

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 20, 2011 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, January 20, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, MI.

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Korth, Commissioners Lowry, Paul, Lunn, Commissioner Butterfield, and Treasurer Rhoades. Absent: Commissioner Easter. Also present: Planning Director Ferro.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Lowry, second by Paul, to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 16, 2010 MEETING

Motion by Paul, second by Lowry, to approve the December 16, 2010 meeting minutes.

Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

Request for Special Use Permit, for Replacement of an Existing Private Helipad and Construction of a Private Heliport Accessory Building of 3,678 Square Feet, 1170 Fox Hollow Avenue SE, Parcel No. 41-15-33-300-053, Tom Weatherbee, Via Design, Inc., on behalf of Richard M. DeVos and Elisabeth D. DeVos

Tom Weatherbee, Via Design, presented the plan for a new accessory storage building and helipad. The site has been used for the last 3 years as a helipad. Weatherbee stated they are also proposing to pave the gravel drive and add a security gate. He noted the proposed landing site is at a lower elevation than alternate sites, which helps minimize the visual impact. He stated there are no pole-mounted lights proposed. Low-height bollard lights are proposed along the drive, and landing lights that are only on when the landing pad is in use. The helipad usage hours proposed are from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm, limited to usage by aircraft of no more than 10,000 lbs, with flight frequency limited to 125 landing/takeoff cycles per year and no more than 5 landing/takeoff cycles per day.

Ferro explained the procedure of how the zoning and rules began, and how the Ordinance for a Special Use Permit for the helipad was originally adopted. A public hearing is required and owners of the adjacent properties were notified of the hearing. Ferro noted receipt of two written comments from property owners.

Korth noted both letters received were in support of the Special Use Permit. The hearing was opened to public comments.

Kathleen Richter, 6301 Hall Street, commented a helicopter twice the size of the current DeVos helicopter would be noisier. Questioned how many helicopters are going to be housed in the building? What will be the noise volume if he goes to a helicopter twice the size? Is the helipad going to be moved to the other site, and if so, will the building fit with the land?

The public hearing was closed.

Korth asked a representative of the applicant to respond to the questions.

Kevin Nelson, representing Mr. Dick DeVos, stated the hanger could only accommodate 1 helicopter, and the 10,000 lb. was chosen to accommodate possible future technology.

Tom Weatherbee, Via Design, clarified where the proposed pad is located in relation to the existing pad, and that extra evergreens will be planted to help shield the building.

Korth questioned whether larger helicopters are generally noisier.

Kevin Nelson stated the majority of the noise comes from the smaller tail blades. The more blades on a helicopter the less noise.

Lowry asked if the helicopter is to remain on the ground for no more than 5 minutes can you get it inside the hanger within that time.

Kevin Nelson stated we would land and shut down the helicopter, which takes no more than a minute, and it is moved into the hanger with a small electric cart.

Lowry asked isn't it more expensive and more dangerous to have a fuel tank stored on site than it would be if you had a fuel truck come in when necessary.

Kevin Nelson stated they are going to have a portable trailer they fill off-site and then bring in and fuel the helicopter. The cost would be exorbitant to have a truck come in every time.

Butterfield asked what kind of security will be implemented around the perimeter of the property.

Kevin Nelson stated there will be a security gate at the road access and lighting on the building.

Paul complimented Via Design on the plans put together. He commented on observing a landing as he was driving down Fox Hollow Avenue, and with the windows down he could not hear the helicopter.

Butterfield asked Mr. Nelson what the maximum number of flights on any given day was, going back in time, and what were the circumstances.

Kevin Nelson stated over the last three years, there were 6 flights in one day on one occasion, and two other occasions with 5 flights a day. He stated that the high activity days tend to occur in the summer months.

Rhoades pointed out that a resident of the Tamarron neighborhood to the south of the DeVos residence had contacted the Township and expressed concern with previous flights over his home.

Nelson stated he could think of only one occurrence when weather conditions dictated a landing approach further to the south than is typical.

Rhoades asked if there is a minimum elevation requirement for flying over homes.

Kevin Nelson responded that for commercial operations it is 300 feet; there is no minimum for private use and we normally fly at 500 to 800 feet. This has been designed to be the least impact for all the neighbors and function of the township.

Paul asked if the new helicopter being acquired by the owner is the same model as the one currently owned, and if the noise level would be the same.

Kevin Nelson stated it's exactly the same. The current one is a 2002 model and the new one will be 2011.

Korth asked if the Planning Commission members would like to visit the site.

Lowry, Rhoades and Butterfield said they would like to visit the site.

Ferro stated the simplest approach to placing limits on the aircraft permitted to use the facility would be to restrict the approval to the specific model currently owned by the applicant. With this approach, any future change in the aircraft based at the site would require review and approval by the Township, providing an opportunity to review the performance characteristics of the aircraft, including noise.

Korth pointed out that in Ferro's suggested conditions of approval, there was nothing that would prohibit an aircraft other than the one owned by the owner from landing at the site.

Kevin Nelson stated that there is always the potential for a visiting helicopter, and he suggested that the wording restricting the type of aircraft apply only to the helicopter based and stored at the site, so that an occasional landing by a visiting helicopter would not be precluded.

There was discussion regarding the number of landings as well as the weight of the helicopter.

Paul stated he supports a restriction on total number of landings, regardless of the aircraft involved, and that we should not prohibit landings by visiting helicopters, as long as it falls within the allowed limits on number of landings.

Korth stated there should be a start-up date listed, and we should put in a condition that when we talk about operations we're referring specifically to the helicopter rotors running and not the electric cart.

Following discussion, it was moved by Rhoades, seconded by Butterfield, to postpone the Special Use Permit request for one month. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Request for Rezoning to R-2/PUD / Request for Approval of Preliminary PUD Plan for 50 Attached Condominium Units in 16 Buildings on Approximately 13.4 Acres, Villas of Ada Phase 2, 5504, 5550 and 5554 Ada Drive SE, Parcel No.'s 41-15-31-426-004, 031 and 013, Covenant Two, LLC

Peter Engles, Covenant Development, covered the changes made since the original request. He stated input from the Township has resulted in improvements to the Plan. Engles noted the Villas is about improving people's lives, such as Yvonne who recently broke her hip and was able to stay in her home at the Villas, as everything was accessible. He also cited Dick, suffering from a terminal illness, who wanted his wife Karen to be in a home where she could care for him and manage when he was gone. Engles reviewed the changes of eliminating garage doors and curb cuts on Ada Drive, and removal of two existing driveways.

Mark Winters, landscape architect, explained the trees and shrubs that are proposed to be transplanted from the interior of the site to the Ada Drive frontage.

Korth asked Ferro to review items that were unresolved from the December meeting.

Ferro asked the applicant what were the side slopes on the proposed detention pond along Ada Drive. Jason VanderKodde, P.E., Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, stated they were 3 to 1, the same as on the Hall St. detention ponds.

Ferro reviewed the questions from the December meeting, which included wanting to see additional detail on traffic impact and additional detail on the storm water detention design. He noted that additional information has been submitted by the applicant. Ferro stated another item requested last month was a comparison of site coverage by impermeable surface between the proposed PUD and potential single-family development. Ferro stated the analysis submitted by the applicant shows that the proposed PUD has a higher percentage of impermeable surface, but that there is a larger volume of storm water detention provided per square foot of impermeable surface under the PUD. Also, Tom Korth had expressed the desire to see the standing evergreens on the property preserved.

Jason VanderKodde stated it has been confirmed the detention basin storage will exceed the 100 year storm volume, and confirmed the basin's outlet release rate is less than the allowable release rate. Regarding traffic management, traffic counts during peak hours showed the school traffic is higher than the rush hour traffic, and with the addition of Phase 2 traffic, the adjacent road corridors and intersections will continue to operate at the same levels of service they are at now.

Rhoades questioned whether the retaining wall on the west end of the property would be disturbed.

Peter Engles stated it will remain as it is today.

Rhoades also asked how vegetation in the storm water detention area will be managed, for such problems as invasive species.

Engles responded that the condominium association would be responsible for management of the area, and that if a problem occurred, the Township would notify the association Board to address it.

Korth thanked the applicant for being proactive in addressing landscaping along the Ada Drive corridor. Korth stated we have a responsibility to all members of the community that the community values be respected by the proposed development. He referenced the intent provisions of the PUD regulations. Korth expressed concern the plan with Building 3 as proposed will significantly alter the rural character of the Ada Drive corridor that currently exists in this area, and that the community values.

Korth stated he believes that two units should be removed from Building 3, so instead of 50 units there would be 48. He noted this would also allow removal of a lot of pavement for the long driveways accessing the two units removed. Korth pointed out that the zoning ordinance normally allows only 20 houses on a cul-de-sac, and the applicant is asking for 50. He also noted that the proposed impervious surface is much higher than the R-2 by right development option.

He stated that the area in the vicinity of the current home on the 12-acre property should be left as is, because that's our history and our current view.

Paul asked if the number of units were reduced to 48 units, would the economic impact jeopardize the project from going forward.

Engles stated the lost sales revenue would be about \$500,000. He stated that if the number of units is reduced, he would contact the two property sellers, and see if he could obtain some price concession. Engles stated he is hopeful that the plan would still be viable.

Paul asked if the building involved could be moved back to achieve the same objective. In discussion, the consensus was that in place of Building 3, a 2-unit building similar to building 16 shown on the plan should be substituted.

Korth suggested the possibility of retaining the existing home on the 12-acre site. Engles noted that their typical approach is to offer Habitat for Humanity salvage opportunity from the home.

Korth expressed a preference to not have the view from the road corridor closed in by landscaping, but to retain the open view that exists currently.

Engles questioned whether this was preferred over the proposed rural landscape preservation plan proposed this evening. Korth stated it was.

Paul suggested the possibility of adding back the two lost units to building 16 at the rear of the site. Korth stated he would not have an issue with this, since the density would be the same as the Phase 1 density.

Korth asked whether the shape of the detention area could be made more natural in appearance, and less inorganic. VanderKodde stated that if the 10-foot wide planting strip adjacent to the trail is reduced, this could be improved.

Ferro went over suggested approval conditions, many of which have been carried over from Phase 1. He suggested an additional condition that the storm water management design shall be subject to review and approval of the Township engineer, since the engineer has not quite finished his review of the northern portion of the site, and the storm water discharge to the north. He also noted that Condition #8 referring to the rural restoration plan needs to be revised. Another condition needed is Building 3 shall be reduced to two units with garages facing south and situated to maximize existing tree preservation.

Ferro also noted that one item not in the conditions is the width of the no-disturb and clearing limits zone on the west and south property lines. Also in Condition #1, maximizing preservation of existing trees should be added.

Korth stated condition 8 goes away so there are now 7 conditions. The consensus of the Commission was that width of no disturb areas could be addressed in the Final PUD submittal. Ferro pointed out that the clearing limits identified on the Preliminary Plan are labeled as "approximate," but that the expectation is that this will not change significantly on the Final PUD Plan.

Rhoades moved, seconded by Lowry, to recommend approval of the request for rezoning to R-2/PUD and the proposed Preliminary PUD Plan subject to the following conditions:

1. The PUD Plan shall consist of 48 attached condominium units in 16 buildings, as shown on the plan titled "Villas of Ada Phase 2, Sheet P-1, with a plotting date of 1/12/11, subject to Building No. 3 being reduced to 2 units with the garage doors facing south, and situated to maximize preservation of existing trees.
2. Documentation shall be provided that the applicant has clear title to all land included in the proposed PUD site, prior to initiation of any site work, and prior to issuance of any building permits.
3. All public and private utilities serving the development shall be underground.
4. Construction plans for public water and sewer mains shall be reviewed and approved by the Utilities Director, and issuance of Michigan DEQ permits, prior to initiation of construction, and prior to any building permits being issued.
5. A storm water permit application shall be submitted by the applicant, and a storm water permit shall be issued by the Township, prior to initiation of site improvements.

6. Utility easements for public water and sewer mains within the PUD shall be dedicated to the Township, in a form approved by the Utilities Director, and providing that the Township shall not be responsible for the costs of pavement surface repair occasioned by utility repair or replacement, and placing responsibility for these costs on the property owner.
7. Any exterior lighting of the site shall be of a residential quality and character. A detailed layout plan and fixture specification shall be provided as part of the Final PUD application, and shall be subject to approval of the Planning Commission.

Motion passed unanimously.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VIII. STAFF/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

1. Amendment to riparian protection standards – No staff report at this time.
2. Discussion of FY 2011-12 Budget

Ferro stated a draft of the Budget for the next fiscal year has been submitted and asked for any input on items that should be budgeted this year.

Korth asked to hold that subject for a couple of minutes.

Resident Cornelius Smit commented the area needs a little park. There should be a plan for a park in this area instead of planning more trails. Korth responded we will talk about the need for pocket parks.

Korth asked for potential dates to visit the DeVos property. Kevin Nelson proposed several dates for the site visit. Dates and times were set for 2 site visit opportunities.

Continuation of budget discussion:

Korth stated we should start working on the Master Plan now because it will be two years before we get it done in order to have it within a 5 year window.

Rhoades suggested \$20,000 be budgeted for professional services for the Master Planning process.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lunn, second by Butterfield, to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Burton, Township Clerk
SB/dr