



ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF THE MEETING JULY 20, 2023

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, July 20, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., at the Ada Township Hall Assembly Room, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, Michigan.

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Burton, Easter, Jacobs, Korth, Moyer

Members Absent: Butterfield

Staff Present: Bajdek, Buckley, Said, Suchy, and Harry Hill, summer intern

Others Present: 12

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 15, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Easter, supported by Burton, to approve the June 15, 2023, Regular Meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Request for Special Use Permit to expand Ada Christian School, proposing to add six (6) classrooms with two (2) separate additions to the existing building, in R2 Zoning District, Shawn Bates/Dan Vos Construction on behalf of Ada Christian School Society, 6206 Ada Drive SE, Parcel No. 41-15-32-400-036

Shawn Bates with Dan Vos Construction on behalf of Ada Christian School presented the proposal to expand the school with an additional six classrooms (2 classrooms on north wing for pre-K and 4 classrooms on the south end for middle school). He explained details on the size of the addition, parking improvements, fire main relocation, and landscaping.

Planning Director Said, summarized the staff memo with details on the school property size and school capacity; current enrollment is around 560 K-8 grade students and 145 pre-K students, with growth projections of over 600 K-8 and 150 pre-K. Said noted that the proposed additions would help accommodate for the increased growth over the next few years.

Korth opened the public hearing at 5:35 p.m.

Andrew Salata, 6304 Dunbarton Street SE, shared concern with stormwater runoff and asked if there was a proper plan of what the storm runoff will look like. He explained that his back yard faces the driveway to Ada Christian School and there is also construction going on at St. Roberts and he has seen a significant increase of water runoff that has created problems.

There was no other public comment and the public hearing was closed at 5:37 p.m.

Shawn Bates addressed the concern with stormwater drainage and said the stormwater is being addressed with the existing detention pond and that he has been working with Steve Groenenboom with Moore & Bruggink, the Township Engineer. He explained the process and calculations and said he felt comfortable with the capacity they have for both additions. Said shared an email he received from the township engineer that said the detention pond has adequate capacity to handle the additional runoff.

There was Commissioner discussion about the maintenance of stormwater and the detention pond, emergency accesses, and the timeframe of the project. There was additional discussion about the concerns with the traffic on Ada Drive, the number of schools along Ada Drive and their future growth, and the possibility of doing a community recap on the enrollment numbers/capacities (for 'traffic study' purpose).

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Burton, to approve the special use permit to expand Ada Christian School, subject to the following conditions:

1. The township engineer to review the detention pond maintenance plan.
2. Any significant traffic-generating activities at the campus shall be scheduled with at least 30 minutes of separation time from the beginning and end of student drop-off and pickup times.

Motion carried.

2. Planned Village Mixed-Use (PVM) Overlay District Development Plan, with departures from the PVM Dimensional Standards, for a proposed 5,652 sq. ft., 2-story office building, in C1 Zoning District, PDL Ventures LLC/Jeremy Frost on behalf of Ada West Village Unit 8 LLC, 7159 Headley Street SE, Parcel No. 41-15-28-279-008

Chip Clark with Dixon Architecture, representing Jeremy Frost, said that the planning department staff report addresses everything upfront and that he was requesting consideration for departures from the PVM dimensional standards in response to the nature of the parcel size (odd shape and size).

Said clarified that recently the zoning ordinance was amended to require that any departures from dimensional standards in the PVM Overlay District now require a public hearing because those basically function like zoning variances do. Said noted that the applicant is requesting departures for lot coverage and rear yard setback.

Korth opened the public hearing at 6:05 p.m. There was no public comment and the public hearing was closed.

There was discussion among the Planning Commission, Mr. Clark, and Planning Staff regarding the building height (and how the façade has different architectural character observed from the street), meeting emergency/fire codes, parking, and the buildings intended use. Jeremy Frost, PDL Ventures,

confirmed that the intended use is going to be low density professional office, with possible limited use of retail.

Moved by Moyer, supported by Easter, to approve the PVM Development Plan, with the requested departures, subject to the following findings and conditions:

1. The Planning Commission hereby makes the following findings:
 - a. The proposed development plan, as modified by the conditions of approval listed below, requires the following departures from the standards of the PVM district (per Sec. 78-476 of the Zoning Ordinance), which are hereby approved:
 - 1) Lot coverage of 58.7% in lieu of the maximum allowed 50%.
 - 2) Rear yard setback of 7' 1", in lieu of the minimum required 10'.
 - b. The above departure results in a plan that complies with the spirit and intent of the PVM District to a greater degree than would be the case without authorization of the departure.
 - c. The proposed alternative is consistent with the purpose and intent of the PVM District.
 - d. The proposed alternative, in comparison to conformance with the PVM district standards, will not have a detrimental impact on adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood.
 - e. The proposed alternative is necessary and appropriate to accommodate a superior design of the proposed development.
2. The proposed development plan for a 5,652 sq. ft., two-story building is hereby approved, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. The building and site improvements shall be completed substantially as shown on the plan set including the following sheets, except as modified with these conditions of approval:
 - C101 Topographic Survey and Site Demo Plan dated 05/18/2023 and 06/08/2023.
 - C201 Site Layout Plan dated 06/08/2023.
 - A1.1, A2.1, and A4.1 (3 sheets) Site Plan & Elevations, all dated 06/09/2023.
 - A3.1 Building Renderings dated 06/09/2023.
 - b. All exterior building mounted light fixtures shall be "full-cutoff" style to control light emission, or of a low light intensity non-glaring style, subject to approval of the Planning Department. Fixture specifications shall be submitted for approval, prior to building permit issuance.

Motion carried.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Land Division of a platted lot creating 2 parcels in the VR Zoning District, Citizens Plat of the Village of Ada, Timothy VerMeulen, 7175 Bronson Street SE, Parcel No. 41-15-33-230-005

Applicant, Timothy VerMeulen, explained that the lot as it currently exists is 132 ft. across and non-conforming due to lot size. He is proposing to split the parcel and create one non-conforming lot, and the other a more-conforming lot.

Planner/Zoning Administrator, Bajdek, summarized the staff report and noted for clarification that the applicant went before the Zoning Board of Appeals in June and was granted variances for the lot area at 13,024 sq. ft. and lot width at 81.56 ft. for the proposed parcel 'B.1', and now the applicant is before Planning Commission for approval to divide the lots.

Bajdek stated the lots will be required to connect to existing water and sewer utilities and will be subject to all applicable Township requirements to new development (such as stormwater drainage). In addition to the zoning lot area and width requirements noted above, the parcels will be required to meet the other applicable Zoning Ordinance regulations. For the record, the applicant and all future property owners/developers/interested parties are so informed that Staff would not support any future variance requests to placement (setback) requirements for these lots, as any unusual physical lot situations would be considered self-created hardships.

Bajdek concluded with the granting of the subject lot area and lot width variances for proposed parcel 'B.1,' the land division of the property meets the criteria in Sec. 78-544 of the Zoning Ordinance, as noted in the staff report. Therefore, Staff has no objections to the approval of the requested land division, subject to the building envelopes for the proposed lots being indicated on the survey drawing prior to Staff signoff and approval.

There was discussion among Planning Commission, Mr. VerMeulen, and Planning Staff regarding the 2 lot sizes, the possible options of building footprint size, and the current minimum and maximum setbacks.

Moved by Easter, supported by Jacobs, to approve the land division of a platted lot creating 2 parcels, subject to the building envelopes for the proposed lots being indicated on the survey drawing prior to Staff signoff and approval.

Motion carried.

2. Site Plan Review for existing barn to become a private athletic facility, in RP-1 Zoning District, applicant Wes Kent on behalf of Arena LLC, 6006 2 Mile Road NE, Parcel No. 41-15-17-200-004

Wesley Kent, representing property owner at 6006 2 Mile Road, said he was requesting a site plan review to convert the old horse barn on the property to private athletic grounds for the family's private use. He shared some history of the property and that it is on 70 acres, surrounded by over 300 acres of related property.

Said summarized the staff report and noted all the amenities the athletic facility provides. He said the Planning Staff worked with Mr. Kent reviewing the Zoning Ordinance for the proposed

use in the RP-1 zoning district. Said explained that Sec. 78-157 of the Zoning Ordinance includes golf courses, athletic grounds, and other such uses as allowed uses in RP-1 conditional on a site plan approval by the Planning Commission. As the Zoning Ordinance does not define "athletic grounds," Staff interpreted the language to include the proposed use. Staff was especially receptive to the concept due to the family and friends only aspect of the proposal, even though other such facilities (such as a golf course) often provide for public admittance and usage.

There was brief Commissioner discussion regarding the conversion of the 'use', the locations of driveway access to the facility, and the number of vehicles likely to be there at any one time.

Moved by Burton, supported by Jacobs, to approve the site plan review for the barn, subject to the following condition:

1. The athletic facility shall be a private facility for family and friends of the property owner, and at no time shall be a membership, fee-admission, nor public use facility.

Motion carried.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER / STAFF REPORTS

Said informed that he received a note from Cascade Township concerning their intent to amend their Master Plan. He said he will continue to communicate with their Planning Director for additional details.

Said updated that the Ada Township Master Plan was approved by the Township Board at the July 10 meeting. He extended great appreciation to everyone involved in the process.

Said noted that the next task he has long talked about is a Zoning Ordinance re-write; not necessarily to change the regulations but rather re-organize them (with the goal to have a consulting firm work on it in the next fiscal year). He would like to form a study group/working committee to assist staff in reviewing how to go about a Zoning Ordinance re-write. Commissioners Korth and Moyer have agreed to participate on the committee and Said will follow-up with the Zoning Board of Appeals for a member from there.

Easter asked for an update on the complaint about the 'gun club', KCCL (Kent County Conservation League). Said informed that Ada Township has reached out to KCCL and he explained some of the legal issues involved and that the Township's powers are limited based on Zoning Ordinance allowances.

Township Manager, Suchy, offered a follow up on the KCCL and said Ada Township had a meeting setup with the new director and the meeting got cancelled. Suchy said that we need to send a formal request to visit their site because nothing in our Zoning Ordinance allows us to go on the premise for an inspection, and he further explained the legal process and the next steps to take.

Suchy provided updates on several items:

1. Fulton Street pedestrian trail to connect Village East and Legacy Park is expected to start August 15th.
2. Two lots on River Street have been purchased by Ada Township – (Township received a

donation of \$2.1 million from Sherry DeVos & Steve Ehmann). The properties are being looked at as a 'park reimagining' project.

3. Pedestrian bridge over the Thornapple River connecting Legacy Park with property across the river – Township has submitted a Grant request for \$500,000 from MEDC RAP 2.0.
4. Dennis Brinks was hired as the Township's Buildings, Facilities and Grounds Director.
5. BATB – Beers at the Bridge is at Legacy Park on July 21, 6-9PM.
6. New Township Hall – hope to have a Township work session in August to continue discussions.
7. Trail Wayfinding signage – the current preliminary plan includes 126 signs throughout the trail system.

Suchy concluded with a brief update on the concerns about pedestrian crossings and Ada's ongoing discussions with Kent County Road Commission. Suchy said he will follow up with Tim Haagsma from KCRC and have an update for the next Planning Commission meeting.

Easter commented that the murals at the train bridge locations are very nice and all the Commissioners agreed, "really like them."

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Margaret Idema, 7213 Bronson Street, asked if landscape items (trees, vegetation) can be a requirement on a new build project. Said explained there are currently landscape requirements in the Zoning Ordinance for plantings in various locations, typically that is associated with transitions between different zoning districts. Said noted that landscape is often a part of zoning review for commercial buildings, and not as much for residential building.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Easter, to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Smith, Ada Township Clerk

rs:eb