



## **ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 19, 2023 REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 5:30 p.m., at the Ada Township Hall Assembly Room, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada Michigan.

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Co-Chair Butterfield called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Burton, Butterfield, Easter, Heglund, Jacobs, Moyer

Members Absent: Korth

Staff Present: Bajdek, Buckley, Moran, Said, Suchy

Others Present: 22

### **III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Easter, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 15, 2022, REGULAR MEETING**

Moved by Burton, supported by Heglund, to approve the December 15, 2022, minutes as presented. Motion carried.

### **V. PUBLIC HEARING**

- 1. Special Use Permit to expand the existing Preschool thru Fifth Grade Private Elementary School Facilities to include Sixth thru Eighth Grades, St. Robert of Newminster Catholic School, 6477 Ada Drive SE, Parcel No. 41-15-33-101-027**

*Moyer arrived at the meeting at 5:31 p.m.*

Commissioner Jacobs disclosed that Warner Norcross and Judd was representing St. Robert's and she is employed by Warner Norcross and Judd but she has no involvement with the practice group on this subject and said she felt she could be fair and impartial. The Planning Commissioners concurred that it was not necessary for Jacobs to recuse herself.

Jim Rabaut, Warner Norcross and Judd, said he was representing the Diocese of Grand Rapids and the St. Robert's Parish and introduced Liz Peters, Principal at St. Robert's. Mr. Rabaut stated that back in 2018 they requested a Special Land Use permit to operate the school and at that time they addressed a fair amount of traffic concerns which resulted in a number of requirements for The Diocese/St. Robert's to meet; site and parking, school capacity, provide a center left turn lane, widen driveway access, and other Special Use standards.

Mr. ~~Rebaut~~ Rabaut said the St. Robert's Special Use Request proposes to expand the existing school to add grades 6 through 8 with interior space adjustments and increased student capacity. Liz Peters shared that the school has slowly grown over the past 5 years, which started with 45 students and now has 108 students. She requested the Planning Commission to approve the proposed Special Use expansion that would allow St. Robert's to continue to enhance the community with their school and the students growing up there.

Co-Chair Butterfield opened the public hearing at 5:39 p.m.

Chad Bassett, 6391 Ada Drive, lives directly west of the church, shared his concern for the church traffic and said there was a lot of congestion/close calls on Ada Drive during church service times.

There was no other public comment and the public hearing was closed at 5:40 p.m.

There was Commissioner discussion regarding the flow of traffic on Ada Drive and related traffic concerns, student transportation via car drop-off/pickup (Ms. Peters confirmed that there were no students walking to school), teacher meeting times/locations, and whether to apply conditions to the increased number in student population.

Moved by Easter, supported by Heglund, to approve the Special Use request to expand the existing school, St. Robert of Newminster Catholic School at 6477 Ada Drive SE, subject to the following conditions:

1. This Special Use approval is for the existing building only, specifically for expansion of the school to include Grades 6 through 8, and for a student population not to exceed 225 students. Any expansion of the school building or to the student population beyond this number shall require an amended Special Use review.
2. Any other significant traffic-generating activities at the campus shall be scheduled with at least 30 minutes of separation time from the beginning and end of student drop-off and pickup times.

Motion carried.

## **VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **1. Proposed Text Amendments to the Planned Village Mixed-Use (PVM) Overlay District regarding allowed Departures from District Standards**

Planning Director Said recapped the Planning Commission that the proposed amendment was tabled at the last meeting. Said explained that the Planning Commission liked the idea of a joint special meeting with the DDA to review these topics and he was working with the DDA and Planning Commissioner schedules to obtain joint meeting dates. The proposed amendment remains tabled until the joint meetings take place.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

1. **PVM District Development Plan, with departures, for proposed apartment house lot type with 13 total dwelling units including five ground floor live-work units, 7247, 7257, and 7267 Bronson Street SE, Parcel Nos. 41-**

**15-34-103-011, 41-15-34-103-012, and 41-15-34-103-013, Let Us Development, LLC**

Chip Clark, Dixon Architecture, said he was representing Joel Harner with Let Us Development, LLC, and they were proposing a development for a live-work apartment house. Mr. Clark explained the project proposes two buildings with parking access off of Bronson Street with 13 total apartment units, including 5 that will be live-work types. He said the ultimate goal was to create a housing option that does not exist in the village proper by taking a multi-family higher density housing type and nesting against the village core of Ada within the PVM District.

Mr. Clark described the proposed 13 dwelling units, with the 5 ground floor live-work units, covered patios and balconies, parking spaces, building exterior appearance, and the departures they were requesting (as referenced in the staff memo).

Planning Director Said explained that he received three pieces of written correspondence regarding the proposed project and he summarized them:

- 1.) Cindy Janes, 1071 Honeycreek Avenue, shared her concerns with this proposal with details about the history within Ada and that she was not in favor of demolishing the old homes and replacing with new, non-historic, structures.
- 2.) Margaret Idema, 7213 Bronson Street, identified concerns with apartment buildings in residential neighborhood being a departure from the nature of Bronson Street, and she felt the area should remain all single-family homes. She was not in favor of the overall size and setbacks of the proposed project. Ms. Idema shared that she felt action should be postponed until a joint meeting of the DDA and Planning Commission take place.
- 3.) Tom Korth, Planning Commission Chairperson, wrote that 6 years ago that area of the PVM District was changed from Village Proper 1 to Village Proper 2, which Village Proper 2 restricts more of the allowable uses/lot types as single-family. He also shared concerns about the departure from the PVM code raised a question of consistency of purpose and intent of allowing an apartment building. His letter concluded that he regrets having to miss the meeting and he believed that action should be postponed until the joint meeting takes place between the DDA and Planning Commission.

There was Commissioner discussion and shared concerns regarding the scale/size, setbacks, and departures requested of the proposed project. Heglund said the project seemed pretty major on a quaint residential street. Jacobs stated that she felt the project was not the density solution for Bronson Street. The Commissioners concurred to give the public an opportunity to speak about the project. Co-Chair Butterfield opened the floor for public comment.

Margaret Idema, 7213 Bronson Street, immediate neighbor of the proposed project and DDA member, said the project does not fit the neighborhood and she was not in favor of it. As her note said earlier, she said a decision needed to be tabled for further discussion.

Jennifer Czekai, 7365 Bronson Street, shared concern of taking the charm away from Bronson Street and keeping it a smaller community of single-family homes. She also shared concerns of parking and added traffic.

Marilyn Thompson, 7148 Thornapple River Drive, said she has lived there for 52 years and has seen a lot of changes in the past 5 years. She said she thinks the project is wrong for the area and is disappointed that the quaintness is being destroyed in Ada.

Bernie Veldkamp, 5580 Hall Street, referenced the PVM District Departure Specifications and their purpose and intent. He said that having that many people in that small of an area, in probably the densest corner of the Village, would create many problems and he would rather look for proposed alternatives/single-family homes.

Noelle Divozzo, 7115 Bronson Street, said she agrees with the comments made by the neighbors and shared concerns with the projects that are already going on in the Village; Village East apartment complex, the Mosaic development, and Fase Street developments.

Christopher Czekai, 7365 Bronson Street, said the project is not fitting with the charm and character of Bronson Street and would like to see it stay as single-family homes.

Frank Swanson, 7212 Thornapple River Drive, said he agrees with what all the neighbors have said and that the proposed building does not fit within the residential area.

There was no other public comment.

Chip Clark, addressed some of the concerns that were shared: The overall density – he explained this was a large lot combined from two residential lots, not a subdivision of lots; intent of the PVM was to create a transition between the village core and single-family housing; and appreciated the concept/reason for the joint DDA/Planning Commission meeting to go over the transect overlays and densities being allowed.

Moved by Easter, supported by Jacobs, to table a decision on the Bronson Street Development Plan. Motion carried by roll call vote 6-0, with 1 absent.

## **VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER / STAFF REPORTS**

### **1. Planning Commission Schedule/Calendar**

Said requested the Commissioners to review the proposed calendar for meeting dates for the fiscal year 2023-2024.

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Burton, to approve the 2023-2024 meeting dates for the Planning Commission. Motion carried.

Said shared a few updates\*:

\* Said introduced MSU Graduate Student, Kole Nicholoff, who was visiting Ada Township for the day. Said shared that he was mentoring Kole and that Kole expressed interest in Transportation and Planning/Zoning, so they spent the day touring Ada Township and were able to join the ABA for their luncheon.

\* Said noted that the next community meeting/public workshop for the Master Plan was Thursday, February 9, 2023, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. and Progressive AE plans to introduce the first draft. Said also informed that he was hoping to have Progressive AE present their Master Plan Update to the

Planning Commission at the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup>.

\* Ada Township received notice from Cascade Township that they were beginning the process to amend their Master Plan.

\* There is training available on Planning and Zoning essentials for the Commissioners via virtual or in-person and he would pass along details in an email.

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Margaret Idema, 7213 Bronson Street, requested clarification for the purpose of the joint meeting to take place between the DDA and Planning Commission. Planning Director Said explained the purpose was to review/check-up on the PVM Overlay District and get input from the DDA.

Tom Reed, The Caves, 4920 East Fulton Street, said he recently purchased the Anderson Building and has been working on a site plan of the development/layout and has requested a second Pre-Application Conference/review with the Planning Commission to assist with some development issues.

Said explained that Mr. Reed indicated a change in the plan from when it was last reviewed in October at a Pre-Application Conference. Said noted that the request for a second Pre-Application review was submitted that afternoon and that Planning Staff would review and discuss the process with the Chair, Mr. Korth, and their direction would be addressed within the process as stated in the zoning ordinance.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Easter, to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jacqueline Smith, Ada Township Clerk

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