

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 16, 2011 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, June 16, 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, Hoeks, Lunn, Butterfield, and Treasurer Rhoades. Also present: Planning Director Ferro. Absent: Easter.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Lowry, second by Hoeks, to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 19, 2011 AND MAY 20, 2011 MEETINGS

Hoeks noted that at the May 20, 2011 joint meeting with the Open Space Advisory Board Randy Damstra was present, not absent. Ferro stated he did make that correction and mailed to everyone. Motion by Hoeks, second by Rhoades, to approve the May 19, 2011, and the May 20, 2011 meeting minutes with the correction. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

Request for Special Use Permit for an 864 Square Foot Accessory Building, 6721 3 Mile Rd., Parcel No. 41-15-04-300-024, Carlson Design, for James H. Balk

Dan Carlson, Carlson Design, 5501 Canyon River Drive, presented the request for the proposed building. Carlson stated the property is approximately 10 acres. It is on two levels, with a barn on the lower level which is quite a distance from the house on the upper level of the property. The owner wishes to have a small building up closer to his home for a workshop and vehicle storage. Carlson distributed photographs showing the existing barn and the front of the house, as well as photos of a building similar to the one proposed. Carlson pointed out that the home has galvanized metal roofing over the garage doors and that is the roofing proposed for use on the new building.

Hoeks asked what the existing accessory building was used for.

Dan Carlson stated it was designed for horses, but is not currently used for horses. The owner has chickens in the building, and uses it for storage.

Korth asked if the galvanized metal on the house would be the whole roof on the new garage.

Dan Carlson stated that is correct. He also stated neither of these buildings is within sight of the road.

Ferro reviewed the accessory building rules. He stated the standard that is used by the commission is to determine whether the size, height, placement, design and appearance of the accessory building will be compatible with the surrounding area. In this case the proposed building is also in the front yard and our Accessory Building Rules also state that accessory buildings may only be in the front yard if they are at least 50 feet from any property line, and we have a fairly strict architectural standard that says that the exterior materials, roof shape, materials, pitch must be substantially the same as the house. So there are both of those standards to be met. It is on a 10 acre parcel that's fairly wooded and it's on a private drive in an area that is very rural in character.

Public Comment:

None.

Board Comments:

Butterfield stated, given that it is shielded from the road, she has no issue with it.

Rhoades stated it seems like it fits well into the existing area.

Korth concurred that it is well done and a good example of how accessory buildings can be designed to be in front of or adjacent to homes in this district and add real value to the property.

Motion by Hoeks, second by Butterfield, to approve the Special Use Permit.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Request for Extension of Final PUD Approval, Cascade Trails PUD, for Phase 1 Consisting of a 7,947 Square Foot Adult Residential Facility, 5038 Cascade Rd. SE, Parcel No. 41-15-31-376-002, Olivia's Gift

Kelly Hendrickson, 5892 Lakeside Lane, stated they had a meeting last week with the Kent County Commissioners and are one step closer to getting a final HUD grant, which is scheduled for Thursday, in the amount of \$822,000. She noted they have been working hard to get the grants approved, and once they get the approval next Thursday, they hope to break ground on July 26, 2011. She added the extension is needed so they can get the project moving.

Ferro stated this plan was originally approved in June 2009, and copies of the original plan have been distributed. There have been no revisions proposed. In July 2010 a one-year extension was approved.

Ferro stated the PUD rules state the Planning Commission may extend the time for commencement of construction if the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the commission that the extension is justified either because of unforeseen difficulties beyond the reasonable control of the applicant or other good cause shown by the applicant. The circumstances that existed last year when the extension was approved have really been the same over the past year, so he recommends approval of another one-year extension.

It was moved by Lowry, seconded by Rhoades, to grant another one year extension of the final PUD approval for Cascade Trails PUD, for Phase 1 consisting of a 7,947 square foot residential facility, identical to the plans previously approved.

Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. STAFF/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

1. Proposed Revised Ordinance Creating Planning Commission

Ferro stated a proposed ordinance is currently before the Township Board to replace the current ordinance that is from the 1960's that originally authorized creation of the Planning Commission. This ordinance is in response to the State planning statute passed in 2008 that said by July 2011 local governments must revise or replace ordinances that were adopted under the old planning statute, with provisions that comply with the new planning law.

Ferro stated the most significant change is the language pertaining to the makeup of the Planning Commission. He noted the current ordinance states that membership of the Planning Commission shall be representative of different professions and occupations, while the new statute calls for representation of "significant interests" in the Township.

Ferro stated that review and approval of the ordinance by the Planning Commission is not required, but that Commission input was welcome.

Lowry commented that the ordinance does not specifically mention that one member of the Planning Commission is required to serve on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ferro stated that requirement is actually part of the State zoning statute, rather than the planning statute, and that ZBA membership is specified in the zoning ordinance; however, there is no problem with mentioning it in the Planning Commission ordinance, so we'll add that in there too.

Hoeks asked if Ferro had thought about how representative this Board presently is.

Ferro stated yes, he has given thought to that. Ferro stated he doesn't necessarily like the wording in the new statute. He noted he has seen some advice from a planner who is at MSU Extension who suggests the ordinance specifically list the interests the commission is going to have represented and make sure there is someone representing each of those interests. Ferro stated that he believes this really encourages tunnel vision by Planning Commission representatives, rather than looking out for the interests of the whole community. Ferro stated that most communities are simply reiterating the statutory language in their ordinances.

Ferro pointed out that we don't currently have agriculture represented on the Commission. He noted it is mentioned in the statute, but agriculture is not necessarily a major economic or land-use component in our community. It's relatively minor. Ferro stated in his analysis, we have a strong representation by small business, local government and natural resources, a retired educator, a retired former executive of a multi-national corporation, and we have a pretty good geographic representation. Ferro added that one geographic area we have under-represented that we might want to look at in the future is the far eastern portion of the Township. We also don't have the local school districts represented, or our major corporation.

Lowry stated one thing not included in the ordinance is language stating that Commission members be non-biased.

Ferro stated that is more a function of the Planning Commission bylaws and the rules regarding conflict of interest.

2. Master Plan Citizens Survey

Korth stated that Treasurer Rhoades was astute enough to recognize that we have a money saving opportunity with the tax bills going out soon, and suggested including a Master Plan citizen survey in the tax bill mailing. Korth stated he, Norm and Jim met and discussed trying to get a survey put together quickly to meet the mailing deadline. Korth stated he also believed it was important to have continuity

between a new survey and previous surveys, because it would allow us to measure changes in general sentiment within the community. So, consequently what we emailed to members this week before it went to press this week was essentially the 2004 survey with some minor revisions and it's going to show up inside the tax bills. It was a good use of funds to combine the survey mailing with the tax bills.

3. Report from Staff on Discussions with Kent County Conservation League

Ferro referenced his memo to the Commission regarding a series of discussions he has had with George Haga and representatives from the Kent County Conservation League and some neighbors from the Winding Brook neighborhood east of the gun club. Two neighbors expressed concern over increasing levels of shooting activity over the last couple of years at the club. As a result of that, we've convened a group of neighbors and members of the Kent League to try to arrive at some changes in the operating parameters of the club - the days, the hours per week that they're open to try to resolve some of the neighbor's concerns and at the same time address the fact that the Conservation League at some point in the 1990's installed a new target shooting course called a sporting clays course without Township zoning approval.

Ferro noted at the time the KCCL installed the sporting clays course, the club believed they were entitled to do so by language that's in the State Sport Shooting Ranges Act, which is a State statute. They were under the impression the addition of the course was exempt from zoning under provisions of the Act. The Township believes that's not necessarily the case. Ferro stated as an alternative to dispute over that, we're trying to negotiate an agreed upon set of rules that will satisfy both the neighbors and be acceptable to the club. This may result in changes to the old "planned development ordinance" that regulates the Conservation League's operations. Ferro stated he will be working on some draft changes to the rules in the next few weeks with the goal of getting that before the commission sometime in the summer.

Proposed Amendment to Riparian Rules

Ferro stated there was good representation by the Planning Commission at the May 20th work session with the Open Space Advisory Board, and the consensus at that meeting was rather than try to come up with some complicated partial elimination of the exemption that's currently in those rules, we should propose totally eliminating it and hold a public hearing on that. Ferro stated the draft amendment language in his memo to the Commission would do that just by deleting one paragraph that's in the current regulations.

Korth stated he doesn't think it would hurt to have a public hearing on it just to see what comes out, and may get a lot of information that comes out from the public on why this should or shouldn't happen.

Hoeks stated he agrees.

Rhoades stated this makes sense.

Ferro stated he could schedule a public hearing for July 21.

Korth stated the consensus is to go ahead and put it on for July and we'll use that as part of a fact-finding on whether or not we want to go ahead and change this.

Korth asked Ferro to give an update on 660 Ada Drive.

Ferro stated after the May meeting, he, Korth and Bernie Veldkamp, who works for Tom, met with the architect at the building and had a thorough walk-thru of the entire building. We shared with them in detail some of the feedback that came out of the Commission meeting the previous week. After that Tom and Bernie worked on some graphic depictions to try to get across to the applicant what was expressed

verbally as possible ways to treat the building and its details in a way that creates more traditional character that would fit the character of the village to a greater degree.

Ferro stated the applicant has told him that they would not come back at the June meeting, but that they hope to be back in July. Ferro added that in addition to considering our input they have also retained the services of a development consultant to look at the plans and give them feedback on marketability and targeting specific users, and designing the building to attract the type of tenants the owner wants to attract.

Korth stated the building has a lot of nice spaces that will develop nicely. He stated he believes we made a very good decision to allow the mixed-use of the building.

4. Discussion of Planning Commission Priorities for 2011

Ferro reviewed and commented on the priorities list developed last month. He suggested moving up the priority of developing rules for agricultural tourism businesses, since one is proposed currently.

Lowry asked if we couldn't look at the home occupation rules at the same time as agritourism business rules. He noted they don't allow home-based retail use in Grand Rapids Township and they don't allow it in Cascade, so we've got to take a look at that. He asked can we put that on for next month.

Korth stated that leads into the fact that he, George, Norm and Angela would be meeting on Fridays following the Planning Commission meeting to go over the previous night's meeting briefly. If something like this was asked at the previous night's meeting and Jim was asked to work on something for us the next month, we would try to look at all the other things that Jim is currently involved in and balance those priorities.

Korth stated the agritourism business is so high up, perhaps that can come in the lineup fairly soon. Korth suggested holding off on the complete streets policy for right now until we get more information.

Korth stated that an inquiry has been made about the idea of changing allowable uses in the Cascade Road corridor from strictly professional office to allow it to have a retail component to it. He noted that Ferro's feeling is that the first place for some language that would allow that would be in the Master Plan. Korth stated it might be useful if we had a subcommittee to become familiar with the idea of allowing some real traditional retail or perhaps some food service or ancillary support service businesses in the Cascade Rd. corridor, because there are an awful lot of people working in that corridor. Korth stated he believes the idea has enough credence that a subcommittee would be useful there.

Lunn asked is funds were budgeted for consultant assistance on the Master Plan update.

Rhoades stated yes.

Ferro stated we would need to put together an RFP and solicit proposals.

Korth stated we don't know yet what we're going to spend the money on, and we don't know yet whether a consultant is needed.

Ferro stated we need to further define what we want the scope of the consultant services to be. The odds are that any consultant services on the Master Plan would be over \$10,000. He further stated the law requires that we review the Master Plan every 5 years, and consider whether any changes are needed. There is no requirement that the plan be revised.

Korth stated he knows the community is changing enough that the survey is going to tell us an awful lot, so maybe we should just wait for the survey, or if someone would like to have conversations about these areas he is happy to be part of it and get together with Jim and just talk about it.

Ferro stated what we can do on our own is look at the current plan and identify specific sub areas we feel need re-examination or specific topic areas, such as sustainability, or target a few areas such as the Cascade Road corridor or the Fulton Street corridor. When we have those defined, the areas we want to examine, then we can consider whether we want to get any outside consulting assistance on all or any one or more of those specific target areas. We can take it that far on our own and then make a decision on whether we need a consultant.

Korth asked if anyone would like to join with Jim between now and the July meeting to discuss priority setting; Bob Lowry, Norm Rhoades and Tom Korth will meet, and Angela Butterfield stated if we identify a few areas she would be happy to help out in the next year.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Board Comment:

Butterfield asked if there is a concern about putting the survey on the web site that people might make complete multiple copies.

Ferro stated in the 1994 survey we mailed copies to each registered voter, and some households received multiple copies. We have no idea who actually filled them out, so there was no control in the previous survey. We assume that people will be honest.

Butterfield also commented we should let reporters Jan Holtz and Morgan Jarema know we're doing this so that maybe they can write a little something about it and maybe we'll have more than a 30% return rate. She also mentioned an online survey tool that is inexpensive.

Ferro stated we will do that before the mailed copies go out.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lowry, second by Rhoades, to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Burton, Township Clerk

SB/dr