

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 18, 2016 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, August 18, 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, Lunn, Lowry, Leisman, Heglund, and Butterfield

Absent: Jacobs

Staff Present: Planning Director Ferro, Planner/Zoning Administrator Brent Bajdek

Public Present: Ken Dixon, Dixon Architecture; Ken Berg, McDonalds

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 21, 2016

Moved by Heglund, supported by Easter, to approve the July 21 Meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

Continuation of Public Hearing, Proposed Amendment to Sign Regulations, proposed by Ada Township Planning Commission

Leisman noted this is a continuation of the public hearing that was opened on the proposed amendments at last month's meeting.

Planning Director Jim Ferro stated there have been no revisions made to the proposed amendment since the July meeting.

Planner/Zoning Administrator Brent Bajdek summarized written comments that have been submitted to date on the proposed amendment. He stated these include:

1) concern expressed on behalf of Heidi Christine Salon that a maximum wall sign size of 16 square feet does not take into consideration readability by high speed traffic on Fulton Street.

2) concern that the wall sign size standards might not work well for some smaller buildings.

3) concern that there is no change proposed to the free-standing sign regulations, which allow only 1 free-standing sign per business or business center, even for properties with frontage on more than one street.

4) concern as to whether individual sites in the Ada West Commercial Center will be permitted to have individual free-standing signs, or whether it will be treated as a business center, and limited to only one free-standing sign.

5) concern that the proposed maximum allowable size for individual signs and current limitations on the number of free-standing signs create a potential negative impact on businesses.

Leisman noted that written correspondence has been received from Megan Mason Doezema, Paul Ortez and from Josh Strautz, Dixon Architecture.

Leisman noted that while the proposed maximum wall sign size of 16 square feet is about one-half the size of the current temporary banner they have installed, it is a 33% increase from the current size limit of 12 square feet in the C-1 district.

Leisman opened the Public Hearing.

Ken Dixon, Dixon Architecture expressed the view that individual condo unit owners in the Ada West Commercial Center be permitted individual free-standing signs. He stated that River Valley Credit Union and Paul Ortez would like flexibility to have small free-standing signs on their Headley St. frontage, in addition to the free-standing sign that is proposed by Spectrum Health on their Fulton Street frontage.

Ferro stated this issue hinges on whether the West Commercial Center is considered to fall within the definition of a business center, as defined in the zoning rules. There was discussion among Commission members regarding how the definition applies to the center, with no consensus.

Leisman closed the public hearing.

Bajdek read the ordinance definition of the term "business center."

Ferro stated that it may be difficult to treat the West Commercial Center as not being a business center, while also treating other multiple business sites as falling within the definition, such as the Ada Hillside Center, where we would not want to have multiple free-standing signs.

Easter stated we need to consider what visual end result we want to have, and ensure that it is aesthetically pleasing.

Commission members discussed the application of the definition to the West Commercial Center, with no consensus on how it should be applied.

Leisman stated that the scope of the proposed amendment does not address this issue, and stated if we wish to address it in the amendments, the proposed amendments should be referred back to the subcommittee, or the proposed amendment as written be acted upon now, and the business center issue taken up separately in the future.

Lunn commented that he believes readability of a sign is more a function of the graphic design, not the size.

Heglund stated there may be some buildings for which the 16 square foot wall sign limit is too small, and others where a larger sign would be too large.

Bajdek referenced the table he prepared that provides information regarding how the proposed wall sign standards would apply to new buildings that have been approved in the Village.

Ferro asked Commission members to consider the comment from Josh Strautz regarding the adequacy of a 16 square foot wall sign size limit to the proposed Kingma's Market building, which has frontage on Fulton St. Ferro commented that larger wall signs are permitted in the C-2 district, which is largely properties fronting on Fulton St., with larger setbacks and high traffic speeds. He stated the C-1 district sign standards, are more tailored to the environment in the Village, where we have much smaller buildings set at the sidewalk, with slower traffic speeds. He stated that there may be justification for

having standards for properties in the C-1 district with Fulton St. frontage comparably to the standards applied in the C-2 district.

Following discussion, it was moved by Heglund, supported by Lunn, to recommend approval of the proposed amendments to the sign regulations as drafted to the Township Board. Motion passed by 5-1 vote, with Easter voting no.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER/STAFF REPORTS

Subcommittee Report, Zoning Ordinance Amendment Concerning Restaurants with Drive-through Facilities in C-2 Zoning District

Ferro described the draft amendment that has been prepared by staff based on subcommittee input, as well as early input obtained from American Gas & Oil representatives, on potential standards for fast-food restaurants with drive-through facilities. He stated it's an amendment to the PUD rules, adding a temporary provision applicable to properties being redeveloped to facilitate re-location of businesses displaced as a result of implementing the Envision Ada Plan for the Village. He noted the temporary provisions would be in place for a period of two years, and would allow restaurants with drive-through facilities to be considered in a PUD plan in the C-2 District. Ferro reviewed the proposed standards that would apply to restaurants with drive-through facilities.

Ferro referenced written public input received to date concerning the draft amendment.

Ferro also summarized information in the Commission packets regarding the history of the 1994 adoption of the current prohibition on restaurants having drive-through facilities, and public survey input regarding fast food restaurants in two previous Master Plan surveys.

Easter stated that the public was negative regarding several types of new businesses in the community, not just fast-food restaurants. She stated the proposed amendment may give us a way to accommodate keeping an existing business without compromising what we are trying to accomplish in the Village.

Leisman stated he was on the subcommittee that helped develop the proposal. He stated he believes the current prohibition is a good one that has served the Village well for 22 years. He stated there is nothing in the Master Plan or the Envision Ada Plan suggesting it should be changed. Having said that, and looking at all of the changes going on in the Village, sometimes there are extraordinary circumstances. He stated that a provision limited and temporary applicability to businesses being displaced is probably the best approach for considering this.

Butterfield asked whether the spacing standard contemplates other drive-through businesses being proposed. Ferro stated he is not aware of any other proposals forthcoming, but has had inquiries in the past few years regarding suitable locations for new drive-through restaurants.

Following discussion, it was moved by Easter, supported by Butterfield, to schedule a public hearing on the proposed amendment for the September 15 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Communication from Zoning Board of Appeals regarding Zoning Ordinance Maximum Building Height Standards

Bajdek stated at the July Zoning Board of Appeals meeting the Board recommended that the Planning Commission revisit the matter of amending the building height regulations, given the number of building height variance requests that have been considered and approved since 2002. The most recent building height variances were considered and approved at the May and June meetings. The Zoning Board of Appeals would like the Planning Commission to revisit this item.

Leisman stated we will look for a report and recommendation from the Planning Department on that.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lunn, supported by Easter, to adjourn at 7:59 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Smith
Ada Township Clerk

JS/dr