

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held November 6, 2023

Mayor Favale called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at the East Grand Rapids Community Center and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Commissioners Arendshorst, Burdick, Hamrick, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Mayor Favale.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Charles, Deputy City Manager LaFave; City Attorney Huff; Finance Director Seath; Parks & Recreation Director Melville; Zoning Administrator Gianotti, Public Safety Chief Herald, City Clerk Parmenter.

2023-231. The agenda was approved as submitted.

2023-232. Public comment:

Sarah Buck, 308 Manhattan, stated she was at the work session regarding the Manhattan Park improvements and gave a history of the surveys and millage. She is against a splash pad in Manhattan Park.

John Chronowski, 775 Bagley Ave., stated he is happy to see the City is getting a carbon action plan.

Kim VanDam, 909 Floral Ave., noted she is not in favor of banning gas-powered leaf blowers.

Gerald Najar, 530 Lovett, stated a gas leaf blower ban would cost citizens more money.

2023-233. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Schulz congratulated the High School Girl's Swim Team on their win and reminded everyone about the GVBA Tree Lighting the Friday after Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Burdick attended the MML Convention and said that it was time well spent.

Commissioner Schwartz mentioned Frightful Friday was busy, but it seemed to go smoothly.

Commissioner Arendshorst participated in early voting and noted that Secretary of State Benson came to the City to see how it was working.

Commissioner Hamrick reminded everyone to get out and vote tomorrow.

Mayor Favale thanked everyone for early voting.

City Manager Charles noted early voting and asked for Commission to set a work session for the meeting on the 20th for Manhattan Park.

- 2023-234. Consider the introduction of the rezoning of 30 properties on Lovett Avenue, Wealthy Street and Barnard Street from R-3 Single Family Residential to MFR Multi-Family Residential.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti reviewed the request.

Commissioner Schwartz asked what the community feedback was. Deputy City Manager stated that it was generally pretty positive at the work sessions and both sides were heard at the public hearings.

Commissioner Hamrick thinks the comments were mostly positive and the renderings gave a lot of clarity.

Commissioner Burdick wondered if most of the non-conformities were related to setbacks. Zoning Administrator Gianotti said that they were.

Commissioner Arendshorst wondered if the Planning Commission thought about changing zoning to accommodate the setbacks. Zoning Administrator Gianotti stated that it had been talked about.

Commissioner Hamrick said that empty nesters want smaller places to live that are walkable and close to busses.

Mayor Favale noted that empty nesters want to stay in East but there is no place for them to go.

Commissioner Burdick applauds the City for being proactive rather than reactive.

Deanna Eckert, 537 Greenwood Ave., wondered why it had to be both sides of the street and said that we have to be careful about step zoning and maybe scale back to one side.

Paul McCarthy, 554 Lovett, owns three properties on Lovett and thanked the Commission for moving forward on this and he supports the change.

Mary Margaret Munski, 2731 Cascade Springs Dr, owns two rentals on Wealthy and supports the change and all of the work done bringing this forward.

Gerald Najar, 530 Lovett, said that this is a drastic change and doesn't think it is a good idea.

2023-0234-A. Arendshorst-Hamrick. To approve the introduction of the rezoning of 30 properties on Lovett Avenue, Wealthy Street and Barnard Street from R-3 Single Family Residential to MFR Multi-Family Residential.

Commissioner Arendshorst said that this has been discussed since 2018 and it would allow for natural expansion and increased diversity. Non-conforming lot owners also have to jump through additional hoops to make improvements.

Commissioner Burdick supports this to help give people the opportunity to move into East and this will make more conforming allowing for improvements to properties.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Burdick, Hamrick, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7

Nays: -0-

2023-235. Public Safety Quarterly report.

City Manager Charles reviewed the report.

2023-236. Consider approval of Social District Liquor License request from Bowdie’s Chophouse.

City Manager Charles highlighted the request.

2023-0236-A. Schultz-Burdick. To approve the resolution for a Social District Liquor License request from Bowdie’s Chophouse.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Burdick, Hamrick, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7

Nays: -0-

2023-237. Consider awarding development of a Carbon Action Plan for City Operations for a cost of \$24,474.

City Manager Charles highlighted the request.

2023-0237-A. Arendshorst-Wessely. To award development of a Carbon Action Plan for City Operations to GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc for a cost of \$24,474.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Burdick, Hamrick, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7

Nays: -0-

2023-238. Schulz-Schwartz. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2023-0238-A. Minutes of the regular and special meetings held October 16, 2023.

2023-0238-B. Minutes of the work session held on October 24, 2023

2023-0238-C. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$341,076.28; county and school disbursements of \$89,7964.52 and total remaining disbursements of \$935,203.18.

2023-0238-D. Minutes of the East Grand Rapids Library Commission meeting held on September 25, 2023.

2023-0238-E. Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting held on September 25, 2023.

2023-0238-F. Blodgett neighbor concerns report.

2023-0238-G. Quarterly financial and adjustments.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Burdick, Hamrick, Schulz, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 7

Nays: -0-

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until November 20, 2023.

Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk