

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 17, 2021 REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday June 17, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., at the Roselle Park Resource Building, 1010 Grand River Dr. NE, Ada MI.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Korth, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Carter, Heglund, Jacobs, Korth
Absent: Burton, Butterfield, Easter
Staff Present: Buckley, Ferro
Others Present: 13

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE JUNE 1, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING

Moved by Carter, supported by Jacobs, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Request for Special Use Permit to allow addition of 2,526 square feet of accessory building floor area, resulting in total accessory building area in excess of the maximum 4,000 square feet permitted by right, 1170 Fox Hollow Ave SE, Ada, MI, Parcel No. 41-15-33-300-056, Brian Barkwell

Applicant, Brian Barkwell, presented his request for a Special Use Permit to add a new accessory building and said the homeowners have extensive maintenance for the acreage of their property. Mr. Barkwell stated the proposed building would allow for the storage functions for vehicles, equipment, and supplies utilized by staff for maintaining grounds of 158 acres.

Mr. Barkwell described the location, structure and aesthetics of the building. He said the building is in a low valley area and would not be visible from neighbor's property or the public road.

Ferro summarized the request as provided in the staff memo. Ferro stated the applicant's property is occupied by a single-family home and accessory buildings on 120 acres. Ferro described the location of the proposed building and said the property borders on both Fox Hollow Ave. in Ada and Hillsboro Ave. in Cascade.

Ferro said with the proposed additional accessory building area, the total accessory building area of 6,991 exceeds the maximum 4,000 sq. ft. and the proposed sidewall height is 15' 2", slightly greater than the 14' permitted. Ferro said neither of the buildings will be visible from adjoining property or the public road at any time of the year.

Ferro stated that staff recommends approval of the special use permit, based on a finding that the standard for approval contained in the zoning regulations is satisfied.

Korth opened the public hearing at 7:10 p.m. There was no public comment and the public hearing was closed.

Korth said considering the size and location of the proposed building and that there was no public comment, he was supportive of the request.

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Carter, to approve the special use permit based on a finding that the standard for approval contained in the zoning regulations is satisfied. Motion carried by 4-0 vote, with 3 absent.

2. Proposed Amendment to Sign Regulations for the C-1 Zoning District, to increase permitted number of “projecting signs.”

Ferro stated due to a recent inquiry from a business owner in regards to the installation of two (2) projecting signs, the proposed amendment was drafted. Ferro said there are three (3) types of signs permitted in the C-1 Village Business zoning district upon application and issuance for a sign permit; wall sign, projecting sign, and freestanding sign. He said currently one (1) projecting sign per business is permitted, however, there are multiple businesses with more than one entry.

Ferro stated it is staff’s opinion that projecting/blade type signs are an effective alternative to larger sized permitted wall signage and contribute to an interesting and vibrant streetscape. Ferro explained the dimensional standards of the current rules.

Korth opened the public hearing at 7:15 p.m. There was no public comment and the public hearing was closed.

Heglund said the proposed draft amendment was worded well and additional projecting signs make sense.

Moved by Carter, supported by Heglund, to recommend approval to the Township Board the draft amendment to sign regulations for the C-1 Zoning District, to increase permitted number of “projecting signs.” Motion carried by 4-0 vote, with 3 absent.

3. Proposed Amendment to Sign Regulations, to add an exemption from regulation and permitting for wall murals that do not contain commercial speech or content.

Ferro stated the township has been contacted by a party that wants to install a mural on the wall at Beyond by Bill and Paul’s building. Ferro said the current sign regulations do not contain any provisions specific to non-commercial works of art such as a mural. Ferro read the drafted proposed amendment to the commissioners. Ferro said that murals add an interest in the township and contribute to a pleasing visual environment.

There was board discussion in regards to concerns about offensive content, whether murals would be prohibited without the drafted amendment, and reviewed examples of other municipalities zoning language.

Korth opened the public hearing at 7:26 p.m.

Dave Hovinga, 4630 Little Harbor Drive SE, spoke on behalf of his wife, Lisa Hovinga, and was supportive of the murals. Mr. Hovinga said he and his wife are familiar with the artist in mind and he feels that a mural will bring people in to the township.

Ken Dixon, 523 Ada Drive, said he was in total support of the mural and that it would add vibrancy and growth to the township.

Bernie Veldkamp, 5580 Hall Street, said it would be uncomfortable if the mural became religious or political.

There was no other public comment and the public hearing was closed at 7:31 p.m.

There was board discussion about mural content and whether to get legal counsel input. Heglund stated the board could consider adding reasonable restrictions to the draft amendment.

Korth asked the commissioners if they would prefer waiting to vote when there were more than four (4) board members present.

Moved by Carter, supported by Heglund, to recommend approval to the Township Board the draft amendment to sign regulations to permit wall murals that do not contain commercial speech or content; subject to the condition that the amendment be reviewed by legal counsel for input. Motion carried by 4-0 vote, with 3 absent.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. PUD Pre-Application Conference, 19,845 sq. ft. 3-Story Office Building in the C1/PUD District, 7500 East Fulton St., Parcel No. 41-15-34-102-012, PDL Ventures, LLC

Jeremy Frost, PDL Ventures, stated that he appreciated the great feedback received at the special Planning Commission meeting on June 1, 2021. Frost said they have reworked the original plans and feels they have proposed an even better project.

Ken Dixon, Dixon Architecture, stated he has previously studied historical buildings in the village and he feels he has revised the proposed building design to achieve a better fit. Dixon said that in consideration of the sensitivity to the Norman building and parking concerns, there were changes made including: reshape the design layout more to the east, lowered the parking lot and worked with the existing grade, improved landscaping, and changed the flow of traffic.

Dixon stated they would like to pursue the proposed project under the PVM district regulations with departures, instead of a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Dixon went over the details of the departures required.

Ferro said he was supportive of the proposed changes to the building character and that it is closer in keeping with PVM district regulations, although he has concerns with the access point and how it relates to the left turn lane. Ferro stated his concern is relying on the proposed access point when there are already operational issues with the existing driveway.

There was discussion between Dixon and the commissioners regarding access possibilities and the other options that involve Chase and Fifth Third Bank. The possibility of a full-direction access to Fulton Street was discussed. Dixon stated he has not looked into a new access and summarized the solution possibilities that he would take into consideration.

There was board discussion about the new architecture design. Jacobs said she liked the changes on the design. Heglund said the change in design gives the appearance of a refurbished warehouse and he liked the looks. Carter said that he was not sure about the modern concept on the two ends of the building. Korth said he would feel more comfortable when the access issues are worked out, but he does appreciate the looks and the materials of the design.

Korth stated that Ferro and the applicant will need to determine the best way to review the application, as PVM vs. PUD, which one may be a better angle.

Devin Norman, 519 Ada Drive, spoke. He thanked Dixon for the changes in design and the sensitivity in respect to his building but said he still has concerns with the access driveway and that there needs to be a safer way in and out.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Site Plan Review, Renovation of Swimming Pool Facilities, 7333 Knapp St. NE, Parcel No. 41-15-09-226-001, Egypt Valley Country Club

Jacobs pointed out that two members of the planning commission are also members of Egypt Valley Country Club. Korth asked Jacobs and Heglund if they believe they can be fair and impartial. Jacobs and Heglund replied yes.

Mike Perry, Architect at Progressive AE, presented the request for the renovation of the swimming pool facilities. Perry stated there are currently two pools, a locker room and a kitchen and the facilities are tired and need updating. He said the club wants to invite the entire family to the pool area with plenty of shade to offer. Perry discussed the basic components on the site plan and went over the design changes. He said they are not changing the footprint of the locker room building but have proposed to remove the old kitchen and build a new kitchen, add lockers and a large canopy for shade.

Ferro pointed out the 15 ft. grade change between the pool and the tennis courts and said the club plans to fill it in and use a 15 ft. retaining wall. Ferro said the pool area and tennis courts will have very little visual impact from outside the club boundaries. Ferro suggested the addition of some columnar trees between the proposed retaining wall and the existing cart path.

Carter shared a concern with the 15 ft. high wall and how to prevent kids from jumping off of it.

Perry stated they plan to incorporate some planting areas along the wall with landscaping and boulders.

There was board discussion and the consensus was supportive of the changes/improvements.

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Carter, to approve the site plan review of the renovation of swimming pool facilities, subject to the following conditions:

1. Any added exterior lighting fixtures shall be "full-cutoff" fixtures, or be of a low illumination intensity.
2. A landscape plan shall be submitted for review and approval by staff that provides plantings in the area between the accessible ramp and existing cart path that will visually soften and screen the view of the accessible ramp and retaining wall from the north.

Motion carried by 4-0 vote, with 3 absent.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER / STAFF REPORTS

Korth stated that some of the commissioners are working together on a formal gathering in honor of Jim Ferro's retirement. Korth proposed to move the time of the next Planning Commission meeting on July 15th from 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Carter, to approve the change of time from 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. for the Planning Commission meeting on July 15, 2021. Motion carried.

Korth mentioned that he had received the Michigan Planning Association packet and is interested to do a custom training/workshop with the Planning Commission Board. He said he will officially present the idea to the board at a later date.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Carter, supported by Jacobs, to adjourn meeting at 8:45 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Smith, Ada Township Clerk

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