

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2019 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, February 21, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, MI.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Burton, Butterfield (arrived at 7:06 p.m.), Carter, Easter, Jacobs, Leisman

Absent: Lunn

Staff Present: Ferro, Winczewski

Public Present: 1 Member

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Easter, supported by Carter, to approve the agenda as written. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2019 MEETING

Moved by Carter, supported by Burton, to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2019 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Proposed Capital Improvements Plan, 2019 – 2024

Planning Director, Ferro, summarized the Proposed Capital Improvements Plan handouts which were given to the Planning Commission.

Ferro brought attention to the Public Safety Fund stating that it is one of the voter-approved millage-supported funds that supports extra contracted sheriff department coverage and it pays for the Township's fire protection services. Based on the historical and projected revenues and operating costs, and the projects they would like to undertake, the projections show that there are insufficient funds to undertake all the desired projects. Ferro stated this concern was brought up during last year's Planning Commission review of the Capital Improvements Plan. The Planning Commission communicated this concern to the Township Board at that time.

Easter asked who was ultimately responsible for making sure the Township stays within the budget. Ferro stated it is the Township Board. Ferro pointed out that his recommendation, as stated in his memo to the Planning Commission, is for the Planning Commission to approve the proposed CIP as drafted, but include communication to the Township Board a recommendation that a committee or task force be immediately charged with developing a financial sustainability plan for the Public Safety Fund.

Burton inquired about money being set aside each year for the purchase of a new firetruck. Ferro confirmed that money is being set aside, however, the funds set aside are included in the Public Safety Fund balance. As of this year, funds assigned towards the firetruck will need to be used for operating expenses.

Jacobs stated she will bring up the Planning Commission's concerns to the Township Board at the next meeting.

Ferro noted the planned maintenance projects for the Township Hall. Easter raised concerns about putting money into the current building when a new one may be built. Ferro stated a Space Needs Study

is planned for this year. The Study will look at the Township's future space needs and if the needs can be met in the current building.

Burton asked if the Township is looking at purchasing property for a new Township Hall. She noted that available land is disappearing. Ferro stated a few ideas have been discussed, one being the property on the south side of Headley Street, where the library was originally going to be built.

Easter asked how much most Township's hold in their General Fund as "unassigned" reserves. Ferro stated 25-50% is what is recommended by the Township's auditing consultant. Easter stated that Ada Township has reserves which are 153% of total general fund expenditures. Easter questioned why there is a high amount of reserves in the bank as she feels that is not why people pay taxes. Easter stated that there should be a public outcry if the General Fund continues to be so high.

Ferro noted that revenue sharing is likely to increase with the 2020 census but that is not included in the CIP projections.

It was moved by Easter, supported by Burton, to recommend approval of the proposed Capital Improvements Plan, 2019-2024, as drafted, with an additional recommendation that an appropriate committee or task force be immediately charged with developing a financial sustainability plan for the Public Safety Fund. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

VII. NEW BUSINESS - None

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER / STAFF REPORTS

1. Options for Preserving Historic Buildings in the Village

Ferro stated a Historic District Study Committee was formed in 2006. Several meetings were held at that time and Ross Leisman was engaged as a consultant to provide legal guidance in the process of creating a historic district. A formal inventory of historic resources prepared by a qualified person in conformance with the evaluation criteria referenced in the State law was never completed for the potential district. The Planning Commission does not necessarily need to be involved in this process. The leadership on what direction to take on this should come from the Township Board.

Leisman stated having a Historic District gives the Township an inventory of what to protect. Leisman requested feedback from the Township Board and asked Ferro and Jacobs to bring this to the Board's attention.

2. Proposed Landscaping Changes for Ada Hospital for Animals, 1770 Grand River Dr. NE

Ferro stated that when the original site plan for Ada Hospital for Animals came to the Planning Commission years ago, the approved site plan contained a note indicating that existing arborvitae shrubs along the road frontage would be preserved. Now they are asking to remove the arborvitae. Ferro stated he is seeking guidance as to whether the proposed shrub removal should come before the Commission for approval of a revised site plan. Commissioners discussed and agreed that a revised site plan is not necessary. The Planning Department can use their discretion and handle this request.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

X. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Smith, Ada Township Clerk