

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held August 19, 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, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs and Mayor Favale.

Absent: Commissioner Wessely.

Also Present: City Manager Charles; Deputy City Manager La Fave; City Attorney Huff; Parks and Recreation Director Melville; Zoning Administrator Gianotti; City Clerk Parmenter.

Mayor Favale welcomed Kate Skaggs as the new First Ward City Commissioner.

2024-136. The agenda was approved as presented.

2024-137. Public comment: None.

2024-138. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Schwartz welcomed Commissioner Skaggs.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak welcomed Commissioner Skaggs and welcomed students back to school. She thanked the teachers and administrators for their hard work.

Commissioner Hunter welcomed Commissioner Skaggs and welcomed students back to school.

Commissioner Skaggs welcomed students back to school.

Mayor Favale welcomed students, teachers and administrators back to school. She also noted the social media post regarding back-to-school safety.

City Manager Charles noted the work that Director Melville and Public Safety did for Taste of East. It was an amazing event. With the start of school, he would like everyone to focus on pedestrian safety and noted the school resource officer would be reinforcing safety, Master Plan website is up with a survey for residents to complete.

2024-139. Consider introduction of a conditional rezoning request at 469 Greenwood Ave. SE/505 Lakeside Dr. SE from R-3 Single Family Residential to C-1 Commercial.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti reviewed the request.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak questioned the number of bedrooms and square footage of the residential part of the building. Zoning Administrator Gianotti is not sure.

Mayor Favale asked if it could go back to R3 zoning in the future. Zoning Administrator Gianotti stated that it could with the rezoning process.

Commissioner Hunter questioned if this would have to be included in the Gaslight Village if it is rezoned. Zoning Administrator Gianotti stated that there is no definition or boundaries for Gaslight Village.

Scott Kraemer, 180 Monroe Ave. NW, stated that he is the attorney representing Baxter Stein, LLC for this rezoning request. He stated that there has been commercial space on the lower level and residential in the upper level of the building for the past sixty years. He has reviewed the Master Plan and noted that it lists the property as commercial and noted that it has been mixed use for sixty years. He stated that they have tried to address all the concerns thoughtfully and completely.

Commissioner Skaggs asked if there was a connection between the upper and lower levels. Ms. Stein stated that there was one door.

Stephanie O’Laughlin, 323 Gracewood Dr., is in favor of the rezoning.

Anthony Maurer, 421 Lakeside Dr., is in opposition to the rezoning.

Wendy Scott, 435 Lakeside Dr., is opposed to the rezoning and wonders why not state a specific use for the property.

Scott Damen, 625 Bridge St., is opposed to the rezoning.

John Stein, 55 Park Hills Dr., stated that parking will always be an issue no matter what the use is. He stated that the conditions of the rezoning would be a part of the deed of the property.

2024-0139-A. Burdick-Hunter. To approve the introduction of a conditional rezoning request at 469 Greenwood Ave. SE/505 Lakeside Dr. SE from R-3 Single Family Residential to C-1 Commercial.

Commissioner Skaggs asked what the deed restrictions do. Zoning Administrator Gianotti stated it would limit what is done to the property today and in the future.

City Attorney Huff stated that the owners would have to go to court to change the restrictions in the future if chose to do so.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak stated that it felt that they were putting the cart before the horse in regard to the Mater Plan and that the Commissions responsibility is to the community.

Commissioner Burdick stated that this was a tough one and that we can't solve the parking issues whether it is commercial or residential.

Commissioner Schwartz said that her vote has swung now that it is more restrictive than before and noted that it was a historical landmark in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Hunter does understand a pause because of the Master Plan but questioned the timeline of it. Deputy City Manager La Fave said it would be sometime in the winter or spring, but he can't predict due to it being the board's decision.

Mayor Favale agreed that we can't fix the parking, and it is not fair to punish the applicant because of timing. She also stated that nobody goes to the office anymore and the proposal is much more tailored and reminded everyone that the property has been commercial for sixty years.

Yeas: Burdick, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs and Favale – 5

Nays: Groff-Blaszak. - 1

- 2024-140. Consider approving a resolution to amend the Poverty Exemption Guidelines and Policy to ensure that the Board of Review's decisions are compliant with the current State laws.

City Manager Charles highlighted the request.

- 2024-0140-A. Schwartz-Skaggs. To approve the resolution to amend the Poverty Exemption Guidelines and Policy to ensure that the Board of Review's decisions are compliant with the current State laws.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs and Favale – 6

Nays: None.

- 2024-141. Consider allocating \$350,000 in Park Improvement Millage Funds for the renovation of the Woodcliff Early Childhood Center playground areas and authorize staff to release the funds to EGRPS when invoiced by the district.

Parks and Recreation Director Melville highlighted the request.

- 2024-0141-A. Groff-Blaszak-Schwartz. To approve allocating \$350,000 in Park Improvement Millage Funds for the renovation of the Woodcliff Early Childhood Center playground areas and authorize staff to release the funds to EGRPS when invoiced by the district.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs and Favale – 6
Nays: None.

2024-142. Consider awarding carpet and vinyl tile flooring improvements in the amount of \$109,117.90 plus 10% contingency.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed the request.

2024-0142-A. Skaggs-Burdick. To award carpet and vinyl tile flooring improvements in the amount of \$109,117.90 plus 10% contingency to Seelye Group, LTD-Shaw Industries.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs and Favale – 6
Nays: None.

2024-143. Consider authorizing a not-to-exceed agreement in the amount of \$14,600 for the renewal of the Community Recreation 5-year plan.

Parks and Recreation Director Melville reviewed the request.

2024-0143-A. Burdick-Schwartz. To authorize a not-to-exceed agreement in the amount of \$14,600 for the renewal of the Community Recreation 5-year plan with MCSA Group, Inc.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs and Favale – 6
Nays: None.

2024-144. Hunter-Groff-Blaszak. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2024-0144-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held August 5, 2024.

2024-0144-B. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$302,805.73; county and school disbursements of \$10,998,142.08, and total remaining disbursements of \$874,740.19.

2024-145. Results from the August 6, 2024 election.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs and Favale –6
Nays: None.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until September 3, 2024.

Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk