

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE JULY 15, 2010 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, July 15, 2010, at 7:30 p.m. at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, Michigan.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order by Korth at 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Korth, Commissioners Butterfield, Easter, Lowry, Paul and Treasurer Rhoades. Also present: Planning Director Ferro. Absent: Commissioner Gutierrez.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Lowry, second by Paul, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JUNE 17, 2010 MEETING

Motion by Rhoades, second by Lowry, to approve the June 17, 2010 meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Request for Special Use Permit to allow a Foster Care Group Home in the R-3 and VR Districts, 7133, 7147 and 7164 Rix St. SE, Parcel Nos. 41-15-33-231-019, 011 and 012, AMDG Architects, for Thornapple Homes, LLC

Tom Noble, President of the Board of Thornapple Homes, gave a brief overview of the project. He spoke about the need for a home such as this being proposed. Additional comments were made by Tom Sinke of AMDG Architects. He stated they are seeking approval for a 9,950 square foot footprint for the building. He spoke about grading, storm water and setbacks. He noted the home will have a circle drive off Rix Street with a 2-stall garage and 4 employee parking spaces adjacent to the driveway. The home will facilitate 12 people. The exterior will be a barn-like appearance, designed to fit in with the character of the Township.

Ferro stated that the proposed use is a special land use and the zoning rules contain standards that must be met for the use to be approved.

The public hearing was opened, with the following comments being made:

1. Bernie Veldkamp, 5580 Hall Street, asked Ferro to read the zoning rule standards that must be met. He stated they should be applauded for wanting to provide a facility such as this, but it has to be noted that they are requesting to change the appearance of the neighborhood.
2. Melinda Winks, 7014 Ada Ridge Dr., pointed out where she lives in relation to the property for this project. She spoke about the basis of determination for special use approval regarding changing the character of the surrounding area. She believes this project does not meet this criteria and that it will change the character of the neighborhood. She is not against the idea of the foster group home, but she is against the apartment-style facility. This would change the overall look of their neighborhood and there are other properties available in Ada that could work for this.
3. Sydney DeGood (address not given), stated this facility will be helping people.

4. Dan Vos, Sr. submitted written comments which Chairperson Korth read. Mr. Vos states that he is strongly against the project and believes it is not compatible with the long-term plan of the Township. He set forth safety concerns and concerns about the neighbors' property rights also.

The public hearing was closed.

Ferro next went through each special use standard which must be met for approval and whether the standard has been met:

- a. The facility shall have a capacity to provide foster care to no more than 12 persons. Ferro stated this standard is met.
- b. The facility is not closer than 1,500 feet to a group day care home, adult foster care group home, substance abuse treatment facility or community correction facility. It was noted this standard is met.
- c. The facility shall be located on a lot with a minimum lot area of 20,000 square feet, and a minimum lot width of 150 feet. This standard is met.
- d. Identifying signs on the property comply with regulations of article XXVI of this chapter. Ferro stated no details on signage have been provided at this point. A sign permit and conformance with the sign rules would be required later if any signs are proposed.
- e. The size, design, architectural character and exterior materials of the facility shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding area. Ferro pointed out that the plans show a 2-story central portion of the building, with single-story wings on either side. The building form is an agrarian or barn style core, with vertical board and batten siding on the central portion of the building, and horizontal siding on the residential wings. The standing seam metal roof used on the dormers and shed roof is a common feature in the surrounding neighborhood, including on the home adjacent to the east.
- f. Off-street parking shall be provided in a quantity sufficient to accommodate employee and visitor needs. Parking shall be located and screened by landscaping so as to be least visually objectionable from adjacent roads. Ferro stated more substantial screening of the parking should be provided in order to meet this requirement.
- g. All state requirements governing the licensing of foster care facilities shall be met. The state requirements referenced above are satisfied, given that the facility is not required by the state to be licensed.

Ferro briefly summarized four additional standards contained in the zoning regulations which apply to any special use: (1) the special use is to be designed in manner harmonious with the surrounding area; (2) the special use shall not change the character of the area; (3) the special use shall not create a hazard to the adjacent property; and (4) the special use shall not place demands on public services in excess of their capacity.

Ferro stated that he does not believe that the size of the facility alone renders it incompatible with the area. He referenced schools and churches as examples of large facilities that are commonly found in residential areas and accepted as compatible uses. Ferro commented that in general he supports the concept of providing housing for persons with developmental disabilities within a neighborhood setting, rather than marginalizing them, and relegating this type of facility to the fringes, to a highway setting or to a highly rural area.

Ferro also suggested that placing the storm water detention facilities underground rather than having a surface detention area on a highly-visible corner.

Ferro said that he recommends approval, subject to the three conditions listed in his memo pertaining to screening of the parking, submittal of storm water detention area design details and approval by the church for joint use of the detention area.

Easter asked for clarification as to the relationship between the home and the church. Noble responded that the Ada CRC church is one of 11 churches that is part of the classis which has approval rights over the Board of Thornapple Homes.

Lowry stated he has issues with the main building wherein the barn-style and red siding makes the whole home stand out like a sore thumb. He suggests the red building be redesigned.

Rhoades stated that putting an almost 10,000 square foot building in the neighborhood does not fit in with the other houses.

Korth stated there is a somewhat apartment quality to this facility. It is important to be able to create as much quality residential property for the community. Korth spoke about setback issues. He is concerned that since this is a suburban style setting, there are access issues. He asked why the structure is not a 2 or 3 story structure.

Sinke responded that from a program standpoint, have multiple stories is difficult with people with developmental disabilities. Noble added that they are not sure at this point what sort of disabilities the residents may have – there may be some in wheelchairs, etc. He believes a taller building would be less compatible.

Korth stated that he firmly believes that they need as much density as possible to preserve the character of the village. Korth stated he believes the Commission needs to revisit what has been presented tonight at the meeting.

It was moved by Easter, and seconded by Lowry, to postpone action until the August meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Request for Special Use Permit for Addition of 2 Youth Soccer Fields to the Existing Church Facility, 655 Spaulding Ave SE, Parcel No. 41-15-31-177-001, Rapids FC/Keystone Church

Dan Spiegel presented the request. He first spoke about the Rapids FC soccer program and how their goal is to try to keep the program at a low cost. They need to find facilities to help keep these costs down and thus they approached Keystone Church regarding use of their open land for their fields. Spiegel noted that the games would be held on Saturdays and all vehicle traffic would come only off of Spaulding and all parking would be limited to the church parking lot. There will be no changes to the land.

Ferro stated that parks and playgrounds are permitted in residential districts with special use approval. If traffic can be effectively kept out of the West Village Development, he believes the use could be acceptable and not out of character with the area.

The public hearing was opened. The following comments were made:

1. Ryan Vanderhoff, 5066 West Village Trail, state he did not get a letter and no one spoke to him about this. He will view the soccer field with all the commotion out his front window and he does not see any reason to put this here. This would adversely affect him in many ways. He said the average homes in West Village are \$500,000 homes and no one would want to buy a home with a soccer field in the front, the traffic, the vehicles, etc. He added that residents of the neighborhood would not even benefit from this. There will be no way to prohibit the traffic and

parking. This is not like a playground or a park. This will have events every Saturday, creating noise and other issues. He strongly believes this will significantly deteriorate the value of every home in the development.

2. Rob VanderSloot, 5140 Clear Drive, noted his primary concern is traffic and parking along the berm. (Korth stated that a fence where you can't cross over would solve this completely – a simple solution and feels the comments should not involve traffic issues.)
3. Ray Reitsma, 5122 West Village Trail, also noted he was not approached about this. He spoke about the fact that he knew he was buying next to a church, but never would have associated this with having soccer fields on top of them.
4. Kerry Vanderhoff, 5066 West Village Trail, stated they chose their lot to buy knowing they had a view of a quiet open field. They want to enjoy their peace and quiet.

The public hearing was closed.

Ferro commented that the planning commission could consider imposing conditions on approval of the use relating to location of parking and use of the streets in West Village, and if those conditions are violated, the approval of use could be subject to revocation. Limits of time and frequency of use could be another condition, along with no traffic associated with the use on West Village Trail.

Rhoades asked if the church were to do this on their own, would they have a use by right. Ferro responded that a certain amount of recreational use is commonly associated with a church, but this is on a significantly higher level of recreational use. There was more discussion on the exact uses to be associated with the fields.

Easter stated she feels like this is extreme and wondered if there could be a compromise.

Lowry stated he believes the applicant needs to get with the church and figure out the maximum usage and present that back to the residents.

Korth asked if there is anything related to this property that has to do with sensitive features. Ferro stated there is wetland on the property but not where the soccer fields are proposed.

Motion by Easter, second by Butterfield, to postpone action for one month. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Request for Special Use Permit to Permit an Accessory Building Side Wall Height of 28 Feet, in the RP-1 Zoning District, 7523 Knapp St. NE, Parcel No. 41-15-10-100-014, Ronald R. Idema, Jr. for Mark and Jeanne Ferderber

Ron Idema presented the request for special use permit. He noted this is an existing 40' by 60' barn on which the owners are proposing to remove the roof and add a second floor with 16' high walls, resulting in a total side wall height of 28'. The appearance will be the same, but it will just be taller. The second floor use would be recreational.

Ferro stated the building was originally built as an agricultural building and thus there was no building permit. He stated the nearest adjacent home is north of the barn which is about 600' from the property line. There are substantial wooded tree lines and minimal visibility from either of the adjacent roads.

Lowry asked about the existing well and septic system on the property. Idema stated he was unsure and would have to address the owners on that. Lowry asked whether there would be any exterior lighting.

Idema stated there is some lighting that is set up in the peaks and underneath the windows which is timed lighting. It was noted that the dormers on the roof mimic the dormers on the house.

A public hearing was opened. There were no comments and the hearing was closed.

It was moved by Paul and seconded by Easter to approve the request for special use permit to permit an accessory building side wall height of 28 feet, in the RP-1 Zoning District, at 7523 Knapp St. NE (Parcel No. 41-15-10-100-014). Motion passed unanimously.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. 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.

Dan Henrickson presented the request on behalf of Olivia's Gift. They are requesting an extension in order to allow more time for Olivia's Gift (a non-profit organization) to obtain charitable gifts toward the cost of developing the facility. He noted the only change to the plan is a request through the HUD program that this be apartment rental versus condominium ownership.

It was moved by Easter, and seconded by Rhoades, to approve a 1-year extension of the final PUD plan. Motion passed unanimously.

2. PUD Pre-Application Conference, 11,500 Square Foot Day Care Center, 7030 Fulton St. and part of 7041 Bronson St., Parcel No. 41-15-28-477-039 and 009, Highpoint Real Estate and Development

Brian Sikma of Highpoint Real Estate presented the PUD plan. Robert Young of Big Steps Little Feet Day Care was also present. Sikma pointed out the property is located between the Ada Township Fire Station and the BP gas station on the south side of Fulton Street. He stated many parents who would be utilizing the day care center are Amway employees. Robert Young presented information on the proposed day care center. They will have more of a nature area than a standard playground at the rear of the building, taking advantage of the wetland setting.

Ferro commented on the proposal. He noted driveway access is proposed to both Bronson Street and M-21. He feels consideration should be given to removal of the access to Fulton St. The property has some constraints such as wetlands, awkward shape, and grade changes, which make it difficult to develop. The layout of the building and parking is somewhat conventional, with parking directly adjacent to the road. He stated that there should be a provision for pedestrian access with connection to the Bronson sidewalk.

Korth next spoke about the PUD pre-application process. Rhoades spoke about the parking in the front in relation to the young children. He also said he would like to see green screening of the parking lot all the way around. Ferro asked if the state licensing agency has any regulations over parking. Young stated they do not.

Ferro stated that the next step for the applicant is to take the feedback presented tonight into consideration and then come back before the Commission with submittal of a Preliminary PUD plan.

3. Proposed Amendment to Industrial District Building Height Regulations

Ferro stated that Amway is proposing to relocate a manufacturing process from California to Michigan with an equipment layout that is vertically oriented. They are proposing a vertical expansion of an existing building within their facility. There are already two existing buildings with heights exceeding the current 45 foot building height limit – one is at the west end of the plant near Grand River Drive and the other is an office building immediately across the street from the Rix Robinson memorial. Ferro passed out a memo which suggests the possibility of amending the building height rules in the Industrial District so that the maximum height tiers back to a higher level the further you get away from the property boundaries. The memo includes four different examples. Amway is proposing a height of almost 60 feet at a distance of approximately 600 feet from the property boundary.

Ben Wickstrom, Erhardt Construction, contractor for the proposed Amway project, spoke about their timeline noting that the construction project needs to be completed by the end of 2011.

Ferro stated if the Commission wishes to move forward with a proposed amendment to the building height limits, the next step is to set a public hearing date, either for the regular August meeting or at an earlier special meeting. He stated that the earliest possible date for a special meeting is August 5th in order to get a recommendation before the Township Board at an earlier date than would be possible if the hearing isn't held until the regular meeting on August 19. The contractor stated they would appreciate the Commission's consideration of holding an expedited hearing. Ferro believes that this amendment is in order since they have already approved several building height variances.

Motion by Paul, second by Rhoades, to schedule a special meeting to hold a public hearing on the proposed Amendment to Industrial District Building Height Regulations for August 12, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

4. Revised Draft of Village Form-Based Code

A special meeting will be held on this item.

VIII. REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS/COMMITTEES/STAFF

1. Correspondence was received from Grand Rapids Township informing Ada Township that they are initiating a master plan amendment process.
2. Correspondence was received from the Open Space Advisory Board requesting the Planning Commission revisit the Riparian Protection Rules. (Korth read the letter.)

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Bryan Harrison of Amway Public Affairs complimented the Commission on their work.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lowry, second by Easter, to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Burton, Township Clerk
Rs:lm