

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2020 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, December 17, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., via video/audio-conferencing, in conformance with Public Act 228 of 2020 concerning temporary authorization of remote participation in public meetings.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Burton, Butterfield, Carter, Easter, Jacobs, Korth  
Absent: Heglund  
Staff Present: Bajdek, Buckley, Ferro, Suchy  
Others Present: 17

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Moved by Easer, supported by Korth, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE NOVEMBER 19, 2020 MEETING**

Moved by Carter, supported by Korth, to approve the minutes as presented.  
Motion passed by roll call vote 6-0, with 1 absent.

**V. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**1. Zoning Ordinance text amendment: revisions to Sec. 78-51(b), Definitions and Sec. 78-17, Keeping of pets and livestock, to add provisions to allow for the keeping of poultry in the Residential zoning districts and modifying setback requirements for structures housing poultry in the Rural/Agricultural zoning districts.**

Bajdek presented a brief summary of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment. Bajdek stated due to an increased interest in the keeping of small flocks of chicken/poultry in the higher density residential zoning districts, an amendment to section 78-17; keeping of pets and livestock, has been drafted to permit such keeping. Bajdek stated the ordinance amendment also adds provisions related to the keeping of poultry not in farm buildings in the Rural/Agricultural residential zoning districts as well as adding poultry related definitions.

Bajdek stated in February the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on the proposed set of regulations, however, action was postponed due to concerns expressed as to how it applied to the Rural/Agricultural residential districts. Last month revised regulations were presented to the Planning Commission and the public hearing was set for tonight.

Bajdek concluded the higher density residential zoning districts and the Rural/Agricultural zoning districts of lots less than 5 acres would be subject to a list of standards, which include the amount of poultry kept, setbacks of henhouses/poultry coops on adjacent properties, and square footage limits for the henhouses/poultry coops, as well as other related items.

Bajdek said on lots that are larger than 5 acres there is a statement that exempts the henhouses/poultry coops from 150-foot setback requirement that currently applies to all farm buildings that house livestock and farm animals; no standards apply for those properties, the same pre-existing rules regarding the keeping of animals apply.

Vice-Chair Butterfield opened the public hearing at 7:07 p.m.

Josh Suderman, 466 Lehigh Drive, asked if his daughter could read a statement on their behalf. Ms. Suderman presented to the Board "The Benefits of Backyard Chickens." Ms. Suderman shared some benefits/reasons to consider to allow backyard chickens in our community. Ms. Suderman said every chicken can produce something organic that is better for you and the earth. The second benefit is the responsibility level; chickens can be a big responsibility and need fresh food and water every day to keep them healthy. The third benefit chickens are not all work; chickens can be entertaining to watch and chase each other. Finally, chickens are pets that are meant to be outdoors and that is great for people who have allergies; chickens are great to consider for companions in your backyard.

There were no more public comments and the public hearing closed.

Bajdek mentioned he would like to see a statement revised on the proposed amendment in section A, 1, b to say: "On a lot/parcel of land 5 acres or greater."

It was moved by Carter, supported by Jacobs, to recommend to the Township Board to approve the amended ordinance with the revised Section A, 1, b, to read, 5 acres or greater. Motion passed by roll call vote 6-0, with 1 absent.

Easter mentioned a chat question popped up from Karen and she asked if the chickens will be vaccinated against Avian flu or if Kent County has vaccination guidelines on poultry. Bajdek said Ada Township zoning rules do not have anything in the ordinance regarding those items; vaccination, licensing, or any rules on the care of the pets.

Charles Hively, 5240 Knoll Place Drive, said he believes this is something that would not fall under the purview of Planning and Zoning. The Board agreed that Kent County would be the one to contact regarding those issues.

Ferro stated the chat screen should be used only to communicate to us that you would like to make a comment and that comments should be made verbally in the meeting. Ferro said people need to be identified by full names and addresses.

## **VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was some Board discussion on Election of Officers. Ferro stated typically the Election of Officers takes place once a year and on resignation of a Chair person, the Vice-Chair takes the Chair position for the remainder of the year. It was agreed by the Board to continue discussion with the attendance of a full Commission and revisit at next month's meeting.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. PUD Pre-Application Conference, 14-unit apartment development on .6 acre site in the Village Residential (VR) Zoning District, 7518 and 7524 Fase St., Parcel No's. 41-15-34-179-002 and 003, Ufuk Turan**

Ken Dixon, Dixon Architecture, 523 Ada Drive, stated he has been assisting Turan with a plan for a development on the site at 7518 and 7524 Fase Street. Dixon presented the project details. Dixon stated the primary goal of the project is a 14-unit apartment house that will have apartments anywhere from 600-1100 sq. ft. to provide a location for some of the service workers in the Village. Dixon said Turan would like to utilize this property to provide the housing opportunity for his employees as well as other service

workers in the Village.

Dixon pointed out the blueprints of the proposed layout and said it is a 14-unit, 2-story building that provides 7 units per floor; ranging from 1 bedroom to 2 and 3-bedroom. Dixon said the required parking lines the outside periphery of the property. Dixon stated he thinks the location is a good location for a residential transitional property. Dixon concluded this was just an introduction to the project to show the opportunity to allow for additional and affordable housing.

Easter shared concern about the intersection at Fase Street and Thornapple River Drive at the pedestrian crossing and adding to the congestion in that area.

Ferro summarized the staff memo as provided in the Board packet. Ferro stated the site is .6 acres, it has 198 feet of frontage on Fase Street and 132 feet deep. Ferro stated keep in mind that a PUD pre-application conference, as stated in the zoning regulations, is “for the purpose of preliminary discussion and review regarding the appropriateness, general content and design approach of a proposed PUD,” so there was no formal action to be taken tonight.

Ferro stated the property is in the Village Residential district; a single-family residential district, and in the Village Residential development PUD Plans are also permitted following the regulations.

Ferro stated there are also eligibility standards for a site being eligible to be considered under the PUD zoning rules and discussed the 3 eligibility standards included in the staff memo. Ferro said the key factor is to consider whether developing the site under the PUD rules would achieve the purposes and intent of the zoning rules.

Ferro referred to the provision in the rules that said all of the residential zoning districts may be included in a PUD Plan. Ferro added one notable aspect of that wording is the zoning districts that are listed do not mention the VR district, which is also noted in the staff memo. There was some Board discussion about the VR district and the language in the rules that conflict with allowing PUD Plan development within the VR district.

Ferro continued to review the screen share of the Ada Village Regulating Plan and there was further Board discussion on the residential living options currently in the Village.

Ferro discussed the proposed property lot size in relation to the PVM district, concluding it would not conform with the apartment house standards that are contained in the PVM district.

Ferro concluded with reference to his memo in the packet that cited a number of provisions in the Master Plan, as well as, the 4 items of potential feedback to the applicant, that are relevant to this proposal.

Ferro noted that he had received two written items of correspondence by email and forward them to the Planning Commissioners. Letters from residents John Adriance and Del Ratsch.

Following Ferro’s conclusion there was continued Board discussion on several items; how much fill would be required for foundation and the current height of Fase Street/floodplain, when/if an elevator is required, possible parking structure under the building, and the opportunity for affordable living.

Dixon stated these are the elements he and Turan are trying to find the best solutions for and appreciate the Board discussion and comments. Dixon explained no architectural design has been provided yet but the plan is for an upscale quality building like the other buildings throughout the Village.

Easter questioned how do you maintain that standard and still create affordable housing. Dixon stated the plan is much smaller units with simple wood framed structures; we can still maintain the beauty, the trick

is to keep it affordable with construction costs.

Vice-Chair Butterfield opened the public comments at 8:05 p.m.

Kristen Nauss, 7575 Fast Street, said earlier the residents got together and opposed a variance for the proposed 16-unit development at the former Kent County Road Commission building. Ms. Nauss said they have the same concerns about the proposed apartment building which would add additional 28 cars and additional people onto their tiny street. Ms. Nauss referred to the two emails sent by residents and said they addressed all of the issues.

Marc LaCroix, 7551 Fase Street, shared concern about the traffic, pedestrian safety and character of the street. Mr. LaCroix stated he became particularly interested in the floodplain issue after the 2013 flood. Mr. LaCroix said the Village has been built on a levy and he is fairly certain that the raising of the Village and the potential raising of the properties does represent increased risks for their neighborhood.

Kristen Nauss asked if the banquet room on second floor of the Zeytin Building had a possibility of remodeling to accommodate the workers there. Dixon stated it was not a banquet room and is an office space that occupies the entire second floor.

Del Ratsch, 7653 Fase Street, shared concern about additional traffic and the number of trips in and out of Fase Street. Mr. Ratsch said one of the problems is there are only two outlets and trying to turn left out of either one is terrible. Second is pedestrian safety and crossing at the intersection of Thornapple River Drive. The third concern is the character of the neighborhood.

Patricia Pflug, 7588 Fase Street, said she fully supports what the neighbors have said. Ms. Pflug added in the summertime people use Fase Street as a transition area from around the area, Ada Park and down Thornapple River Drive, and adding more traffic would be detrimental.

Commissioners set forth their comments.

Easter said the original Village plan/idea was to have a place people would be able to work in and live in the same area and if affordable housing is so important to us, we need to find solutions that are consistent with what the original Village plan was meant to be.

Burton agreed that there is a need for the affordable housing, but the location is very challenging

#### **VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER / STAFF REPORTS – none**

#### **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Josh Suderman, 466 Lehigh Drive, shared concern with public comment about the vaccinations of poultry. Mr. Suderman said he emailed some ideas to Mr. Ferro. Mr. Suderman stated we need to be careful how we are applying flocks of 6 or fewer chickens with issues of commercial flocks and raising chickens in those areas. Another option is to use the best hygiene and prevention practices such as sanitation, as common sense measures to prevent the spread of any potential flu or other viruses.

Marc Pflug asked what is the proposed rent structure for the 14-unit complex if it is supposed to be affordable. It was determined by the Board that Ken Dixon had left the zoom meeting and was not available to reply to Mr. Pflug.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Korth, supported by Easter, to adjourn meeting at 8:34 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jacqueline Smith, Ada Township Clerk

rs:eb