

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 19, 2015 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, November 19, 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 Leisman at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Easter, Butterfield, Lunn, Lowry, Leisman

Staff Present: Planning Director Ferro

Absent: Heglund, Jacobs

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Lunn stated the election of officers is a carryover from last month.

Motion by Easter, supported by Lunn, to approve the agenda with one correction.

Motion passed unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15 MEETING AND OCTOBER 22 JOINT WORK SESSION MEETING

Motion by Easter, supported by Lunn, to approve the minutes of the October 15 meeting, subject to revision to state that Butterfield called the meeting to order, and subject to revision of condition number 5 of the motion to approve the River Valley Credit Union development plan, on page 7, to read as follows: "5. The condominium Master Deed and Bylaws shall be submitted to the Township for review and approval by the Planner as to conformance with the zoning regulations and conditions of approval, prior to being recorded with the Kent County Register of Deeds, and prior to issuance of a building permit."

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Lunn, supported by Easter, to approve the October 22 Joint Work Session Meeting minutes as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Thornapple Homes Extension Request

Jim Ferro stated an email was received from the architect on behalf of the project withdrawing their extension request, and stating they may return with a new application in the future.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Request for Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment, to Allow Storage Buildings for Property Maintenance on Vacant Parcels not Otherwise Occupied by a Principal Use, Requested by Dave Clay

Ferro stated in 2014 after he had been contacted by Dave Clay who owns property on the east side of Honey Creek Avenue, north of Two Mile Road, a draft text amendment was presented to the Planning Commission that would allow a building to be constructed on a vacant property that does not have a home on it, subject to certain conditions and restrictions being satisfied. He noted at that time the Commission consensus was that an amendment process should not be initiated on this matter by the Planning Commission.

Ferro stated Clay has contacted him several times regarding his desire for a storage building, as he has to transport maintenance equipment to the property from his home and back any time he wishes to work on the property. Ferro stated he has told Mr. Clay that to bring this matter formally for consideration in a public hearing, Mr. Clay would need to submit a formal application for a zoning ordinance text amendment, which he has done. Ferro stated a public hearing should be scheduled on the requested amendment.

Leisman stated our focus shouldn't be on this one individual person, it should be on whether this type of building should be allowed throughout the Township. He suggested this be on the agenda for January.

Motion by Easter, supported by Lowry, to set a public hearing for the January 21 meeting

Motion passed unanimously.

Development Plan for 10,000 Square Foot Commercial Building on a Village Blockfront Lot in the PVM Zoning District, portion of 527 Ada Drive SE, Parcel No. 41-15-34-102-005, Dixon Architecture

Ken Dixon, Dixon Architecture, stated he intends to build a 10,000 square foot building with a 5,000 square foot footprint, with two stories, at the intersection of Ada Drive and Headley, with construction to begin early next year. He stated he and an interior designer would have their offices on the second floor, and the lower level would be leased for retail use.

Steve Tietsma, Progressive AE, stated the new parcel that has been created by the relocation of Headley Street is almost 17,000 square feet, and will work very nice for this development. He stated parking would be from a shared access, and would extend behind and to the side of the building. Tietsma stated they have been working with adjacent property owners as well as the Kent County Road Commission to evaluate curb cut locations, which have been preliminarily agreed to, as well as the shared access concept. He then discussed the few minor design changes that have been made to the plan that was submitted. A revised site plan was distributed to Commission members. Tietsma noted the proposed parking lot contains 22 spaces, and they have maximized the amount of parking as much as they could.

Ferro stated the proposed driveway access to Headley St. would align with a possible driveway access on the north side of Headley St., which would provide access to the Norman Dentistry office building.

Tietsma stated the reason for the new driveway to the Norman building is that it would replace the existing access from Ada Drive, which would be closed due to its proximity to the traffic signal. The Road Commission has said that the current Ada Drive curb cut should be closed in the future.

Ferro stated the 10,000 square foot footprint has a useable floor area of 4,3000 square feet per floor, and under the form-base code is considered submitted as a village blockfront lot and building. Ferro stated a departure from the zoning standards for the minimum frontage percentage requirement is proposed. He

noted the frontage percentage is defined as the percentage of the lot width occupied by the building façade at the street frontage. Ferro stated the proposed building is well short of the 90% minimum standard on both street frontages. Ferro stated the code describes a Village Blockfront Lot as having “little or no side yard and minimal front yard setback, thus creating a continuous street wall.” He stated the intent of the village blockfront lot in urban design standards is to create urban form that has a continuous building frontage in the highest density core of the village. He stated that is an issue we need to talk about.

Ferro stated in regards to parking, the PVM District states parking must be located within or behind buildings; and that parking may be located in a side yard only if it serves a building that meets the lot width and frontage percentage requirements. Ferro stated this appears to be another departure from the standards that is proposed. Ferro stated he believes the parking supply here is more than the minimum requirement based on the relaxed standards in the PVM District. With 22 spaces provided on site what is really happening is the building’s entire parking needs are being met on site in a zone where our intent, and one of the principles in the Envision Ada Plan dating back to the 2006 Charrette, is the village should rely more on shared parking and not on individual restricted use parking lots. Ferro stated in this case, we have a shared access but we don’t have any proposed true shared parking between the two property owners who are sharing the access drive.

Ferro stated his staff report addresses conformity with other standards in the PVM district, and there may be some minor conflicts with some of the standards. He stated it is not clear what the first floor story height is, which needs to be between 11 and 14 feet.

Dixon stated the second story floor construction is 12 inches in depth.

Ferro stated there is no information provided on the exterior site lighting or refuse container location. He noted the building will be served by public water and sewer. He added storm water runoff is collected in the parking lot and discharged to the existing storm sewer in Ada Drive, with a restricted discharge rate to ensure the capacity of the downstream system is not exceeded. Ferro stated there is some green space in the rear of the building between the building and parking.

Ferro noted the form-base code calls for six foot high walls to be used to screen parking and other private use areas from street frontage. He stated it’s a very attractive building, with a lot of detail and variation in the building façade. Ferro stated the main issue for the Commission to consider is whether the criteria for granting a departure from the minimum frontage percentage standards are satisfied, and whether the plan conforms to the purpose and intent of the PVM District. He stated he recommends postponing action while some of the issues are worked on.

Lunn stated with the two curb cuts the only way to make the building bigger is to take out some of the parking, but if you did that you still wouldn’t have the building occupying 90% of the street frontage.

Dixon stated it is not clear in the code how to measure the percentage of the building façade that must be windows – whether this is measured using square footage or linear distance along the building wall. He noted that in some jurisdictions it is based on the window length at a point from two foot to eight foot above grade, almost like a lineal distance of glass as compared to solid wall. So if you do lineal distance of window versus solid for a 100 foot wall along Headley there is 76 feet 4 inches of glass store front area of visible wall that would interact with the pedestrian environment, or 76% of the building length. He noted on the Ada Drive frontage, this measurement is 74 feet 8 inches, and rounded up its 75%, if that’s how you calculate.

Ferro stated when we started this first phase project we had a meeting with property owners on the south side of Headley Street and said we would like to establish a shared parking facility from the Community Church over to include the McAleenan property, and what was the Scott Gregory property. However, the

McAleenans are not interested in participating at this point; so the Township needs to take the lead in addressing parking. Ferro stated his concern is that we're demolishing existing development character that we don't like and we would be replacing it with the same thing we are trying to get rid of if we have a bunch of individual sites with restricted use parking lots.

Lowry stated he is very impressed with the proposal. He asked when is it expected to start, and how long will it take to finish it.

Tietsma stated February hopefully, and it will take about six to eight months.

Lowry stated it will be a nice addition; just open up that corner.

Butterfield stated the design looks fantastic; the location will correspond to the community; her only concern is the driveway situation. This is the first structure in the village, and we were hoping we would have tighter buildings set close to the sidewalks, and it seems that component is kind of missing with the parking off Headley Street, and the parking off Ada Drive flanking this beautiful building.

Lowry asked when the parking study is expected to be done.

Ferro stated we just sent the recent set of square footage projections for the village by use category to the parking consultant to use in completing their analysis of parking needs. They should have some analysis results to use within two weeks.

Lowry asked if there was any talk on using tour buses for round trips from Amway to Ada. That would ease up a lot of the parking.

Ferro stated there was talk at one time of Amway implementing a shuttle service for their own employees, but not the general public, but it was never implemented because of legal concerns.

~~Butterfield~~ Easter stated she is not sure if they did run buses if that would resolve our problem because the draw is going to be from all over this area. She asked if we had a municipal parking solution and you didn't have to deal with that, would it change the design of your building.

Dixon he wouldn't be able to make it any larger than what is proposed.

~~Butterfield~~ Easter asked if they had chosen too large of a lot on which to place the building. Is it too big of a lot and you can't afford to build a building that meets the requirements for that lot?

Dixon stated they didn't feel it was too big; it fits the parking what we feel is appropriate, the 22 stalls; we're already reducing from 36 spaces. The location of it is going to be important, as well.

~~Butterfield~~ Easter asked if we had a municipal parking solution for you, would that affect how you place this building and what you put on that site.

Dixon stated yes.

Butterfield stated she wouldn't necessarily want to see a larger building. She suggested the possibility of a second smaller building if we didn't have to have parking there.

Leisman stated he likes the building, and would like to find a way to make it happen.

Tietsma suggested the possibility of the owner agreeing to remove a portion of the parking at such time as municipal parking is provided.

Butterfield stated that's the only solution that she can see for everybody that's involved.

Motion by Lunn, supported by Easter, to table for one month.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Lowry, supported by Lunn, to have the Planner send a memo to the DDA and the Township Board expressing the Planning Commission concern with the need to develop a municipal parking supply for the village.

Motion passed unanimously.

Request for Modification of Plan Approval Conditions pertaining to Exterior Lighting, Heidi Christine Salon & Day Spa, part of 7130, 7214, and 7576 East Fulton St., 7171 Headley St., Parcel Nos. 41-15-27-352-001 and 002, 41-15-28-477-031 and 036, and River Valley Credit Union, portion of 7214 East Fulton St., Parcel No. 41-15-27-352-001, Geld, LLC

Steve Tietsma, Progressive AE, presented the request for removal of the condition of approval on the Heidi Christine salon site requiring installation of Village-style lighting on the site. Teitsma stated the proposed parking lot light they submitted, and which was approved, is a dark sky-compliant LED fixture that sufficiently lights the site. He stated the conditional approval put on the project through the Planning Commission meeting for Heidi Christine's in effect was the lighting needed to be sympathetic to the village, decorative street light, energy efficient, and shall be dark sky compliant. Tietsma stated the crux of the discussion is what does sympathetic to the village style mean?

Lunn stated our discussion was that you put decorative poles along the sidewalk like there are in the village.

Ferro stated as it got worded during the April 30th meeting regarding this issue, the intent was to require a decorative fixture, which is what was meant by sympathetic to the village street lighting. Ferro stated that in listening to the recording of the entire discussion at the April 30 meeting regarding lighting, it is clear that the intent of the Commission was to require decorative lighting similar to the lighting on Village streets. Ferro stated he did not believe it was feasible to light the entire parking lot sufficiently with the Village-style light, which led him to suggest to the applicant to use a decorative fixture around the perimeter of the parking lot in the interface area between the building and the sidewalk adjacent to parking. He stated he brought this to the applicant's attention in September to make sure the applicant was aware this was still an outstanding issue before they paved the parking lot and had all the underground work done. He stated last month we put a similar condition of approval on the credit union, but there has been no building permit applied for yet.

Easter asked why this is a big deal.

Tietsma stated it's their position that the decorative lights are not needed, so why put more lights along the sidewalk.

Butterfield asked if there is a middle road that could satisfy both parties.

Ferro stated it's clear to me that the applicant doesn't want to have any more lighting, other than what's on the two light poles.

Easter stated it's not the type of fixture that is proposed to put here, isn't it that we're wondering if we just don't need more focused lighting on the sidewalk.

Ferro stated the lighting industry recommends two-foot candles for sidewalk lighting and one-foot candles for parking areas, and we've got the reverse. So the intent of the April 30th meeting was that decorative lighting be required.

Easter stated I think the issue is we need the lights, but I think what Steve is saying is if you have the lights on the building then you probably don't.

Lunn stated we made a condition, now we're here, it's almost built, and the condition wasn't followed, and it was a condition of the issuance of the permit.

Ferro stated he believes the intent was to visually give the interior of this planned area some continuity with the streetscape system in the rest of the village, and visually tie the areas together.

Lunn stated he would have to see adequate lighting in these spaces for the walkway, and he doesn't see that on this drawing.

Easter stated there is a potential of eight buildings here, and those two may close at 6:00, these may be open later, but we don't know what they will be. Also, I think there's the question that we made the condition, and why wouldn't we stand behind it.

Leisman stated I think the idea behind changing the condition is now we're looking at a bigger plan.

Lowry asked if anything had come up about the safety factor of the lighting; regardless of what you do you have to include that. I haven't heard anybody talk about it.

Motion by Easter, supported by Butterfield, to reaffirm that Heidi Christine's and the River Valley Credit Union be required to put decorative lighting by the sidewalks.

Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER/STAFF REPORTS

None.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lowry, second by Easter, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Smith, Township Clerk

JS/dr