session to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Approval of the work session agenda
3. Review of the minutes of the March 4, 2015 work session/regular meeting
4. Other business
 - a. Discuss handing out Environmental Stewardship Awards
5. Public remarks
6. Adjournment

Regular Meeting

1. Call the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Approval of the regular meeting agenda
3. Approval of the minutes of the March 4, 2015, work session/regular meeting
4. Public remarks
5. Presentation of environmental Stewardship Awards to
 - *Leonard Provencher*
 - *Susan Masten*
 - *Julie Brixie*
 - *Dianne Holman and Kris Berglund*
6. Chair's Report
7. Communications/staff report
 - a. Spring Recycling Event on April 25th
 - b. The 2015 Ride of Silence is on Wednesday, May 20th
8. Other Business
 - a. Review/recommendation of WUP #15-01(BBI Holdings)
 - b. Resolution of support for the 2015 Ride of Silence
9. Study groups/liaison reports
 - a. Land Preservation: Jim Kielbaso
 - b. Energy Team: John Sarver
 - c. Street Tree Replacement: John Scherbarth
 - d. Parks: Richard Searl

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- 10. Public remarks
- 11. Adjournment

WORK SESSION

PRESENT: Chair McConnell and Commissioners Kielbaso, Jackson, Sarver, Scherbarth, Schools, and Searl

ABSENT: None

STAFF

PRESENT: Richard F. Brown, Jr., AICP, Associate Planner

OTHERS

PRESENT: None

1. **CALL WORK SESSION TO ORDER**

Chair McConnell called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE WORK SESSION AGENDA**

Agenda approved without objection.

3. **REVIEW OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 4, 2015 WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING**

Corrections and amplifications were noted.

4. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- a. Environmental Stewardship Award nominees: After a review of each nomination by Associate Planner Brown, there was a discussion amongst the Commissioners on each candidate. Some concern was expressed about whether to include a currently elected official, which has not been done before. A tentative vote on each nominee was held and all were approved for being considered at the regular meeting.

5. **PUBLIC REMARKS**

None

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

- **MOTION** by Commissioner Kielbaso to adjourn the Work Session. Supported by Commission Jackson. Approved 7-0. Work Session adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES
Meridian Municipal Building
March 4, 2015 - DRAFT**

REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT: Chair McConnell and Commissioners Searl, Jackson, Schools, Scherbarth, Sarver, and Kielbaso

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Richard F. Brown, Jr., AICP, CBSP Associate Planner

OTHERS: Harmony Gmazel of Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

1. CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McConnell called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

- **MOTION** by Commissioner Jackson to approve the agenda. Supported by Commissioner Kielbaso. Approved 7-0.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 4, 2015 WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

- **MOTION** by Commissioner Jackson to approve the minutes as corrected during the Work Session. Supported by Commissioner Scherbarth. Approved 7-0.

4. PUBLIC REMARKS

None

5. GREEN THEMES PRESENTATION BY HARMONY GMAZEL OF TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, ENTITLED: "WRAPPING UP THE MID-MICHIGAN PROGRAM FOR GREATER SUSTAINABILITY"

Aspects of the completed program included:

- A five-year Comprehensive Regional Fair and Affordable Housing Plan
- Regional Affordable Housing Plan
- A Regional Affordable Housing Study
- Community Reinvestment Fund
- Energy Audit of Built Structures
- Build Capacity for a Regional Urban Service Management Area
- Greening Mid-Michigan - A Prioritized Green Infrastructure System

- Sustainable Design Portfolio for Michigan Avenue Corridor
- Build Capacity for Complete Streets Planning and Implementation
- Create an Online Portal

6. **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Brief summary of communications he has had with the IT Department Director regarding the Greenspace Plan maps.

7. **COMMUNICATIONS/STAFF REPORT**

Associate Planner Brown summarized the following:

- ITC tree grant check for \$5,000 presented to the Township Board
- Two wetland use permits are coming up soon – on Association Drive and along Van Atta Road
- Spring recycling event on April 25th
- Quiet Waters Symposium is this coming Saturday, March 7th
- Summarized two webinars recently attended:
 - Solar Power for Resilient Communities and
 - Building Healthy Places Toolkit - listed and summarized the 21 recommendations made by the Urban Land Institute (see attached).

8. **OTHER BUSINESS**

a. **Approve Environmental Stewardship Award recipients:**

- **MOTION** by Commissioner Jackson to approve the slate of nominees discussed during the Work Session. Supported by Commissioner Kielbaso. Approved 7-0.

9. **STUDY GROUPS/LIAISON REPORTS**

a. **Land Preservation:** No report.

b. **Energy Team:** Commissioner Sarver noted the February Energy Team meeting was held followed by the first meeting of the Solar Committee. Director Kieselbach was chosen to be the Chair of the committee.

c. **Street Tree Replacement:** No report.

d. **Parks:** Commissioner Searl summarized what took place at the most recent Park Commission meeting, including:

- Installation of a zig-zag fence behind the log cabin in in the historic village;
- Only six deer were taken during the extended Deer Management effort in January and February;
- They are working on a master plan for Central Park; and
- Plans for repairing the tennis courts and the pavilion in Hillbrook Park.

10. **PUBLIC REMARKS**

None.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

- **MOTION** by Commissioner Jackson to adjourn the Regular Meeting. Supported by Commissioner Scherbarth. Approved 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.



March 27, 2015
Project No. G150126W01

Mr. Richard Brown
Charter Township of Meridian
5151 Marsh Road
Okemos, MI 48864

Re: Wetland Use Permit #15-01 Application Review
BBI Holdings, LLC - Appletree Learning Center
2172 and 2190 Association Drive

Dear Mr. Brown:

The Appletree Learning Center is a proposed day care center located near the east end of Association Drive in the Charter Township of Meridian (Township). The development is proposed by BBI Holdings, Inc. (the Applicant) and will impact 0.25 acre of a 0.28 acre emergent wetland (Meridian Township Wetland No. 33-16).

At the request of the Township, FTCH reviewed the Wetland Use Permit (WUP) request, including the following:

- Plans dated March 19, 2015, prepared by Nederveld Associates, Inc.
- A Joint Permit Application, dated February 24, 2015, prepared by King & MacGregor Environmental, Inc. (KME)
- KME Wetland Delineation Report, dated March 19, 2015
- A wetland mitigation plan prepared by KME, dated March 19, 2015

FTCH also inspected the site on March 12, 2015, to verify wetland boundaries and assess site conditions. This report provides a brief description of the resources that would be impacted by the proposed work, evaluates WUP Application #15-01 according to review standards in the Township Wetland Protection Ordinance (Article IV of Chapter 22 of the Code of Ordinances of the Charter Township of Meridian), and makes recommendations to the Township regarding issuance or denial of the WUP application.

Overview of Proposed Wetland Impacts

The proposed activities are located in southeast quarter of Section 33 of Town 4 North, Range 1 West, Ingham County, Michigan. The Applicant proposes to construct an 11,974 square foot day care facility on Parcel Numbers 33-02-02-33-453-002 and 33-02-02-33-453-003, located in an existing office park complex. The subject property contains a 12,382 square foot emergent wetland in a centrally located depression. According to the Joint Permit Application provided by the Applicant, the proposed building is the minimum size necessary for operating an Appletree Learning Center in this service area. Avoidance of wetland impact is not possible due to the wetland's central location.

The Applicant proposes to fill the southern 10,730 square feet of the existing wetland and to construct a 10,785 square foot mitigation wetland adjacent to the remaining wetland to compensate for wetland impacts. The mitigation wetland will be excavated to an elevation similar to the remaining wetland and will extend east and west of the wetland remnant on the subject property.



Review of WUP Application

The review standards used to evaluate WUP applications are found in Section 22-157 of Article IV (Wetland Protection) of Chapter 22 of the Township's Code of Ordinances. WUPs are not to be issued unless the proposed activity is found to be in the public interest, the permit is necessary to realize the benefits from the activity, and the proposed activity is otherwise lawful in all respects. Section 22-157(2) lists eleven general criteria to be considered when evaluating whether or not a proposed activity is in the public interest. An evaluation of the proposed activity, according to each of the eleven criteria, is as follows:

Section 22-157(2)(a) *The relative extent of the public and private need for the proposed activity.*

- FTCH was not provided information regarding the relative extent of the public and private need for the proposed activity. We do not know if there is a need for additional day care facilities within the Township. However, the presence of high quality and affordable day care is an important factor within a community to attract working families and it contributes to the economic stability of the community. The proposed project addresses these issues.

Section 22-157(2)(b) *The availability of feasible and prudent alternative locations and methods to accomplish the expected benefits from the activity.*

- The location of the wetland in the center of the site limits feasible and prudent alternative locations. The WUP application discusses various alternatives (moving the building to the south, turning it 90 degrees, flipping the locations of the parking lot and playground) and noted the resulting affects on site safety and wetland impacts. The preferred alternative appears to result in the least overall wetland impact and the greatest site safety in the available space.
- Parking lot size was reduced to below normal Township standards to limit the development footprint and wetland impact. Additional bicycle parking spaces were added to compensate for the lost vehicle parking spaces.
- Appletree Learning Center playgrounds typically wraps around the back of the building. For this site, the playground was limited to the east side of the building to limit wetland impact.

Section 22-157(2)(c) *The extent and permanence of the beneficial or detrimental effects which the proposed activity may have on the public and private uses to which the area is suited, including the benefits the wetlands provide.*

- The proposed project is a suitable use for the subject site, since the site is highly disturbed, primarily does not contain native plant communities, and is located in the middle of an office park.
- The existing wetland provides the following functions and values: water storage, water quality improvement, limited wildlife habitat, and limited aesthetic value. Construction of the day care center will eliminate these functions and values within the impacted wetland, but will replace them in the mitigation wetland at a 1:1 ratio. The resulting wetland may be of higher quality, due to greater plant diversity introduced by the proposed wetland seed mixture.

Section 22-157(2)(d) *The probable impact of each proposal in relation to the cumulative effect created by other existing and anticipated activities in the watershed.*

- There are no identified cumulative impacts of the proposed project or by other existing and anticipated activities in the watershed.



Section 22-157(2)(e) *The probable impact on recognized historic, cultural, scenic, ecological, or recreational values and on the public health or safety, or fish or wildlife.*

- FTCH has no direct information pertaining to historic and cultural value or issues relating to impacts on public health.
- The proposed site development is not likely to significantly impact (positively or negatively) recreational or scenic value of the site.
- Construction of the proposed mitigation area is likely to result in a higher quality wetland than is currently present on the site.
- No other impacts on recognized historic, cultural, scenic or recreational values are apparent by the proposed activities. In addition, no impacts on fish or public health or safety are apparent.

Section 22-157(2)(f) *Economic value, both public and private, of the proposed land change to the general township area.*

- FTCH concurs that avoidance of wetland impact on the subject property severely limits the site's development potential, due to the central location of the wetland. The extent of the loss of economic value associated with wetland preservation is beyond the scope of the issues FTCH was retained to address. However, it appears that allowing the proposed site development would provide economic value to the general township area.

Section 22-157(2)(g) *The size and quality of the wetland being considered.*

- The site's wetland is 0.28 acre in size. The proposed site development will impact 0.25 acre of this wetland. The predominant species within the wetland is reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), an invasive species. The wetland is located within an office park complex and is mowed during the summer. Therefore, the wetland is of low quality, although it does serve some wetland functions, as noted above.

Section 22-157(2)(h) *The findings of necessity for the proposed activity which have been made by other agencies.*

- FTCH is not aware of any findings of necessity for the proposed activity which have been made by other agencies.

Section 22-157(2)(i) *Amount of wetland remaining in the general area and proximity to a waterway.*

- According to the Township Wetland Map, the site wetland is an isolated pocket of emergent wetland. It is not associated with a waterway.

Section 22-157(2)(j) *Proximity to any waterbody.*

- The site's wetland is located approximately 460 feet west-northwest of a 2-acre lake.

Section 22-157(2)(k) *Extent to which upland soil erosion adjacent to the protected wetland is controlled.*

- Sheet C-300 of the WUP application contains a soil erosion and sedimentation control plan for the proposed development. The plan notes a pretreatment bioswale area will be constructed that will receive storm water runoff from the western parking lot and allow sediment to settle before storm water discharges into the western portion of the mitigation wetland.
- The plan also notes erosion control blanket will be installed on the mitigation wetland side slopes to prevent erosion during wetland establishment.



Recommendations

Based upon our review of the submitted materials, it is our opinion that the proposed project meets the Township's requirements for permit issuance. FTCH recommends the WUP permit be issued with the following conditions:

- Implement appropriate erosion and sedimentation control measures during construction to ensure there are no impacts to the remaining wetland as a result of soil erosion.
- Submit a monitoring plan that notes vegetative monitoring sampling transects, photo points, and monitoring well location. The Wetland Monitoring Plan notes these features are depicted on the permit drawings, but none were observed.
- Monitor the mitigation wetland for five years.

In addition, implementation of measures to control the establishment of reed canary grass within the mitigation wetland is recommended, including suppressing the presence of this species within the existing wetland.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist in the review of this file. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at 616.464.3738 or ehtripp@ftch.com.

Sincerely,

FISHBECK, THOMPSON, CARR & HUBER, INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elise Hansen Tripp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elise Hansen Tripp, PWS

pmb
By email

**RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR
THE 2015 RIDE OF SILENCE**

At a regular meeting of the Environmental Commission of the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County, Michigan, held on the 1st day of April 2015, at 7:00 p.m., local time.

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner _____ and supported by Commissioner _____.

WHEREAS, the Ride of Silence honors and remembers those bicyclists who have been killed or injured by motor vehicles; and

WHEREAS, the Ride of Silence is the pre-eminent showcase for focusing on rider safety in the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, 2015 will be the 13th anniversary of the founding of the Ride of Silence in Dallas, Texas; and

WHEREAS, the Ride of Silence provides a good opportunity to educate motorists, cyclists, and the general public about traffic safety; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 Ride of Silence is scheduled to start at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 20, 2015, and includes a ride across portions of Greater Lansing starting from Michigan State University and concluding at the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, numerous Township residents are involved in organizing and/or participating in the 2015 ride.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN HEREBY resolves to express its support for the 2015 Greater Lansing Ride of Silence and its efforts to improve rider and traffic safety.

ADOPTED: YEAS:

NAYS:

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
)ss
COUNTY OF INGHAM)

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting Chairperson of the Environmental Commission of the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County, Michigan, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Environmental Commission on the 1st day of April, 2015.

William McConnell, Chairperson
Environmental Commission