CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos MI 48864-1198
517.853.4000, Town Hall Room
Monday, October 26, 2026, 6:30 pm

PRESENT: Chair Romback, Vice-Chair McCurtis, Commissioners Brooks, McConnell, and Nahum

ABSENT: Commissioner Shrewsbury

STAFF: Principal Planner Shorkey

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

   Chair Romback called the October 26, 2026, regular meeting for the Meridian Township Planning Commission to order at 6:30 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

   Chair Romback called the roll of the Board. All Board members were present except for Commissioner Shrewsbury and Vice-Chair McCurtis.

3. PUBLIC REMARKS

   None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

   Principal Planner Shorkey suggested moving Other Business B ahead of Other Business A.

   Commissioner McConnell moved to approve the October 26, 2026, Regular Planning Commission meeting agenda as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Nahum. Motion passed unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

   Commissioner Nahum moved to approve Minutes of the September 21, 2026 meeting as amended. Seconded by Commissioner McConnell. Motion passed unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

   Principal Planner Shorkey discussed the communication from the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. After discussion, Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would add the resolution to support the Middle Grand River Water Trail state designation to the next agenda. Vice-Chair McCurtis arrived during the discussion at 6:33.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

   A. SUP #26035 – Bridges Child Care

Principal Planner Shorkey summarized the memo in the packet. Principal Planner Shorkey complimented the application and showed the plan in the packet. Commissioner Nahum said that this was a good location and strongly supported the application.

After no comment from the public, and after a straw poll, the Planning Commission indicated support for the application. Principal Planner Shorkey said that based on the conversation, Staff would bring a resolution to recommend approval to the next meeting.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. PUD #26026 – Capstone Hannah Boulevard Apartments

Principal Planner Shorkey summarized the memo in the packet and said that based on the public hearing, a resolution to approve was in the packet. Principal Planner Shorkey complemented the Applicants for their interaction with the public.

Commissioner Nahum agreed with Principal Planner Shorkey and complemented the Applicants for their public interaction.

Commissioner Brooks discussed the application and raised concern about the amount of parking on the plan, noting environmental issues, transit issues, the cost of parking passed on to residents, and the incentivization of parking. Commissioner Brooks said that he would vote yes but that the issue of parking should be looked at for future developments.

Commissioner McConnell asked about conditions in the resolution and discussed Commissioner Brooks' comments.

Commissioner Nahum moved to adopt the resolution recommending approval of Planned Unit Development #26026 to allow for the construction of 256 new multiple-family homes on approximately 69 acres located on Hannah Parkway, subject to the conditions found in the resolution to approve. Seconded by Vice-Chair McCurtis. Motion passed unanimously.

B. SUP #26028 – New Hope Church

Principal Planner Shorkey summarized the memo in the packet and said that based on the public hearing, a resolution to approve was in the packet.

Vice-Chair McCurtis moved to adopt the resolution recommending approval of Special Use Permit #26028 to expand the church sanctuary, enlarge the parking lot, and construct new sidewalks and classrooms at 6482 Newton Road. Seconded by Commissioner Nahum. Motion passed unanimously.

C. ZA #26025 – Professional Office Updates

Principal Planner Shorkey summarized the memo in the packet and said that based on the public hearing, a resolution to approve was in the packet.

Commissioner Brooks moved to adopt the resolution recommending approval of Zoning Amendment #26025 in accordance with the revised draft ordinance language. Seconded by Commissioner McConnell. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Romback explained the text amendment and the reasoning behind it to the students in the audience.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

A. ZA #26039 – Data Center Amendment – Discussion (Discussed after Item B)

Principal Planner Shorkey summarized the memo, pointed out the draft ordinance, and discussed the history of the proposal. Principal Planner Shorkey said that there was no potential data center application nor was Staff in conversation with any potential data center applicant. Principal Planner Shorkey said that the Township Attorney would be at the November 16 meeting and that he was there to collect questions.

Commissioner McConnell said that the draft ordinance includes requirements about a decommissioning plan and asked if there are any other uses in the zoning ordinance that require a decommissioning plan. Chair Romback suggested that the full cost to decommission a data center should be required up front before a data center is approved.

Vice-Chair McCurtis asked if it is possible to simply outright ban data centers. Commissioner Nahum discussed data center approval processes and said that the State could allow one if a local municipality does not have an approval process. Discussion about data center projects. Commissioner Nahum said that the Board wanted a response on the draft ordinance by the end of the year. Vice-Chair McCurtis asked how restrictive the Planning Commission could be. Commissioner McConnell said that on first reading, the draft ordinance addresses typical concerns.

Commissioner Nahum asked if there examples of data center ordinance from other communities. Chair Romback discussed cost neutrality and asked if the ordinance be drafted to get "cost neutrality" to residents.

Commissioner McConnell asked what the difference is between a closed loop cooling system versus a recycled water system. Chair Romback asked for the study for the community impact analysis to be an independent study paid for by the applicant. Discussion about development reviews, after which Chair Romback suggested adding the word "independent."

Principal Planner Shorkey showed the Township zoning map and showed where the Industrial zoning areas are. Commissioner McConnell discussed the uses on Dawn Avenue and suggested a data center might not be out of place. Commissioner Nahum discussed sizes of data centers and said that he was worried that it would over regulate and asked what is the minimum size for a data center to be regulated.

Commissioner Brooks discussed data centers and asked if the ordinance too restrictive and limiting potential business opportunities. Commissioner Brooks suggested allowing data centers or BESS in the PO district. Commissioner Brooks said that the draft ordinance feels so restrictive as to prohibit development of data centers and asked if different sizes of data centers were looked at when drafting the ordinance.

Commissioner McConnell discussed server rooms and said that businesses in professional offices can exceed 50 square feet. Commissioner McConnell said that he wanted to hear more about what current operations have for current data centers and brought up the Delta Dental building as an example. Commissioner Nahum suggest that the Planning Commission does not want to impact existing systems. Discussion about current systems and how to define different data centers.

Chair Romback asked if there are any model data center ordinances. Principal Planner Shorkey said not yet. Commissioner Nahum asked if data centers can be regulated by data usage and 50 square foot is way too small. Commissioner Brooks asked about proposed data center requirements and asked what other projects have similar requirements.

Commissioner Brooks discussed the requirement for a "Threat Assessment and Risk Mitigation" and said that he was not interested in the proposed surveillance requirements. Further discussion about proposed data center regulations.

Commissioner Brooks asked about electromagnetic interference and asked if could be more restrictive; there is an option for applicants to describe why they cannot meet requirements, but can the ordinance say that applicants must meet requirements. Commissioner McConnell suggested deleting language allowing applicants options and that electromagnetic interference be grounds for denial.

Commissioner Nahum asked about noise restrictions and asked if there is existing language regulation decibels and suggested that 55 decibels is not restrictive enough. Commissioner Brooks asked if the standards as written apply to data centers and BESS. Commissioner Brooks asked if BESS are only acceptable attached to a data center.

Chair Romback asked if there is a fire at a data center, is Meridian Township Fire in a position to handle today. Chair Romback suggested that if the risk assessment indicates that equipment upgrades are necessary for Township agencies, we make the applicant fund that equipment upgrade.

Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would schedule a public hearing for the proposed amendment for the November 16 Planning Commission agenda.

B. ZA #26040 – Hard Cider Production in the RR District – Discussion (Discussed before Item A)

Principal Planner Shorkey summarized the memo and discussed the history of the proposed text amendment.

Vice-Chair McCurtis asked if hard cider was alcoholic and if it required an alcoholic permit. Principal Planner Shorkey introduced the applicant to discuss licensing procedures. Chair Romback asked if the floor should be opened and discussed procedure and opened the floor to the applicants.

Mr. Keenan Gibbons and Mr. Sam Decamp spoke about the application. Mr. Decamp said that the license would be a small wine maker license and required municipal approval and zoning compliance. Principal Planner Shorkey pointed out the proposed conditions. Commissioner Brooks discussed Burgdorf Winery and asked about that township's ordinances. Commissioner Brooks asked about Red Cedar Distillery. Principal Planner Shorkey discussed the differences between the proposed cider facility and Bergdorf and Red Cedar.

Sam Decamp discussed the differences between distilling and hard cider and said that hard cider is considered wine by the State. Mr. Gibbons noted that the conditions prohibit public consumption and Mr. Decamp said that public consumption was not his intent.

Commissioner Nahum asked if this was allowed by right in the Agricultural district; further discussion about the Agriculture district.

Commissioner Brooks said that this activity is happening around the Township and that he sees no issue with the amendment and pointed out other agricultural businesses. Chair Romback agreed and suggested that the proposed conditions are too restrictive. Commissioner McConnell agreed and asked about the history of the apples on the property. After discussion, Commissioner McConnell asked about the expected production. Mr. Decamp said that he is processing about 800 pounds of apples, hoping to increase to thousands of pounds but would need to grow more apples. Commissioner McConnell asked what happened to the byproducts. Mr. Gibbons said that they were working with EGLE and that it would act as compost and fertilizer. Mr. Decamp further discussed the waste process.

Mr. Gibbons asked if the draft could still be changed based on the discussion. Principal Planner Shorkey said the Planning Commission could make suggestions. Chair Romback discussed the conditions and suggested potential changes. Commissioner Nahum suggested removing restrictions for tasting rooms. After discussion, Principal Planner Shorkey suggested that tasting rooms sounded appropriate, based on the conversation, but that restaurants and event centers were too intense for the intent.

Commissioner Brooks asked about the time frame for the applicants. Commissioner Brooks asked about other uses for the public and asked for a potential scope of activities. Commissioner Brooks asked Principal Planner Shorkey to discuss current business uses allowed in the Rural Residential district.

Commissioner Nahum suggested striking sections E through I from the proposed conditions and adding some of the struck subjects as Special Uses. Chair Romback asked for another discussion of the draft amendment before a public hearing. Commissioner Brooks agreed and asked Principal Planner Shorkey about Township alcohol licensing.

Discussion about next steps ensued. Commissioner Brooks asked for related information from Williamston Township.

After discussion, Principal Planner Shorkey said that he would include the proposed amendment, reflecting the proposed changes, on the November 16 Planning Commission agenda for further discussion.

10. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Township Board Update

Principal Planner Shorkey updated the Planning Commission on recent Board activity and said that a new Planning Commissioner was joining the Commission in December.

B. Liaison Reports

Commissioner Nahum said that the Zoning Board of Appeals had nothing to report.

11. PROJECT UPDATES

    Principal Planner Shorkey said that the project report had one update and said that he attended the ribbon cutting for BB.Q Chicken.

12. PUBLIC REMARKS

    None

13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

    None.

14. ADJOURNMENT

    Chair Romback called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

    Commissioner Nahum moved to adjourn the October 26, 2026 regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Seconded by Vice-Chair McCurtis. Motion passed unanimously at 8:24.