



ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF THE JULY 21, 2022 REGULAR MEETING

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, July 21, 2022 at 5:30 p.m., at the Ada Township Hall Assembly Room, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada Michigan.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Butterfield called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Burton, Butterfield, Easter, Heglund, Jacobs

Members Absent: Korth

Staff Present: Bajdek, Buckley, Said

Others Present: 12

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 16, 2022, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Heglund, supported by Easter, to approve the June 16, 2022, minutes as presented. Motion carried.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Proposed Text Amendment to Section 78-20 of the Zoning Ordinance Regarding Accessory Buildings and Proposed Changes to Articles VI, VI-A, VI-B, VII and VIII Regarding Adult Foster Care Homes in the AGP, RP-1, RP-2, RR, and R-1 Zoning Districts

Planning Director Said gave explanations on both of the proposed text amendments.

Said stated that accessory buildings have been a topic for a long time and the requested change was generated due to a recent request from the Zoning Board for a proposed accessory building in a front yard.

Said explained that, as recommended by the planning commission, there were discussions with planning staff and commissioners Burton and Korth about possibilities and/or changes to the language in the ordinance about accessory buildings in the front yard and also the requirements in non-residential zoning districts. He said the proposed amendments would help clarify requirements and establish a clear process for proposed accessory buildings.

There was board discussion about other possible changes to accessory building requirements; side wall height restrictions and/or proposing an average height requirement, special use process vs. a variance request, and possibly tabling a decision to allow staff to review additional changes to accessory building language.

Said spoke about the Adult Foster Care Home request and referred to the staff memo that detailed the factors for consideration, if adult group homes are added as special uses; greater administrative control, higher demand for infrastructure, expand housing opportunities/options for older individuals, whether larger lots offer more open space amenities, and state licensing being a requirement.

Butterfield opened the public hearing at 5:51 p.m. There was no public comment and the public hearing was closed.

Moved by Heglund, supported by Easter, to recommend to the Township Board, approval of the text amendment to Articles VI, VI-A, VI-B, VII and VIII regarding Adult Foster Care Homes in the AGP, RP-1, RP-2, RR, and R-1 Zoning Districts, with the condition that the special use facility must have access to a public street; and to table the request for change to the Accessory Buildings to allow staff to review additional changes.

There was additional board discussion regarding the condition of "must have access to a public street" and how that may eliminate potential private road locations from the special use advantage and to possibly not include the language in the motion; instead review the street access at the time of the request for special use. Jacobs stated she would be in favor of not including the language.

Moved by Heglund, supported by Jacobs, to amend the original motion, to recommend to the Township Board, approval of the text amendment to Articles VI, VI-A, VI-B, VII and VIII regarding Adult Foster Care Homes as special uses in the AGP, RP-1, RP-2, RR, and R-1 Zoning Districts; and to table the request for change to the Accessory Buildings. Motion carried.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Site Plan Review, Installation of a 12' x 28' Substation Control Enclosure in the R3-Medium Density Single-Family Residential District, 7050 Rix Street SE, Parcel No. 41-15-33-226-019, Consumers Energy (Thornapple Substation), Joe Lawson

Said explained that there had been no communication from Consumers Energy regarding any changes as per the discussions at the last meeting.

Said gave a brief summary about the recommendations given to applicant on the different fencing and the potential change of location for the sub-station building.

Moved by Easter, supported by Burton, to table, indefinitely, any action on the site plan review. Motion carried.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Site Plan Review, Land Division Creating 4 Parcels from 2 parcels in the VR/PVM District, 7380 Thornapple River Drive and 550 River Street, Parcel No. 41-15-34-105-020 and Parcel No. 41-15-34-153-002, River Street Ventures, LLC., Jeremy Frost of BP-Ventures; Property Owned by Geld LLC

Jeff Visser, J Visser Design and partner in the development, said they spent a good amount of time studying what would be the appropriate project for the properties and their intent was to have single-family homes that aesthetically were more traditional in nature.

Said summarized the staff report and explained that the applicant proposes to create 4 parcels from 2 existing parcels. Said shared details on how the properties were zoned, the lot area and width requirements, riparian protection and zoning requirements, and went over the criteria of the standards applicable to lot divisions and confirmed that the proposed land divisions comply with the criteria noted.

Said noted that he spoke with the township attorney for legal advice and he summarized what the review capabilities were and what the attorney advised on this matter. Said stated that the attorney concurs that despite the presence of the existing structures, this was strictly a zoning request, and there were no township regulations prohibiting redevelopment of the properties.

There was board discussion regarding; the existing structures and concerns of losing historical character, the past history of an unsuccessful attempt to have a 'historic district' in Ada, the importance of meeting riparian requirements, and reiterated their focus on the laws and requirements of the zoning request.

Said shared an email conversation received from Chair Korth regarding the land division request. The commissioners concurred to open the discussion up for public opinion.

Bernie Veldkamp, 5580 Hall Street and president of the Historical Society, spoke of concerns about the land division and demolition of the existing structures. He said it was a real shame and disregard of the Charrette, whereas the township has a brand-new village designed with history, but disrupt the prominent location by the bridge.

Bill Payne, owner of subject properties, spoke in favor of Visser's development and described the proposed homes as historic-looking homes, creating density, and providing an opportunity for people to live in a prime area.

Jeanne Ferro, 641 Honey Creek Avenue, said that one of the homes was built in 1850 and it was sad to see it go, but she understood that the planning commission has to go by the zoning regulations. She said she would dearly love to see Ada keep its historic character.

Noelle DiVozzo, 7115 Bronson Street, shared concerns on the removal of the old homes and the possible removal of the old oak trees.

Chris Czekai, 7365 Bronson Street, also on the Historical Board and DDA Citizens Council, said he was not thrilled with the strategy of Geld purchasing the 4 houses with the intent of letting them sit for years and stressed concern that if the 4 houses were removed, what could happen to the rest of the neighborhood.

Diane Black, used to live on Rix Street and currently lives on 5 Mile Rd, shared concern of removing the 4 houses and many other empty houses in Ada. She said when they are gone, they are gone and worries that Ada won't be historic any more.

Moved by Easter, supported by Heglund, to approve the request to create a total of 4 parcels from 2 existing parcels at 7380 Thornapple River Drive and 550 River Street, with the condition that prior to the recording of the land division, the applicant shall verify conformance with applicable riparian requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Motion carried.

2. PUD Pre-Application Conference, Proposal for a PUD site comprising of 13

lots on 60 acres in the Court O/RP-1 Zoning District, 3201 Egypt Valley Ave. NE, Parcel No. 41-15-05-400-002, Hidden Lakes @ Ada, LLC, Paul C. Heule, Manager

Ed Pynnonen, 7114 Gladys SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546, introduced himself as a residential developer representing Paul Heule, the property owner. Mr. Pynnonen shared some history of the proposed site and said that 50 years ago a circuit court ruling allowed the property to be modular homes. In 2008, the township approved a conservation easement over a portion of the property, but nothing transpired from the owner at that time. (staff note: the conservation easement agreement was never signed.)

Mr. Pynnonen said since the site was zoned for modular housing, they did a preliminary plan with 150 units on it, but Mr. Heule thought it would be more appropriate for a single-family community and he would create a conservation easement over a portion of the property and donate it to a conservancy.

Mr. Pynnonen explained that the proposed site was on 60 acres and his request was to pursue a Planned Unit Development (PUD) review and approval for a 13-lot single-family home development. He went over details; the 13-lot layout, trail system, wetlands, community septic system, ecosystem, and the spacious area for wildlife.

Said summarized the staff memo and noted the primary reason the applicant needs a PUD approval was because the density was slightly higher than what is allowed in the RP-1 District, and he explained the net density calculations. Said stated that from staff perspective the idea of lower density was consistent with the surrounding property (RP-1 District).

Said referred to the bullet points noted in the staff memo and Mr. Pynnonen addressed each of the items with explanations; trail locations/connectivity, homeowner association responsibilities, soil conditions, stormwater management, and setback requirements.

Applicant, Paul Heule, 5144 Winterridge Drive (across from Roselle Park), said he was interested to create an area that was gratifying and pretty and briefly explained the portion for the conservation easement/land conservancy and donating it for tax exemption purposes and stressed his hopes to preserve as much land as possible.

There was board and staff discussion regarding; road size for emergency vehicles, how the stormwater system/retention pond work, curb cuts and road entrance/exit accessibility, zoning district lot size requirements, topography details, and shared concerns about the utilities available and how that negates possibilities for higher density/affordable housing. The Commissioners concurred with favorable feedback for the proposed project.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER / STAFF REPORTS

Said gave a brief update on the Master Plan project and shared that the on-line survey had been completed by 350-400 people, the public events (Farmers Market, Music on the Lawn, and 3 workshops) were very successful, and said to mark your calendars for the next community meeting on August 16 at 5:00 p.m. at the library for a summary/wrap up/collect input and to plan what the next step is.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Heglund, to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Smith, Ada Township Clerk

rs:eb