

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 7, 2010 SPECIAL MEETING**

A special meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, January 7, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, Michigan.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Korth at 6:00 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Easter called the roll. Present: Chairperson Korth, Commissioners Butterfield (arrived at 6:12 p.m.), Easter, Gutierrez, Lowry, Paul and Treasurer Rhoades. Also present: Planning Director Ferro.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion by Paul, second by Easter, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**1. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Revisions to Agricultural District, Creation of New Rural Preservation-1 and Rural Preservation-2 Zoning Districts, and Re-Zoning of Land to the New Districts.**

Ferro presented an overview of the two optional approaches to amending the zoning rules he had prepared, in response to direction at the December meeting. Ferro stated that at the December meeting the Planning Commission reviewed and discussed possible changes to the portion of the zoning rules dealing with open space development designs, to allow higher density than proposed in the new districts for development plans that preserve at least 50% of the site as open space. The other option discussed was potentially changing the PUD zoning rules to accomplish the same thing. Ferro reviewed his written comparison of the two different approaches, highlighting their differences.

Ferro said that the amendment to the PUD rules he prepared is simple -- it only changes one table in the PUD zoning rules and one introduction statement on the first page. Although very simple revisions, this would provide a strong incentive for property owners or developers to develop under the PUD zoning rules rather than the by-right permitted density, which would be much less than that which could be achieved through a PUD. Plan that preserves a significant portion of the site as permanent open space.

Ferro noted the differences for the approval process between the two options. The overall approval process by design is more discretionary under PUD zoning, with broader discretion on the types of conditions that can be imposed. There is very limited discretion in the open space preservation development rules. Ferro also noted that the PUD Plan review and approval process is longer, with approvals needed by both the Planning Commission and Township Board, whereas the Planning Commission has final approval authority under the open space preservation development rules.

Points of Commission discussion:

- PUDs would have to go in front of the Board for each application.
- The open space option does not involve rezoning, whereas the PUD option does.
- The PUD rules provide the Township with greater control over many of the detailed aspects of development design, such as architectural character of buildings, street lighting and other site design features.
- More control over a PUD.
- How this affects the property owners.
- For protection of residents, give the option that they may develop their land or someone can buy

it to develop -- keep zoning the same but use the 50% open space requirement.

- Clarification that currently it is a minimum 50% in open space requirements.
- Pros and cons of having a pre-application hearing under both scenarios.
- Importance of the public hearing to get public input and opinions.
- Could there be a compromise regarding the 1 unit per 10 acres.
- Whether open space rules have been tested in other townships.
- Control issues over potential aesthetics relatively close to another's home.

In discussion, Commission members Rhoades, Gutierrez, Korth and Lowry expressed a preference for using the PUD rules to provide an incentive for higher density in the new districts. Commission member Paul stated he preferred using the open space preservation rules. Paul stated he wanted it known that his preference for the open space preservation rules was based on his belief that it would best serve the needs of the property owners in the Township.

Ferro informed the Commission members of verbal comments he had received from Township resident Nevin Zolenski, from 3 Mile Rd., who could not be at the meeting. Mr. Zolenski stated that by allowing the higher density under either of these two options, we are not honoring the recommendations of the 2007 Master Plan. He noted that density is what affects traffic volumes and our infrastructure. He also commented that he believes that smaller lots will result in lower-valued homes being built, with negative implications for our property tax base.

There was discussion about holding another special meeting in order to meet the deadline for holding a public hearing and voting on this. Korth spoke about the moratorium window for completion of this.

The meeting was opened for public comments:

Karen Holt, 5701 3 Mile Road, set forth her observations regarding the rural atmosphere of Ada and how this is diminishing quickly. She spoke about PUDs and noted it is important for follow-up on the PUDs so that rules are followed. She stated she believes that the open space along the road frontage in the Montreux development is being mowed. She stated she is particularly concerned about the impacts of development on wildlife and wildlife habitat. She believes it is important to look at what kind of life is being disrupted by the projects imposed on the land.

Following further discussion, a special meeting and public hearing on proposed revisions to the PUD regulations was scheduled for Thursday, January 28, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

#### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Gutierrez, second by Paul, to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Susan Burton, Township Clerk

Rs:lm