

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 31, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING**

A special meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, March 31, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, MI.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Korth at 4:00 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Korth, Butterfield, Leisman, Lowry, Jacobs, Easter

Absent: Lunn

Staff Present: Planning Director Ferro

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Moved by Easter, seconded by Jacobs, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO PLANNED VILLAGE MIXED USE (PVM)  
ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS, PROPOSED BY ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING  
COMMISSION**

Korth stated some background information on how the current zoning framework in the Village evolved over the last few years would be useful. He asked Ferro to provide a review of zoning actions since the 2006 Charrette.

Ferro stated the PUD rezoning in the Village as an overlay district was put in place after the 2006 Design Charrette, to provide time for development of form-based zoning rules that would reinforce the desired character for the Village that was identified by the public in the Charrette process. Ferro stated that when the optional, form-based PVM district was adopted, the PUD zoning was also left in place. Ferro provided an explanation of how the optional PVM district provisions relate to the current PUD zoning overlay and the underlying zoning that are also in place for properties in the Village. Ferro stated that if a property owner chooses not to use the PVM district regulations and review process, the only alternative process for review and approval of new development is using the PUD zoning provisions. Ferro stated the original thinking was that the PVM district rules would be preferred by property owners, given the incentives of a shorter review and approval process and opportunities for mixed use development with shallow setbacks and taller buildings.

Leisman suggested having Township legal counsel review the current code, to confirm whether the Township has the authority to deny a PUD Plan that conforms with the underlying zoning district standards.

Leisman stated that he missed much of the public hearing, and asked what input was heard.

Korth asked Jim Reminga, Rockford Construction, to reiterate some of his comments from the hearing.

Reminga having discretion in the code to address the needs of unique uses is important. He stated that 2-story buildings close to the street are important in creating a comfortable sense of enclosure for pedestrians along the street frontage, but having discretion in the code is needed, based on his experience with form-based codes in other communities. Reminga also stated it was uncommon in his experience to have a form-based code that was optional on the part of the property owner.

Ferro stated the optional nature of the PVM district may have been based on a desire to have a “fallback” process using PUD zoning, due to our lack of familiarity with the form-based code.

Ferro stated he believed that building placement close to the property line was more important in creating a sense of enclosure than building height, particularly in a small Village. He referenced Duvall St. in Key West, Florida as an example of a nationally-recognized main street that has a mix of single-story and multiple-story buildings.

Ferro referenced a draft of potential revisions to the “departure” provisions in the PVM district, that would somewhat relax the standards for approval of a departure from the dimensional standards.

Leisman stated he liked this approach. Korth stated the alternative that already exists of submitting a PUD Plan application may be preferable. The consensus of Commission members was that relaxing the standards as suggested was not appropriate.

Following discussion, it was moved by Leisman, seconded by Easter, to recommend approval of the proposed amendment to Table XX-A.2 contained in the PVM District regulations, as originally drafted and proposed by the Planning Director.

In discussion, Butterfield stated she would like to consider in the future the possibility of modifying the standards to allow minimum 1-story height for buildings having a small building footprint.

Korth stated this could be done using the same amendment procedure and process used for the current amendment being considered.

Motion passed by 6-0 vote.

In follow-up discussion, Jim Reminga stated that Rockford Construction is considering various development sites in the Village, and asked if the Commission would be open to an informal pre-application discussion on a potential project.

Korth stated that we require pre-application conferences for PUD’s, but not under the form-based code procedures. He stated he would welcome an informal discussion. Ferro stated we are likely to have requests for informal feedback sessions with at least 2 other parties in the near future, and he has encouraged these.

Korth proposed to the Commission re-scheduling the special meeting that was previously scheduled for 4:00 pm on April 13 to be held at noon instead. Butterfield stated she would not be able to make a noon meeting. Butterfield stated she would defer to the Chair’s discretion on the time. The consensus was to change the meeting time to noon.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Brian Sikma stated he also felt there would be value in a pre-application conference with the Planning Commission, because of the amount of time and money in developing a complete application.

Korth stated he felt the Commission was open to this. Korth asked Ferro whether there was anything that would preclude us from entertaining a pre-application conference.

Ferro stated there is not, and he has not been discouraging them at all.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Easter, second by Jacobs, to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Susan Burton, Township Clerk

SB/jf