

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 16, 2010 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, December 16, 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 Easter, Lowry, Paul, Lunn, Commissioner Butterfield (7:50 p.m.) and Treasurer Rhoades.

Also present: Planning Director Ferro.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Korth stated the agenda shows Election of Officers; however with one member absent at this time, he suggested that the agenda be amended to move this item to later in the meeting.

Motion by Lowry, second by Rhoades, to approve the Agenda, subject to postponing election of officers to the end of the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 18, 2010 MEETING

Easter stated she had nominated Corky Paul to be Vice-Chair and it was not included in the Minutes. Motion by Easter, second by Rhoades, to approve the November 18, 2010 meeting minutes, with the revision of adding Easter's nomination of Paul as Vice-Chair.

Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Request for Rezoning to R-2/PUD / Request for Approval of Preliminary PUD Plan for 50 Attached Condominium Units in 16 Buildings on Approximately 13.4 Acres, Villas of Ada Phase 2, 5504, 5550 and 5554 Ada Drive SE, Parcel No.'s 41-15-31-426-031 and 013, Covenant Two, LLC

Peter Engles, with Covenant Development, explained the reason for this rezoning request. We are here because we are also a neighbor who shares the boundary of the subject property including 1,000' of frontage and 10 occupied homes. Recently we were contacted by the property owner and were told the property was going to be sold for development, and as a result we optioned the property to do our due diligence. After evaluation we decided we would be our own best neighbor, and for the same reason believe we are the best fit for the Township and the other adjoining properties. Our proposal tonight is a result of discussions with the Township staff, pre-application process, Kent County Road Commission, neighbors and co-owner feedback.

(Butterfield joined the meeting at this time.)

Engineer Jason VanderKodde with Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, representing Covenant Development, outlined the overview of the Ada PUD ordinance, the existing property, the by-right subdivision drawings, the proposed Villas of Ada Phase II PUD, and how this proposal meets Ada Township goals.

Ferro commented on the 12 acre existing site and its features, which is relatively flat with mostly young trees and more mature woodlands on back portion of the site. He then listed the characteristics to be eligible for PUD zoning rules. Also stated the storm management system is based on a storm intensity of a 100-year return frequency, which is a higher performance standard than required by the Township storm water ordinance.

Korth opened the hearing to public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cornelius Smit, 5613 Far Hill Drive, commented on the trees and the lighting from the present development. This is a residential area and now you're talking about making it commercial which will affect the property values some day, and it will be more crowded.

Ellen Waalkes, 5460 Ada Drive SE, stated they have a pending sale on their house and the potential buyers met with Peter and looked over the plans and their only concern was if it was going to be developed he wanted Covenant Developers do the development. As far as traffic, her husband is very happy that cars will be able to exit both ways and not just onto Ada Drive.

Marilyn Hazard, 1011 Gros Venture Drive SE, stated she lives downhill from the water basin and is concerned with the run-off from the water system, and the fact that the DEQ has given citations to this developer. Would like to see a very clear cut understanding exactly of how these holding tanks are going to hold the water and what is going to happen at a later date.

Harry Kooyman, 1010 Fernridge Avenue SE, would like to know if the trees being put in are going to be hardwoods or evergreens, if the project is approved would like evergreens on the southern edge which butts up to his property.

Phil Engelsman, 5655 Far Hill Drive, stated on the Phase 1 project there was concern about the density, which was reduced somewhat, and along with the density is the traffic and the things that go with it. Also there was concern about the wooded areas. He doesn't have a problem with developing this as a PUD but should look at the density and learn from the past, and when new trees are planted should be 2 for 1. Because a lot of the woods have been taken down there has been a lot of destruction of other trees because the root structures were disturbed. Also, the drainage area does drain down into the south area and there have been problems. These are all considerations that should be made when looking at this.

Korth suggested the developer might want to respond to issues brought up about the DEQ citations, the issue of going inside the "no disturb zone", and as two commenters noted the remaining trees are not as strong as they should be and what is being done to protect the forest, and also the storm water retention.

Peter Engles responded that throughout the entire process of clearing and building the site they have been in day-to-day contact with the Township before doing anything in the "no disturb zone". In regards to the drainage and construction of the south basin along Hall Street, plugs are put in the sides of the manholes and this particular one blew out in a heavy rain event and it did allow a higher rate of water to go to the Sikkema and Romance properties. The DEQ did give us written warning and said we had to go in there and clean that up, which we did. Since then have worked with the Township engineer and Tom Byle of the Kent County Road Commission and put in an 8" pipe through that property which is in the historical drainage area and it more than handles that flow rate, including if there were to be a Phase 2.

Jason VanderKodde responded to the drainage issue. The southern third of the property will drain into a proposed retention basin which is an extension of the existing basin, and this should be a zero impact downstream from what currently exists in Phase 1. The North 2/3 of this site will be stored in a detention basin which is connected to a 12" pipe and will flow into the Clements Mill engineered storm sewer.

Peter Engles asked for clarification of R-2 requirements of 25 versus 100 year how this would be beneficial to those downstream.

VanderKodde stated the benefit is these basins will be over-sized which will greatly reduce the odds of emergency water leaving the basin so a much larger amount of storm water will be retained and run through the pipe at a faster rate. Also, the design is for 30% extra volume on the basin so the neighbors downstream have a much better means of protection.

Korth commented that the project because of the higher density creates a higher degree of coverage, and would appreciate knowing how does your coverage of the site in respect to asphalt and roof structures compare to the R-2 or R-3 plans submitted. This is one more information piece we need to effectively make a decision. Korth also asked for information regarding planned landscaping between the road and the new retention area. He suggested an evergreen framework in that area.

VanderKodde stated what is currently there would not be disturbed, and more evergreens may be added.

Rhoades questioned the emergency drive that goes around the new detention pond. Fifty more homes are being dumped into an area that's a dogleg, so can't the south end be hooked into the road the same as the emergency drive is.

VanderKodde explained it has to do with the additional road width and the impact on the basin, and from an engineering standpoint it's a lot more work with minimal benefit.

Butterfield stated Covenant Properties did say they would provide additional traffic studies and would like to see those additional details and the date it was performed in Ada.

Paul would like to make sure the grade of exterior materials used would be comparable with that used on Phase 1.

Peter Engles commented the landscaping, the exteriors and materials, and the floor plans as currently used are exactly what will be used in Phase 2.

VanderKodde commented the same buffering at the end of the driveway will be used in this phase also.

Korth stated he believes we failed miserably on the appearance of the building adjacent to Hall Street in Phase 1, and he doesn't want to see this repeated. He noted there is a stand of white pine and oak in the vicinity of proposed Building #3 that he would like to see preserved. He is also concerned with the appearance of the detention pond proposed along Ada Drive. How does the true density from a number of units perspective relate to what the traditional zoning is currently on this piece of property?

VanderKodde stated the density proposed here is 3.8 dwelling units per acre. Using the number of homes on the comparison plans, the R-2 plan with 20 potential homes is 1.5 units per acre and the 28 lot layout is 2.2 units per acre.

Peter Engles commented there will be additional buffering at Buildings #3, #2, and in front of the parking area of Building #1. He will supply a landscape plan showing additional buffering.

Korth asked for a motion to postpone action on the application.

Motion by Paul, second by Rhoades, to postpone action on the application until next month.

Susan Agerson, 5449 Ada Drive SE, stated does not want to see any more trees along Ada Drive go down, and is concerned about the aquifer, and the flooded basements.

Korth asked Ferro to contact the Sikkema's and Romence's regarding their flooded basements.

Ferro stated he recently had a 2 hour meeting with them, the developer's engineer, and our engineer and there is communication in the packets.

Korth stated the public hearing has been closed on this but will take additional written comments.

Motion to postpone action passed unanimously.

2. Amendment to Zoning Regulations, to Adopt a new Article titled "Planned Village Mixed Use Overlay (PVM) District, Proposed by Ada Township Planning Commission

Ferro stated that the difference between #2 and #3 is that #2 is text amendment to the zoning ordinance that creates a new zoning district, and #3 is actual rezoning of the property to that overlay district. He went on to explain the reasoning for the proposed regulations.

Korth opened the hearing to public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Judy Haga, 7182 Rix Street SE, asked how this is going to affect her house, and what if the lot next door was empty.

Korth replied this does not affect you as a homeowner if you are currently here. If there is an empty lot and a new home is going to be built it would have to be built according to the new standards.

John Knol, 7206 Rix Street, asked about the handicapped facility and whether this would affect that facility, and whether that has been passed.

Korth commented that has been passed and was done as a special use permit.

Mike Corby, Integrated Architecture, representing owner of 660 Ada Drive, stated that building is a former civic building and would like to know how that would be from an architectural standard since it doesn't fit the other requirements.

Korth stated one thing that was done, as an example, the southeast side of Ada Drive was converted to Village Center in order for buildings to be revitalized and used in a useful manner for the community without having so much red tape that it's almost impossible to get it finished. If you read the definition of Village Center, you will see that structure complies for the most part with the Village Center requirements under this draft.

Korth closed the public hearing. Also stated he would like to see the ordinance move forward, if possible.

Lowry stated we need to make the Village more pedestrian friendly. We also need to address a color code for buildings. Also, there should be something that says only certain size landscape is allowed.

Rhoades stated the landscape issue should be addressed from a Township perspective by zoning district because it is a very difficult subject to address. He also pointed out that the State of Michigan has passed a complete streets initiative that gives us latitude to force the Road Commission to upgrade pedestrian facilities as part of one of their road projects.

Korth pointed out that because this is designed to be an overlay people don't have to use it if they don't want to. It does not affect current homeowners, does not affect maintenance of your home, but is meant to try to allow current residents to live their lives basically the way they have been. The hope is it will be a bit of clarity overall for people in the community who want to invest in their houses, and it should help property values and make it a more interesting place for people to be.

Motion by Easter, second by Lowry, to recommend approval of the proposed zoning ordinance amendment subject to the changes that were noted. Motion passed unanimously.

Korth stated now the question is whether everyone is comfortable with the definitions to rezone the properties to include this new overlay as an option.

Paul thanked the subcommittee for its work.

Motion by Paul, second by Easter, to recommend approval of rezoning of land to the PVM district, as shown on the proposed rezoning boundary map. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Moved by Lowry, second by Easter, to elect Korth as Chairperson. Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Lowry, second by Rhoades, to elect Butterfield as Vice Chairperson. Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Paul, second by Lowry, to elect Easter as Secretary. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS None.

IX. REPORTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS/STAFF

1. Amendment to Riparian Protection Standards – No staff report at this time.

Korth stated the hope is that by January this would be active.

2. Review/Approval of Proposed Fiscal Year 2011-12 Meeting Schedule.

Motion by Lowry, second by Easter, to approve the proposed meeting schedule for Fiscal Year 2011-12 including the change to July 21st. Motion passed unanimously.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Paul, second by Lowry, to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Burton, Township Clerk
SB/dr