

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE JULY 19, 2012 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, July 19, 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 Chairperson Korth at 7:30 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Butterfield, Easter, Jacobs, Korth, Lowry, Lunn and Rhoades

Absent: None

Staff present: Planning Director Ferro

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 21, 2012 MEETING**

Motion by Easter, second by Rhoades, to approve the June 21, 2012 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

**V. PUBLIC HEARING**

**Request For Special Use Permit for conversion of portion of existing distribution facility to manufacturing use, 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, gave an overview of their plans to produce Nutrilite supplements at this site. He stated the proposed manufacturing use would use a little over half of the square footage of the building, with all new equipment, and air handlers on the roof. Sheridan stated they expect to hire 180 employees, and that there will be less truck and general traffic generated at the facility, compared to its historical peak under the previous use.

Jim Ferro, Planning Director, stated the property is zoned Light Industrial, and that pharmaceutical manufacturing is allowed by Special Use Permit, which requires a public hearing. He then listed the four criteria which must be fulfilled in order for a Special Use Permit to be approved. Ferro stated the property is adjoined on the south, west, and east by residential uses, and vacant industrially-zoned land to the north. He referenced an aerial photo he provided showing the distance of the nearest residences to the existing building on the property, as set forth in his staff report. Ferro pointed out there are no changes proposed to the existing site conditions.

Korth opened the public hearing.

Sue Hieronymus, 4779 Forest Hills Court, asked if there will be an increase in the size of the building or the parking lot.

Sheridan stated no.

There was no further public comment, and the hearing was closed.

Ferro stated that based on the information submitted by the applicant and the research he has conducted, the proposed use appears to be an example of a clean industry, and there are no risks involved with air quality or noise, and the traffic will be less than what they had previously. He also stated the Township's engineering consultant has spoken with engineers from Amway regarding their anticipated water usage, and was told the manufacturing process is a "dry" process that uses very little water. As a result, there is no significant increase in water use anticipated and no impact on water and sewer infrastructure.

Lowry asked about the use of isopropyl alcohol mentioned in Ferro's staff report.

Sheridan stated the facility only uses 16 gallons of isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) per month, which is in hand-spray bottles which are used to clean the equipment.

Ferro stated he researched the air emissions produced at Amway's existing Nutrilite plant in California, and compared the data to existing emissions from Amway's existing facilities in Ada, and the California plant has fewer emissions than the existing Amway facilities.

Korth asked if everyone was in agreement that the four criteria for the Special Use Permit had been met, and everyone responded yes.

Motion by Easter, second by Lowry, to approve the Request for Special Use Permit for conversion of a portion of the existing distribution facility to manufacturing use, for manufacturing of nutritional supplements, based on a finding that the ordinance standards for approval of a special use permit are satisfied.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **Request For Extension of Special Use Permit Approval for Foster Care Group Home, 7133, 7147 and 7164 Rix St. SE, Parcel Nos. 41-15-33-231-019, 011 and 012, Thornapple Homes**

Tom Nobel, President of the Board of Thornapple Homes, stated when they first applied for a Special Use Permit in 2010, they expected to begin construction within 18 months. He stated that due to unforeseen circumstances, the needed funding has not yet been entirely secured. He stated as a result they are now seeking approval for another 12 month extension.

Korth asked if there had been any changes to the plan from when it was originally proposed.

Nobel stated no.

Korth asked if it would be necessary for the planning commission to re-examine the approved site plan for the project.

Ferro stated no, since there have been no changes in the Township's planning goals and policies for the area or physical changes in the surrounding area.

Motion by Rhoades, second by Lowry, to approve a 1-year extension of the Special Use Permit for Thornapple Homes, to August 19, 2013.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Site Plan Review, Proposed Children's Play Area, Ada Place Townhomes, Ada Place Dr. SE**

Michael Arnott, 990 Ada Place Dr., presented the Ada Place Townhomes Condominium Association's proposal to install a children's play structure within the condominium development. He stated the development has a number of households with children, and there are currently no outdoor play facilities, with the result that children currently ride their bicycles and play along the driveway. He stated the Association would propose to install a fence along the south and west perimeter of the proposed play area, to discourage children from wandering onto the adjoining office property. Arno stated they are trying to come up with a plan that will not cost a lot of money.

Ferro stated it is an unusual situation for a children's swing set to be in front of the Planning Commission for approval, and that this is due to the unique history of the Ada Place Townhomes development. He stated that the development was the result of a litigation consent judgment, which states that the property shall be developed according to the plan that is attached to the consent judgment, and that that time, and that any changes to that plan shall be presented for approval by the planning commission.

Ferro stated the adjoining property owners and office occupants, Ken and Gail Saukas, have expressed concerns about the location of the play area immediately adjacent to their property, both with respect to safety and with respect to impact on the value of their property. Ferro noted that the proposed play area is immediately adjacent to a portion of the Saukas parking lot where vehicles back up to exit the parking area. Ferro stated he views this proximity as a potential safety hazard. Ferro stated he has walked the site and looked for alternative locations for a play area, and has found a couple of candidates which could be considered.

Arnott stated the children are used to playing in the vicinity of the proposed play area, and would likely continue to play in that area, regardless of where the play structure is located. He also stated that one of the alternatives suggested by Ferro would require removal of trees, which would be costly.

Ferro stated he believed the concerns expressed by Saukas's could be addressed by requiring the installation of a physical barrier between the edge of the parking area and the play area, to prevent vehicles from inadvertently backing into the play area, and by installation of a 6-foot high solid screen fence, to provide visual and noise screening between the play area and the office site. Ferro stated he had recommended approval of the proposed play area, subject to these measures being taken, and that if the applicant was not willing to take those measures, that action be postponed, pending an evaluation of alternative locations being completed.

Arnott stated there is really only outdoor activity by children after work and on weekends. He stated that a play area next to residential is not a good idea as people work different shifts.

Korth asked if trees would have to be cut down in the location proposed by the applicant.

Arnott stated there were a couple of evergreens that would have to be taken out.

Easter asked if there had been issues with the neighbors in the past.

Arnott stated several years ago they had a minor incident, and since then those children have moved.

Easter asked if there is a manager on site.

Arno stated no.

Ken Saukas, owner of the adjacent property, stated that the townhomes were originally all rental apartments but since have concerted to condominium ownership. He stated now there is more of an influx of kids, and there is no place for the kids to play so they use the parking lot. Saukas stated usually there are no cars in the parking lot after work hours and on weekends, and there has been no vandalism. However, he stated, their office building is for rent as he and his wife would like to retire, but they are concerned that the proposed play area will have a negative impact on their ability to sell the building if kids are running around. Saukas stated at one time space in back of the garage building was used as a play area with playground equipment, and the back of the building is where it should be.

Angela Versluis, 1040 Ada Place Drive, stated with the proposed privacy fence the play area would not be visible from the Saukas office building. She stated benches and tables would be put there, playground use rules will be posted, including a notice requiring parent supervision of children. She stated The Association has already spent \$1,000 for a property boundary survey, and if they place the playground in the back of the garage building they would also have to remove some big trees.

Ken Saukas stated he does not know what the appearance of a screen fence would be.

Korth asked Saukas if he would support the proposed location if he was satisfied with the appearance of a screen fence.

Don Saukas stated that was a possibility.

Korth asked how many total condominium units are in the Ada Place Townhomes.

Arnott stated 36.

Korth asked how many have kids.

Arnott stated 15, and he noted that all 36 units have 3 bedrooms. He stated they are trying to figure out a way to handle the play area without spending a lot of money.

Korth stated the lot has some complex issues, and suggested Commission members may wish to take some time and visit the site.

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

Jacobs, Korth and Rhoades volunteered to serve on a subcommittee that will visit the site and report to the Commission at the August meeting.

## **STAFF/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS**

Korth reported on an inquiry he and Ferro received from a party interested in developing private storage units that would be sold as individual condominium units, on property located immediately west of the Rollingbrook neighborhood on the north side of Fulton St., west of Spaulding Ave. Korth stated that the Commission heard a proposal for a residential development on this same property several years ago, at the time the Master Plan was being updated, that would have had a density substantially higher than the 1 unit per 2 acres permitted under the current zoning. Korth asked Commission members for feedback on the potential commercial storage proposal, which would require both an amendment to the Master Plan and rezoning to a commercial zoning district.

Ferro was asked whether utility service is available at the site. Ferro stated that there is a water main at the Spaulding Ave./Fulton St. intersection, and that public sewer service is located on Spaulding Ave. between Fulton St. and the railroad line.

Ferro noted that the developer's anticipation is that a majority of the units would be used for personal storage, but that some might also be used for small business storage, subject to conformance with condo restrictions on the types of business activities permitted.

Korth pointed out that the Rollingbrook neighborhood was developed under previous zoning rules, and has a density of 1 lot per acre. He also stated that there is potential for a private street connection to be made between the Rollingbrook private road and the property to the west, which would avoid a new curb cut on Fulton St., and that could facilitate residential development of this property at a similar density as Rollingbrook.

Ferro stated that a commercial rezoning of this property could have implications for rezoning of other, similarly-situated properties on the north side of Fulton St., and that the larger context of the area needs to be considered.

The consensus of the Commission was that commercial development of the site should not be considered.

#### **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

#### **X. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Rhoades, second by Jacobs, to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Susan Burton, Township Clerk

SB/dr