

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 16, 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

Public present: Approximately 5

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion by Easter, second by Butterfield, to approve the revised agenda, with addition of Discussion of Riparian Protection Regulations. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 19, 2012 MEETING**

Motion by Rhoades, second by Lowry, to approve the July 19, 2012 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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

Ferro reviewed the history of the request, including postponement of action by the Commission at the July meeting, appointment of a committee consisting of Korth, Rhoades and Jacobs to visit the site, and the results and findings of the Committee's site visit. Ferro also stated he had asked the Fire Chief whether he would have any objections to closure of the current driveway between the two main garage buildings on the site in order to convert it to play area use, and after review of the site plan for the development, the Fire Chief stated he had no objection to the driveway being removed. Ferro also noted correspondence received on August 15 from Ken and Gail Saukas.

In Commission discussion, Rhoades stated that Option D, the location between the two garage buildings, shown on the aerial photo prepared by Ferro, appears to him to be the preferred location, since the Fire Chief has no objections, and the cost of pavement removal could be offset by avoiding the need for 6-foot high screen fencing.

Jacobs commented that Location B shown on the aerial photo, at the far west end of the development, is too far away from most of the condo units, and that Option D seems like a better option.

Korth stated he also believes Location D is the best of the optional locations, but is probably more expensive to convert to a play area. Korth also stated he believes the wood fence proposed by the applicant does not provide a desirable level of quality. Korth asked Ferro if the Saukas's had provided any input on the style of a screen fence.

Ferro responded he did not recall asking the Saukas's whether they had any preference on the type of fence.

Butterfield suggested the possibility of leaving the existing pavement in place in Location D between the two garages, and placing a sufficient depth of cushioning material such as mulch over the pavement, to provide a safe play surface.

Angela Versluis, representing the Ada Place Townhomes Condo Association, noted that the play equipment needs to be adequately anchored to the ground, by screw anchors, and that the pavement could interfere with this.

Ferro suggested that cored holes in the pavement could be created, to allow for anchoring into the ground.

Following discussion, it was moved by Rhoades, seconded by Easter, to approve the site plan for the addition of an outdoor play area at the Ada Place Townhomes, subject to the following conditions:

1. If the play area is installed in location "A" as originally proposed by the applicant, a solid screen wall with a minimum height of 6 feet and exterior faced with horizontal lap siding of a style and color matching the adjacent garage wall shall be installed on the south and west play area perimeter, and a steel or timber vehicle barrier shall be installed, on the property boundary between the play area and the vehicle aisle in the adjacent parking lot.
2. The play area may also be installed in location "B" or location "D" as shown on the alternatives map, subject to submittal of a site plan for review and approval by the Planning Director.

During discussion of the motion, Angela Versluis commented that she believed the vehicle barrier would need to be located on the fence.

Ferro commented he believed the vehicle barrier would be best located at the top of the slope adjacent to the Saukas parking area, which would be on the Saukas property. He noted that the Township is not in a position to impose any requirement on the Saukas's. He stated he encourages the Condo Association to work with the Saukas's to obtain their permission to install the barrier on their property, and if this can't be worked out, the barrier would need to be placed on the Condominium property at the bottom of the slope, with the screen fence placed immediately behind the barrier.

On a call for a vote on the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **2. Discussion of Need for Revisions to Riparian Protection Regulations.**

Korth noted this item has been placed on the agenda for discussion purposes only, and it is not anticipated there will be any action taken tonight.

Ferro provided background information regarding the exemption for existing lots of records that was included in the riparian protection regulations at the time they were adopted. He stated that the matter of removing or modifying this exemption has been a topic of discussion ever since the regulations were adopted, with individuals in the community advocating both for and against removal of the exemption.

Ferro stated when the Commission held hearings on potential changes a year ago, the Commission postponed action for 1 year, with the expectation that additional educational efforts would be undertaken to encourage voluntary stewardship of riparian areas by property owners.

Korth noted there were several members of the public present, and asked if anyone wished to comment.

Betty Jo Crosby, Chairperson of the Open Space Preservation Advisory Board, encouraged the Commission to consult with the Advisory Board regarding the riparian protection regulations.

Tom Rehwoldt, 9460 East Fulton, state he owns about 33 acres of land on the Grand River, and is interested in what action the Commission will take on this matter in the future.

Ferro encouraged Mr. Reywoldt to subscribe to the Township's email distribution list for meeting agendas, and Rehwoldt provided his email address to Ferro for this purpose.

Korth suggested the appointment of a subcommittee to study potential revisions to the regulations. Easter and Lunn both volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Lunn noted he would not be able to meet until October.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS:** None

**VIII. STAFF/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS**

1. Master Plan Update Schedule and Process

Ferro reported he is in the process of preparing proposed revisions to the Vision Statement component of the Master Plan, which sets forth goals and policies for the future.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Cornelius Smit, 5613 Far Hill Dr., encouraged the Commission to consider establishing a Dutch colonial theme for the Village, noting that he believes the resources exist within the community to accomplish this, and that it could establish the Village as a tourist destination. He cited as an example the community of Pella, Iowa. He noted he had provided some photographs to Supervisor Haga.

Betty Jo Crosby, 411 Grand River Dr., stated she had read in the draft minutes from the July meeting about a possible proposal for commercial storage buildings on the north side of Fulton St. near Taos Ave. She stated she hoped that the Commission would continue the policy of discouraging commercial development on the west end of the Fulton St. corridor.

Korth noted that the feedback that was provided to the developer was not encouraging, and that there was some feeling by Commissioners that the property in question was suited for residential development at a density similar to the existing adjacent Rollingbrook neighborhood.

Korth asked Ferro whether action was being taken to ensure correction of the zoning violation at the Ada Body Shop, involving expansion of the paved parking area to the property boundary, and painting of a sign on the pavement. He expressed concern that this not be forgotten or overlooked.

Ferro stated that action was being taken. He noted that he is taking into consideration health issues within the business owners' family, and that he has encouraged corrective measures to be taken prior to the end of this construction season.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Rhoades, second by Lunn, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Susan Burton, Township Clerk

SB/jf