

**ADA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 20, 2020 MEETING**

A meeting of the Ada Township Planning Commission was held on Thursday, February 20, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. at the Ada Township Offices, 7330 Thornapple River Dr., Ada, MI.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Butterfield (arrived 7:03 p.m.), Carter, Easter, Heglund (arrived 7:07 p.m.), Jacobs, Leisman
Absent: Burton
Staff Present: Ferro, Bajdek, Winczewski
Public Present: 17 Members

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Jacobs, supported by Easter, to approve the agenda as written. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 16, 2020 MEETING

Moved by Easter, supported by Carter, to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2020 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Butterfield arrived

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Request for a Special Use Permit for a “Type 2” Home Occupation in the RP-1 Rural Preservation 1 Zoning District, to permit psychotherapy as a Home Occupation, 8815 Conservation St. NE, Parcel No. 41-15-24-151-014, Carol Seacord, for property owned by Carol Seacord & Tracey L. Baij

Tracey Baij presented. Ms. Baij stated that Ms. Seacord currently has a psychotherapy practice in Ada village and is considering winding down her practice as she approaches retirement. Ms. Seacord is not exactly sure what she is going to do but would like the option to work from home which is why this request is being heard today. Ms. Seacord’s practice is individual therapy. She sees approximately 30 clients per week. She is increasing the number of telehealth sessions which means those patients are not coming into the office. With fewer and fewer clients coming to the office, it is anticipated the amount of traffic coming to the home will be minimal, possibly 20 cars per week, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Ms. Baij stated that she and Ms. Seacord have read the Planner’s memo and have no issues with the recommended condition of approval.

In the interest of full disclosure, Commissioner Easter stated she is personal friends with both of the applicants. Ms. Easter stated she has no financial interest in the outcome of this request and will be fair and unbiased.

Heglund arrived at 7:07 p.m.

Public Hearing was opened at 7:07 p.m. No comments were received.

Planner/Zoning Administrator, Bajdek, gave a brief overview of the request. Bajdek stated “Type II’

Home Occupations must comply with all 9 standards as were outlined in the staff memo. All the standards have been met for the applicants. Staff is recommending approval subject to one condition also noted in the staff memo.

Easter moved, Carter supported, to approve the Special Use Permit for a “Type II” Home Occupation business to permit psychotherapy as a home occupation at 8815 Conservation St. NE, subject to the following condition:

- 1. The number of sessions with clients visiting the residential premises shall be limited to no more than six (6) sessions per day, and 30 sessions per week, Monday through Friday from 8 am to 6 pm.**

Motion passed unanimously.

- 2. Amendment to Chapter 78, Ada Township Zoning Regulations of the Ada Township Municipal Code, to add provisions to allow for the keeping of poultry in the Residential zoning districts and modifying setback requirements for poultry housing units in the Rural/Agricultural zoning districts**

Bajdek stated that this change in ordinance, section 78-17, is due to an increase of residents interested in keeping of small flocks of chickens in residentially zoned districts. This amendment would allow the keeping of poultry in those districts subject to several regulating items, which include a limitation on the amount of poultry kept, a prohibition on keeping roosters and slaughtering of poultry, required setback of poultry shelters and runs from dwellings on adjacent properties and property lines, and square footage limits for such shelters and runs. The amendment also adds provisions related to the keeping of poultry not in a farm building in the Rural/Agricultural zoning districts.

Commissioners reviewed and discussed the amended language.

Easter wondered who and how the oversight will be handled. There are provisions stating that the shelters must be tended to daily, all feed and related items must be in sealed containers, etc.

Butterfield commented on setbacks. Bajdek stated the proposed setbacks are greater than other communities who have adopted similar ordinances.

Leisman expressed concern with adding more regulations to larger parcels in the Agricultural districts.

Public hearing opened at 7:18 p.m. No comments were received.

Jacobs commented on the lack of regulations for other livestock such as hogs, horses, etc. It was noted that there is not currently a limit on the number of horses or hogs that may be kept in the Rural/Agricultural districts.

It was moved by Jacobs, supported by Easter, to table the proposed amendment to Chapter 78 for one month. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Hearing, Preliminary PUD Plan, 92 Multifamily Residential Units on a 9.64-acre site in the (C-1) Village Business Zoning District, 7590 E. Fulton St., Parcel No. 41-15-34-127-003, Wheeler Development Group

Chairperson Leisman stated this project has been reviewed by the Planning Commission several times. Today's meeting is to get an update from the applicant and hold a public hearing. Because the Planning department is not ready to make their recommendation, this item will likely be tabled until next month.

John Wheeler of Wheeler Development Group presented. Mr. Wheeler stated he is not interested in tabling the project. They are here today to receive feedback and a vote from the Planning Commission. Mr. Wheeler stated they are proposing 92 units in 4 buildings on almost 10 acres. This is a \$25 million investment.

Mr. Wheeler thanked the Commissioners for working with them on The Knoll project and stated they are pleased to announce The Knoll is at 100% occupancy and has a waiting list.

Leisman explained the normal process for Planning Commission meetings, stating that usually the Commissioners hear the request and then vote to have a Public Hearing at the next meeting before making a decision. In this case, they are holding the Public Hearing first which also allows the Planning department more time to provide their recommendation. In either case, the Planning Commission's decision would not be decided until next month. Mr. Wheeler thanked Leisman for the clarification.

Steve Tietsma with Progressive AE presented site plans, architectural renderings, the utility plan and landscape plan. Mr. Tietsma noted that the entrance will be off the main driveway into the commercial area but it has been pushed a little farther to the east to put a bit more separation between the commercial traffic and the apartment traffic. This change was recommended for safety reasons by traffic engineers at Progressive AE. They have also added 2 more parking spaces since the last time they presented.

Leisman inquired about the landscaping between the northeast garage units and Fulton St. Mr. Tietsma stated that that area is already wooded and no additional landscaping is planned. They are concentrating the landscaping in areas where they want to buffer from the commercial zone.

Planning Director, Ferro, stated that Planning Commissioners expressed interest in hearing a more in-depth analysis on how this project relates to the Envision Ada Plan. Ferro stated he has not yet prepared any technical reviews on the plan details but is providing a broader view as described in the staff memo. Ferro spoke of the different development processes this project could fall under such as PVM or PUD. Ferro noted that the 2013 Envision Ada Plan was guided by 10 principles. 2 of those are relevant to the proposed project which are:

1. "Encourage building types that preserve the quaint, historic, small-scale feeling of the Village."
2. "Strike a balance between residential and commercial uses within the Village, and encourage pedestrian access and activity."

Ferro stated The Envision Ada Plan applies traditional urban design principles to the layout and geometry of the street network in the Village and the arrangement of new buildings in relation to the streets by putting buildings along the street front along public sidewalks with retail spaces with display windows facing the sidewalks. It also has plans for civic buildings and greenspaces in strategic locations.

Ferro continued by noting that the graphic contained in the 2013 Final Plan document shows one of many layouts which would conform with the Plan's intentions. The illustration plan does not have the force of law. The illustration should not be taken literally.

Ferro stated the 2013 Final Plan depicts this particular property being accessed by a looped through-street, accessing residential buildings that include both attached townhomes and detached or attached single-family homes. The access street is described as a 20-foot wide “yield street” that contains a 12-foot travel land and 8 feet for parallel parking on one side. Ferro stated that there have not been any developments in the Village to date with streets that are this narrow. Ferro noted that the Plan also depicts all 2-story homes.

Easter asked where the Envision Ada Plan ideas came from. Ferro stated a lot of the ideas and sample building plans came from Jeff Speck who was a member of the consultant team along with Progressive AE. Easter pointed out that it doesn't then appear that this was a back and forth conversation (between the consultant and the community) but were primarily Jeff's ideas. Ferro agreed and noted that Jeff also suggested a set of zoning standards which were not adopted by the Township.

Ferro stated the site of the proposed PUD plan today has less land than what was originally shown on the Envision Ada Plan, mainly because the Marketplace Square development parking and driveway have both been extended farther east. Ferro stated that if the applicant's adhered to the same building types as depicted in the Envision Ada Plan (townhomes and single-family homes), they would have difficulty fitting 50 units due to the lower acreage that they're working with.

In speaking of the proposed project, Ferro stated the stacked apartment units will all be accessible with elevators serving each floor. This is a positive feature that is lacking in the Envision Ada prototype plans. This will serve an area of the housing market that is not currently being served.

Ferro commented on building height and provided comparisons to the new library being constructed. There will be about a 6-foot difference in height to the top of the 4-story apartment buildings compared to the top of the mechanical equipment screen wall on top of the library, which you can see today. He also noted that the library building is much closer to Fulton St. than the proposed 4-story apartment buildings..

Ferro stated there is justification for encouraging higher density on this particular site; it puts residents close to businesses, services, civic and greenspace. It encourages walkability and puts less demand on parking.

Public Hearing opened at 8:00 p.m.

Ken Dixon of Dixon Architecture stated that he is in total support of the residential aspect and density. He is struggling with the connectivity to the Village. There are 92 units proposed and only 1 paved sidewalk. The views when driving down River Street will now be the back of a garage unit. Dixon recommended studying the connectivity piece and be more community oriented.

Noelle DiVozzo, 7115 Bronson St., stated she thinks the apartments look like a hospital. She would like to see townhome architecture.

Margaret Idema, DDA member, 7213 Bronson St., asked for clarification on the number of bedrooms and the garage configuration.

Public Hearing closed at 8:08 p.m.

Mr. Wheeler responded to the public concerns stating the single-stall garages will be on the ground floor of each building. There will be 1.75 parking spaces per unit. There will be around 60% 1-bedroom units and 40% 2-bedroom units. There will also be guest parking.

Mr. Wheeler stated they will be adding the non-motorized bike path along the water edge at their own expense. Mr. Wheeler stated he appreciates Mr. Dixon's comments and is willing to meet with him to

discuss connectivity.

Commissioners commented on the proposed project:

Jacobs stated she likes what has been presented, loves that it is zero-barrier; her only concern is the affordability.

Easter stated she also likes the plan, it has vibrancy to it, she appreciated Mr. Dixon's comments on connectivity.

Butterfield stated she likes the plan and appreciates the developer's trail donation.

Heglund stated he agrees with the connectivity piece and asked for clarification on where River Street ends. Mr. Tietsma answered by showing the area on a site map. Mr. Wheeler pointed out that Building B-6 will have 4 parking garages facing their development.

Carter stated the back of the garage units and the office building could be improved so the architecture flows a bit better.

Mr. Maier stated they may be removing the office building as they are not sure it will be needed.

Leisman stated he is comfortable with the project and the architecture. He would like the ends of the buildings that face Fulton St. to look more unique, he would like more attention to detail on the back of the garage units, address any connectivity issues, and would like to see improvement in the "brush" area along Fulton St.

Easter inquired about the material of the garage doors. Mr. Wheeler stated they will be made of wood.

It was moved by Jacobs, supported by Easter, to table the Preliminary PUD Plan for 1 month. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Site Plan Review, 1,386 sq. ft. addition to existing former dental office for Sun Title in the (PO) Professional Office zoning district, Parcel No. 41-15-31-305-021, 4828 Cascade Rd. SE, Richard Craig of Craig Architects, on behalf of Dale Shoemaker

Richard Craig of Craig Architecture presented. Mr. Craig handed out an aerial photo of neighboring properties on Cascade Rd. and addressed the reasons why the Site Plan Review needs to be tabled as recommended in the staff memo. There was some confusion on his part on how to measure the setbacks properly, not knowing if it should be from the MDOT easement or from the property line. It appears he will need to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance from setback requirements.

Ferro gave a brief history of the subject property stating it was rezoned from Residential to Professional Office in 1987. The house was then converted to a dental office. Ferro noted that the site plan for conversion of the building to office use that was submitted at that time showed a right-of-way width of 50 feet from centerline for Cascade Rd., and that no information regarding the additional 25 foot right-of-way easement that was placed on the property in the 1950's was shown on the site plan.

Planner/Zoning Administrator, Bajdek, gave an overview of the project. The applicant is proposing to construct a 1,385 sq. ft. addition to the east side of the building as well as some site improvements in the parking area. Until recently, a dentistry office operated from the property out of the existing main building, which was originally constructed as a single-family dwelling; a detached garage is also located on the site, which will be utilized for storage purposes. The existing buildings were constructed prior to the Professional Office designation of the property and subsequent use of it for office purposes.

The Zoning Board of Appeals granted a rear yard setback variance for the property on January 7, 2020, subject to site plan approval by the Planning Commission, to allow the construction of the proposed building addition with a rear yard setback varying from 29 feet 3 inches to 39 feet 11 inches rather than the required 40 feet.

Bajdek stated that although the Zoning Board of Appeals granted a rear yard setback variance for the addition, due to the 25-foot additional highway right-of-way easement, which exists along the front of the property, additional variances are necessary for the project to proceed. Setbacks are measured from right-of-way easements. Variances are necessary for the building, as well as the northern portion of the 'new paving area,' as indicated on the site plan, for construction of additional parking spaces. The front yard building setback and 20-foot greenbelt setback are not met.

Bajdek stated the site plan indicates a retention area near the northeastern corner of the property and noted that the retention area was enlarged from the initial submittal to address the Township's consulting engineer's comment that it needed to be sized to accommodate the runoff from the building addition and extended parking area. Public water and sewer currently serve the building.

Bajdek stated the northeastern most parking space does not meet width requirements and that the barrier free parking space should be properly labeled.

A landscape plan has been submitted that indicates an extensive landscape update of the property. However, greenbelt requirements have not been satisfied. Per the Kent County Road Commission, they would not prohibit landscaping within the additional highway right-of-way easement, behind the sidewalk; however, placing such landscaping could potentially be at the risk of removal at some time in the future. There is no indication of site lighting on the plans.

Bajdek stated that staff is recommending the tabling of this item to resolve the outstanding site plan review items as outlined in the staff memo dated 02/20/2020.

Lawrence Duthler of Sun Title stated he will research to see if any of his neighboring properties have been granted releases from Kent County for the 25 ft. easement.

Leisman suggested approving the site plan but adding 2 conditions: 1. That the ZBA grant a variance from Cascade Rd. and, 2. That the applicant provides an amended landscape, greenbelt, and lighting plan subject to approval by the Planning department before the issuance of a building permit.

It was moved by Jacobs, supported by Carter, to approve the Site Plan for a 1,386 sq. ft. addition subject to the following 5 conditions:

- 1. A setback variance from Cascade Rd. shall be granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.**
- 2. There will be no parking lot lighting and any lighting on the building shall be non-glaring, full cut-off fixtures, approved by the Planning Department.**
- 3. A revised landscaping and greenbelt plan shall be approved by the Planning Department prior to issuance of a building permit.**
- 4. A stormwater permit shall be provided prior to issuance of a building permit.**

5. Any signage shall be subject to approval by the Planning Department.

Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. COMMISSION MEMBER/STAFF REPORTS

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

X. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Smith, Ada Township Clerk

rs: aw