

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 30, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, April 30, 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: Chairperson Korth, Commissioners Butterfield, Lunn, Leisman, Lowry, Easter

Absent: Commissioner Jacobs

Staff Present: Planning Director Ferro

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Development Plan for 5,075 SF Hair Salon Day Spa Building on “Village Shop Lot” in “Village Center” subzone of PVM District, part of 7130, 7214 and 7576 East Fulton St., 7171 Headley St., Parcel Nos. 41-15-27-352-001 and 002, 41-15-28-477-031 and 036, Highpoint Real Estate**

Ferro stated on the 16th the Planning Commission saw at a pre-application informal feedback session some revised renderings of potential revisions to the building, and since then the applicant has worked feverishly to complete the plan that was submitted on April 23, 2015. After modification the building footprint now has a partial second floor of only 448 square feet that’s a small office, and a storage and mechanical area; the total square footage increased to 5,376 square feet. Ferro stated as we suggested, the applicant approached the design of the building and its layout as if it were on a couple of adjacent village shop lots with the building having the appearance of two individual small buildings having been connected at some point, which is reflected in the building footprint where you have two major sizable portions of the building floor area connected with a connector space that has less depth and is recessed on both the east and west faces of the building. Ferro stated the proposal meets most of the dimensional standards for a Village Shop lot. He stated his staff report identifies which ones it doesn’t meet.

Ferro stated the submittal didn’t comply with some important standards within the form-base code, which are the requirement that the primary entrance must directly face a street or a civic space. When I pointed that out to the applicant the architect had already modified the floor plan to readjust the layout so the reception area is moved to a point where it can have access from both sides of the building, with an entrance on both sides of the building.

Steve Teitsma, Progressive A&E, stated we have used a connector piece as an entrance for both Headley as well as the parking lot, a larger open area with seating throughout.

Korth asked fellow Commission members how much of what is being presented was seen at the last meeting, for which he was absent.

Leisman stated we reviewed renderings, and conceptually we didn’t have an issue with departing from some of the standards, as long as the building had the proper form and looked like a two-story building.

Korth stated he thinks overall the design is on the right track.

Korth stated we should do everything possible on this application to minimize departures from the strict form-base code so that when we get done we only are looking at a couple of items that deviate from the requirement. To do otherwise would risk setting a precedent of too broad a deviation for the overall set of rules. He then asked if this plan would be developed using condominium ownership.

Teitsma stated more than likely.

Korth stated that could potentially eliminate the need for a departure from lot size standards, by having 2 connected buildings on separate lots under potentially separate ownership and use in the future.

Korth stated there's a case to be made that connecting these two structures is a better outcome than what our form-base code intended because it creates a more efficient utilization of land.

Ferro stated he tends to agree with the view expressed at a prior meeting by the applicant that the prohibition on parking being the principal use of a lot may be unwise, as it would tend to discourage the whole notion of having a municipal parking lot that has no use other than parking. I think in a condominium ownership situation the parking lot is not on a lot, it is legally a general common element in a condominium. If condominium ownership is used here and the parking area is general common element for which responsibility rests with the condo owners association, then I think it doesn't require a departure from that prohibition on parking being a principal use of the lot, so that eliminates one of the departures. Ferro stated the applicant has already addressed the standard requiring access to the building from a public street, so that departure disappears. If the building actually spans across two separate condominium units, then it eliminates a lot area and a lot width departure but it introduces setback conformance on both of the lots, and it reduces the lack of two-story minimum on the northerly lot. So I doesn't know that we necessarily reduce the number of departures.

Korth stated he doesn't think that the fact we reduced the numbers is as important as the magnitude of the departure. This solves the magnitude question along with not to have a strong precedence for a much larger footprint of certain lot sizes than the code intended.

Ferro stated another important area here in the site design is pedestrian circulation. The plan provides a perimeter sidewalk on two sides of the parking area, the east and the south side, and that sidewalk that runs north/south behind Heidi Christine's building extends down to the public sidewalk on Headley Street. Ferro stated he recommends that this sidewalk be extended north to connect to a sidewalk on Fulton Street. He stated it is important to have a well inter-connected network in the pedestrian circulation system just like we strive for in the street system.

He also stated another thing to think about is whether we should have either sidewalks or an eight foot wide bike trail separated from the highway curb paralleling Fulton Street, eventually extending to Bronson St. intersection to the west. In our most recent trail plan we haven't shown a trail along the south side of Fulton between Bronson and Ada Drive. He stated we do have a trail extension planned from Grand River Drive to Fulton Street east on Amway's frontage up to the traffic signal at their truck entrance at Bronson; then possibly a separated bike path coming in to the village between Bronson Street and the railroad tracks. Ferro stated at some point this transitions into on-street presence of bicycles in the Village. In the long term we need to think about how pedestrians move east and west through this large parking zone that will eventually extend further west to potentially other buildings between Heidi Christine's and the post office.

Korth suggested shifting the north edge of the parking area closer to Fulton St., in order to provide an east-west oriented green space with a pedestrian path internally within the large future parking area to visually divide it into two smaller parking areas.

Jim Reminga, Rockford Construction, stated he agrees with the idea of breaking up a parking lot with trees and so on, but the primary pedestrian movement is always going to be along where the buildings are, and that along the edge of the parking lot in front of buildings is where most people are going to walk.

Korth stated he thinks one of our goals has to be that human beings belong everywhere within the village.

Leisman suggested a possible motion that would begin with the Commission making a finding that the criteria for approval of a departure from the PVM district standards has been met. He also suggested modifying Ferro's suggested conditions by adding language stating that the plan shall be modified to shift the parking area closer to Fulton St. and an internal landscape island with pedestrian path, as approved by the Township Planner.

Ferro pointed out that our general landscaping standards state "for any parking area that abuts or faces a public driveway, a three foot high continuous obscuring screen shall be required between the parking area and the road." He stated he believes there is also language in the same chapter that requires a 20 foot wide green belt in the C-1 District on Fulton Street frontage only.

Korth stated this is where I get very confused; the form-base code zoning ordinance for this area, doesn't that supersede or step above the other areas.

Ferro stated he also believed the form-based code requires a 20-foot parking setback for parking located in a side yard.

Korth stated if that is the case, a departure could be approved from that standard.

Ferro stated what we're doing is we are sacrificing landscape screening along the road frontage for this internal green space in the parking area, and that we've already established that green corridor along Amway's entire frontage on the north side of M-21.

Korth stated this entrance is the gateway to the new village. It was supposed to be a transition from "bypass the community" to "here's the town," and you're supposed to be preparing people turning right to slow down and make that corner at 10 mph not 25, and the road commission has designed our road entrance to be taken at 25 if you want. Everything we can do to create clutter near the edge of the road is going to be a community amenity from a walkability perspective.

Following discussion, it was moved by Leisman, supported by Easter, as follows:

1. The Planning Commission hereby makes the following findings:
  - a. The proposed development plan, as modified by the conditions of approval listed below, requires the following "departures" from the standards of the PVM district, which are hereby approved:
    - 1) minimum side yard building setback on one side of each of two "Village Shop" lots.
    - 2) minimum building height of two stories on one "Village Shop" lot.
    - 3) minimum front building setback of 10 feet.
    - 4) minimum parking area side yard setback of 20 feet.
  - b. The above departures result in a plan that complies with the spirit and intent of the PVM District to a greater degree than would be the case without authorization of the departures.
  - c. The proposed alternative is consistent with the purpose and intent of the PVM District.
  - d. The proposed alternative, in comparison to conformance with the PVM district standards, will not have a detrimental impact on adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood.
  - e. The proposed alternative is necessary and appropriate to accommodate a superior design of the proposed development.

2. The proposed development plan for a 5,376 square foot salon/day spa building is hereby approved, subject to the following conditions:
  - a. Final exterior cladding color selection shall use different colors on the northern and southern main portions of the building, with a third color used for the recessed connection between the two main building portions.
  - b. A pole and fixture specification for the proposed exterior parking lot lighting shown on the plan shall be provided, subject to approval by the Planning Director, prior to building permit issuance. The fixture shall be sympathetic to the Village decorative street lamps and shall be energy efficient, and shall be dark sky compliant, if feasible.
  - c. The landscape plan shall be modified to provide a 3-foot high visual screen between the proposed parking and Fulton St., using a berm, low hedge, solid wall or a combination thereof.
  - d. The sidewalk layout shall be revised to extend the sidewalk at the east edge of the parking area to the north, to connect to the sidewalk on Fulton St.
  - e. The routing of public water and sewer services to the building shall be subject to review and approval by the Township's engineering consultant and the Utilities Director.
  - f. The refuse container enclosure shall be re-located to the north edge of the parking area, shall have access doors to screen the refuse container from view, and shall have appropriate landscape screening from Fulton St., subject to approval by the Planning Director.
  - g. A storm water permit application shall be submitted and approved, prior to issuance of a building permit.
  - h. Approval of the development plan does not grant approval of signs shown on the plans, which are subject to issuance of a sign permit.
  - i. The plan shall be modified to provide that the proposed building will be placed on two lots or site condominium units, in order that the building could be modified in the future in a manner that the northern and southern portions of the building could be converted to two separate condominium units attached with a common wall, and owned and occupied individually.
  - j. The parking area layout shall be modified to shift the edge of parking closer to Fulton St., and a landscaped island with suitable trees and a pedestrian walkway oriented in an east-to-west direction shall be installed within the parking area, with details subject to approval of the Planning Director.
  - k. Raised curb may be removed from the parking lot perimeter and islands, except at the driveway access and adjacent to perimeter sidewalks.
  - l. The setback of the building from the east property boundary may be reduced to 5 feet, at the discretion of the applicant.
  - m. Unbuilt outlots shown on the plan shall be landscaped and maintained in a neat condition until developed.

(Note: Leisman left the meeting at 5:05 p.m.)

The Commission discussed the proposed conditions of approval.

Lunn asked if what is reflected on the plan is the final design of Headley Street.

Ferro stated he doesn't know if it's been seen by the Road Commission or not.

Teitsma stated we've been working with them, it's very close; a few minor modifications here and there.

Lunn stated we've kind of gone through this and talked about five feet here and ten feet there, and I don't even know that what we're looking at for a road.

Teitsma stated he is comfortable that the right-of-way has been defined. But some design details are still subject to change.

Korth stated to the left of the left turn lane at the Headley St. intersection is a big no-man's land. He questioned why that is needed.

Teitsma stated the thought has been to help with the transition to where the median island begins, and to accommodate truck turn movements.

Korth suggested proposing the striped area be stamped concrete instead, which would avoid having worn out striping. The other place we can kind of get a theme like that is using stamped concrete at crosswalks.

Teitsma stated he agrees, but the only caveat is it's going to be subject to approval by the Road Commission.

Korth asked Ferro what degree of flexibility does the applicant have for any other minor changes in terms of things like adding a patio space off the break room, can that just be considered minor landscaping changes.

Ferro stated building perimeter stuff like that would be very minor, and if he felt it was significant he would bring it back here for review.

Following discussion, on a call for a vote on the motion, the motion passed by a ~~7-0~~ 5-0 vote, with Leisman and Jacobs absent.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Susan Burton, Township Clerk

SB/dr

Note: overstrike and underscore indicate revisions to draft minutes approved by the Planning Commission