



ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF THE MEETING JUNE 12, 2025, REGULAR MEETING

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, June 12, 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, Carter, Ellixson-Andrews, Kluting, Moyer, VanderVennen

Members Absent: Cooper-Surma

Staff Present: Bajdek, Buckley, Said

Others Present: 7 members of the public

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 15, 2025, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Moyer, supported by Carter, to approve the May 15, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes. Motion carried.

V. PUBLIC HEARING - none

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Request for Site Plan Review to allow for an accessory building in the front yard; RP-2 zoning district, applicant & property owner Andrea Arnold, 2474 Grand River Drive NE, Parcel No. 41-15-07-100-041

Andrea Arnold, applicant, presented her request for an accessory building to allow for additional storage space for garage overflow. She described the location of the accessory building and said it is the only possible area for the building due to sloping and erosion and referred to the pictures in the packet showing that the building matches the appearance of the home and that it is barely visible from the road. Ms. Arnold further explained that the accessory building was constructed without Township zoning approval, but she was not aware that was required, so she reached out to Planning and Zoning Staff for proper application review.

Zoning Administrator/Planner Bajdek summarized the Staff Report and said the applicant is seeking site plan approval to allow a 200 sq. ft. accessory structure in the front yard on the northwestern

corner of the property. Bajdek noted that the onsite placement of the structure at 29 feet from the front property line and 32 feet from side property line do not satisfy the required 50-foot front and side yard setback requirements; a request for variances has been submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) from the subject setbacks and is scheduled to be heard at their July 1, 2025 meeting. The building meets all other dimensional requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Bajdek said the building was constructed without the Township zoning approval, though a building permit is not required for buildings 200 sq. ft. or less. Bajdek concluded that given the applicable standards for site plan review, Staff has no objections to approval of the proposed accessory building, based on the request meets the applicable site plan review standards, and subject to the required front and side yard setback variances being granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

VanderVennen opened the public hearing at 5:38 p.m.

Mike Peskin, 2510 Grand River Dr., lives north of the applicant, said that he was at the meeting to object to the proposed accessory building but realizes the objection is not related to the Planning Commission's process and will attend the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on July 1 to object to the variance request.

VanderVennen closed the public hearing at 5:40 p.m.

There was Commissioner discussion regarding the existing tree coverage of the accessory building, concern was mentioned about exterior storage outside of the building, and Staff went over clarification on the procedure process for the ZBA variances.

Moved by Ellixson-Andrews, supported by Carter, to approve the proposed accessory building, based on the findings of fact that the request meets the applicable plan review standards, and subject to the required front and side yard setback variances being granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Motion carried.

2. Request for Final PUD (Planned Unit Development) approval for a commercial warehouse/storage facility; I Industrial zoning district, The Caves LLC, Tom Reed, 4900 and 4920 Fulton Street East, Parcel Nos. 41-15-30-300-019 and 41-15-30-300-020

Tom Reed, applicant and owner of The Caves, gave a summary on the PUD process he has pursued for the past couple years. Mr. Reed requested review and approval of the Final PUD, which includes the building, building layouts, the setback issues, the parking, and the use. He noted the agreement received from the Township regarding the water and sewer service and that condition of approval #7 should be removed from the final approval.

Planning Director Said went over the items addressed previously during the preliminary PUD process (building layout, setbacks, engineering plans). Said summarized that the applicant requests final approval of a PUD for this site with an expansion to include new buildings, revisions to previously-approved buildings, related site changes, and to unify the adjacent parcel at 4900 Fulton (former Anderson site) with the preexisting property, 4920 Fulton, to a unified development area.

Said noted items for Planning Commission review and reiterated that the outdoor trailer parking/storage area must be paved, per Township Ordinance. Said also noted the Township

Board agreement (documented via a Township Resolution) that Mr. Reed's project would not be required to connect to the municipal sewer. He said that Staff has no objections to the final approval of this request based on the applicable standards.

There was Commissioner discussion regarding condition of approval on stormwater and the clarity on the language on condition #2 (allowed uses vs. prohibited uses), and the Commissioners concurred that the existing landscape as proposed is acceptable.

Moved by Carter, supported by Moyer, to approve the Final PUD, based on findings of fact that the request is consistent with the preliminary PUD and the applicable PUD Standards, and based on the following conditions of approval (as discussed in this meeting):

1. The approved PUD Plan shall be carried out in substantial conformance with the plans prepared by Callen Engineering, Inc., as follows:
 - Existing Conditions Plan, dated 03-13-25, by Bruce A. Callen/Callen Engineering, Inc.;
 - Site Plan and Grading, Drainage, and SESC Plan, both dated 05-06-25, by Bruce A. Callen/Callen Engineering, Inc.;
 - Cross Sections, Notes, and Details Plan; dated 03-13-25, by Bruce A. Callen/Callen Engineering, Inc.
 - Landscape Plan, dated 05-06-25, by Bruce A. Callen/Callen Engineering, Inc.
2. The following use restrictions shall apply to this PUD:

The following uses, and no others, are allowed in this PUD:

- a. Light assembly, Light or small-scale fabrication with on-site staff/worker presence of no more than 3 people per unit. Light fabrication to be assembly/conversion/manufacture of already processed raw materials into products, where the operation aspects of these processes and the materials to be used will not cause impacts on surrounding areas or the community overall. Examples include, but not be limited to artisan/craft products, clothing and fabrics, furniture and fixtures, cabinetry, media production, printing/publishing and the like. This limitation shall not apply to the building at 4900 Fulton.
- b. Contractor offices/workshops, with on-site staff/worker presence of no more than 3 people per unit. This limitation shall not apply to the building at 4900 Fulton.
- c. Indoor storage and self-storage.
- d. Outdoor trailer storage in designated areas only as shown on approved site plan.
- e. Research and testing.
- f. Wholesale/Distribution type business with no retail.

The following uses are specifically prohibited in this PUD:

- a. Production, sales, storage, or distribution of any food or beverage products.

- b. Engine/automotive/vehicular service, repair, of any kind.
- c. Manufacturing or anything beyond light or small-scale Fabrication, of any kind.
- d. Uses that require water usage as part of assembly activities.
- e. On-site retail sales of any kind.
- f. Outdoor storage of any materials, etc.
- g. Vehicle fleet storage, maintenance and fueling facilities.
- h. Churches.
- i. Day care centers.
- j. Public and private use heliports.
- k. Antenna towers and masts for cellular phone and other personal communications services.

The Township, through its Zoning Administrator, reserves the right to review and any proposed uses not specifically identified in the I District or in the categories noted herein, and either approve or deny such uses based on consistency with the PUD. The applicant, and/or the Zoning Administrator, may refer such proposals to the Planning Commission to approve or deny the request based on consistency with the PUD.

- 3. Prior to the issuance of any permit, the applicant shall obtain a stormwater permit from the Township, and shall obtain Township Engineer approval of the proposed stormwater plan.
- 4. Permits for on-site potable well and on-site waste disposal system shall be issued by the Kent County Health Department, prior to issuance of any building permits.
- 5. Building wall-mounted exterior lighting shall be limited to one fixture per unit service entry door, plus one additional fixture per building at a location determined by the applicant, with the exception that no fixtures shall be installed along the east wall of buildings along the east edge of the property. All fixtures, whether wall-mounted on buildings or freestanding, shall be full horizontal cutoff fixtures mounted in a vertical downward position. No light shall spill over onto adjacent properties.
- 6. Prior to the issuance of any permits, the applicant shall complete a lot combination request to merge 4900 and 4920 Fulton.
- 7. No signs are approved with this request.

Motion carried.

3. PVM District Development Plan Amendment with Departures (request to change a previous condition of approval); C1/PVM zoning district, applicant Outdoor Lighting Perspectives, property owner Salhadar Holdings LLC, 7210 Headley Street SE, Parcel No. 41-15-34-101-042

Rob Clark, applicant with Outdoor Lighting Perspectives, 5241 Plainfield Ave., also 221 Dogwood Ave., presented the request for a change in the lighting style. Mr. Clark said the type of lighting they work with is architectural up lighting. He explained the reason they prefer that type of lighting is that you see the affect, the building, the architecture, and you don't see the source. He said that on a lot of modern commercial and residential buildings, your eye is drawn to the source of the light and not to the building itself and with such a beautiful building as Dr. Samy's, they want to showcase that.

Mr. Clark listed other buildings in Ada that have this type of lighting and that it is low voltage, landscape style lighting and is in compliance with all dark skies restrictions and limitations. He said they would like to use the lighting on the building to enhance the architecture.

Said stated that this request is a change to a previous condition of approval for this project, along with a departure from the PVM Overlay District requirements for lighting. The condition of approval, regarding lighting, was included with the previously approved PVM Development Plan for the subject site.

Said explained that the applicant requests that condition of approval 2.e., which reads as follows, be omitted from the approval: "The applicant shall provide lighting plans consistent with applicable requirements and shall obtain Township Staff approval prior to the issuance of any building permit. All exterior light fixtures, both building-mounted and pole-mounted, shall be full-cutoff to control light emission, and subject to approval by Township Staff prior to issuance of a building permit."

Said noted that this request also necessitates a request for a departure from the applicable PVM Standards, which states the following: "Floodlighting shall not be used to illuminate building walls (i.e., no up-lighting)."

Said stated these requests are not consistent with the overall spirit and intent of the PVM Overlay District requirements. Per the applicant's request, the uplighting is being requested to highlight the building's appearance and to emphasize the business sign, yet no other building in the PVM Overlay District has a similar arrangement. Staff believes that approval of this application could set a poor precedent for future such requests and in conclusion, Staff does not support the request.

There was Commissioner discussion regarding the current lighting at the Library and other sites in the PVM Overlay District, an explanation was received from Mr. Clark regarding the change in lighting (fixture projection on LED vs. halogen bulbs), and the Commissioners concurred that it may be a good idea to review/reconsider the PVM Standards for future projects.

Bajdek referenced the other lighting option; full cutoff, low intensity lighting. Carter mentioned concern with all the time and efforts that went into develop the PVM Standards. Kluting noted that the PVM language specifically says no uplighting (since 2011). VanderVennen stated though the lighting does look nice, he feels his job as a Planning Commissioner is to uphold the laws of the Township.

VanderVennen opened the public hearing at 6:28 p.m.

Marie Clark, 221 Dogwood, said she understands the rules and the reason why boundaries/standards are put in place; however, the effect of the proposed lighting is so classy and beautiful and will offer the community a safe and well-lit environment.

VanderVennen closed the public hearing at 6:30 p.m.

Moved by Carter, supported by Kluting, to deny the request for change in lighting, based on the findings of fact that the request is not consistent with the applicable criteria. Motion carried.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER / STAFF REPORTS

Said updated that there is a Special Meeting scheduled for the Planning Commission on June 24, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. to review the proposals received (presentations from consultants) regarding the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite. The next scheduled Regular Planning Commission meeting is on July 17, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Peskin, 2510 Grand River Dr., suggested the Township offer a hearing loop, which loops into a hearing aid (for hearing impaired) for future meetings. Said noted he will investigate hearing loop accommodations.

Mr. Peskin inquired about the public meeting with the Kent County Drain Commission regarding Ada Township. Said explained the history and purpose for the public meeting and said the meeting on May 29th was handled at the Township Board level, not the Planning Commission level. Commissioner Carter (Township Board Trustee) said he was at the meeting on May 29th and would be happy to discuss with Mr. Peskin after the Planning Commission meeting adjourned.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Kluting, supported by Carter, to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo DeMarco, Ada Township Clerk

rs:eb