

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 21, 2016 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, April 21, 2016, 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 Leisman at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Easter, Heglund, Lunn, Lowry, Leisman, Butterfield (7:05 pm), and Jacobs (7:05 pm)

Staff Present: Planning Director Ferro

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Heglund, supported by Lunn, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 17, 2016

Lunn stated he arrived at 6:45 p.m. not 7:45 p.m.

Leisman commented on item No. 5, Sign Regulations, stating he had asked Korth if he would be willing to serve. He then stated we should add that Butterfield and Heglund also agreed to serve; and add a sentence at the end that the Commission agreed to send it to sub-committee.

Motion by Easter, supported by Lunn, to approve the March 17 Meeting minutes, as revised. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

Special Use Permit, Accessory Building with a Sidewall Height of 16 Feet, in the RP-1 Zoning District, 3365 Egypt Valley Ave., Parcel No. 41-15-05-200-022, James Reed

James Reed stated he is requesting 16 foot sidewalls to accommodate a motor home, and he prefers to have an overhead door for easy use and aesthetics. The only change to the request is he has reduced the proposed size of the building to 48 feet x 48 feet for budgetary reasons.

Planner Brent Bajdek provided an overview of the proposed site plan and building design. He stated the appearance of the building would be consistent and compatible with the design and character of the existing home and barn, as well as the surrounding area. Bajdek summarized the standards for approval contained in the zoning regulations. He noted that there are other similar buildings in the surrounding area.

Leisman opened the Public Hearing; with no comments he closed the Public Hearing.

Lunn suggested that there be a condition in regards to exterior lighting, subject to review by staff.

Motion by Jacobs, supported by Heglund, to approve the Special Use Permit for an accessory building with a sidewall height of 16 feet, subject to the condition that any exterior lighting on the building be of a non-glaring style, subject to approval by the Planning Department. Motion passed unanimously.

Amendment to PUD Plan, 2,191 Square Foot Classroom Addition and Parking Addition, Big Steps Little Feet Child Care Center, 7030 East Fulton St., Parcel No. 41-15-28-477-042, 7030 Fulton, LLC

Brian Sikma, Highpoint Real Estate, on behalf of Robert Young, stated there are no changes from the plan presented at the pre-application meeting. Sikma stated that the staff report identifies the need for landscaping improvements on the site. He noted that they have some concepts they would like to go through with him, so they are prepared to modify the landscaping.

Leisman stated it appears this is something that under the Zoning Ordinance would need to go to the Township Board, and then come back here for final approval of the site plan. Would you like us to consider approving both the preliminary and final plan review of the landscape plan if the Board agrees?

Bajdek stated expansion is proposed for a 2,191 square foot building; the property is zoned C-1 PUD; three additional classrooms are proposed to be constructed at the southern extent of the existing building with a capacity increase of 45 children and 3 staff members. The pre-application meeting was held on January 21, 2016 regarding the subject project. Materials do satisfy the preliminary, as well as PUD requirements. The site was approved and developed to conform to all dimensional zoning standards for the C-1 zoning district, except the signage. The addition will match the current exterior building materials; existing sidewalk and the building expansion area is proposed to be removed, but will be replaced as part of the construction project. There are no proposed changes to access to the site. The existing outdoor play area will be displaced with the proposed construction. Per the applicant, the child care facility currently exceeds the minimum outdoor play area required by the State; and the lost area is not proposed to be replaced. With the proposed expansion there will be an increase in the required number of parking spaces; 69 spaces are now required, however no additional spaces are proposed to be created at this time; 58 spaces are there currently. Approval of a variation from the ordinance standards is requested at this time.

Sikma stated ideally, they would like to acquire additional land along Bronson to install more parking, if needed.

Bajdek stated some of the landscape plantings installed when the facility was constructed have suffered damage along the Fulton Street frontage and improvements are necessary. There is a storm water detention pond that exists at the northwest corner of the site that was built for this expansion, as well.

Leisman opened the Public Hearing; with no comments he closed the Public Hearing.

Jacobs asked if there is a definition of a minor variance.

Ferro stated there is not a definition of what is a minor variation from those requirements.

Jacobs stated with parking becoming such a huge issue with all of the new development, and people coming before us, she wonders what precedent we are setting.

Ferro then read the wording in the ordinance. He noted that the zoning rules permit the Planning Commission to allow minor variation from the standards in the ordinance, or allow construction of a portion of the required parking to be deferred to a future date, if it is determined by the Township that the deferred parking is needed.

Leisman asked how we could require that if the applicant doesn't own the property.

Easter asked why they don't think they need the parking spots.

Sikma stated one of the reasons they are not showing it on the site plan is ideally they would put it in on the land that would be swapped with the adjoining property owner. He stated the land swap is only going to happen if we get a better AGO station approved, but they could put it along the driveway; there's enough room to put those on the site, but it's not the best solution. He stated they don't believe they need it yet, but they could show it on the existing site. He stated they have excess capacity in the storm pond in the northwest side and could place a couple of spaces there, but this is not as efficient as if they do the land swap and put it on there.

Rob Young, owner of Big Steps Little Feet, stated a parking analysis completed by Nederveld concluded that based on the size of the facility, the quantity of parking they currently have is sufficient, even with the proposed addition.

Easter stated you're saying you're complying?

Young stated we are complying; we're over right now.

Heglund stated he has driven by the facility 20 times a day and it never seems like the parking lot is full, but whenever we hear parking, the ears perk up.

Young stated that even during conferences and events, they fill the lot, but it is sufficient.

Jacobs stated if someone's study says we have enough parking for what is necessary for a daycare center, why is Ada Township so different.

Ferro stated he doesn't know whose measure is being referred to by the applicant. In showing this potential parking expansion on the plan, he assumed that the applicant had control of that land, and he is somewhat hesitant to see a plan approved that has three new classrooms, when we don't know whether they're going to be able to acquire that additional land or not.

Jacobs stated she is concerned that we don't exactly have a definition of what is a minor variation, and because we have parking issues, if we start this domino effect of variances in parking it could be a big problem. She stated she thinks we need to sort that out.

Ferro stated we've seen no plan that shows where other parking could be added on the site, other than what is shown on the plan. He stated his is concerned that the applicant does not have control of the potential parking expansion area that they have shown on their site plan.

Leisman asked what would the Planning Department's preference be with respect to that issue.

Ferro stated it would be to postpone action.

Following discussion, it was moved by Easter, supported by Jacobs, to table the application for an Amendment to PUD Plan, 2,191 Square Foot Classroom Addition and Parking Addition, Big Steps Little Feet Child Care Center, for one month. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Preliminary PUD Plan,, 24,396 Square Foot Medical Office Building, 7130 East Fulton St., Unit 10, Ada West Commercial Condominium, Spectrum Health

Ferro stated we previously had a pre-application conference with the applicant, who then submitted a preliminary PUD application package. The next step would be for the Planning Commission to schedule a Public Hearing for the plan for the May meeting. Based on what the applicant hears tonight there may be some revisions made to the plan between now and the Public Hearing.

Jeff Meyers, Director of Real Estate Development for Spectrum Health, stated this is our clinic integrated care facility project, located at the opposite end of the area where Heidi Christine's is located. Meyers stated they would like to open the facility in the early summer to late fall, 2017. Once the River Valley Credit Union vacates their current building, they will be able to demolish it and proceed. He stated they are under a purchase agreement with GELD, which is contingent upon getting Township approvals.

Cheryl Pierre, Vice President Primary Care for Spectrum Health Medical Group, stated this would be an integrated care campus, which is consistent with new models of care, especially primary care and women's health. It focuses on enhancing the patient experience, with increased convenience. She stated many of the standard services patients are looking for will be under one roof so they don't have to travel. Spectrum Health looks forward to working with the many businesses and community members to help support a healthy lifestyle.

Dr. Phillip Henderson, Primary Care Practitioner in northeast Grand Rapids, stated what they are proposing in this new building is having a laboratory on site for drawing blood, x-ray equipment for ultra sound and routine x-rays, and a mobile mammography unit. They are really trying to keep care local, within the community. Henderson stated they already provided occupational medicine services on site within the Amway corporate complex, and they are proposing moving that into the new site.

Jack Baar, Nederveld, presented the proposed plan.

Ken Dixon, Dixon Architecture, described the building architecture. He stated the roof ridgeline would be 42 feet above grade. He stated all of the building's proposed in the Ada West Commercial center area are two-story. The mechanicals will be hidden in the center portion of the roof.

Ferro stated the applicant, jointly with the AGO property owner, had a traffic impact study prepared, which noted the conditions modeled are 70% build-out of the entire commercial center that has the 10 condominium units in it; for the time being the right turn taper on eastbound M-21 into the north-south service drive is adequate, and complies with MDOT guidelines. We should discuss whether we believe there should be a right turn lane constructed now. The site will be served by public water and sewer; the storm water plan shows run-off from a portion of the roof draining to a storm sewer located west of the building, and another roof drain connects to the storm sewer system in the shared parking lot in the commercial center, which goes to an underground chamber system for storm water management located to the east.

He stated there are a variety of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs, and low level planting beds shown on the landscape plan. The building is placed about two feet from the right-of-way, which results in a separation distance from the road. Overall, the building design and placement on the site is consistent with the design principles in the Envision Ada Plan; putting the building close to the right-of-way is acceptable. The applicant submitted a signage plan that shows one free-standing sign near the intersection of the service drive and M-21, and one wall mounted sign on the east face of the building, and both of those comply with sign regulation standards.

Ferro stated we haven't yet had a sit down meeting with the utilities director and the Township engineering consultant. In the meantime, he thinks the plan can be set for a Public Hearing.

Heglund likes that the roof top mechanicals won't be seen.

Lunn commented that the sidewalk located west of the building should extend north and connect to the Fulton Street trail.

Lowry asked if they are planning to have urgent care at this facility. Also, the population is aging very rapidly and are you planning on geriatric care.

Dr. Henderson stated we are not planning on having urgent care at this time. The primary care physicians we're looking at for this area are going to be internal medicine and pediatrics for family medicine that care for people of all ages.

Butterfield asked if they had any written correspondence with MDOT regarding landscaping in the right-of-way.

Meyers stated no we haven't talked with them.

Easter asked if the plan is to go underground with the power lines.

Meyers stated no.

Easter stated it's a very exhaustive report that Jim put together, and I appreciate it.

Leisman stated the building footprint is 12,000 square feet, which exceeds the maximum footprint size of 8,000 square feet, and there wasn't much comment on that. We don't have to do a deviation because it's PUD. He stated he assumes the PUD zoning rules allow us to exceed the maximum standard that much, and he asked whether there are specific findings that need to be made to do that.

Ferro stated there are no specific findings for that required by the ordinance, but the PUD rules do provide flexibility, allow you to relax those dimensional standards.

Motion by Jacobs, supported by Easter, to set the preliminary PUD Plan for a Public Hearing next month. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER/STAFF REPORTS

Sign Regulations Subcommittee Report

Heglund stated what has been developed is an idea of having a maximum signage allowance per building. Instead of regulating individual types of signs, the approach in the rules would be to allow the maximum signage allowance to be allocated among different sign locations for different tenants. He noted this would give the owner of the building the responsibility and the right to get creative with how they want to do their signs as long as they meet a certain ratio for the size of the building. We're going to have different ratios depending on the architectural style of the building; instead of having each individual sign meet a certain criteria you can do whatever you want to do as long as they meet certain specs of quality and are within the building's sign budget. It's the owner's responsibility to work that out with the occupants.

Easter asked if there was any height maximum talked about.

Heglund stated he didn't think so.

Ferro stated no, but he doesn't anticipate any change in those standards. We don't currently allow pole-mounted signs and we have a five foot maximum on ground mounted signs. The concept that Jake described is a pretty major change compared to how the rules work right now.

Jacobs asked if this would be similar to what is in front of Dr. Norman's building.

Ferro stated we allow one free-standing sign for a property that has multiple tenants, and it is referred to in the rules as a business center sign; individual free-standing signs are not permitted for individual tenants in a business center; and there is a maximum size allowed for the business center sign.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Noelle Divozzo, Bronson Street stated her home looks toward the proposed medical building and she is concerned with the lighting. She is also concerned with buildings being too large.

Leisman stated on May 19th we will have a Public Hearing so that's the time to make your concerns known.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Easter, supported by Lunn, to adjourn at 8:44 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Smith
Ada Township Clerk

JS/dr