

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES OF THE JULY 15, 2021 REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday July 15, 2021, at 3:00 p.m., at the Ada Township Hall, Assembly Room, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada MI.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair, Korth, called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Carter, Heglund, Jacobs, Korth  
Absent: Burton, Butterfield, Easter  
Staff Present: Bajdek, Boerman, Buckley, Ferro, Murray, Suchy  
Others Present: 6

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE JUNE 17, 2021 MEETING**

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

**V. PUBLIC HEARING - none**

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none**

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Request for Extension of Final PUD Plan Approval, 92 Multifamily Residential Units on a 9.64-acre site in the (C-1) Village Business Zoning District, 7590 E. Fulton St., Parcel No. 41-15-34-127-003, Wheeler Development Group**

Mike Maier with Wheeler Development Group explained the history of the PUD Approval that was received in June, 2020. Mr. Maier said during the preliminary process he determined the project was over budget and prices of building materials kept climbing, thus the project delayed. Mr. Maier stated now the prices for materials are beginning to fall and he would like to break ground this fall and get the project going.

Ferro summarized his staff memo and said the Final PUD Plan for the project was approved on June 18, 2020, and no building permit applications have been submitted yet. Ferro stated the zoning ordinance contains provisions regarding the duration of the Final PUD Approval and went over the provisions/rules of the ordinance. Ferro stated the rules say that if construction is not commenced within the one-year period, the approval shall lapse, however the planning commission may extend the time if the applicant requests an extension prior to the expiration of the one-year period and if they feel the extension is justified. Ferro said an extension request was received from the applicant in early May.

Ferro went over the site history and the process of reviewing and approving the plan from the Pre-Application Conference in Sept., 2019, to the final revisions of the 92 multifamily residential units and the Final PUD Approval in June, 2020.

Korth stated his concern is that this piece of land is a very important piece to create housing and that he feels the request for extension gives the project/applicant an opportunity for a denser project. He said with a little bit of effort we could phase the project and find a way to add another 25-unit building to be able to have enough available housing for a walkable community.

Korth said he would prefer to ask the commission to delay the request for extension allowing them to get some study done on the broader built environment created in relation to the parking availability and come up with the ideal number of housing units needed.

Mr. Maier stated he worked very hard with the planning commission to get the plans where they are at now and he finally has numbers that work and materials locked in, and he is concerned if he doesn't use the opportunity to move forward now the project will go upside down. Maier stressed his concern for any changes to the plan; would not be able to get any more units on the site, problems with financing and continued parking issues.

Heglund stated he wants the project to work but would rather see 120 units. He said a year ago the problem of housing was there but it has gotten much worse.

Jacobs said she would hate to see the project abandoned but things have changed over the past year and it would be nice to be able revisit and discuss what could be better.

Carter stated that he agreed with Korth and would like to see more units and he was interested to extend action for 30 days to revisit.

There was board discussion about the demand and need for housing, whether the greenspace on the site could be utilized and/or the area of wetland, and extending the decision for 30 days to revisit other options for additional units/parking.

The consensus of those present was to hold a sub-committee meeting with sub-committee members Carter, Jacobs and Korth, on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. to further discuss some of the concepts prior to the next planning commission meeting.

Moved by Heglund, supported by Carter, to postpone action for one month and have a sub-committee meeting on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 3:00 p.m., to meet and further discuss some of the concepts. Motion carried 4-0, with 3 absent.

**2. Request for Amendment to Conditional Rezoning from Industrial (I) District to Low Density Single Family Residential (R-1) District, to Extend the Proposed Duration of Use of Property for a private, non-profit, K-12 school on a 1.7 acre-site, 155 Spaulding Ave SE, Parcel No. 41-15-30-300-018, Dana Roefer, for Journey Academy**

Nathan Vandenbroek, board member of Journey Academy, 155 Spaulding, introduced himself on behalf of Journey Academy.

Ferro stated the approval process used in 2018 was very unique because we used a fairly recent addition to the state's zoning law that authorizes local governments to carry out "conditional rezoning" and if a zoning applicant offers to enter into restrictions, the local government can accept the offer.

Ferro said we rezoned a portion of a large industrially zoned property owned by Amway to residential subject to conditions that were offered by the applicant that included a 3-year time restriction that the property could be used for a private school. The condition was that once the time limit was up the zoning would revert back to its original industrial zoning.

Ferro stated that the applicant has been looking for a permanent location in the township but with no success. Ferro said the applicant submitted the request for extension before the expiration date of August 13, 2021, but for the planning commission to change that deadline/extend it it has to be done by passing another conditional zoning ordinance by holding a public hearing.

There was discussion between the board and Mr. Vandebroek regarding properties/locations that have been looked into and any other land purchase opportunities.

Moved by Carter, supported by Jacobs, to set a public hearing at the next planning commission meeting on August 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Motion carried by 4-0 vote, with 3 absent.

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

Suchy shared an update on the anticipated transition for the hiring of a new planning director. Suchy stated there is a committee set up to do the interviews. The committee consists of: Catherine Jacobs, Tom Korth, Ken Dixon, Ross Leisman, and Julius Suchy. Suchy said they interviewed four candidates and there were two they feel very strongly to move forward with. Suchy went over the next steps, timeframes and processes prior to hiring and he anticipates the committee making the final decision in hopes to present before the township board at the July 26, 2021 meeting.

Korth mentioned that when a new planning director is on board one of the things the commission want to do is go over the Master Plan Update. Ferro stated there is a provision in the state planning law that says you should be reviewing a Master Plan every five years.

### **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Korth opened public comment at 4:27 p.m.

Betty Jo Crosby, 411 Grand River Dr. NE, congratulated the planning commissioners on how they handled the agenda item, the Village East request for an extension of Final PUD Approval. She said it was a professional, patient and persistent approach. Ms. Crosby said you are all doing a great job and I appreciate your efforts very much.

The public comment was closed at 4:29 p.m.

### **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair, Korth, adjourned the meeting at 4:29 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jacqueline Smith, Ada Township Clerk

rs:eb