

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 21, 2010 MEETING**

Draft

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, January 21, 2010, at 7:30 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 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

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

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2009 AND JANUARY 7, 2010 MEETINGS

Motion by Easter, second by Paul, to approve the December 17, 2009 and January 7, 2010 meeting minutes, subject to the following revisions to the January 7, 2010 minutes: (1) under Item IV.1., in the last sentence of the second paragraph, cross-check with the recording whether a percentage was mentioned or not; and (2) under the public comments at the bottom of page 2, check the spelling of "Karen". Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Request for Special use Permit for Veterinary Clinic in the C-1/PUD District, 517 Ada Dr., SE (Parcel No. 41-015-34-102-015), The Animal Hospital at Ada Village

Denise Witthoft and Kiersten Marshall were present on behalf of the Animal Hospital. They have been in practice combined a little over 30 years. They wanted to relocate to the Village of Ada and believe they would fit in nicely. They stated their clinic will not be for grooming or boarding but will just be a wellness clinic wherein their goal is to develop good relationships with clients and their pets. It would basically be a low-volume, easy going clinic.

Ferro gave an overview of the request noting that the space they are proposing to occupy is space that used to be Dr. Norman's dental office on Ada Drive. This space has been empty since his practice moved to the adjacent new building. Vet clinics are specifically listed in the C-1 Village Zoning District as a use permitted with approval of a special use permit. The proposed use would occupy approximately 1,950 square feet. There are no changes being proposed to the site.

Lowry asked if there is any thought to putting an outdoor enclosure behind the building. Marshall stated they do not plan on having any outside enclosures. Paul stated anything the Commission can do to fill vacant buildings he is in favor of.

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

Easter stated she is concerned about the parking at this location. Ferro noted that the parking issue is addressed in his memo to the Commission. He pointed out a number of factors that justify not holding this property to the letter of the parking standards. For example, employees could park at the nearby public parking area at the Community Church parking lot, with 80 spaces. Ferro stated that the PUD plan for the property shows an area between the existing building and the new building where potential additional

parking could be installed if needed. He also noted that since this is a mixed use property with multiple tenants, peak parking needs for individual tenants are likely to occur at different times, thereby reducing the overall peak parking needs for the site.

Lowry stated that he believes this is a great fit for the Village. Butterfield asked what they would do regarding pet waste outdoors on the site. Marshall stated they do not have an actual plan but intend to be very conscious about this. Paul noted there is a grassy area in the back that would work.

Motion by Paul, second by Lowry, to approve the request for Special Use Permit for a veterinary clinic in the C-1/PUD District, at 517 Ada Dr., SE (Parcel No. 41-015-34-102-015), for The Animal Hospital at Ada Village. Motion passed unanimously.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VI. REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS/STAFF

Korth noted that due to the light agenda, they would like to revisit the ordinance work that has been on the sidelines for some time, and he feels that the timing is right to begin working on this.

Ferro handed out a copy of a presentation he made at the recent Ada Business Association membership meeting regarding community growth trends. Ferro stated the presentation also included information on MDOT's proposed 6-month closure of the M-21 bridge in 2011. MDOT will present details regarding the proposed bridge construction project and the reasons for the proposed closure at an upcoming Township Board meeting.

Korth spoke about trends in the metro area that may bring some new employment to the region, and stated that this could help stabilize residential property values in the Township. He also stated that new development activity is back at the same level it was in the early 1980's.

Paul commented that the only visibility that the real estate community seems to have for the future is that conditions are not getting any worse. He commented that he did not think Ferro's projection of continued decline in property values was unreasonable.

Rhoades spoke about commercial real estate trends and how the Board needs to look at growth rates. Ferro said that the assessed values for 2011 are being established during the current time period, and there is still a depressed housing environment. Butterfield asked about the planned pedestrian bridge and Ferro stated that it is still being planned as part of the M-21 bridge and will be funded partially out of a transportation enhancement grant.

Ferro also handed out a summary that was prepared a couple of years ago regarding form-based zoning rules. The outline gives an overview of the differences between traditional zoning and form-based zoning. The whole idea is for zoning rules to focus less on segregating on different types of uses and instead address the regulations toward governing how buildings are placed on property and how they relate to the street and to one another. The form-based zoning rules were put on hold while the Township Board was addressing the creation of the Downtown Development Authority, but the Commission needs to focus on these now.

Ferro suggested the Commission re-look at the planning priorities that were set by the Commission in early 2009, and consider whether any changes in those priorities should be made.

Korth noted that with the light agendas they have had, the Commission may be able to work on more than

one ordinance amendment topic at a time, especially since some of them are intertwined anyways. Korth added that in his opinion the draft form-based code has too many plan districts, and it would be easier for the public to understand if the number was reduced to about three and work from there – simplify the whole approach.

Korth suggested that Ferro retrieve the priority list so they could review it at this meeting. After review of the 2009 priority list, the consensus of the Commission was that the form-based code, wind energy regulations and riparian protection standards should all be addressed simultaneously in the near future. Butterfield and Gutierrez were appointed to a Subcommittee to work on wind energy regulations.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lowry, second by Rhoades, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.