

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 20, 2012 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, December 20, 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 (arrived 7:38), Jacobs, Korth, Lowry, Leisman, Lunn
Absent: Commissioner Easter. Chairperson Korth welcomed newly-appointed member Ross Leisman to the Commission, and noted that Leisman was filling Commissioner Jacobs' position, while Jacobs was replacing Rhoades as the Township Board representative on the Commission.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Jacobs, supported by Lowry, to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 15, 2012 MEETING

Motion by Lowry, second by Jacobs, to approve the November 15, 2012 meeting minutes with one correction: page 2, first sentence, Motion supported by Lowry, not Lunn. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

Special Use Permit, 14,420 SF Addition to Existing Church, 5125 Cascade Rd. SE, Parcel No. 41-15-31-326-031, Rev. Robert Appold, for St. Matthew Lutheran Church

Paul Henderson, P.E., Roosien & Associates, and Rev. Robert Appold, Pastor, St. Matthew Lutheran Church, were present. Rev. Appold stated the purpose of the multi-purpose room is to meet the needs of the congregation, which has doubled in size.

Henderson presented the proposed plans for the addition. He stated the building addition is behind the existing building, and won't be seen from Cascade Rd. He stated the existing parking supply is 60 spaces, the zoning regulations require 80 spaces, and the plan provides 93 spaces. Henderson noted that the church has an agreement in perpetuity with the adjoining office park property owner, to use the adjacent property for parking. Henderson stated there will be storm water management provided with discharge of runoff to the wetland at the front of the property. He stated they will be bringing the storm water management measures for the entire site to current standards with the addition.

Ferro stated the property is in the Professional Office district, and that churches are permitted in this district with special use permit approval. He noted the church property is adjoined on three sides by office buildings. The north and east property perimeters are wooded with thin young trees. He stated the proposed layout complies with all office district dimensional standards. He stated the site has access from both Cascade Rd. and Spaulding Ave., and there are no changes proposed or needed to the driveway accesses. Ferro stated a landscape plan has been submitted showing a large number of existing large trees and shrubs that will be removed and transplanted on the site. Pole-mounted parking lot lighting is proposed, with full cutoff fixtures mounted at a height in conformance with the zoning regulations. Ferro stated he has prepared a small list of conditions of approval as set forth in his staff report.

Leisman asked how the storm water gets from the basin to the wetlands.

Henderson stated there is an existing storm sewer that will discharge water into the basin, which will filter the storm water prior to it being discharged to the wetland.

Korth asked if the parking agreement was permanent.

Appold stated it is in perpetuity.

Korth asked how much of the office parking lot is used on Sunday.

Appold stated about half.

Korth asked if the church would consider initially constructing only a portion of the added parking on the church site, with the potential to add additional parking later if it is needed.

Paul stated one challenge in relying more on the adjacent office site parking is that there is a grade difference of 6-7 feet between the two parking areas, with a stairway connecting the two lots.

Korth noted that the added parking area consumes green space, as well as adds extra cost, and questioned whether the church would want to be better stewards of the land by minimizing paved area.

Appold stated they are trying to serve the people of the church community.

Korth asked if they had considered using LED lighting fixtures for parking lot lighting, rather than the metal halide fixtures proposed.

Commissioner Lunn stated he had been looking at LED lighting for use by the City of Grand Rapids for a number of years, and that LED lighting technology has advanced rapidly. He stated it would save about 40% of their electric costs in the long run. He asked how long the present lights are on.

Appold stated the lights are on until about 10:00 p.m.

Jacobs asked if the parking agreement is a recorded easement.

Appold stated he didn't know whether it is an easement.

Paul stated they are only adding about one-third of an acre of hard surface, which is in the back part of the parking lot.

Ferro stated the notes on the site plan indicate the existing site has .69 acres of parking, and the proposed plan has .78 acres of parking.

Ferro stated the two conditions he has recommended include compliance with the storm water ordinance for the entire site, and completion of the landscaping improvements substantially as shown on the plan submitted.

Korth opened the Public Hearing. There were not public comments, and Korth closed the hearing.

Following discussion, it was moved by Lunn, supported by Butterfield, to approve the special use permit for the church addition, subject to the following conditions:

1. Requirements of the Township's storm water management ordinance shall be satisfied, and a storm water permit issued by the Township, prior to issuance of a building permit.

2. Landscaping consistent with the preliminary plan dated November 23, 2012 shall be installed as a part of the proposed expansion.
3. The applicant has the option of phasing the construction of the added parking until such time the church determines the total amount shown on the site plan is needed.
4. The applicant is encouraged to consider use of LED parking lot lighting.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Request for Special Use Permit for a Landscape Contracting Business in the RP-1 Zoning District, 9430 Vergennes St. SE, Parcel No. 41-15-36-200-065, Deb Sears

Leisman stated that his wife has previously worked as a seasonal employee for this company. He noted that he has never met or had any interaction with the business owners, and that his wife is not currently employed by the company. He stated he felt he should disclose this in the event the Commission members viewed this as a conflict of interest.

The consensus of the Commission was that the relationship disclosed by Leisman was not a conflict of interest.

James Sears stated he and his wife Deb, who own the Enchanted Gardener landscape business, use the lower level of the home on the property for their office, and for the past two years have rented the upper level residence to a current employee. He stated that a detached garage is used to house two of their four trucks. There is also a small shed and one storage barn, which will eventually be torn down, that are used for the business. He stated they are here requesting approval to run the landscape company on this property.

Korth asked about the status of determining access improvements that would be required by the Road Commission, and the status of the residential occupancy of the building.

Ferro stated the applicant has mentioned to him the potential of the employee moving out, and have asked what the implications of that would be for zoning approval status. Ferro stated that landscape contracting businesses are permitted in this district only when incidental and secondary to agricultural use or single family residential use of the same parcel. If the residence on the property was not used for residential use, a conflict with the zoning rules would be created.

Ferro stated the building inspector visited the property and the building code issues that need to be addressed are minor, such as barrier free bathroom, a modification to the entry door threshold, and having fire separation between upper and lower levels, if the upper level is used for residential use. In addition, the Road Commission has stated they would require installation of a "Type A" commercial driveway, which is the least extensive of the Road Commission's driveway standards, and which does not require curb and gutter.

Sears stated a proposed new driveway location has been identified at the far east end of the property, which has much better sight distance than the current driveway.

Korth stated the Road Commission has given you latitude on the driveway, and asked what is going on with the fire separation requirement.

Sears stated the furnace heats both the upper and lower levels, and the duct system needs fire separation.

Ferro stated he is looking for input from the commission on whether any change should be made to the current zoning rules regarding this type of use.

Korth asked whether Ferro had any issues with the special use permit being approved under the current regulations.

Ferro stated he had no concerns with approval unless the tenant moves out.

Sears stated the tenant had mentioned the possibility a couple of months ago but nothing has happened.

Ferro stated this is a small scale, seasonal business with no large vehicles and minimal visual impact on the area.

Lowry asked if there are any requirements on size of acreage.

Ferro stated there is a 20 acre minimum parcel size requirement, and this is met.

Korth stated as long as the approval carries on with the property, there are not a lot of employees, zoning is in place, so we should approve the special use.

Lunn stated he was concerned as to whether the renter would stay or not.

Sears stated we would take time to find another renter.

Butterfield stated there should be a review of the ordinance in general.

Korth stated there was a location on Honey Creek that received approval.

Ferro stated it was approved under the home occupation rules. He stated this portion of the ordinance was never previously used. He stated the rules were drafted and approved at the request of Kappes Landscaping who was looking at purchasing the property they currently own on Honey Creek Ave. for use as a nursery operation, and wanted to have the potential to move their business operations there at some point in the future.

Sears stated the Commission is welcome to come and visit the site.

Motion by Lunn, supported by Lowry, to approve the request for Special Use Permit for a Landscape Contracting Business in the RP-1 Zoning District, 9430 Vergennes St., subject to the following conditions:

1. Compliance with building code requirements.
2. Compliance with Kent County Road Commission requirements for driveway access
3. The business sign shall be a maximum of 12 square feet, shall not be illuminated, and shall be located outside the right-of-way.

Motion passed unanimously.

Korth asked if commission members would like to form a committee to look at the ordinance. Jacobs and Leisman volunteered, with Ferro organizing the meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Request for Change in Site Plan Approval Conditions, Pertaining to Installation of Landscaped Islands in Cul-de-sacs and Restriction on Location of Driveway Access, Edlyn Drive and Barron Drive, Paul and Heidi Barron

Paul Barron requested that the requirement for islands in the two cul-de-sacs be eliminated, and that the lot at the corner of Barron Dr. and Bailey Dr. be permitted to have its driveway access from Bailey Dr., instead of from Barron Dr. as originally required. Barron stated that the lot in question is already chopped up by power lines, which restricts where a home can be placed on the property. He distributed a cost estimate for the proposed driveway access on Bailey Dr., compared to the cost of a driveway off Barron Dr., and noted that the cost of the driveway from Barron Dr. is quite excessive. It would also be more expensive to maintain due to its longer length. Barron stated that to compensate for the loss of 1 lot sharing private road maintenance costs on Barron Dr., he would add an additional split on the opposite site of Barron Dr., so that there would still be four property owners sharing maintenance costs.

Leisman stated there should be an agreement as to what the responsibility is for each of the property owners.

Ferro stated the agreement is now being drafted. He stated in the original agreement Lot A, the subject property, was required to be included as they would be using the private road. Ferro distributed email correspondence he has received from other lot owners on Barron Dr., stating they have no objection to Lot A having its access from Bailey Dr., so long as their shares of private road maintenance costs do not increase. Ferro stated he believes that the number of allowable splits under the state Land Division Act may already have been reached, and that the Barrons may not be able to split off another lot to compensate for the loss of Lot A in sharing private road maintenance costs. Ferro stated this brings into question whether the conditions set forth by the other property owners in their correspondence can be satisfied.

Lunn asked why the house location shown on the site plan for Lot A has been moved from the location shown on the original plan.

Barron stated it was because that lot is so chopped up by power lines.

Ferro stated there is a low area on Lot A immediately adjacent to Barron Dr., and some fill would be required to install a driveway from Barron Dr. In addition, he noted that there are steep grades further to the east between the low area and the proposed building site, which would require cut and fill to achieve an acceptable driveway grade.

Korth stated this is difficult for us, and asked Barron if he could confirm agreement with the owners and get it worked out by next month.

Barron stated he should be able to.

Korth suggested separate action be taken regarding the driveway access request and the cul-de-sac islands.

It was moved by Lunn, supported by Jacobs, to postpone action on the request for change in driveway location for Lot A for 120 days.

With regard to the cul-de-sac islands, Barron stated that the roads are private drives. He noted that Edlyn Drive would be gated, so it is a private area. He stated residents have no need for the islands, and plowing

will be a problem with added cost of maintenance. He stated he went to two different fire departments, including the Ada Fire Department, and both stated they need to have a 40 foot radius for their trucks and islands are an obstacle for them.

Ferro stated that the standard we have used for cul-de-sac dimensions and island dimensions have been reviewed by the Ada Township Fire Chief, and confirmed as being acceptable. Ferro stated he does not see any compelling reason to remove this requirement. He stated about the only reason he can think of for not having them is the fact that there is no irrigation system available to serve the islands. He also pointed out that this can be addressed by not using high-maintenance plantings in the islands. They can be left in natural conditions, or native plantings can be used that do not require irrigation or maintenance.

Korth stated he is not in favor of any more asphalt.

Following discussion, it was moved by Leisman, supported by Lunn, to deny the request to remove the condition of site plan approval requiring islands in the cul-de-sac turn-around areas.

Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. STAFF/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

Approval of Meeting Schedule for Fiscal Year 2013-14

Ferro stated all meetings in the proposed meeting schedule for Fiscal Year 2013-14 are on the third Thursday of the month.

Motion by Jacobs, supported by Lowry, to approve the meeting schedule for Fiscal Year 2013-14 as proposed by Ferro.

Motion passed unanimously.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lowry, second by Jacobs to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burton, Township Clerk

SB/dr

Note: Revisions to draft minutes approved by the Planning Commission indicated by underscore and overstrike marks.