

**ADA TOWNSHIP  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2013 SPECIAL MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. by Chairperson Bob Kullgren, at the Ada Township office, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, MI.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Terry Bowersox, George Haga, Bryan Harrison, Jim Ippel, Bob Kullgren, Walt VanderWulp, Ted Wright

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tom Korth, Devin Norman

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jim Ferro, Planning Director

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Susan Burton, Township Clerk, Pete Lazdins and Pete Lamourie, Progressive AE, Jeff Speck, Speck & Associates

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Steve Dertz, Amway, Matt Michiels, Gravel Bottom Brewery

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved by consent.

**REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF VILLAGE DESIGN PLAN, DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

Board members reviewed and discussed two alternatives to the preferred plan for the Village, both of which address the scenario under which the Speedway convenience store/gas station remains in its current location. The two alternatives differ with regard to whether Headley St. is to be extended from Ada Drive east to Thornapple River Dr.

Board members heard comments on the two alternatives from consultant team member Jeff Speck. Speck stated he believed that the alternative under which Speedway remains in place and Headley St. is extended results in a much less pedestrian-friendly environment, because it does not have the spatial definition along the street frontage created by buildings, and exposes the Speedway site to public view from 3 sides.

The suggestion was made that the drawbacks of this alternative could be lessened by placing a building in the area to the east of the Speedway site that would provide visual screening of the Speedway and create more of an urban street frontage on both the Headley St. extension and Thornapple River Dr. Speck commented that making this addition would make this alternative less objectionable to him.

Board members also discussed the issue of whether the 3 existing buildings located along the riverfront in the Thornapple Village shopping center should be shown as being removed in the long term.

Speck stated that even though the classic public riverfront has no buildings, his preference for retaining them in place was that they would provide an anchor of pre-existing activity that would help draw people down the new riverfront street and make the riverfront drive more used. He stated he believed the elevation difference between the street and building entries could easily be addressed.

Speck stated that their location in the floodplain is a risk, but if we remove the buildings, we will never be able to build in that location again. He stated the floodplain is not an issue from a planning perspective, and there are a lot of great cities in the floodplain that could never be built today. He stated that the potential anchor benefit of these buildings, combined with the cost of removing them, led to his preference for keeping these buildings in the plan, although he doesn't feel strongly one way or the other.

Kullgren raised the issue of the lack of parking in proximity to these buildings. Service access to these buildings was also mentioned as a constraint on keeping them in place.

Speck stated there is ample shared parking within a close distance, as well as on-street parking in front of the buildings.

Consensus of the Board was to show these buildings as being removed in the long term.

Speck also presented a draft of the Regulating Plan diagram he has prepared, which is intended to accompany the proposed regulation text contained in the Plan document.

Kullgren commented that the process of developing zoning regulations to advance implementing the plan would involve the Planning Commission to an equal or larger degree than the DDA Board, and that there would also need to be lots of stakeholder consultation in this process. He questioned whether we should look at these proposed regulations as a completed product knowing that that this larger process needs to be gone through.

In discussion, concerns were raised as to whether the regulations address design details that are beyond what would be considered appropriate for regulation in this community. In addition, concerns were raised as to whether there was too much detail in the regulations concerning civic spaces in the plan. For example, at this point in the process, we do not know whether the visual focal point in the village green in the preferred plan should be a fountain, or whether it should be some other physical feature.

The consensus of the Board was that feedback from Board members on the draft regulations should be provided to Ferro, who will compile them and provide the consultant with recommended revisions to be incorporated into the final document.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Bowersox, seconded by Wright, to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 a.m. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted:

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Tom Korth, Secretary