



**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING NOVEMBER 16, 2023, REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., at the Ada Township Hall Rix 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, Butterfield, Easter, Jacobs, Kluting, Korth

Members Absent: Moyer

Staff Present: Buckley, Said

Others Present: 8

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 19, 2023, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Burton, supported by Easter, to approve the October 19, 2023, Regular Meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Special Use Permit to expand existing St. Robert of Newminster Catholic School, 6477 Ada Drive SE, Parcel No. 41-15-33-101-027

Planning Commissioner Jacobs notified the Board that the applicant is being represented by Warner Norcross & Judd, her employer, but that she has no connection and they are not a part of her practice, so she feels no reason to recuse herself.

Liz Peters, representing St. Roberts School, shared that the school opened its doors in August 2018 with 42 students and they have seen enrollment growth over the last five years and currently have 132 students enrolled. She said we are blessed with a community of educators and families who believe that Catholic education offers a unique but complimentary educational option for Ada residents and wants to be able to continue to expand to a K-8 grade building, allowing for up to 372 students.

Peter Baldwin of AMDG Architects, thanked the Planning staff for working together with him on the proposed plans and he highlighted items on the site plan and noted that they meet all setback requirements, landscape requirements, and parking requirements (with 472 spaces). He said he met

with the Township Engineer on stormwater/waste water quality and meets those requirements. He went over details on extended play areas and new play areas, the additional rooms, stacking requirements, the right-out and left-out driveways, and the staggering of start times with the other three schools.

Jim Rabaut, Warner Norcross & Judd, legal counsel for the Dioceses of Grand Rapids and St. Roberts, said that this request for expansion is a wonderful investment in Ada Township and they are fortunate to have the resources for expansion over the next ten years. He said that he knows there are traffic concerns about Ada Drive but according to the traffic report and a review by Kent County Road Commission, this particular development is not making a major impact on traffic.

Korth opened the Public Hearing at 5:48 p.m.

Ken Ruehrdanz, 612 Arrowhead Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, said he was here as a citizen and board member of Ada Congregational Church, which is directly across the street from St. Roberts. He said that St. Roberts has been very open and asking opinions from Ada Congregational regarding this proposal and Ada Congregational is supportive of the expansion.

Dr. Robin Kuhn, said she is a business owner and provides behavioral intervention services. She said she has the good fortune of partnering with St. Roberts and working with their students and is excited for them to have the opportunity to grow.

Kari Natale, 478 Edgeworthe Drive, Ada, said she has three children in St. Roberts School and would like them to be able to go there through grade 8. She encourages the approval of this request.

Venkanna Maidam, said his son goes to St. Roberts School and he would like to have him continue his education through eighth grade at St. Roberts.

Planning Director Said stated that the Planning Department has received letters of support for the project from (including a list for the record): Krzysztof Cichno, 660 Alta Dale, Ada; Drs. John & Celia Egan, 3324 Whitburn Ct., Ada; Cristina Howard-Veronna (no address); Dewey Doyle VI, 7461 Thorncrest Dr., Cascade; Jeff & Peggy Naber (no address); Rachel Udy, 6190 Scarborough Dr., Ada; Kevin J. Sall, Ada Christian School.

There was no other public comment and the public hearing was closed at 5:55 p.m.

There was discussion among the Commissioners, applicants, and Planning Staff regarding the different services provided to students at St. Roberts, dedicated spaces for the parish and/or the school, timeline of school arrival/departures (30 minute buffer time), the multiple school zones (signage) on Ada Drive and their locations, and it was noted that there would be less activity on election days as St. Roberts will no longer hold voting precincts in their building.

Said stated that he will reach out to Kent County Sheriff and the Road Commission regarding questions about the multiple school zones.

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Easter, to approve the Special Use Permit to expand existing St. Robert of Newminster Catholic School, subject to the following conditions:

1. This Special Use approval is for the existing building, proposed addition, and related improvements only, with a limit only, specifically for expansion of the school to include a student population not to exceed 372 students. Any expansion of the school building or

to the student population beyond this number shall require an amended Special Use review.

2. Any other 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.
3. All exterior light fixtures shall be full-horizontal cutoff to control light emission.
4. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall obtain Township Engineer review and approval of stormwater plans and shall obtain a stormwater permit.

Motion carried.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Site Plan Review, accessory building in the front yard, The Tower Revocable Living Trust/Doug Tower, 8003 Wilderness Trail NE, Parcel No. 41-15-23-351-018**

Nathan Vandebroek, contractor, shared history of the property in that he used to own it and he built the home there, then sold it to the Tower's and they asked him if an accessory building could be added. Mr. Vandebroek told the Tower's that it would not be a problem, however, he did not realize that it is required that all front yard accessory structures must obtain approval from the Planning Commission.

Planning Director Said explained that the Planning Staff met with the applicant to discuss regulations of the existing detached buildings and the proposed detached building. The proposed building would be placed 50 feet from the front yard lot line (along Wilderness Trail), and about 50 feet from the side lot line (along Honey Creek). Said went over illustrations of the property and further explained the requested location.

Said concluded that given the applicable standards for the site plan review, Staff has no objections to approval of the proposed athletic facility, subject to a condition regarding the owner shall retain a buffer of existing trees along the road frontages.

There was extended discussion among the Commissioners, contractor, and Planning Staff regarding the proposed location of the accessory building (concern of an obstructed view from Honey Creek), possible options of other locations and still meeting setback requirements, the new breezeway attaching the existing buildings, the distance from the house to the proposed building, and the use of the building/athletic facility over time (in the future).

Moved by Easter, supported Kluting, to approve the site plan for 8003 Wilderness Trail for an accessory building that shall be located a minimum of 50 feet from the Wilderness Trail (front) property line and a maximum of 20 feet from the existing principal structure, and subject to the following condition:

1. The owner shall retain a buffer of existing trees along the road frontages of Wilderness Trail and Honey Creek to help visually screen the accessory building from adjacent views. Should the trees die or be removed, the owner shall install new trees to maintain the visual buffer.

Motion carried.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER / STAFF REPORTS

Said noted that the next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for December 21st, just before the Christmas holiday.

Korth requested Said to look up the history of the old approval for an addition to the Schnitz restaurant in regards to a public shared parking lot agreement vs. private parking.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Easter, supported by Jacobs, to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Smith, Ada Township Clerk

rs:eb