

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20, 2015 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, August 20, 2015, 7:00 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 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Easter, Lunn, Jacobs, and Leisman

Absent: Commissioners Lowry

Staff Present: Planning Director Ferro

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Jacobs, supported by Easter, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 16 MEETING

Motion by Leisman, supported by Easter, to approve the August 16 minutes as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Development Plan for 1,080 Square Foot Kitchen Addition and 911 Square Foot Outdoor Seating Addition for Nonna Café, in Planned Village Mixed Use (PVM) District, 584 Ada Dr SE, Parcel No., 41-15-34-105-004, 2D, LLC

Ken Dixon, Dixon Architects presented the proposed plan. Dixon stated the existing structure viewed from Ada Drive will remain pretty much intact. He stated that they will be removing a few interior walls to open it up a bit more to accommodate a restaurant environment with about 44 seats on the interior. Dixon stated at the back wall they will be adding on about 1,000 square feet. The kitchen is a primary addition to provide the great menu items that Ron is proposing. Dixon stated the mature landscape along the north property boundary will be maintained. He noted a brick paved parking area is proposed at the rear of the property.

Easter asked if they will be raising the building up

Dixon stated the existing building is already on a raised foundation, on a low-ceilinged basement that has mechanical equipment.

Lunn asked if the addition has a second floor.

Dixon stated the dormers in the roof are to try to add a little bit of character to the style of the building; they are false type dormers, they're purely there for aesthetics, to improve the look of it; and down below instead of a blank wall where there's a kitchen on the opposing side, we've put shutters, kind of a historic looking closed shutter, although there are no actual window openings on the kitchen wall.

Lunn asked if the pavers in the parking lot are porous or impervious.

Dixon stated the plan currently proposing an underground storm water detention system. He stated they are waiting for a soil borings report to determine whether the soils are sufficiently pervious to use a leaching system.

Easter asked when they expect to begin construction.

Ron Cook responded as soon as possible, with the intent of being open prior to the holidays in December.

Lunn suggested using a "living wall" on the exterior walls that screens the dumpster and the cooler.

Ron Cook stated he has some landscaping features in mind for the rear of the property.

Butterfield asked if the shingles as depicted are going to be the old style.

Dixon stated no, it'll be more of just a traditional type roof that you see shingled.

Butterfield asked Ferro to present his comments on the plan.

Ferro provided background information regarding how the Village form-based code applies to the proposal. Ferro stated the proposal conforms with the dimensional standards for a "Village Blockfront Lot," which is a permitted lot type in this location.

Ferro stated with respect to parking, there are four spaces provided adjacent to a 10-foot wide access aisle, such that vehicles using those spaces will have to back all the way out into the Township parking lot in order to turn around. Ferro stated one way to improve on that would be to seek approval from the Township Board to have access to the front parking area at the Township Hall, so that one-way traffic could access the 4 parking spaces from the south, and exit to the north. He stated the applicant could pursue this possibility at a September Township Board meeting.

Ferro stated that based on the parking standards for the Village contained in the PVM district, the parking demand for the expanded building and the new use is eight spaces. There is language in the zoning rules that allows the Planning Commission to relax parking requirements, and that this has been done on several occasions for building expansions and changes of use in the Village. Ferro noted he had not included parking demand calculations for the outdoor seating area, due to the seasonal nature of its use, and its peak use in seasons of lower activity levels in the Village.

He stated there is no exterior lighting shown on the plans, but he would think the owner would probably like some kind of lighting over the rear entrance; if there is going to be any exterior lighting we will need a fixture specification submitted before a building permit is issued.

Ferro stated the dumpster area at the rear of the building will be screened. There will be horizontal siding and roof pitch that match the existing portion of the building that is being expanded to the rear.

Ferro stated overall, he believes it's a good plan; the building complies with the architectural standards in the form-base code, and he recommends approval with two conditions: one pertaining to the need for a

storm water permit, with design calculations submitted, and a second condition requiring submittal of a fixture specification if there will be any added exterior lighting.

Butterfield asked if the barrier free parking area shown on the plan has already been approved.

Dixon stated there is one there.

Ferro stated there was one required years ago by the building department. He stated he is not familiar with what the dimensions are.

Dixon stated 9 feet wide by 20 feet deep and you have to have an unloading zone which is 8 feet wide by 20 feet deep. This should really be striped as a non-parking stall to be accurate with the handicap requirements.

Butterfield asked if they had considered one-way driveway connection to the front Township parking lot, and if employees would park there.

Cook stated employee parking will mostly be at the Community Church parking lot. Cook stated he is also concerned with any impact a driveway connection to the north might have on the future development potential of his property.

Ferro commented he doesn't believe that the Township allowing a driveway connection would have any impact on the applicant's property, and that it would be more of an encumbrance on the Township's property.

Easter stated I think it looks like a great plan; it's going to be a nice addition to the village. She asked whether the building would remain the existing white color.

Dixon stated it will be an off white color.

Jacobs asked whether any additional information is available with regard to parking availability and use in the Village.

Ferro stated we are having a parking study completed by a parking consultant, and they have given us a partial draft of the final report that at this point addresses only inventory and analysis of current parking conditions. It concludes that there is currently sufficient parking in this part of the village. The Community Church lot is greatly under-utilized, and it is not widely used by the public. The portion of the study that is not done yet is projecting future conditions and parking needs. Ferro stated we should have a completed report in two to three weeks that includes analysis of future conditions and parking needs.

Jacobs asked if it's fair to say that based on the completed portions of the study, there is currently sufficient parking supply available in the Village to meet the deficit on this site?

Ferro stated yes, there are other parking opportunities in the village that could help meet the demand from this building.

Jacobs stated she is excited about the potential of the building, and I think it's a beautiful concept and a great addition.

Leisman asked if the zoning ordinance provides for not counting outdoor seating in the parking requirement calculations.

Ferro stated it doesn't speak to it one way or another. He stated parking requirements for restaurants are based on building square footage, not on a seating count.

Leisman expressed some concern with completely exempting outdoor seating from parking requirements.

Leisman stated he believes that with this addition being one-story, there is also the need for approval of a deviation from the minimum building height standard in the code.

Ferro stated the existing building is two story, and our form base code doesn't specify for a two story building what percentage of the first floor must also have the second floor above it; there's no percentage of the total footprint that has to be the full two story.

Leisman stated that without language to the contrary, he would assume that it would apply for the entire footprint of the building.

Butterfield stated that was a new structure, this is an existing historic area of the village that's very charming that we're looking to retain. You're looking at two different scenarios.

Ferro stated he believes there was a deviation approved from the two story requirement for the Heidi Christines building, and noted it does not have a true second floor above the entire footprint.

Leisman stated we need to make a finding concerning the lack of necessity for added parking, and another finding in order to authorize a deviation from the 2-story requirement. He believes it is important as we move forward that we have a reason for our deviations. The only other comment he has is whether we should include a condition requiring protection of the existing maple tree during construction.

Cook stated we are going to have West Michigan Tree Service treat the tree and monitor its health. The arborist's opinion is that the root zone is 10 to 12 feet from the base of the tree, so it should be ok.

Ferro stated the language concerning relaxation of parking requirements states that "documentation is provided to the Planning Commission that the requirements contained herein would result in an excessive number of unneeded spaces, the Commission may permit minor variations from the standards contained in this section." The language concerning what's referred to as a deviation from the standard states "a departure from the PVM district standards shall not be approved unless it complies with the following standards:

1. The proposed alternative is consistent with the purpose and intent of the PVM district.
2. The proposed alternative to the standard will not have a detrimental impact on adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood;
3. The alternative is necessary and appropriate to accommodate a superior design;
4. The proposed departure is clearly identified in the application."

Butterfield asked if the parking standards are different for uses like a restaurant used as a banquet facility.

Ferro stated we have a standard for assembly areas without fixed seating, of one space per 100 square feet. He stated that's probably the closest thing that would apply.

Motion by Leisman, supported by Jacobs, to approve the Nonna Café Development Plan based on the following findings, and subject to the following conditions.

1. That a parking deviation is justified to prevent unnecessary excessive parking; given the age and location of the existing structure and availability of public parking, and the potential for future

additional parking via the Envision Ada Plan, make for sufficient parking for the additional increased parking requirements from the prior use and for the outdoor deck.

2. That a deviation from the two-story requirements for village block front buildings is justified under the five criteria listed in the zoning ordinance, including consistency with the plan and neighboring properties; and specifically for the reasons that the front of the structure facing the street is two story, and that the addition being added to the back of the structure is less visible and provides a better connection to the existing one and one-half story portion at the rear of the building.
3. Apart from the parking and two-story deviations, which are hereby approved, the plan otherwise complies with the standards of the PVM district.
4. The existing maple tree at the north end of the site shall be protected during construction.
5. A storm water permit application shall be submitted and approved, with required storm water design calculations and design, prior to issuance of a building permit.
6. An exterior light fixture specification for a “full cutoff” fixture shall be provided for any added exterior lighting, prior to building permit issuance.

Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER/STAFF REPORTS

Ferro presented a proposed schedule for updating of the Township Master Plan, calling for review of a draft at an October work session meeting. Ferro noted he now has a contract services planner assisting him in the office approximately 15 hours per week.

Leisman stated that the a subcommittee consisting of he, Butterfield and Easter had met with Thornapple Pines regarding issues discussed at the pre-application conference, including private road access. Leisman questioned whether the developer has the option of applying for a variance from the ordinance limits on number of dwelling units that can be accessed from a private road.

Ferro stated that’s a question for legal counsel, and he would seek input regarding that question.

Ferro reported on the status of enforcement action concerning the event venue being operated by Mr. Bieker at 3050 Pettis Ave. He reported that after two written violation notices were mailed, he and Haga had met with Bieker and the Township committed to not taking formal enforcement action pertaining to events already committed for 2015, which will end in October.

Following discussion, the consensus of the Commission was to move consideration of the pending zoning ordinance amendment concerning special event venues to the September meeting.

It was moved by Easter, supported by Jacobs, to schedule a public hearing at the September meeting on the proposed zoning ordinance amendment to allow special event venues by special use permit approval.

Motion passed unanimously.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jay Bayley, 8811 Vergennes St., suggested the Commission look into the restrictions on special events that apply to Meijer Gardens.

Leisman noted that between our June and July meeting Tom Korth resigned, and he was a member for, I believe, 17 years, and I'd like to state that he did a good job.

Lunn asked if election of officers could be held.

Ferro stated our normal election of officers is the October meeting. He stated he and Angela had discussed a schedule for holding elections, and thought that waiting until October, after the Commission vacancy has been filled, would be appropriate.

Lunn asked if there was a zoning issue hanging out there with regard to the property along M-21 shown on the Envision Ada Plan as future residential development that is currently zoned commercial. Lunn suggested we should change the zoning to be consistent with the Envision Ada Plan.

Ferro stated the first step in that process should be amending the Master Plan, which is underway.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jacob, second by Easter, to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burton, Township Clerk
SB/dr