

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held October 21, 2024

President Schwartz 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 Wessely.

Absent: Mayor Favale.

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

2024-173. The agenda was approved as presented.

2024-174. Public comment: None.

2024-175. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak gave a shout out to City staff for the election work and the updates that have been going out. She requested a work session on Vision Zero with multiple experts.

Commissioner Burdick mentioned that GVMC also has a Vision Zero plan.

Commissioner Hunter is in support of a work session.

Commissioner Wessely is in support but is not sure how it aligns with the Master Plan.

City Manager Charles noted that GVMC is working on their Master Plan and educational opportunities are being looked at for the Commission and the community as well.

Commissioner Hunter stated the Harvest Fest was a success and that the donations went to the Ronald McDonald House.

Commissioner Wessely said that the only complaint he heard was that it did not last long enough.

Commissioner Burdick mentioned that it is darker in the morning now and to be mindful of kids walking to school. He also stated that Harvest Fest was great.

Commissioner Skaggs said that Harvest Fest was wonderful.

Commissioner Schwartz reminded everyone about early voting and noted that Harvest Fest was great.

City Manager Charles said that they are pouring concrete on the paths at Manhattan Park and reminded everyone that Public Safety Day is this coming Saturday along with the drug take back. There will be donuts and Riding for Ryan will be there. He received positive feedback on the Harvest Fest.

- 2024-176. Consider approving Attorney Fred Schubkegel with Varnum and Susan Wenzlick with Fishbeck to assist with the potential establishment of a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority for the City of East Grand Rapids.

City Manager Charles highlighted the request.

Susan Wenzlick with Fishbeck gave a presentation about Brownfields and the process of starting one.

Commissioner Skaggs questioned the taxes relating to TIFF. Ms. Wenzlick noted that the only thing that could not be collected was debt.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak questioned where the money for the City comes from. Ms. Wenzlick stated it comes from the developer's taxes.

Commissioner Wessely asked if the BRA has control over the length of time for the TIFF. Ms. Wenzlick said that it was set by policy.

Commissioner Schwartz asked what the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority looked like. Ms. Wenzlick said that it was a minimum of five members that are approved by the Commission.

- 2024-0176-A. Wessely-Skaggs. To approve Attorney Fred Schubkegel with Varnum and Susan Wenzlick with Fishbeck to assist with the potential establishment of a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority for the City of East Grand Rapids.

City Manager Charles explained the process going forward if approved.

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

- 2024-177. Consider approving the franchise extension from Comcast for cable television services in East Grand Rapids.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

2024-0177-A. Burdick-Wessely. To approve the franchise extension from Comcast for cable television services in East Grand Rapids.

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

2024-178. Consider approving an agreement between the City and Gaslight Investors LLC permitting them to demolish the upper level of their current parking deck.

City Manager Charles reviewed the request.

Commissioner Skaggs asked if there were safety concerns. Deputy City Manager La Fave stated that inspections were being conducted regularly and the second level is currently not being utilized.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak questioned the mention of a Brownfield in the agreement.

Attorney Mike Roth stated that it does not hold the City into creating a Brownfield rather he thinks that they were just being upfront that if it was created, they would like these costs included.

Commissioner Skaggs asked if the sculpture was staying or going. City Manager Charles stated that he would find out.

There was a lot more discussion regarding the Brownfield paragraph in the contract.

2024-0178-A. Wessely-Skaggs. To approve an agreement between the City and Gaslight Investors LLC permitting them to demolish the upper level of their current parking deck.

Commissioner Hunter stated that it was bad timing for the contract.

Commissioner Burdick questioned if there was anything binding in the contract regarding the Brownfield. Attorney Roth stated that there was not.

There was more discussion regarding the contract.

Yeas: Burdick, Schwartz, Skaggs and Wessely – 4
Nays: Groff-Blaszak, Hunter - 2

2024-179. Consider approval of a contracts for lead water service line replacements for FY 24/25.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed the request.

2024-0179-A. Wessely-Burdick. To approve contracts for lead water service line replacements for FY 24/25 with Groundhawk Excavating and Landscaping of Lowell, MI for Project/Contract #1 in the amount of \$593,358.00 to replace 130 lead service lines (LSLs) and authorizes two contracts to the two qualified low bidders for Project/Contract #2 with Groundhawk Excavating and Landscaping of Lowell, MI (bid \$255,293.50) and Tubergen Construction of Wyoming, MI (bid \$271,486.25) to be assigned by the Deputy City Manager/Director of Public Works to replace 60 lead service lines in accordance with prorated bid pricing and for both Project Contracts up to the authorized budget amount of \$930,000 to include contingency or added LSL replacements.

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

2024-180. Consider approval of a resolution and bids relating to the Robinson Road/Cascade Road – Side Path/Sidewalk Project.

Deputy City Manager La Fave highlighted the request.

Commissioner Skaggs questioned the placement of the sidewalks. Deputy City Manager La Fave stated that they would be situated closer to the edge of the road in the right-of-way.

Commissioner Schwartz questioned the street crossings. Deputy City Manager La Fave stated that crossings would be updated as part of the Safe Routes to School project.

2024-0180-A. Skaggs-Wessely. To approve of a resolution and bids relating to the Robinson Road/Cascade Road – Side Path/Sidewalk Project.

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

2024-181. Consider approving the addition of a loan option to City employer/employee's 401(A) Defined Contribution Plan.

Finance Director Seath reviewed the information.

2024-0181-A. Skaggs-Hunter. To approve the addition of a loan option to City employer/employee's 401(A) Defined Contribution Plan.

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

2024-182. Wessely-Burdick. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2024-0182-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held October 7, 2024.

2024-0182-B. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$294,163.39; county and school disbursements of \$148,832.10, and total remaining disbursements of \$389,792.02.

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

Nays: None.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until November 4, 2024.

Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk