



ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF THE MEETING FEBRUARY 20, 2025, REGULAR MEETING

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 5:30 p.m., at the Ada Township Hall, 7330 Thornapple River Drive, Ada, Michigan.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair VanderVennen called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Butterfield, Cooper-Surma, Kluting, Moyer, VanderVennen

Members Absent: Carter, Ellixson-Andrews

Staff Present: Bajdek, Buckley, Said

Others Present: 3 members of the public

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Moyer, supported by Kluting, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 16, 2025, REGULAR MEETING

In reviewing the meeting minutes, it was noted by two Commissioners that minor typographical errors (apostrophes inserted) on pages 2 and 3. It was moved by Butterfield, supported by Kluting, to approve the amended January 16, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes (apostrophes removed). Motion carried.

V. PUBLIC HEARING - none

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Planning Commission Bylaws – Proposed Revisions

Planning Director Said stated the Bylaw revisions were presented at the meeting in January, Chair VanderVennen was absent, and the Commissioners in attendance opted to table the matter to give the Chair an opportunity to discuss the preference for retaining existing language requiring Chair approval of Commission agendas.

Said noted some of the minor changes proposed; meeting cancellation process, Commissioner resignation process, Chair approval of the agenda, and referred to the draft copy with the proposed changes noted in red.

There was brief discussion regarding the cancellation process or modifying meeting dates, and the details about the affirmative vote of 2/3 majority required for any part of the Master Plan vs. simple majority vote of the Planning Commission.

Moved by Moyer, supported by Cooper-Surma, to approve the proposed Bylaws with revisions and note that Staff will confirm with Township legal counsel the State law language on (Section 2 Meetings, E-Voting, number 1) whether the 2/3 majority voting have to be present or not.

Motion carried.

2. Possible Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Renewable Energy Ordinance (CREO)

Said noted at the January 16 meeting he introduced information regarding a new State law that allows development of large-scale solar and wind farms (and storage facilities) without regulation by local governmental authorities, as long as certain requirements are followed. Said explained the details on the energy storage process and that local governments may enact ordinance requirements (such as the model CREO-Compatible Renewable Energy Ordinance) regulating location and allowing local review process of such projects. There was Commissioner conversation at that time, and they requested a sample CREO be provided and inquired about what is considered a large-scale project.

Said researched their inquiries and referred to the staff memo that includes a sample CREO and explained the general estimates concerning the amount of land needed. Said requested the Planning Commission direction on whether or not to pursue adoption of a CREO as a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance or await conclusion of legal action from the State prior to further action.

There was Commissioner discussion about the clarification that the new ordinance would allow for Township local review, but no authority to allow such a project, only allows for awareness of the projects to the Ada community. The CREO ordinance would at least give the Planning Commission the opportunity for a public hearing to provide awareness to Ada residents.

The Planning Commission unanimously supported pursuing adoption of a CREO ordinance as a part of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite process.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Site Plan Review for Chief Hazy Cloud Park Trail parking, Kent County Parks, Brian Mulligan, 869 Pettis Avenue NE, Property Owner County of Kent, Parcel No. 41-15-20-200-018

Ben Swayze, Parks Director, and Brian Mulligan, Parks Landscape Architect, presented their request.

Mr. Swayze said they are excited about this project and that Chief Hazy Cloud is a great example of a partnership between the county and the township. He explained that Kent County Parks is working with Ada and other entities on the Grand River Greenway, which extends an existing trail in Ottawa County that will go completely through Kent County. Chief Hazy Cloud is the center of the section that Kent County Parks is working on; which includes the shared-use path, park to park bridge, trailhead parking areas, nature trails, and equestrian trail throughout the park.

Mr. Mulligan went over the plans for the proposed parking lot and explained that the lot would have 20 paved parking spaces for passenger vehicles and 6-8 spaces for truck and horse trailers.

The driveway entrance will have a left turn lane that lines up with Egypt Valley Road.

Said made note on items mentioned in the Staff report: the vehicle parking area has no exterior lighting and does not have a gate (if there is need for a gate the Parks could install one), the parking lot will be put on a snow clearing rotation, and the site does not appear to be in the floodplain. Said referred to the landscape plan and noted the Parks planted many trees along the edge of the parking area that enhances the area.

Said stated based on the applicable site plan review standards, Staff has no objections to approval of the site plan, subject to two conditions about lighting fixtures and obtaining a stormwater permit.

There was Commissioner discussion regarding no exterior lighting, the addition of equestrian trails, no restroom facilities at this time, trash receptacles, equine parking standards, park maintenance, and signage for the parking lot.

Mr. Mulligan responded to some of the Commissioner questions/concerns: exterior lighting unnecessary as the park only operates from 7AM to Sunset, rest room facilities will be provided when the park-to-park bridge project is completed (temporary port-o-potty can be provided as necessary), and confirmed that Kent County Parks is responsible for the maintenance of all the trails and parking lot at Chief Hazy Cloud (Ada to provide rotation snow clearing).

Moved by Moyer, supported by Kluting, to approve the site plan, subject to the following conditions:

1. Any lighting fixtures installed in the future shall be "full-cutoff" fixtures to control light emission, subject to approval of the Planning Department. Fixture specifications shall be submitted for approval for all lighting fixtures, prior to issuance of a permit.
2. The applicant shall obtain a stormwater permit within sixty (60) days of Planning Commission approval of the site plan.

Motion carried.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER / STAFF REPORTS

Said mentioned the Grant approval received from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and that Staff will be proceeding with the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite process.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

One individual (member of the public) spoke to say they were there to observe the process and procedures of a Planning Commission meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Kluting, supported by Moyer, to adjourn the meeting at 6:19 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo DeMarco, Ada Township Clerk

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