

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE JUNE 25, 2007 SPECIAL MEETING**

A special meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Monday, June 25, 2007, at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, Michigan.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairperson Gutierrez at 3:00 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Burton, Butterfield, Gutierrez, Hoeks, Lowry, and Sytsma.

Absent: Chairperson Korth.

Also Present: Planning Director Ferro.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion by Sytsma, second by Burton, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**1. Final PUD Plan, 267 Multiple Family Residential Units on 30.9 Acres, 372 and 420 Spaulding Ave., NE, Parcel No. 41-15-31-201-056 and 060, Miller Valentine**

Kevin Hogan of Miller Valentine presented the plan and addressed issues brought up at the June 21, 2007 meeting. He spoke about the issue of the units' proximity to wetlands and retaining walls. He noted they have made an adjustment on the clubhouse design, changing it to a walkout configuration, thus pulling the building further away from the wetlands. He stated the retaining walls will not be visible from anywhere other than the wetlands. As far as parking spaces, there are 13 garage spaces per building, for a total of 273 spaces; there are 160 spaces in front of garages; and there are 42 spaces not in front of garages, for a total of 475 spaces. As far as the bike/pedestrian path, they have relocated the trail to the south side of their entry drive which leaves more room for the 8-foot path. Hogan presented a drawing showing the proposed path.

Hogan next talked about the landscaping plan. He talked about adding trees and shrubs while referring to pictures of the same. Hogan read a letter from RJM Design which addresses the tree lines and plantings along Spaulding Avenue, noting that what is currently there is not high quality. The applicant plans to put higher quality of trees in this area. Mike Bruggink of RJM addressed some questions regarding irrigation. He said that an alternative would be to contract a landscape company for the first year or two for watering service. Hogan next submitted a photo of the planned landscape for the entrance to the development. The Commission then had some questions about grading and excavation.

Ferro asked the applicants if they have prepared a phasing plan. Hogan responded their plan is to build consistently from north to south in a time period of approximately 20 months.

Hogan noted that they have anticipated all along installing an internal system of footpaths in the development. It has not been detailed out at this point. Burton asked what the surfacing of the footpaths would be. Hogan stated this has not yet been decided.

Hogan summarized that he believes they have done everything they can to address the concerns and issues that the Township has identified, while still making it an economically viable project.

Ferro stated progress has been made. The retaining wall has basically been cut in half, and getting rid of a lot of the retaining wall does lessen the negative impact on a healthy functioning wetland area. Relocating the trail to the south side of the driveway is an improvement. Alternatives for routing the trail

across Spaulding Ave. were discussed. Ferro did note that he strongly believes the trail should be 8 feet in width and should not vary from 5 to 8 feet. Ferro next stated that the tweaking of the grading plan is also helpful, to provide a small area of undisturbed woodland along Spaulding Ave. at the south end of the site.

A question that came up is whether the property is subject to compliance with the riparian standards. Ferro stated this parcel predates the riparian protection rules and thus would not apply. Another question was whether the property is subject to the current access standards in the zoning ordinance. Legal counsel stated they believe this is subject to the access standards and thus there would need to be two access points. Ferro noted that the Settlement Agreement requires conformance with “current ordinance requirements,” which legal counsel believes refers to requirements at the time the plans are submitted for approval.

Ferro referred to comments from Moore & Bruggink, asking for more details regarding storm water management design. Ferro expressed some concern with surge runoff impacts on the stream channel within the development site, before it goes under the railroad tracks.

Hoeks stated he is heartened by the collaborative and cooperative approach. Hoeks spoke regarding the second point of access and suggested having an emergency only lane at a right angle at the entry (parallel to Spaulding). Hoeks also gave suggestions to create less impervious surface – concrete blocks that allow grass to grow in between. Hoeks also mentioned the possibility of using pervious asphalt.

Hogan spoke about paved and green space areas. He stated that they are not sufficiently familiar with porous asphalt to consider using it. He stated that with a large portion of the parking internal to the buildings, they have a generous amount of green space on the site, and less intense site coverage overall than if the parking were all exterior surface parking.

Ferro asked if the retaining wall can be built without physically being in the wetlands. Hogan responded that yes it can be. Ferro then asked Hogan if Miller-Valentine has built this building type in the past in any other developments, to know whether the parking supply and layout works well. Hogan stated they have not, but they have done a lot of research and believe they have the right balance between housing and parking area.

Ferro talked about the access situation. He believes the zoning rules do call for a second access and this would not just be an emergency vehicle access. He spoke about the possibility of changing the settlement agreement to accommodate for this. Kraker noted that he has seen the need for secondary access addressed in other circumstances with a boulevard entry design.

Hoeks asked the Planning Director to elaborate on his concerns with the design of the pedestrian/bicycle path. Ferro stated he had hoped to see it routed along the edge of the wetland, where it would only be in proximity to two buildings. Hogan stated that there are other locations in the Township, including West Village, where the trail route includes both 8-foot asphalt trail and 5-foot sidewalk adjacent to the street, where there are a large number of driveway crossings. There also is a trail crossing of the street on Ada Drive, where traffic volumes are similar to Spaulding Ave.

Lowry commended the applicants for the work they have done on the plan in a short amount of time. He stated he agrees with Ferro and feels strongly about the need for an 8-foot bike path. 5-foot width does not provide sufficient space for safe passage.

Sytsma questioned whether the small size of the proposed swimming pool justifies having this facility. She stated that residents would be more likely to belong to private clubs than to use this facility. Hogan stated that the exact size hasn't been determined yet. He added that their experience is that the space around the pool is more important than the size of the pool itself.

Sytsma stated she doesn't care what the retaining wall looks like, only that it can be constructed without damaging the wetland. Hogan gave assurances that the wall can be constructed without impacting the wetland.

Hogan thanked the Commission for allowing them to come back on short notice. He summarized by stating that he believes they done as much as they can to address all of our concerns. He stated they are not able to drop the number of units any further and still have a viable project.

Ferro stated he believed the site layout in the area between the wetland and the main access drive was too crowded, and that the plan as proposed seeks to place a standard building template into an area where it does not fit very well. He suggested either eliminating one of the two buildings, or considering use of a different building footprint in this area. One solution might be to use the town home footprint which might work better in the space available.

Butterfield asked whether consideration had been given to placing an apartment building closer to the road, near the maintenance building, and moving the clubhouse further into the site.

Hogan replied that the alignment of the existing sewer interferes with placing a large building in that area. Hogan also stated that introducing a different unit type to the project would interfere with the look they are trying to create.

Hoeks asked whether construction of the two buildings nearest the wetland could be deferred to the end of the project. Gutierrez noted this would not eliminate the concern, only postpone it.

Gutierrez set forth his concern over the transition from a wetland to a jobsite with use of a retaining wall and protecting the wetlands during construction. He noted he is very adamant about having a second egress; that's why the ordinance is written how it is. He emphasized how sensitive the issue of the wetlands is. Gutierrez stated that he thinks we are close to agreement, and that the Township needs this type of project. He feels we simply need to come to terms on a couple of issues.

Gutierrez asked whether Building 13 could be removed, or whether a mix of 2 and 3 story buildings could be used. Hogan stated he did not believe either solution would work.

Hoeks suggested aligning both Building 13 and 14 parallel to the access road, to increase separation from the wetland. Gutierrez suggested reducing the size of these two buildings to fewer units.

Hogan replied that the project scope and number of units has already been reduced to the minimum feasible.

With regard to the wetland, Stalsonburg noted the State of Michigan will be overseeing this and will make sure the wetland is not damaged whatsoever.

Sytsma stated she is not sure they are ready to vote on this, especially with the Chairman absent. She stated she wants to be sure they are not missing anything.

Gutierrez also stated he doesn't feel he is ready to vote yet with the concerns over the wetland/retaining wall issue, and he would support postponement to the July 19 meeting at the latest.

Sytsma asked why there is such a time constraint, when the zoning has been in place for 10 years. Hogan spoke about the time constraints they are under, in working with investment partners in the project.

Gutierrez noted that last Thursday was the first time he has been exposed to the project. He asked Ferro to describe the process that had been followed to date in reviewing the project. Ferro described the Committee makeup and the process that led to the Settlement Agreement with Eastbrook Homes being

amended. He stated that the purpose of the review at that point was only to develop amended language to change the allowable mix of unit types on the property, not to review and approve the site plan.

Ferro stated he was not prepared to offer a set of approval conditions at this meeting. Ferro stated in his opinion there are unresolved issues and a lack of consensus on aspects of the layout. He stated he would also like the applicant to consider whether it would be possible to eliminate or downsize one of the buildings between the sewer lines and the wetlands.

Motion by Hoeks, second by Sytsma, to postpone a decision on the Final PUD Plan and set a special work session meeting for Monday, July 9th at 9:00 a.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Hoeks requested that the applicant work with the Planning Director in resolving remaining issues. Hogan requested a specific list of unresolved issues.

Some remaining issues to look at are:

- Irrigation should be put along the entire Spaulding border, with a natural vegetative buffer.
- North border retaining wall, if there is one, to be installed from outside the wetland.
- Clarify water surge and retention pond issue.
- Lengthening boulevard entries to provide alternative access.

Ferro stated he did not believe that the boulevard entry would satisfy the ordinance standards for two points of access. He would prefer to address this issue through another amendment to the Settlement Agreement, if needed. The connection across the power line already provides a second emergency-only access, so we do not need the boulevard for that purpose.

## **V. REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS OR STAFF**

Butterfield spoke about preliminary conversations she had with Penny Ladd regarding the WIRED Program and how Ada has been identified as a community that could be a viable location for a “remote work center” in this regional program.

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**                      None

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Deborah Ensing Millhuff, CMC  
Ada Township Clerk  
rs:lm