

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 19, 2006 MEETING**

**Draft**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, January 19, 2006, at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, Michigan.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order by Korth at 7:30 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Chairperson Korth, Commissioners Burton, Butterfield, Hoeks, and Sytsma (at 7:45 p.m.).  
Absent: Commissioners Gutierrez and Lowry. Also Present: Planning Director Ferro.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Hoeks, second by Burton, to approve the December 15, 2005 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion by Burton, second by Butterfield, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**V. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**1. Amendment to Special Use Permit, to Permit a Detached Accessory Building of 3,500 Square Feet Ground Floor Area, and Increase in Total Accessory Building Square Footage from 20,340 Square Feet to 21,000 Square Feet, 6385 Ada Dr., SE and 6807 N. Fox Meadow Ln., Parcel Nos. 41-15-33-101-028 and 41-15-33-176-007, Robert and Suzanne Vanderweide**

Peter Baldwin of AMDG Architects was present on behalf of the owner. He stated that the last time this was before the Commission, they proposed a new accessory building for staff office and property maintenance back in the woods at the east end of the property, and proposed to remove the 1,410 square foot former residence that had been converted to an accessory building. These requests, which were approved, did not go forward, and thus they are before the Commission again with a different plan, with the maintenance building in a new location. They also now wish to retain the former residence on the property as another accessory building.

The net effect of the proposed changes is to increase the total ground floor area of all detached accessory buildings combined from 20,340 square feet to 21,000 square feet. They are requested the previously approved special use permit be amended. The new proposed location for the maintenance building is about 3 football fields in length from the road, with an architectural character that is rural/agrarian.

He noted they are open to landscaping conditions for the former residence parking area, and are willing to have final engineering approval and staff approval for utilities.

Ferro stated the reason this is before the Commission is that the zoning rules state on a lot larger than 3 acres, the maximum ground floor coverage of accessory buildings cannot exceed 1,800 feet. He pointed out that the proposed new location of the accessory building is in a moderately sloped area, about 1,000 feet away from a nearby stream. Based on this distance, there does not appear to be any storm water impacts from the building, and no need for storm water management measures.

Ferro stated that if the former residence is desired to be retained, the site could be improved by providing additional landscape screening between the paved parking area in the front yard and the road. Another possible alternative is to remove the front parking and re-locate it behind the building.

Ferro stated he recommends approval subject to conditions as outlined in his memo to the Commission.

The public hearing was opened. There were no comments and the public hearing was closed.

Hoeks stated he sees a potential plus for the neighborhood to the north and the layout looks great. He asked what the plans are for disposal of automotive fluids and oils. Burton asked if driveway access has changed. Ferro stated there are no new driveways proposed. Butterfield stated she is not generally in favor of using a residential building for non-residential use, but in this case there seems to be no neighbor concerns or objections. She would like to see the parking moved to the rear of the existing building, with possible limits placed on the number of vehicles.

Korth stated there seems to be a lot of activity and large vehicles on the site. He said conceptually he has no objection to the amendment of the square footage, but if the former residence remains as an accessory building, there needs to be screening and he would recommend removing the existing drive and front yard parking, and re-locating it to the rear, using the adjacent driveway entry. It would be helpful to understand the level of activity of the building expected in the future.

Ferro stated the approval already in place restricts the use of the home to support staff for the household and property -- it's not permitted to be used for business activity. Baldwin then responded to some of the above issues. He noted that they would be willing to have a restriction on the disposal of fluid issue. The use of the home has been entirely for the use of the family and four staff people. The large SUV's and vans are the owners' and maintenance personnel and are there when they have meetings, etc. They have recently moved their offices to Cascade Road. There should be a decrease in traffic since the move and the use of the building should be significantly less. There is a desire to keep the structure and there is certainly flexibility for putting landscaping in. Baldwin stated that he is open to considering re-locating the driveway and parking, but cannot commit to that at this time, pending discussion with the owner.

Korth stated he would be inclined to either table the request to further investigate the parking and driveway re-location/screening issue, or approve it with the condition that the drive and parking be re-located. Ferro stated another condition he would like to see is a requirement for a standard marked 4 by 4 foot post installed pursuant to fire department recommendation.

Motion by Hoeks, second by Burton, to approve the amendment to special use permit for Robert and Suzanne Vanderweide, to permit a detached accessory building of 3,500 square feet ground floor area, and increase in total accessory building square footage from 20,340 square feet to 21,000 square feet, at 6385 Ada Dr., SE and 6807 N. Fox Meadow Ln. (Parcel Nos. 41-15-33-101-028 and 41-15-33-176-007), subject to the following conditions:

1. The maintenance building shall be connected to public water and sewer services.
2. A landscape screening plan shall be prepared, submitted for approval by the Plaintiff Director, and installed to provide a complete visual screening of the parking area in front of the former residence, and any additional parking shall be behind the staff house before an additional building permit is issued.
3. An intercepting mechanism shall be installed to gather any fluids from vehicles being serviced and/or maintained.
4. A marker post is to be placed in the driveway to assist in establishing a water supply should a fire occur, as recommended by the fire chief.

Motion passed unanimously.

**2. Request for Special Use Permit for Type II Home Occupation – Outdoor Recreational Vehicle Storage Facility on 3 Acres in AG District, 8381 and 8495 Two Mile Road, NE, Parcel Nos. 41-15-11-300-010 and 013, Matt Inman and Mary Inman**

Matt Inman presented the request stating that he is requesting a permit for a home occupation of storing outdoor recreational vehicles on 3 acres of his 160+ acres. The storage area would have a capacity for a maximum of 275 recreational vehicles (boats and RV's).

Ferro noted he submitted an aerial map to the Commission which outlines the 3 acres in question. He said the driveway and 3 acres are right across the street from the Goodwillie Environmental School, and the driveway is on top of a hill.

The public hearing was opened:

Jamie Ladd, 6300 East Fulton, stated he is surprised that this sort of use would be permitted in an area of the Township where the residents are concerned about open space preservation, and a part of this will be lost. He noted he is opposed to this and there are places that would be better for this type of use – such as an area that is more developed.

Ted Batkie, 6624 Brookside Woods Ct., stated he wouldn't be opposed to this. He asked if the property will have some sort of gravel for the vehicles to be parked on and whether this will be monitored so it doesn't look junky.

The public hearing was closed.

Ferro noted three written comments were received -- two of them anonymous and thus not entered onto the record. The third letter was from Ken and Gayle Saukus, stating that they must reserve judgment on the merits of the request, since they are out of the country, but that they are generally against commercial ventures pertaining to storage of recreational vehicles in this rural area.

Ferro stated this is not proposed as a free-standing commercial business, but only as a home occupation operated by the resident of the premises. He said he looked at zoning rules in surrounding townships to see how this type of use is handled in a rural area. Some permit RV storage businesses only within a building, while some permit RV storage businesses outdoors, by special use permit.

Ferro stated there are only limited areas in the Township which would allow this use. This would not be visible from the road where proposed. Ferro spoke about the issue of compatibility – noting this use requires no permanent alteration to the land, etc. – it can really be considered a temporary use. He believes that allowing this type of use as a home occupation in an agricultural area may actually help encourage retaining agricultural land, by providing a secondary source of income for an agricultural land owner.

Burton stated she would be opposed if it was adjacent to the road, like the one on Burton St. She agreed that with the proper landscaping, this proposed storage would not be visible from the road. She also noted she is concerned about fluid leakage and what to do about that. She would also be in favor of the applicant re-applying every five years. There was some discussion over visibility in different areas since the area is elevated.

Butterfield stated she's not sure if this should be a Type II home occupation, according to the standards. It doesn't seem clear if the standards are being met.

Sytsma stated if this is allowed, the use should be revisited every three years rather than five years.

Korth commented that he doesn't want to see this evolve into a production facility. The intent should be to bring the vehicle in, park it and walk away. Korth stated that possibly more time should be taken to properly evaluate its visual impact on the area. This could work, but it needs to work correctly.

Ferro stated he recommends the Planning Commissioners visit the site.

It was moved by Burton, and seconded by Butterfield, to table the home occupation request, until the February Planning Commission meeting, in order to give the Commissioners an opportunity to visit the site with Ferro.

Motion passed unanimously.

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**1. Revised PUD Plan, Lots 26 and 27, Ada Moorings North, Eastbrook Homes**

This agenda item was postponed at the applicant's request.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**VIII. REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS, BOARD LIAISONS, COMMITTEES AND/OR STAFF**

**1. Discussion of Historic Preservation Ordinance Needs**

Korth stated this is an area that has never been addressed by the Township in the past. The Historical Society has requested at various times in the past that we evaluate the merit of protecting some of our historic buildings, and he personally became interested in the topic when a beautiful old home near Ada Elementary School was torn down this past autumn. Approval was obtained from the Township Board to obtain legal assistance in considering and evaluating the various possible ways of developing some type of historic preservation regulations for the Township. This meeting is the very initial foundations of that, just to get our arms around the concept.

Ferro stated that he and attorney Ross Leisman have prepared some materials for the Commission's review. They took data from Township Assessor's records and prepared a couple maps/graphs showing the number of homes in each square mile of the Township that are at or above 75 years of age. Ferro summarized some of the data obtained. Leisman presented an overview of the alternative legal procedures available for adopting historic preservation rules. He outlined the steps involved in creating one or more historic districts under the State Historic Districts Act, as follows:

- appointing a historic preservation study committee
- issue a preliminary report for the Planning Commission and the State
- drafting an ordinance
- adopting the ordinance
- holding a public hearing
- creating the historic district

Leisman noted that adopting some form of historic overlay zoning district within the zoning regulations of the Township is another legal mechanism for adopting historic preservation rules.

Korth stated he believes the Commission should start out by following the procedure of the Historic Districts Act, by first requesting the Board to appoint a historic districts study committee. This would keep our options open to either use the authority under the Historic Districts Act or use the zoning regulations authority to establish regulations. The choice between these alternatives would be studied and recommended by the study committee.

Motion by Hoeks, second by Sytsma, that the Planning Commission request the Board of Trustees to appoint a historic district study committee, with the request that three Planning Commission members be part of the committee. Motion passed unanimously.

## **2. Draft Report – Wireless Infrastructure Study**

Ferro stated he has nothing to report at this time.

## **3. Draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Temporary Use Permits**

Ferro passed out a draft of this ordinance, noting this would govern approval of temporary land use activities. Ferro stated there may be slight changes to the draft, hopefully to shorten it.

It was moved by Sytsma, and seconded by Hoeks, to approve scheduling the Draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment on Temporary Use Permits for a public hearing at the February meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

## **4. Draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Dog Day Care and Boarding in Industrial District**

Ferro noted the draft zoning ordinance amendment is in the Commissioner's materials. He stated he received two written comments on the draft from outside parties. He also received a short video from the corporate Camp Bow Wow offices which was watched at the meeting. There was some discussion regarding the video. Dave and Cindy Haynes from Georgetown Township spoke regarding the draft language. They are requesting some language regarding the statement by the Michigan Department of Agriculture (on their website). He next spoke about Item C under No. 13 regarding prohibiting being located in a multi-tenant building. He noted they would be a single use facility, and would be willing to get landlord references, etc., as requested. Regarding Item 13f, regarding limits on retail space, they did prepare a prototype layout showing a display for clients with products such as leashes, collars, dog food, etc. They would like to see the limit increased to 10% of the total floor area, rather than 5%. Haynes noted any retail is located in the lobby area.

Korth commented that given the state of the light industrial district, he believes the more latitude they have for site by site discussion is important. Korth stated the next step is to hold a public hearing. Haines noted they would have a corporate representative present at the hearing. Ferro noted he still has concerns regarding potential noise being that this borders a residential neighborhood. There was some discussion regarding location of the outdoor kennels. There was discussion as to whether the outdoor exercise area could be located on the north or west side of the building, rather than the south side facing residential properties.

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

None.

**X. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS ENTERED ON THE RECORD**

Correspondence was received from Doug Landman. Hoeks commented that he welcomes the opportunity to be on a committee to investigate into the level of illumination at night. Ferro spoke regarding the Township's authority in this situation. Korth spoke about light spill. Ferro stated lowering the wattage on the bulbs is also a suggestion, as well as lowering the pole height. Korth and Hoeks agreed to accompany Ferro on a site visit to observe the lighting conditions.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Korth, second by Hoeks, to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.