

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 21, 2012 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, June 21, 2012 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 Commissioner Butterfield at 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Butterfield, Lunn, Lowry, Jacobs, and Easter, Planning Director Ferro and Treasurer Rhoades. Absent: Chairperson Korth.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Easter, second by Jacobs, to approve the Agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 17 AND MAY 22, 2012 MEETINGS

Motion by Jacobs, second by Easter, to approve the May 17, 2012 meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Easter, second by Jacobs, to approve the May 22, 2012 special meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

Request For Special Use Permit To Allow An Accessory Building With 26 Foot Sidewalls, Greater Than The 14 Feet Allowed And A 3,360 Square Foot Addition To An Existing 2,400 Square Foot Building, Greater Than The 1,800 Square Feet Allowed (5,760) Total, 7523 Knapp St. NE, Parcel No. 41-15-10-100-014, Ron Idema

Ron Idema, representing the owner, stated after the previous special use permit approval over a year ago, the client changed his mind as to what he wanted to do, and the project was put on hold. He stated they now have a clear direction as to how they wish to proceed.

Butterfield asked for an overview of how the plans had changed from the original.

Idema stated he was originally looking at constructing a separate recreation building, and not doing anything in regards to the barn he already has, however it would be cost prohibitive so they elected to remodel the barn he already has. He stated they are going to add to the width and length of the barn, which will allow him to store his vehicle, maintain the utility use, and recreation use. Idema stated the building will be large but you can't see the existing barn from the road now that the trees are all filled in, and it shouldn't be any different as far as being an eyesore to the community.

Easter stated she drove out there and you really can't see it. She stated she had to drive way back in, and doesn't see it being an issue for anyone.

Jacobs asked whether the building was actually 225 feet from the golf course property boundary.

Idema stated he did not have the exact dimension, he has had a survey done and whatever it says should be accurate. He stated he hasn't studied the survey, but Egypt Valley Golf Course has an understanding of what we're trying to do.

Ferro stated the 225 foot dimension may be the existing barn. He stated the site plan submitted indicates the proposed addition would be 160 feet from the property boundary.

Lowry asked whether the existing roof was going to be removed.

Idema stated the whole roof system is going to be removed, the trusses are being recycled, more trusses made, and a lot of engineering is going into it because it's going to be clear standing.

Ferro stated the staff report says the existing barn is 225 feet from the golf course property line, and the proposed addition decreases that by 36 feet, so it's a little under 200 feet, 189 feet. He stated the property runs from Knapp Street to Three Mile Road, and it's almost ½ mile long, so it is a very large property and the barn is 1,300 feet off the road.

Ferro stated it is a massive barn and if you measure the height to the top of the cupola it's about 60 feet, a tall structure. He stated if you can't see the existing barn now, there's no guarantee that you won't be able to see a 60 foot tall structure.

Ferro asked if the main purpose of the upper gable is to expand the clear height in the upper level.

Idema stated yes, in the future the owner wants to be able to play basketball up there.

Ferro stated neighbors were notified.

Butterfield opened the public hearing; with no comments she closed the public hearing.

Rhoades stated it is basically three stories, so what is the second floor, if he's going to put the basketball court on the third floor.

Idema stated that is the second floor; the main floor, which is the ground level, is utility for his tractor and lawn mower, and he has some collector cars that are going in the addition for the width. He stated the bottom floor is really utility space, and the second floor will be hard wood so he can play basketball on it.

Butterfield asked what type of lighting is planned for the structure.

Idema stated they had not yet come up with the exterior lighting plan, but on the existing barn there are lighting fixtures outside the doors. He stated the intent is to make it work with the home. He stated we don't have anything definite at this point.

Butterfield asked for a motion that might consider the lighting.

Jacobs asked if the motion could be to approve the special use permit as listed here based on the approval of lighting as a provision.

Ferro stated that might be helpful to have discussion on what we don't want to see in lighting, just for some direction. He stated with a 60 foot tall cupola we don't want to see the entire building façade lit up, for example.

Idema stated it is the intent to put recessed lighting in the mansard roof going across, and right now there are two light fixtures on either side of the service doors on the existing barn. He stated the intent is not to light up the upper portion at all, just strictly to be a little bit of accent lighting but not over doing it.

Ferro questioned whether soffit lighting would be put 26 feet up in the air.

Idema stated he was not sure whether he wants that or not.

Butterfield asked how much taller is the structure than the 50 feet that is normally approved by the township.

Ferro stated the normal accessory building height limit is based on just a single story accessory building with 12 to 14 foot side walls, and the higher ones could be cleared for RV's or motor homes. He stated generally soffit lighting is good, but when it's 26 feet in the air maybe less so.

Ferro stated he did not see any issues here as long as it's not up-lighting.

Motion by Jacobs, second by Lowry, to approve the Request for Special Use Permit to allow an accessory building with 26 foot side walls, greater than the 14 feet allowed and a 3,360 sq. ft. addition to an existing 2,400 sq. ft. building, greater than the 1,800 sq. ft. allowed (5,760 total), subject to exterior lighting approval by the Planning Director.

Motion passed unanimously.

Request For Special Use Permit For Farm Market Special Events, 8540 Two Mile Rd. NE, Parcel No. 41-15-14-200-009, Sietsema Orchards & Cider Mill

Jerry Sietsema stated we are applying for the special use permit as this will allow us to do what we envision as farm-to-table dinners after hours, after we close. He stated under the new farm market ordinance we are allowed 20 special events per year and that is what we are going for, especially this year with the weather, and it gives us another way to diversify our income stream. He stated he is in contact with a number of local chefs who are ready to go with a more intimate setting of a picnic table in the middle of the orchard with 10 to 12 people, and even up to 60 people.

Ferro stated we recently adopted new farm market regulations which allow ancillary activities or uses intended for customer attraction, amusement and entertainment or recreation at a farm market when approved as a special use by the planning commission. He listed the four standards, which are in his staff report as contained in the zoning rules for farm markets. Ferro stated the schedule of events submitted by the applicant describes the general nature of the types of events they would like to hold, which are mainly oriented toward pairing food with farm products that are being produced there, either cider or fermented cider.

Ferro stated the site plan submitted proposes adding eight or nine more parking spaces to the gravel lot, bringing the total parking to 39 spaces. In addition, there is overflow parking on portions of the site that aren't shown on the site plan. Ferro stated the attendance numbers estimated for these events range from 10 to 60 people. He stated the site plan also shows driveway improvements being required by the Kent County Road Commission. Ferro stated that, at the request of both the applicant and the Township, the Road Commission has agreed to not require concrete curb and gutter on the driveway approach. Ferro stated eliminating the concrete curb will help lessen the visual impact in terms of keeping the rural character, and will be less costly for the applicant.

Butterfield asked if there is a comparison out there.

Ferro stated Goodwillie Environmental School has the same driveway approach with the concrete curb and gutters, and it is wider, 36 feet as opposed to 30 feet. He stated this is also subject to a public hearing.

Butterfield opened the public hearing; with no comments she closed the public hearing.

Ferro pointed out a letter received from the Kent County Conservation League in support of the request.

Butterfield then read the letter from the Kent County Conservation League.

Ferro stated he has recommended approval subject to two conditions: One, the special use permit shall authorize the maximum of 20 special events per year of a nature and size substantially as described in the material submitted by the applicant. He stated that the intent of "substantially as described" is that some minor variations may occur as he does not have an exact number for all the types of events and the numbers might vary from what is described.

Butterfield asked whether the approval was for all 20 events.

Ferro stated you would be approving 20 special events. He stated the second condition is that driveway improvements as required by the Road Commission driveway permit shall be completed.

Rhoades asked if they are going to advertise the events, or would they be private.

Andy Sietsema stated some events will be private, others will be promoted by another party, such as a chef hosting an event, and others may be promoted by him as well.

Rhoades stated it will be a good addition to their existing facilities and give them that diversification for income.

Motion by Rhoades, second by Lunn, to approve the request for Special Use Permit for farm market special events at Sietsema Orchards & Cider Mill, subject to the following conditions:

1. The special use permit approval shall authorize a maximum of 20 special events per year, of a nature and size substantially as described in the material submitted by the applicant in correspondence dated May 31, 2012 and June 19, 2012.
2. Driveway improvements shall be installed as required by the Kent County Road Commission.

Motion passed by 5-1, with Lowry voting no.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Request For Special Use Permit For Manufacturing Of Nutritional Supplements, 5101 Spaulding Plaza SE, Parcel No. 41-15-30-300-013, Access Logistics Limited Partnership

Adam Sheridan, Corporate Counsel for Alticor and its subsidiaries, including Access Logistics Limited Partnership and Access Business Group, was present on behalf of the application. Sheridan introduced Rob Hunter, Vice President Facilities, who was also present. Sheridan stated they are outgrowing their nutritional supplement manufacturing capacity at their facility in California, so the proposal is to move it to the now vacant Spaulding Avenue facility. Sheridan stated in working on this project they realized that the light industrial zoning permits various manufacturing but not pharmaceutical manufacturing unless you have a special use approval, so therefore, to allow this facility to be used for the nutritional manufacturing we've requested planning commission approve the special use as permitted by the ordinance.

Sheridan stated the project involves a substantial investment in new equipment, and would use a little over half of the existing warehouse space in the building. He stated the project is expected to generate at least 180 jobs. Sheridan stated compared to the prior use as a distribution facility and office, we don't foresee much change as far as the ingress and egress, in fact there will be less traffic going in there because there are going to be less people there, and it's not going to be a distribution facility. He stated we do not foresee the noise being any louder compared to the old use; emissions wise we will have more equipment but we do not foresee any great increase in the emissions. Sheridan stated, in any event, there are numerous laws that require a control on our emissions that we would obviously follow.

Sheridan stated we have the public hearing scheduled for the July meeting, so we are here to get your thoughts, and answer any questions about the specific project that we can answer. He stated we have a good handle on what we want to do, and some details are still to be worked out in terms of the exact internal layout of the space, but we do not see any major changes to the parking lot, driveway, exterior of the building with the exception, depending on how the plan ends up, we might be coming back for a variance to add a second story on part of it to fit some of the taller equipment. Sheridan stated hopefully after the public hearing we can move forward.

Easter asked if it was just an oversight that pharmaceuticals were not part of the zoning ordinance, or is there a particular thing about pharmaceuticals we should be concerned with that I am not aware of.

Ferro stated when the catalogue warehouse was first proposed a new zoning district was created at that time, the light industrial zoning district, and I believe Amway had originally applied for rezoning to industrial and this new light industrial district was perceived by the Township as a better option than rezoning it industrial. He stated there was a lot of dialogue among commission members and between commission members and Amway as to what uses should and shouldn't be permitted by right versus by special use in this new district. Ferro stated he did not remember a lot of the details, but this was the end result of that debate on what the appropriate zoning for that property should be, which was residential prior to the warehouse proposal.

Easter asked if there is anything special about pharmaceuticals that should make this prohibitive or we should be more concerned about.

Ferro stated he didn't think so. He stated that after reading the process description that was submitted by the applicant and distributed to you by email, it appears to him that this is the type of good, clean manufacturing that any community would want to have.

Lowry stated he had the chance to visit two different pharmaceutical companies in the past, and the government helps make that as clean a system as you can get, they just don't allow the same kind of problems. He stated it was really clean, and in walking outside where they're venting everything that has to be vented, it's all filtered anyway, so it's a pretty clean operation.

Sheridan stated you're right, and when you look at some of the permitted manufacturing, blowing plastics and things like that, it would be a lot more odor producing.

Lowry stated there is no comparison when you get into plastics as there is with the pills, but they've made that scientifically clean now, but doesn't the state pretty much control what you can and can't do.

Sheridan stated yes, and the good manufacturing practices.

Lowry stated the other two that I visited were two different states, but it was clean.

Sheridan stated the federal regulations have good manufacturing practices and that really tightens things up even more so.

Ferro asked if they had any idea what the balance of the building may ultimately be used for.

Rob Hunter stated it may be used for some distribution and office space. He stated most of the distribution system equipment has been moved out. Hunter stated there are currently about 50 employees on the site.

Sheridan stated the everyday employee traffic is going to be less than the prior use, and since it's more manufacturing and less distribution there are not going to be as many trucks in and out.

Motion by Rhoades, second by Lowry, to schedule a public hearing on the request for the July 19 meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. STAFF/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

Communication from Grand Rapids and Vergennes Townships regarding Master Plan amendments.

Ferro noted the Township has received notices of availability of Master Plan amendments from both Grand Rapids Township and Vergennes Township.

Creation of Tree Preservation Ordinance Subcommittee

Butterfield referenced communication from Commissioner Korth expressing a desire for a subcommittee to be appointed to work on possible tree preservation regulations. She stated that a prior committee six or seven years did not come to any conclusion regarding proposed regulations.

Easter asked what the impetus is for getting it started again.

Butterfield read background information from Korth's memo regarding recent tree clearing that had occurred in the Village, on property owned by Scott Gregory behind the Ninth Bridge Market.

Ferro handed out a copy of examples of tree protection rules, which had been provided by Rhoades.

Easter asked whether the owner had plans for the property.

Ferro replied the owner has inquired about the possibility of resubmitting a development plan for the property that was approved several years ago, but has since expired. Ferro stated nothing has been submitted. Ferro stated he asked Mr. Gregory why he was removing vegetation, and the response was that he wanted to be able to get back into the property and get a feel for what he has, what the property is like, because it was real thick and you could hardly walk in.

Following discussion, the consensus of the Commission was to not form a subcommittee at this time.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Butterfield to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Burton, Township Clerk
SB/dr