

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION MINUTES

**APPROVED**

August 22, 2016

5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
Town Hall Rom, 517-853-4560

PRESENT: Chair Scott-Craig, Vice-Chair Jackson, Commissioners Van Coevering, Tenaglia, Opsommer, and Lane  
ABSENT: Commissioners Honicky, DeGroff, and Ianni  
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Scott-Craig called the work session meeting to order at approximately 6:00 P.M.

**2. Approval of agenda**

Vice-Chair Jackson moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Opsommer.

Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously

**3. Presentation**

**Principal Planner Paul Lippens, McKenna and Associates**

I. Review Accomplishments

- a. Recap of Meeting #4, Planning Commission and Board of Trustees Work Session
  - Review of activities over the last month – Future Land Use Map, metrics comments, future activities
  - Incorporated comments from the Planning Commission’s August 8, 2016 work session
- b. Project Schedule
  - 8/22/16 review of the Draft Master Plan represents the last of the joint Planning Commission and Township Board meetings
  - Next step formal Township review and adoption period

II. Explanation of the Planning Enabling Act’s adoption process

- Per Michigan law, the Planning Commission is the body responsible for making a recommendation of a draft Plan to the Township Board
- If the draft plan is acceptable, the Township Board initiates distribution and the 63-day review period
- At the end of the 63-day review period, the Planning Commission is required to hold a public hearing and recommend the Plan to the Township Board
- In Meridian township, the Township Board has assumed the ultimate legislative authority to adopt the Plan

III. Discussion: Walk Through of the Draft Plan

- Photos in flux, place-holders that may be replaced with pictures of Meridian Township over the next two month.
- Dedication to Jim Harrison, famous Michigan author, a friend of Phil McKenna, MSU grad and a 1956 graduate of Haslett High School, author of Legends of the Fall
- Review of the Table of Contents and the order of the Plan chapters—the structure of the

Plan: Action Plan, Future Land Use, Future Transportation, Community Profile, and Attachments

- Action Plan includes Overview; Legal Basis; Plan organization; Goals, Objectives and Strategies; Metrics, Measures, Benchmarks and Targets; Project Evaluation Form; and Zoning Plan
- Action Plan is the Goals and Objectives
- Metrics and measures to determine success of Plan implementation
- Project evaluation form to aid staff in determining success of Plan implementation
- Zoning Plan follows the Action plan shows how zoning categories apply to current zoning districts and suggests possibly zoning amendments
- Future Land Use Chapter includes: Future Land Use Plan, Building Types, Architectural Standards; and Urban Service Boundary
- Future Land Use chapter id's 3 mixed use core areas "Potential Intensity Change Areas" (PICA) around core areas of Okemos, Haslett and Carriage Hills, somewhat Form-based code format
- Includes building types and possible architectural standards to incorporate into zoning if desirable, a future process and may be applicable to a Form-Based code format.
- Urban Service Boundary to promote preservation of more rural character of the Township's eastern one-third
- Future Transportation Chapter includes: Future Transportation; Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathways, Public Transit, and Vehicle System
- Functional classifications have not changed. Roads controlled and developed primarily by the Ingham County Road Department with the Township's input
- Recently updated Meridian Township Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway Plan
- Includes transit recommendations from the Capitol Corridor study/plan, BRT and CATA system
- Community Profile Chapter includes: Demographics, Community Facilities, Existing Land Use, Natural Features and Open Space
- Community Profile includes snapshot of current conditions: infrastructure, land uses.
- Consultant tasked with significantly reducing the size of the plan from over 200 pages to current 100 and modernizing the Plan format
- Previously adopted Goals and Objectives presented as a strategic action plan
- Goals minimally modified during the process to incorporate Complete Streets and sustainability principles
- Section on Metrics, measures benchmarks and targets as a way to measure the success of implementation of each of the goals and objective and a guide to updating the plan
- Metric is an observable indicator of the Master Plan's objectives, measures are what data set or value will be used to evaluate metrics, benchmarks suggested basis to establish the past success levels in the Township and targets are the desired result of future activities all presented in accordance with objectives they go with
- Recommendation the Township review the process possibly every two years and adjust as necessary
- Created Project Evaluation form to assist staff to relate back to goals and objectives to record achievements in a regular way
- Zoning Plan compares FLU designations with corresponding zoning categories
- Short list of possible recommendations to update zoning
- Future Land Use chapter creates three mixed use core districts to create downtown areas. Building types and potential density scenarios for each area provided.
- Retail Market Analysis and Target Housing Analysis used to analyze the market to determine the amount of potential demand in Meridian Township

- Summaries of walkable housing and new walkable retail in each PICA. Conservative estimates of demand
- Reasonable growth projection tied to data analysis
- Each PICA has stated amount of potential housing units. Total of approximately 1100 units in all three areas, approximately 2500 people.
- Responsive to ideas of more single family residential in the PICA areas to match scale of surroundings
- Added more housing types, more single family housing types, to address work force, missing middle housing and middle income housing needs
- Future Land Use Map. Attempt to simplify the way land use is regulated in the Township
- Reduction in the total number of land use categories with idea there can be more similarity and less regulation tied to the number of categories.
- Land Use Map provides a framework for updating zoning in the future.
- Guidelines for building types and architectural standards to guide future development on based on a Michigan vernacular for walkable downtowns to assist during PICA plan review and other areas as applicable
- Urban Service Boundary location based on the Planning Commission's recommendation.
- Future transportation discussion: recommendation for new streets in PICA areas to create the walkable downtown.
- Expectation of BRT support until late into the Master Plan update process
- Access management and shared parking recommendations included
- Community profile chapter includes updated demographics; community facilities, utility and existing land use maps
- Adoption by reference of applicable documents such as Capitol Corridor report and Greenspace Plan.
- Two attachments Retail Market Analysis and Target Housing Analysis
- Chair Scott-Craig opened discussion to Planning Commission and Board members
- Reference to "Greenway" Plan should be changed to "Greenspace" Plan
- Clarification of metric targets, e.g. target for pedestrian-bicycle pathway is 100 percent of the most recent five years within the next five years.
- Focus on the "big picture" and send comments to staff regarding: ability to identify the Plan's main ideas, clear explanation of new ideas, appropriate supportive evidence in the plan, structure of the plan, the Future Land Use Map and categories, Plan format (colors sizes, photos); needed corrections, additions or omissions.
- Review measurements—do measurements match the projects, are targeted short term goals an appropriate match for projects?
- Issues related to proposed metrics: too many, lagging not leading, burden for staff, applicability, clarify establishment of benchmark, percentage increase or percentage point increase, frequency of reporting
- 200 percent is double the benchmark and 100 percent is equal to the benchmark
- 200 percent or 100 percent of what?
- A framework to be modified as go forward and gain experience.
- Possibly too many objectives to measure.
- Metrics, Measures, a generic/model evaluation tool to be adapted as move through the execution of the plan. Application will instruct ways to make them more useful. Put them in the back as appendices and not as major chapter of the plan.
- Not an arbitrary deadline. Changes can be made.
- Amending the Master Plan is not a trivial process. Get the Plan to close to desired outcome before going through the adoption process

- Several members agreed with moving Metrics to an appendix
- Revise P. 3.9 to reflect the Township Board's July 19, 2016 resolution of non-support of the BRT
- The document is missing an executive summary. Tell story, the "big picture," making a case for the conclusion. Statement explaining the Plan's intended accomplishments based on evidence—the Township's demographics, housing analysis, economic strength and sustainability. Include the Township's geographic features—square miles and the amount of undeveloped land. Refer to the "big ideas" supporting the Goals and Objectives the next 20 years: the majority of land uses in the Township are not proposed to change except where FLUM categories allow more flexibility and the creation of the three PICAs for the mixed use core areas. Demonstrate which Goals and Objectives are expected to achieve the desired outcome. The Executive Summary will tie together data and support the conclusions. Metrics are tools to get to focus on the three PICA areas.
- The Executive Summary should sell the plan by tying together evidence and changes to support the desired outcome.
- Take Metrics, benchmarks, etc. out of the plan to permit staff to modify as experience warrants.
- Leave the "metrics" policy in the plan but take execution out.
- Move tools such as "metrics" to an appendix.
- Where are the three "request for proposal" questions in the Plan—where the Township is today, where does the community want to be in the future and how will it get there? Move "community profile" to show where the Township is today. Follow-up with parts of the "action plan" including "goals and objectives," then followed by the Future Land Use chapter, zoning plan, future transportation, how to grow and how to get there and lastly insert implementation tools such as metrics.
- Clearly state development or redevelopment will be concentrated in western portion of township. Retail Market Analysis and Target Housing Analysis support this idea and evaluate the types of housing and retail needed in this area but are not fine-tuned for Meridian Township. Key to call out PICAs as redevelopment areas. Consider unintended consequences of changing FLUM categories. More detail regarding the proposed shift to form-based code. Timeline for completion. Address options for moving forward.
- Advocate for getting the Plan done before the end of the year. Agree with the need for an executive summary and include the three questions—where the Township is today, where the Township wants to be in the future and, and how to get there.
- No clear vision among stakeholders. Agrees with concentrating development in the western portion within USB. Not in support of collapsing designations. 5-14 dwelling units per acre not realistic will always request 14 du/a. Know the ultimate size of the Township for decision making. No correlation between the FLUM and P. 2.14. Density increases in the PICAs but not outside.
- Densities shown in text is accurate, the FLUM densities are incorrect and the FLUM will be corrected. Higher densities proposed as incentives for projects that could achieve affordable housing.
- Indicate in Plan highest densities for incentive to create affordable housing only.
- Affordable housing is 30% or less of qualified applicant's household income, 40% if transportation costs are included. Without incentives passing on to cost of subsidized housing to non-subsidized units thus those rents become exorbitant and result in vacancies and failed project.
- Need to move the Plan forward. The Board is making decision based on an outdated Master Plan. Support for executive summary explaining the big picture more expansively than now. Design to advise users early on in the Plan. Support for moving

tools such as metrics, evaluation form to an appendix to work with and update with experience. The plan will dictate what the Township's ultimate size. Compare map to zoning of undeveloped areas to determine additional population and if unacceptable, tweak the map.

- PICAs include build-out information.
- The Plan fulfills the Township's request and the proposed format is much more readable. Completion of the Plan is consistent with the Township Board's #2 Goal for 2016. An out-of-date FLUM impacts property owners, rezonings and land use decisions. Important to continue with schedule set forth FLUM changes. Consider FLUM changes for BL-69, Hagadorn Road adjacent to 425. Eliminate commercial encroachment by removing residential properties on Kent Street from the Okemos PICA and shown as mixed core.
- Plan states there will be no extension of services outside the USB area.
- Include process to adjust the USB in the Plan. The plan specifically say cannot happen
- Transportation chapter structure is different from of the rest. Suggestions for shared drives along Grand River. Appreciate actual renderings of specific locations in Meridian Township with changes to reflect this suggestion. Draw a picture to show impact the of change to help sell the appropriateness of Plan suggestions
- In favor of moving metrics and Project evaluation form. Permissive –staff may deem necessary to modify. Modify without modifying Master Plan. USB. Need to reach agreement on USB before sending out? PC & TB.
- The Township board must approve sending the Plan out for the 63-day review and may not send out if does not agree with portions of the Plan
- Options include the Township Board sending the draft Plan back to the Planning Commission with a request for changes or the Township Board could authorize distribution and continue to work with the Planning Commission on the USB boundary. If drastic changes are made to the Plan after 63-day review, a new notice, 63-day review period and public hearing should take place.
- Would shifting the USB require a new 63-day review period and public hearing?
- If policies are well established and not changed, lines are well established, and a new 63-day review would not be required.
- Adopt the Capitol Corridor plan by reference, the impetus for Hamilton/Okemos PICA.
- Okemos PICA requires improved transit otherwise PICA of that scale and scope not possible.
- Include pictures showing diversity of population and seasons
- Ask the public to participate by submitting pictures
- Move “building types” and “architectural standards” to the appendix. Winter pictures okay.

## 6. Public Remarks

- Neil Bowlby 6020 Beechwood, Okemos, commented on completing the Master Plan update within the terms on contract, Adding background material to the appendix, the impact of the Georgetown sewer payback district, the chart on Page 4.21, the Citizen Survey preferences, references to the BRT and the importance of public transportation and lack of reference to private transportation.
- Leonard Provencher 5824 Buena, Haslett, commented on non-motorized transportation, Complete Streets ordinance, the need for a road diet and bike lanes on Haslett Road and Central Park Drive.
- Judy Linn, 5435 Van Atta, Haslett commented on her disagreement with parts for the Master Plan, lack of references to land preservation and their potential extinction, no distinction between parks and preserves, more land preservation should take place in the eastern third of the

Township, the incorrect mapping of agricultural land.

- Bill McConnell, 4376 Manitou, Okemos, commented the Transportation section is well crafted, future development is concentrated in the PICAs using form-based coding, leaving the corridor outside of the PICAs will result in more retail behind parking lots which does not represent the vision for the corridor, Disaggregate Parks and Land Preserves in Natural Features Map which shows wetland and floodplains, make reference to the Greenspace Plan, multiple parks categories on the Community Facilities map.
- Judy Kindle 2915 Margate Lane, thanked the Planning Commission inviting comments and incorporating suggestions into Master Plan regarding renewable energy and sustainability plan for energy use; and neighborhoods around Carriage Hills shopping center pleased to be identified as one of three PICAs.
- Renee Korrey, 4633 Okemos Road, Okemos, commented on transportation not having to equate with the BRT, the BRT hitting only the northern DDA area and missing the CATA bus through downtown Okemos, Missing the bus that went through downtown Okemos.
- Doris Schwartz 2209 Kent Street, Okemos commented on the designation of residential lots on the south side of lots of Kent Street, west of Okemos Road as Mixed Use Core.
- Mary Langguth 2422 Jolly Road, Okemos commented on support for an executive summary but not for a re-write of the entire plan. Direct to locations of more detail. Keep building design.
- Vance Poquette, 2226 Kent, Okemos, asked if individual properties in the Mixed Use Core are residential, commercial or mixed use, and how binding are the maps. Suggested notification of residents subject to change in PICA areas, commented the vision of higher density may not be appropriate for every location, the Okemos PICA may not support retail which may result in large decaying mixed use buildings, expressed a preference for townhouses, encourages concepts by applied only if there is a demand for retail space, and metrics overdone.

## Adjournment

**Chair Scott-Craig adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Oranchak, AICP  
Principal Planner