

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held September 3, 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, Wessely and Mayor Favale.

Absent: None.

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

2024-146. The agenda was approved as presented.

2024-147. Public comment: None.

2024-148. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Skaggs reminded everyone about the tree planting program in which sign up is due by October 1st.

Commissioner Burdick highlighted the Parks and Recreation meeting where they began discussion of field usage once the construction has started on the high school and their field will not be accessible, thanked everyone for their work on Manhattan and reminded everyone that volunteers are still needed for the triathlon this weekend.

Commissioner Hunter reminded everyone that the survey is still active for the Master Plan.

Mayor Favale said that people can go to the website to sign up to volunteer for the triathlon and reminded everyone to be extra vigilant in the morning and afternoon now that school is back in session.

City Manager Charles noted that construction at Manhattan Park has begun with a Spring 2025 completion, the traffic study for Breton has been completed and is being reviewed and noted the Master Plan participation so far.

2024-149. Second reading and consider approving a conditional rezoning request at 469 Greenwood Ave. SE/505 Lakeside Dr. SE1 from R-3 Single Family Residential to C-1 Commercial.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti reviewed the request.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak has concerns about parking. Zoning Administrator Gianotti stated that the trend has gone to offsite meetings and there have been no accidents since 2021 at the intersection.

Commissioner Hunter questioned if the slope is really a hindrance to builders. Zoning Administrator Gianotti stated that it was challenging but could be overcome.

Scott Kraemer, Attorney for Ms. Stein, stated that Katie is a good resident and steward of the community, she has addressed the concerns and feedback, there will be less in and outs with her business than if it were a single-family residence and also noted that it was compatible with surrounding uses.

Wendy Scott, 435 Lakeside, is opposed to the rezoning.

Anthony Maurer, 421 Lakeside, is opposed to the rezoning.

Stephanine O’Laughlin, 323 Gracewood, stated that the traffic concern has been addressed and suggested approval.

Katie Southwell, 1774 Sterling Oaks, is Ms. Stein’s real estate and business partner. She stated that they would be at the office very little and hopes that approval is considered.

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

John Stein, 55 Park Hills Dr., stated that multiple changes have been made, a traffic study was done and noted the conditions will be part of the deed.

2024-0149-A. Wessely-Skaggs. To approve the conditional rezoning request at 469 Greenwood Ave. SE/505 Lakeside Dr. SE from R-3 Single Family Residential to C-1 Commercial.

Commissioner Wessely stated that provisions were made, restrictions will be recorded with the deed that will give the City more control and stated that retail in this space could be the opposite of what they were trying to accomplish.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak questioned if the traffic study included pedestrian safety. Deputy City Manager La Fave stated that it did not and mentioned that there have been no accidents since 2021.

Commissioner Hunter doesn’t think that it is right to use the 2018 Master Plan when it is going through revision.

Commissioner Burdick thanked residents for coming out and stated that we can only go off the current master Plan.

Commissioner Schwartz thanked residents and noted that they do listen to neighbors and do research on items, look at facts and stated that it was not a popularity contest. She stated that new facts and proposals were brought forward, and pedestrian safety is always a concern.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak is not satisfied that this request meets the needs of the community and that there is no guarantee that Ms. Stein will own the property forever.

Commissioner Schwartz feels that the new restrictions will protect the neighbors with the types of businesses that can be in there, change of hours and signage.

Commissioner Skaggs thanked the applicant for her responsiveness and the residents that have weighed in. She is supportive of the deed restrictions.

Mayor Favale changed her mind due to this being a different plan. It is more restrictive. She thanked everyone for their time and passion in this matter. She noted that the plan is more tailored to give the City more control and that it was not fair to make the applicant wait until the Master Plan was completed.

Commissioner Wesely noted that it will see less traffic than retail and reminded everyone about the deed restrictions.

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

Nays: Groff-Blaszak and Hunter - 2

- 2024-150. Consider the first reading of a rezoning request at 942 Bellclaire Ave. from R-1 Single Family Residential to R-2 Single Family Residential.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti highlighted the request.

- 2024-0150-A. Groff-Blaszak-Burdick. To approve the first reading of a rezoning request at 942 Bellclaire Ave. from R-1 Single Family Residential to R-2 Single Family Residential.

Commissioner Schwartz noted that the Planning Commission was unanimous in passing this.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs, Wessely and Favale – 7

Nays: None.

- 2024-151. Public safety quarterly report.

Public Safety Captain Buikema reviewed the report

Commissioner Burdick questioned Captain Buikema if they were still ok on staffing for the FOIA requests and gun permits. Captain Buikema stated that they were good on staffing for gun permits, but FOIA requests were being monitored for staffing.

Mayor Favale loves the new format for the report.

Commissioner Hunter thanked Public Safety for keeping the community safe.

Commissioner Schwartz asked about the increase in housing hazards. Captain Buikema stated that it is usually weather related like power line down.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak thanked Captain Buikema for being responsive to questions that she emailed over the weekend. She loves seeing the community policing and has concerns about demographic disparities.

- 2024-152. Consider approving a one-year pool use agreement with Aquinas College for scheduled use of the Community Pool for a cost of \$25,000 with a proposed 50/50 revenue split with EGRPS.

Parks and Recreation Director Melville reviewed the request.

Commissioner Skaggs questioned going from a three-year contract to one year. Parks and Recreation Director Melville stated that is was for cost evaluation.

- 2024-0152-A. Hunter-Wessely. To approve a one-year pool use agreement with Aquinas College for scheduled use of the Community Pool for a cost of \$25,000 with a proposed 50/50 revenue split with EGRPS.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs, Wessely and Favale – 7
Nays: None.

- 2024-153. Consider demo and construction of a salt/aggregate storage building in the amount of \$275,410 with addition of \$21,000 for demolition/recycling and a vehicle/equipment storage building for \$51,232.00, plus 10% contingency.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed the request.

- 2024-0153-A. Skaggs-Burdick. To approve demo and construction of a salt/aggregate storage building with Clear Heights Construction, LLC in the amount of \$275,410 with addition of \$21,000 for demolition/recycling with Pitsch Companies and a vehicle/equipment storage building with Choice Metal Buildings for \$51,232.00, plus 10% contingency.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs, Wessely and Favale – 7
Nays: None.

2024-154. Consider the purchase of winter maintenance road salt for FY 2024-2025 within the approved budget or approved amended budgeted amounts at \$68.40 per ton.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed the request.

2024-0154-A. Wessely-Schwartz. To approve the purchase of winter maintenance road salt from Compass Minerals, Inc. for FY 2024-2025 within the approved budget or approved amended budgeted amounts at \$68.40 per ton.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs, Wessely and Favale – 7
Nays: None.

2024-155. Burdick-Schwartz. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2024-0155-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held August 19, 2024.

2024-0155-B. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$297,104.65; county and school disbursements of \$15,443,307.25, and total remaining disbursements of \$850,576.59.

2024-156. Planning Commission meeting minutes from the June 11, 2024 meeting.

2024-157. Planning Commission meeting minutes from the July 9, 2024 meeting.

2024-158. Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes from the July 22, 2024 meeting.

Yeas: Burdick, Groff-Blaszak, Hunter, Schwartz, Skaggs, Wessely and Favale – 7
Nays: None.

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until September 16, 2024.

Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk