

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

APPROVED

**November 26, 2018
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
517-853-4560, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Premoe, Trezise, Cordill, Scott-Craig, Ianni, Stivers, Richards, Shrewsbury, and Lane
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Director of Community Planning & Development Mark Kieselbach, Principal Planner Peter Menser, and Park Naturalist Kelsey Dillon.

1. Call meeting to order

Chair Ianni called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

2. Public Remarks

- A. James Gorenflo, 7500 Schneider Road, introduced himself as the applicant for Special Use Permit #18101.
- B. Jerry Fedewa, 5570 Okemos Road, developer for Sierra Ridge voiced his support for Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #18044 but requests a 100 foot buffer between the project and the residential development to the south.
- C. Cecelia Kramer, 4560 Oakwood, spoke in opposition to Special Use Permit #18101.
- D. Quenda Story, 4526 Marlborough, spoke in opposition to Special Use Permit #18081.
- E. Brenda Rose, 6106 Fresno Lane, spoke in opposition to Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #18044 and Special Use Permit #18091.

3. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Scott-Craig moved to approve the agenda as written.
Supported by Commissioner Richards.
VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

- A. November 5, 2018 Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Lane moved to approve the minutes as written.
Seconded by Commissioner Trezise.
VOICE VOTE: Motion approved unanimously.

5. Communications

Principal Planner Menser noted additional communications were received after the Planning Commission meeting packets were assembled. He further noted that hard copies of the communications were distributed to the Planning Commission at their places on the dais prior to tonight's meeting and would be included on the agenda for the December 10, 2018 Planning Commission Meeting.

6. Public Hearings

Chair Ianni opened the public hearing at 7:20 P.M.

- A. Special Use Permit #18101 (Green Castle Properties LLC), construct 23,094 square foot new car dealership at 1614 & 1622 Grand River Avenue.

Principal Planner Menser provided a brief summary of the staff report.

The applicant's representative James Gorenflo, 7500 Schneider Road of Manchester, provided a presentation regarding the proposed Fox Nissan Automobile Dealership. In addition, Architect Shane Burley, 2131 Mapledale of Ferndale, provided information about the site design and business owner Colin Schiefler, 2752 Berwyck Road of Grand Rapids, also spoke and noted they were available to answer questions.

Public Comments: None

Planning Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Richards asked about the current site Nissan is leasing and was told the current location would be leased from the owners, Graff Chevrolet, through the end of 2019.

Commissioner Scott-Craig asked about the function of the retaining wall at the proposed site and was told the function of the retaining wall would be for the grade to be brought up on the site 4-5 feet for the building and parking lot. Commissioner Scott-Craig also asked about the road stubs on the east and west side of the property. The Commission would like to see the east side in the plans for the future.

Discussion among the group also involved water drainage issues. The pond east of the proposed site is a regional detention facility. All storm water goes to this area. There is also an existing drainage easement that runs across the proposed property.

Commissioner Scott-Craig talked about the natural features and asked what degree of green screening would be provided across the front of the proposed property. He further added that maintaining natural amenities are important for the proposed project and encouraged the applicants to incorporate as much green as possible. Commissioner Scott-Craig asked why there are three points of access to the proposed dealership and was told this is for the safety and security for the Central Park area and to accommodate future possible development in the area.

Commissioner Trezise would like to see the setback be 100 feet for the proposed building and 20 feet for parking. In addition, since the third parcel is long and narrow he suggested no further development on that parcel in the future.

A straw poll conducted by Chair Ianni indicated the Planning Commission would like to add Special Use Permit #18101 for action at the December 10, 2018 meeting.

Principal Planner Menser noted if there were specific items to be mentioned in the Special Use Permit the Commissioners should have them noted. The following items were mentioned: landscaped buffer in the front of the proposed business, road stubs, not having customers do test drives through the local neighborhoods, saving as many of the mature trees as possible, providing a green screen, consider moving the building closer towards Grand River and move more parking spaces behind the building.

The applicants suggested upgrading their landscape plans to include more evergreen coverage for year round green space and mentioned they would utilize minimum night-time lighting.

Chair Ianni closed the public hearing at 8:15 P.M.

- B. Special Use Permit #18111 (Fedewa Holdings), construct two multiple family apartment buildings with a total of 15 units at 1730 Chief Okemos Circle.

Chair Ianni opened the public hearing at 8:15 P.M.

Principal Planner Menser provided a brief summary of the staff report.

Applicant Jerry Fedewa, 5570 Okemos Road, reviewed the plans for the site and noted he was available for questions.

Public Comments:

- A. Jeanette Feintuch, 4606 Seneca, spoke in opposition to Special Use Permit #18111.

Planning Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Lane noted there are actually five variances that would need to be addressed by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Principal Planner Menser mentioned four in the summary provided and an additional one will be required for the dumpster. As a representative from the Planning Commission who sits on the Zoning Board of Appeals, Commissioner Lane would not support Special Use Permit #18111 because there are too many variances.

Commissioner Stivers shared her concern with the rear deck/yard lighting shining on to the residential neighbors as well as the proposed rear setbacks to the adjacent neighbors.

Commissioner Richards asked for clarification regarding the approval of the project and Principal Planner Menser stated the action taken by the Planning Commission would be for the approval of the project with regard to overall configuration of the site.

Commissioner Scott-Craig reminded the commissioners and applicant that the Zoning Board of Appeals has a set of eight conditions any variance must meet and they are difficult to approve. This proposed project has five variances.

The applicant, Jerry Fedewa, responded to the public comments made earlier by agreeing to build a six-foot privacy fence in the rear between the proposed project and the homes. He also noted the lights on the decks would be 60 watt LED.

Chair Ianni shared concern with the number of variances and the size of the buildings.

Commissioner Trezise expressed concern for the second floor decks overlooking the homes to the rear of the buildings and stated this was not appropriate for the plan.

A straw poll conducted by Chair Ianni indicated the Planning Commission would not be in favor of supporting Special Use Permit #18111 as proposed.

Chair Ianni closed the public hearing at 8:45 P.M.

The Planning Commission took a five minute recess.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #18044 (Newton Pointe LLC), establish Newton Park mixed use planned unit development (MUPUD) project consisting of 19,367 square feet of commercial space and 218 residential units at 6276 Newton Road.
- B. Special Use Permit #18091 (Newton Pointe LLC), construct group of buildings greater than 25,000 square feet in size (approximately 264,684 total square feet) at 6276 Newton Road .

Principal Planner Menser reviewed the updated list of waivers.

The applicant, Chuck Holman, with DTN Management Company provided a review of changes.

Planning Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Scott-Craig commented that some steps were taken to resolve concerns with the proposed project but there is too much in a small space. The apartment building is still too close to Saginaw Highway. The proposed site for the trash compactor is too close to a neighboring property and there is concern with noise, smells and lights. The mail distribution center is located at the main entrance to the development. C1 and C8 buildings pose safety hazards with residents trying to back out of their garages into development traffic and many tight turns. The clubhouse is also too close to the Sierra subdivision.

Commissioner Trezise stated there has not been a setback that has been met in the revised proposal.

Commissioner Richards mentioned it would be nice to see a positive connection between the proposed development and the residents of the Sierra subdivision by possibly allowing them access to the clubhouse amenities.

Commissioner Cordill agreed there are too many units and would encourage the project be scaled back and also agreed the mixed use building is too close to Newton Road.

Commissioner Premoe made a motion to approve MUPUD #18044.
Motion failed for lack of support.

No other Planning Commissioner made a motion to approve Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #18044 and Special Use Permit #18091.

8. Other Business

- A. Commission Review #18133 (Meridian Township), Section 61 Review for land preservation purchase located north of Biber Street, east of Towar Avenue (Tax ID #06-226-001).

Principal Planner Menser provided an overview of the property.

Park Naturalist Kelsey Dillon provided an overview of the proposed land preservation project. The area includes 40 acres of heavily wooded property, rare Pileated Woodpeckers and is bordered on two sides by the Tower Woods Preserve.

Commissioner Premoe asked if there have been negotiations yet with the property owner and was told nothing has happened yet. It was also mentioned that 95% of the property is in wetlands.

Commissioner Scott-Craig commented he was not able to walk the property because he couldn't access it but the pictures provided were viewed. He agreed this is valuable property to preserve.

Commissioner Richards noted he was not supportive of the proposal.

Commissioner Premoe said he doesn't think the Township should spend money to purchase land that is not developable.

Commissioner Cordill asked if the property is developable. She also suggested targeting areas that are under development pressure and using funds for the best impact.

Commissioner Shrewsbury supported the opportunity to preserve the land forever.

Chair Ianni commented the property is currently private but could be valuable to the Township for walking trails if acquired for preservation.

Commissioner Scott-Craig commented the property to the east is a 55 acre sod farm. He asked Ms. Dillon what percentage of land is currently a part of the land preservation project started in 2000. The Township currently has 17% of greenspace acquired and a total of 990 acres.

Commissioner Stivers said the land has value to the Township and the additional access of the Tower Woods Preserve adjoining is also a value.

Commissioner Premoe stated if the land is so valuable then it wouldn't be sold to Meridian Township.

Motion by Commissioner Stivers to approve Commission Review #18133.
Supported by Commissioner Trezise.

VOICE VOTE:

YEAS: Commissioners Stivers, Trezise, Lane, Shrewsbury, Cordill, Scott-Craig and Chair Ianni.

NAY: Commissioners Richards and Premoe.

MOTION CARRIED: 7-2

9. Township Board, Planning Commission Officer, Committee Chair, and staff comments or Reports - None

10. Project Updates

- A. New Applications - NONE
- B. Site Plans Received - NONE
- C. Site Plans Approved - NONE

11. Public Remarks

- A. Jerry Fedewa, 5570 Okemos Road, Special Use Permit #18111 (Fedewa Holdings) asked to be added as a discussion item on the agenda for the December 10, 2018 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Fedewa will make adjustments to the proposed project and get the need for variances removed from the plan.
- B. Quenda Story, 4526 Marlborough, spoke regarding Special Use Permit #18081 and the importance of maintaining green space and preserving trees.

12. Adjournment

Commissioner Scott-Craig moved to adjourn the meeting.

Supported by Commissioner Richards.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Ianni adjourned the regular meeting at 9:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie Budzynski
Recording Secretary