

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES  
September 28, 2009**

**APPROVED**

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

PRESENT: Chair Wilcox, Vice-Chair Reicosky, Secretary Jorkasky, Commissioners Beyea, Deits, Domas, Klemans, Honicky, Jackson, Reicosky  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Wilcox called the regular meeting to order at 7:47 P.M.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**Commissioner Deits moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Reicosky.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 9-0.

**3. Discussion**

**A. Redevelopment Zoning**

Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the Redevelopment Committee's progress as outlined in staff memorandum dated September 24, 2009.

Commission discussion

- Ordinance is an alternative to help revitalize commercial areas.
- The most effective incentives provide monetary support for redevelopment. Monetary incentives are not currently an option, left with design (setbacks, height, etc.) and timing. The draft saves about a month by eliminating a public hearing.
- Question about scaling amenities to complement the size of the project
- Agreement needed on "Purpose and Intent" to show Planning Commission support. It addresses underused, vacant and non-conforming properties.
- Incentives to encourage redevelopment; an expedited process.
- Committee discussed the role of an ombudsman to expedite the review process.
- Performance objectives and amenities sections express ordinance goals for site development.
- Amenities must add value over an above the cost of the project itself.
- Township will determine which amenities are acceptable on a case-by-case basis.
- What encouragements for developers to increase pedestrian density; accessibility for offices?
- Performance objectives #1 and #3 attempt to speak to increased pedestrian/bicycle traffic.
- Women riding bicycles a good indicator of effective non-motorized transportation policies; cars will come, focus on other modes of transportation.
- A preference for parking to the rear or sides of buildings promotes a more attractive streetscape for patrons using alternate means of transportation.
- Specific design requirements are not written into the ordinance to allow for flexibility, creativity and negotiation.
- How will this result in coordination with adjoining properties?
- Assess projects in the context of the location (gateways, Downtown Development Authority

- (DDA), most active redevelopment area) with the Master Plan, DDA plan, for example.
- C-PUD is a choice for the developer; Planning Commission and Township Board evaluate how well a plan relates to Township policies and plans. Possible sub-area plans needed to link goals and policies with specific locations.
  - The Planning Commission is removed if there is no public hearing.
  - Rather than eliminate the public hearing, require the Planning Commission make a decision the same night as the public hearing.
  - Challenging to make decisions the same night as the public hearing.
  - Potential applicants need motivation to use the option; time reduction is one incentive to use this ordinance.
  - If no public hearing, encourage Township to notify adjacent property owners.
  - Why is flexibility not enough to entice developers to use the ordinance?
  - Alternative is the Zoning Board of Appeals with no Planning Commission input for by-right projects and same-night decisions.
  - No flexibility in current ordinance.
  - Process is a huge unknown for developers. If redevelopment is a Township priority; time reduction may be enough of an incentive.
  - Leary of expedited procedure and flexibility; needs more specific standards.
  - Did not get the connection with walkability.
  - Build in cooperation.
  - More ambitious planning proposed, including sub-area plans. The ordinance satisfies the Township Board's request to the Planning Commission; it sets the stage to comprehensively address larger vision.
  - May want more specific guidelines for each geographic area of commercial zoning
  - Flexibility for commercial redevelopment without the residential component
  - Further Committee work: public input, expedited process, opportunity to fold into Planning Commission educational role, require the developer work with neighbors as one step in the C-PUD process; responsibility of the Planning Commission to educate
  - Purpose and Intent is okay as is the Procedure section which now requires more information from the developer.

#### **4. Public remarks**

Chair Wilcox opened public remarks.

Will White, 2138 Hamilton, Okemos, recommended the Planning Commission seek input from the development community.

Doris Schwartz, 2209 Kent St., Okemos, suggested keeping public notice requirement even if the public hearing at the Planning Commission is eliminated.

Vance Poquette, 2226 Kent St., Okemos, prefers retaining some specific setback dimensions to protect interests of adjacent property owners; does not support the elimination of a public hearing before the Planning Commission.

Jason Thomson, 4843 Ardmore, Okemos, supports incentives for redevelopment but not at the expense of public involvement.

Ann Alchin, 2227 Hamilton Road, Okemos, commented about eliminating a public hearing and the impact on public participation.

Chair Wilcox closed public remarks.

**5. Adjournment**

Chair Wilcox adjourned the work session meeting at 9:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Oranchak, AICP  
Principal Planner