

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held July 1, 2024

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 Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Schwartz, Wessely and Mayor Favale.

Absent: Commissioner Hunter.

Also Present: City Manager Charles; Deputy City Manager La Fave; City Attorney Huff; Parks and Recreation Director Melville; Public Safety Captain Ric Buikema; City Clerk Parmenter.

2024-109. The agenda was approved as presented.

2024-110. Public comment:

Peter Kulas-Domingues, 1650 Oakleigh Rd. NW, is running for Kent County Probate Judge and is on the August 6th ballot.

Robyn Stratton, 656 Lakeside Dr SE, is in favor of a traffic impact study. She has almost been hit while walking by bikes and E-Bikes.

Tami Bosco, 545 Lakeside Dr SE, agrees with everything that Robyn Stratton said. She has seen a lot of growth and hopes a traffic impact study will be done.

Mandy Sharp Eizinger, 1643 Whitfield Rd SE, is surprised that pedestrian safety was not on the agenda. She urged for a traffic study before development.

Kyle Brinks, 1721 Whitfield Rd SE, stated that he was pleading for Breton to be made a safer road and there have been people hit by cars that had not been reported to Public Safety. He also noted that there was overgrown vegetation at some of the intersections on Breton.

Lauren Johnson, 959 Breton Rd SE, stated that there needs to be concern with the sidewalks relating to bikes and E-Bikes.

Dane Lund, 2405 Oakwood Dr SE, stated that while East Grand Rapids is a great place, an area of improvement could be traffic and pedestrian safety.

Sean Sperling, 1779 Whitefield Rd SE, E-Bikes and E-Scooters have increased, traffic increased and asked to make safety a priority.

Kate Zell, her son was hit at “cone crossing” a couple of years ago. She stated that it was his fault and that he had made a full recovery. People make mistakes but thinks it can be reduced if there are flashing crossing signs at crosswalks and increase penalties.

Joe Rizqallah, 2730 Maplewood Dr SE, asked if there was a budget for Public Safety. He showed a picture on his phone of pedestrian crossing signs that sit in the middle of the crosswalk stating that it is state law to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.

2024-111. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Burdick thanked everyone for coming out and appreciated that it was not a blame session but that there were suggestions given.

Commissioner Wessely appreciated everyone for coming out and his heart goes out to everyone involved and the families in the area. He explained the traffic study process and stated that they are working to figure out a solution.

Commissioner Schwartz thanked everyone for coming out and stated that they remain committed to doing better. She noted that the traffic study for Breton was done in May and the results should be coming out soon. She stated that the City staff has learned how to install the flashing crosswalk signs to save the City money so they can do more.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak echoed deep thanks for everyone coming out. She gave deep sympathies to the victim’s family, Public Safety involved and the driver. She appreciated the conversations that she had with residents regarding safety in regard to walking, biking, scooters, E-Bikes, etc. She suggested a near future work session or meeting to discuss traffic safety and infrastructure that allows for safety of all road/sidewalk users, new approaches to design, slow streets, vision zero and safe system approach.

City Manager Charles noted that it was a tough night a couple of weeks ago for everyone. He stated that recommendations regarding a traffic study would be coming to the Commission in the near future. He also stated that there was a technical glitch with YouTube during the last Planning Commission meeting, but the audio recording is now available. The next Planning Commission meeting will be held July 9th with Gaslight Investors. He thanked Public Works and Public Safety for their work during the storm clean up last week and reminded everyone about the upcoming July 4th events.

2024-112. Consider electing a president to serve in the absence of the Mayor for FY 2024-25.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

Commissioner Burdick nominated Commissioner Schwartz if she was willing to remain as the President.

Commissioner Schwartz stated that she would be honored.

2024-0112-A. Burdick-Wessely. To elect Commissioner Schwartz as president to serve in the absence of the Mayor for FY 2024-25.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 5
Nays: None.

2024-113. Consider participating in the National Opioid Settlement Agreement with Kroger and authorize the City Manager to execute any documents necessary on behalf of the City of East Grand Rapids.

City Manager Charles highlighted the request.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked how the funds received so far have been used. City Manager Charles noted that they have not been used yet.

2024-0113-A. Schwartz-Wessely. To participating in the National Opioid Settlement Agreement with Kroger and authorize the City Manager to execute any documents necessary on behalf of the City of East Grand Rapids.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 5
Nays: None.

2024-114. Groff-Blaszak -Burdick. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2024-0114-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held June 17, 2024.

2024-0114-B. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$301,941.56 county and school disbursements of \$0, and total remaining disbursements of \$1,508,374.82.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale –5
Nays: None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until July 15, 2024.

Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk