

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 17, 2011 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, March 17, 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, Butterfield, and Treasurer Rhoades.
Also present: Planning Director Ferro. Absent: Commissioner Easter.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Paul, second by Butterfield, to approve the Agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 17, 2011 MEETING

Motion by Paul, second by Lowry, to approve the February 17, 2011 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

Special Use Permit for a 19,587 Square Foot Church, 8611 East Fulton St., Parcel No. 41-15-35-400-085, Redeemer O.P.C.

Korth stated this permit was actually approved in 2009, and because they haven't broken ground the approval has expired and a new application is necessary.

Paul Henderson, Roosien & Associates, engineer who developed the site plan, highlighted the changes made. The primary change that was made was better grading to help better balance the site. One end of the parking area was raised substantially to help balance the site, and all the drainage now is contained toward the infiltration trenches. A large berm was added at the end of the parking row and a smaller berm along Fulton, and because the grade is higher now we were able to rotate the entire parking area toward the hill and away from Fulton. So we have a larger green belt between the parking lot and Fulton. The church would like to propose and request the ability to reserve 23 parking spots for future construction, don't feel they need those right now and would rather leave that green space for now.

Planning Director Ferro stated the original special use permit application for Redeemer Presbyterian Church new facility was approved in May 2009 and expired a year later. The plan is substantially the same plan with very few changes. A slight rotating of the parking lot to provide a little more setback from the road; change in the grading plan so the runoff drains toward the internal swales with discharged outlets from the swales; and the berm toward the west end of the parking lot. Our parking requirements allow for postponing construction of proposed parking until a determination that it's needed, which can be made by the applicant or the Township. In the 2009 approval one of the conditions was addition of more deciduous trees to parking lot islands and that change has been made. I recommended approval pending a public hearing and adjacent property owners were notified.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None. Hearing closed.

BOARD COMMENTS

Korth asked Commission members to provide their thoughts/comments for the members who were not present previously.

Butterfield stated she does recall conversation centering around the parking lot lighting, and in No. 5 of the original Minutes they were required to comply with a fixture mounting height of 20 feet in addition to the base, which is 1-1/2 feet, and to provide for reduction in the extent of lighting used to minimal security level after 10:00. The applicant did have a need for lighting at night and asked if there has been any discussion as to what that cutoff might be for security lighting.

Korth stated the newer renderings are more pleasing as compared to the old renderings. We appreciate the efforts the church has put into making it more comfortable in a rural setting.

Treasurer Rhoades commented the site plan for the landscaping looks like where the berm is there are going to be some pine trees for screening toward Bennett and the berm is maybe 10-15 feet away from the sloping of the hill that goes up, if you could tie that straight across or sweep it around.

Paul Henderson responded yes, this is kind of critical for this hill with all the runoff that is coming down.

Korth asked if it could be tiled and if it would be a material change to tile it.

Paul Henderson stated yes, it could be tiled, and no it would not be a material change. We could draw this up closer, too, and maybe bend it around.

Motion by Lowry, second by Paul, for approval of the Special Use Permit for the 19,587 square foot Church at 8611 East Fulton Street, subject to the following conditions:

1. A MDOT driveway access permit shall be issued for the driveway access to M-21, prior to issuance of a building permit.
2. Kent County Health Department permits for the on-site well and waste water disposal system shall be issued, prior to issuance of a building permit.
3. A specification for building wall-mounted exterior light fixtures shall be submitted for approval, prior to issuance of a building permit.
4. The exterior lighting plan shall be revised, to comply with the maximum fixture mounting height of 20 feet, and to provide for reduction in the extent of lighting used to a minimal security level, after 10:00 p.m.
5. The proposed berm and tree planting located at the west end of the property shall be extended to the north to tie into the existing slope.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Pre-Application Conference, Redevelopment of Former 13,688 Square Foot School Building on 1.5 Acre Site to Mixed-Use Office/Residential Use, 660 and 680 Ada Dr. SE, Parcel Nos. 41-15-34-152-009 and 010, Thornapple Pines Development

Mike Corby, Integrated Architecture, working with the applicant on the design, and joined by Jay Rosloniec, Counsel for Thornapple Pines Development, stated the existing school building is actually a combination of two structures. The block closest to Ada Drive is a two-story use block essentially three stories in height. The first floor actually starts 9 or 10 feet above Ada Drive. The original block was burned down and rebuilt. The one on the right is a three-story block and is partial subterranean level. There is a central stairway, the only interior stair. There are two steel fire stairs on the outside of the building. We have tried to maintain the existing character of the buildings and the relationship to the street, so with any new additions we tried to keep away from the street front. The only areas we're expanding horizontally are helping to tie the building together physically. We are going to retain the central stair and one fire stair that is enclosed on the south side of the building. The north entryway helps to transition to the floor levels; the building will have a legitimate entry point with a small lobby and ramp. The other important thing is any new construction will not try to be unauthentic to this building, to make the new additions simple and defer to the old. We wanted to keep it a neutral tone so we're using the warm grey. Other major elements are to create a live-work unit on the right side with a roof top garden. The stair tower will be a second means of egress on the south side and will also be the egress for the terrace level and the garden. We're trying to retain the simple blocks. We're going to re-do the windows, and the bases of the building will be a cut stone as a plinth to the building. The plinth will continue to the east and will form a wall that will be defining an auto court and will lead to an internal garage with two parking spaces. We will maintain street front presence. The railing systems will be glass or a stainless steel cable. The parking area will be repaved.

Korth asked if they plan to maintain the connection to the street behind.

Corby responded yes, there is a connection that will be maintained. The building will be a LEED certified building with geothermal heating and cooling. They don't currently have any use for the rest of the building, but the hope is for other live-work units or office type units, possibly commercial. The lower level will be the office and the upper level will be the live unit. The additions amount to approximately 5,000 square feet; and an elevator will be added connecting to the basically seven levels. Have been trying to follow the overlay district development.

Jay Rosloniec stated there are no specified uses right now, other than the live-work unit, but it is anticipated there will be an office space and maybe some retail, but we'd like to keep our options open for use of that space, but work within the parameters of the overlay district.

Korth asked if they leave a component of the space as an unknown use, would they have to return to us at a future date, or are the uses up to them?

Ferro stated the allowed uses are addressed in a table most uses are permitted by right. There are only certain uses that are permitted by special use permit, so only if they use it by special use permit would they have to come back to us.

Korth stated one of the things he doesn't like about this building is it is very difficult to access from the village on foot and the sidewalk is tedious. Is it possible that as part of the approval that improving the corridor from the building to the trestle would be something the applicant would consider doing within the road right-of-way? You're talking about having this unique space and people at lunch probably walking in, or you might even have a sandwich shop in the building, but to make it successful there's got

to be a better way for people to comfortably walk to the building. One of our primary goals is to try to create a much more walkable functional community.

Mike Corby responded that maybe providing some linkage to the lobby from the street is possible.

Jay Rosloniec responded he does believe that is something the owner would definitely consider in order to make this project work.

Korth stated if there was a pedestrian underpass to the south it would help the functionality from a pedestrian perspective.

Lowry asked if a traffic survey had been considered as that's a very precarious area, and if you don't take that into consideration think you're making an error because of the traffic and that underpass.

Jay Rosloniec stated they don't have to alter the parking lot much and discussed possibly moving the curb cut over a little bit. Haven't had any traffic studies but believe it is a good idea.

Korth asked if they had spoken with the Road Commission and stated they would like to know your conversations.

Paul stated you're going to be one of the first applicants before us using the live-work space, using the Overlay, so we're very excited about that, and the natural vistas coming in and out of Ada are very important. We encourage the natural vista that is there instead of something that's stark and new and bold looking that it would fit within the realm of what we have going down Ada Drive.

Mike Corby stated we do need to address the safety issue of turning in and out of that driveway.

Paul stated this is a unique piece of property and would like to know how much space the entity is going to be using and how much space, square footage, is going to be available for possible lease.

Mike Corby stated she is moving her office to this space. I think the total square footage of the building with the addition is about 20,000-21,000. The existing building is 16,500 so it's going to be the two additional and then the third floor.

Paul asked if the applicant would be using over 50% of the building.

Mike Corby stated no, probably about one-third.

Lunn stated his overall impression is it looks ultra modern and the Form-Based Code was just passed and all of that glass doesn't fit in to that category.

Korth stated he is also concerned about that as well. He asked if they had any renderings to try to use a more traditional form to try to tie the space together.

Mike Corby stated the two existing blocks are pretty simple. Guess you could call our additions modern, they're simple, they're kind of respecting the simplicity of the building, and they're not trying to be ornate.

After discussion regarding green space, Korth asked Director Ferro to address the zoning ordinance with respect to number of floors possible and what would allow us to approve something with this many floors.

Ferro explained how the new Overlay District works and what is permitted in the different transect zones. The terminology allows the Planning Commission to depart from the District standards.

Korth asked if they had sample buildings and architecture in west Michigan they used as examples of what they were planning on using.

Mike Corby stated they use a photo real world rendering software. Stated we can actually bring physical materials in to show you and then generate a photo image to give you a very clear and accurate rendition of how the materials are going to work.

Korth stated he would like to schedule a special meeting at the building to walk around and talk about the special issues of the building.

Paul asked what the elevation would be including the screening of the garden area.

Mike Corby responded probably 10 feet for the stair tower and on the other side probably another 20 feet. If we measure on the east side, that story above the garage is less than 6 feet above grade level, so technically per the definition it is not a story.

Korth stated one of his concerns also is the fully lit stair tower and asked if there is a way to preserve the glass structure but tone it down so it doesn't scream at you at night.

Mike Corby stated they could tone down the amount of glass used and use a translucent glass, one that does not reflect back at traffic.

Korth asked for Mike Corby to give them some dates when they could meet at the building around 4:00. It was agreed to meet on Tuesday, April 19th.

VIII. STAFF/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

Discussion of Planning Commission Priorities for 2011

Korth asked for this to be postponed until the meeting next month.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Paul, second by Lowry, to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Burton, Township Clerk

SB/dr