

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 22, 2012**

APPROVED

**5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill, Goodale, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Jackson, Scales, Scott-Craig
ABSENT: Chair Deits, Commissioner Norikin
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

1. Call meeting to order

Vice-Chair Jackson called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Approval of agenda

Commissioner Scales moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Goodale moved to approve the Regular Meeting and Work Session Meeting Minutes of October 8, 2012. Seconded by Commissioner Cordill.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 7-0.

4. Public Remarks

Vice-Chair Jackson opened the floor for public remarks.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, addressed the unusual circumstances surrounding Board adoption of the urban services boundary. He requested the Planning Commission reconsider the Board boundary line as he believed Board inclusion of some properties was not based in fact.

Vice-Chair Jackson closed public remarks.

5. Communications

A. Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett; RE: 2005 Master Plan

6. Public hearings

A. Special Use Permit #12-68081 (Studio C), request to install changing message signs on three sides of the building addressed as 1999 Central Park Drive

Vice-Chair Jackson opened the public hearing at 7:06 P.M.

- Introduction by the Chair (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation and applicants)
- Summary of subject matter
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the special use permit request as outlined in staff memorandum dated October 18, 2012.
- Applicant

Roger Lubs, Loeks Theaters, 2121 Celebration Drive, NE, Grand Rapids, indicated the applicant went before the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance of the sign ordinance, noting the signs are actually movie poster cases which change periodically. He stated the frequency of change will vary from weekly to monthly. Mr. Lubs noted the backlit signs in the front of the building will use LED bulbs, adding the banners on the sides of the building will not be backlit, but utilize the existing wallpacks as they also assist in lighting the parking lot. He added the type of bulbs which will be used in the wallpacks is still under review.

- Planning Commission discussion:
Commissioner Goodale inquired of the applicant if the lights on the side of the building would also light the posters.

Mr. Lubs responded the lights on the side of the building originally just lit the sidewalk, parking lot and perimeter drive around the building. He added the wallpacks are metered separately and Meridian Mall Management pays for the electricity as part of its responsibility for lighting the parking lot.

Commissioner Goodale reiterated Mr. Lubs earlier statement that the type of lights for the wallpacks is still under review.

Mr. Lubs noted the type of bulb is still being considered, given the Township's dark sky policy and the allowed number of lumens.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired who has control over whether the trees which surround the building will stay.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded it is generally determined during site plan for the mall site. She added if there are issues with landscaping, staff will review those as part of the project.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired where the signs would be placed on the west side of the building and where they would shine.

Mr. Lubs responded the signs on the west side of the building are meant to inform patrons in the parking lot and patrons of the mall of up-and-coming movies for the six (6) movie screens. He noted the hope is to attract a more mature audience with only six (6) screens.

Commissioner Scott-Craig noted two trees on the east side of the building will be directly in front of the signs on that side of the building.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired if the signs naming the building will be on three (3) sides of the building.

Mr. Lubs responded the name of the theater will be only on the north and south sides of the building.

Commissioner Scott-Craig indicated it would be more advantageous for the applicant to have the name of the movie theatre visible from Okemos Road, the west side of the building.

Commissioner Scales expressed appreciation for the applicant's investment in Meridian Township through use of an existing structure. He inquired as to the life span of the poster case fixture.

Mr. Lubs answered approximately 15 years.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired if approving the SUP approves a changing message sign of any type.

Vice-Chair Jackson responded that any change in the provision of manual change of the posters would require a new SUP.

Commissioner Cordill expressed her appreciation for a movie theatre once again in Meridian.

Vice-Chair Jackson closed the public hearing at 7:26 P.M.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Special Use Permit #12-68081 (Studio C), request to install changing message signs on three sides of the building addressed as 1999 Central Park Drive
Commissioner Cordill moved to suspend Bylaw #6.4a to take action on SUP #12-68081 the same night as the public hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Scales.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Objection to suspending rules to vote on an issue the same night as the public hearing
- Rationale for the applicant's request for a vote this evening is that he was not aware that a SUP was even needed, and scheduled the business to open the first week of December
- Two week delay could affect scheduling, as the applicant hoped to have contractors work completed by November 16th
- Cooks and wait staff must spend several weeks preparing for the restaurant's opening
- Importance of having a movie theatre open for business during the holiday season
- Public hearing on this request has been publicly placed before Township residents on several occasions with no opposition
- Public support for this use of an existing structure

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 6-1 (Hildebrandt).

Commissioner Goodale moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby approves Special Use Permit #12-68081 (Studio C) with the following conditions:

1. **Approval is based on the application materials submitted by Valley City Signs dated and received October 8, 2012, subject to revisions as required.**
2. **The manually changing message signs shall not be converted to automatic or electronic changing message signs without prior approval of the Planning Commission.**
3. **Lighting associated with the changing message signs shall not flash or move in any way to animate the signs.**

Seconded by Commissioner Scales.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, Goodale, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Scales, Scott-Craig, Vice-Chair Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried 7-0.

- B. Commission Review #12053 (Planning Commission), 2005 Master Plan amendment
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the commission review as outlined in staff memorandum dated October 18, 2012.

Commissioner Cordill moved to remove Commission Review #12053 from the table. Seconded by Commissioner Hildebrandt.

Planning Commission discussion:

- Option of having the issue remain on the table until a later date when there is a full complement of the Planning Commission
- Seven (7) of the nine (9) Planning Commissioners are present this evening
- Preference for the Chair to be present as he wanted to “weigh-in” on several issues concerning the Master Plan amendment
- Importance of this decision
- Letter dated October 20th from the Planning Commission Chair indicating his viewpoint
- Commissioner preference to have the Chair present to ask several pertinent questions in response to the Chair’s letter
- Commissioner belief that the Master Plan amendment is one of the driving issues for the general election
- Township Board will not meet until two days after the general election

VOICE VOTE: Motion failed 2-5 (Commissioners Goodale, Honicky, Jackson, Scales, Scott-Craig)

8. Other Business (None)

9. Township Board, Planning Commission officer, committee chair, and staff comment or reports

Commissioner Hildebrandt noted the Red Haven Restaurant that opened on the corner of Hagadorn and Mount Hope Roads as part of the MUPUD does not have a presence on the side of the parking lot in the rear. She noted the Township’s sign ordinance required the sign to be placed on Hagadorn Road and is only seen if traveling south on Hagadorn Road.

Principal Planner Oranchak added the location of the door is problematic, as the entrance to the restaurant is in the breezeway. She stated the applicant must submit a sign program, and did not request a sign on the parking lot side of the building.

Vice-Chair Jackson added that if the applicant wanted to make a change, they could request an amendment to the MUPUD for Township review.

Principal Planner Oranchak stated the Township has already made a change in this facility.

Commissioner Cordill requested clarification of the letter written by Chair Deits regarding the Mud Lake payback district and wondered if this is the same district as Georgetown.

Principal Planner Oranchak added the Mud Lake payback district also includes areas east and west of Georgetown as well.

10. New applications (None)

11. Site plans received (None)

12. Site plans approved

- A. Site Plan Review #12-06-16 (Edgewood Village), minor amendment to add a community activity building to the site located at 6213 Towar Garden Circle

13. Public remarks

Vice-Chair Jackson opened public remarks.

Neil Bowlby, 6020 Beechwood Drive, Haslett, expressed disappointment that the Planning Commission did not send the original urban services management district to the Township Board.

Vice-Chair Jackson closed public remarks.

14. Adjournment

Vice-Chair Jackson adjourned the regular meeting at 7:51 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto
Recording Secretary