

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

**Regular Meeting Held January 21, 2025**

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 LaFave; City Attorney Huff; Finance Director Seath; Parks & Recreation Director Melville; Public Safety Director Buikema; Zoning Administrator Gianotti; City Planner Paul LaBlanc; City Clerk Parmenter.

2025-09. The agenda was approved.

2025-10. Public comment:

Dan Molloy, 938 Maxwell, would like the Commission to make the information regarding the Brownfield available.

Anna Moore Butzner, 2311 Wealthy Apt. 34, wanted to object to the letter that was sent out to the residents within 1000 feet of the proposed Gaslight Investors project. She wants it sent to all residents.

Laurel Abraham, 1108 Lakeside, is concerned about what the Gaslight Investors project will do to residential taxes.

Marc Armstead, 2202 Elmwood Dr., is concerned about spending.

Judith Baxter, Hall St., complimented Public Safety during her medical emergency.

2025-11. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Skaggs thanked public works for plowing the snow and mentioned that on February 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. her and Commissioner Burdick would be hosting a coffee hour here at the Community Center.

Commissioner Schwartz noted that the Planning Commission is looking at updating some ordinances.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak echoed the thanks to Public Works and reminded everyone that the library is a warming center. She is hopeful to revisit public engagement and have a townhall on the Gaslight Investors project. City Manager Charles noted that Gaslight Investors will be holding an open house.

Commissioner Hunter stated that the recycling event last Saturday was a success.

City Manager Charles also gave a kudos to the Public works team and noted that there were specific pages on the website relating to the Gaslight Investors project and Brownfield and they will be updated as things move forward.

- 2025-12. Public hearing for proposed Parks and Recreation Plan and consider adopting a resolution approving the five-year Community Parks and Recreation Plan.

Parks and Recreation Director Melville reviewed the information and process.

Mayor Favale asked for clarification with amending the plan if that affected funding. Parks and Recreation Director Melville stated that it did not.

Commissioner Burdick stated that it was important to meet the February 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for grant funding and wondered if expanding to include more centralized playing fields could be added.

Commissioner Schwartz asked about grant funding for a toddler playground area. Parks and Recreation Director Melville stated that it could be included with a larger project.

The public hearing opened at 6:33 p.m.

Judith Baxter, Hall St., asked if the Rain Garden would be going away in the plan. Parks and Recreation Director Melville stated that it was not.

The public hearing closed at 6:34 p.m.

Commissioner Skaggs noticed that a downtown gathering space was not included.

Commissioner Burdick asked that centrally located playing fields at the elementary schools be added.

Commissioner Schwartz supports the playing fields especially with the high school construction that will be happening and would like to see trees planted thoughtfully during projects.

Mayor Favale supports finding a space for teens and toddlers.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak echoes the play space for young children and would like public access to Reeds Lake. She also questioned the amount of parking needed in the plan.

Deputy City Manager La Fave stated that the DNR requires parking.  
Commissioner Wessely asked about parking spaces for cars/trucks with boat trailers.

2025-012-A. Burdick-Wessely. To amend the Parks and Recreation Plan with adding improvements and maintenance to centrally located playing fields, downtown space, toddler play area, planting of trees and a public access plan for Reeds Lake.

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

2025-012-B. Schwartz-Wessely. To approve the Parks and Recreation Plan with the amendments listed above.

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

2025-13. Introduction of the concept plans from Gaslight Investors and consider setting a public hearing on the concept plan for the February 17, 2025 City Commission meeting.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti reviewed the information and the process.

Scott Weirda from Gaslight Investors stated that this project was started about 20 years ago. He noted that Gaslight Investors remodeled Breton Village over time to what it was today and is looking forward to the project in East Grand Rapids.

Mike Corby with Integrated Architecture presented a slideshow of the conceptual plans for the project. He stated that they want to make sure that it aligns with the City's vision and that some changes have been made based on the July 9<sup>th</sup> community engagement with the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Schwartz questioned the center medians and the possibility of moving buildings closer together to make two-way traffic behind the buildings.

Julie Kroll with Fleis & VandenBrink reviewed the traffic study process and said that data collection would be in April as well as a parking study.

Mike Corby reviewed changes based on the Planning Commission's feedback and noted that they are working with staff to set up a community meeting.

Commissioner Wessely asked if they had considered bikes and e-bikes with the pedestrian and traffic study and asked if they had any plans for carbon neutrality such as solar panels.

Commissioner Skaggs questioned what the number of parking spaces was based on. Zoning Administrator Gianotti stated that was the number of spaces in the plan and that it met the standards.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak questioned the vehicular traffic going through the development and wondered how the safest route can be set without a traffic study. Mike Corby stated that it had been studied by the City and consultants and noted that Shopping Center Road is controllable.

City Manager Charles stated that they will have the traffic information for the public hearing.

Commissioner Schwartz thanked them for adapting based on previous comments and suggestions.

Anna Moore Butzner, 2311 Wealthy, Apt. 34, is concerned about the amount of truck traffic and that they will look at trash bins. The residents in the apartments use the alley as a walkway.

Andrew Baudo, 725 Croswell, is concerned about how traffic will get into the development.

Judith Baxter, Hall St., stated that this was a massive development and stated to expand the information to all residents and encourages the public hearing.

Mark Armstead, 2202 Elmwood, would like to understand the utilities and whom that cost will fall on.

Commissioner Schwartz suggested maybe having printouts around that people can look at for the public hearing.

Commissioner Wessely loves the idea of the public hearing to get more public the information. He suggests Facebook and Instagram messaging for the upcoming public hearing.

Commissioner Burdick is excited for the public hearing to get people up to speed.

Commissioner Skaggs questioned the referendum in 2004. City Manager Charles noted that it was regarding the project, and it was passed by the voters.

Commissioner Hunter thanked the residents who came out and the developers for their work.

Mayor Favale thanked the developers, Commission and the public.

- 2025-013-A. Schwartz-Wessely. To approve the introduction of the concept plans from Gaslight Investors and set a public hearing on the concept plan for the February 17, 2025 City Commission meeting.

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

- 2025-14. Consider approval of a one-year contract in the amount of \$30,000, to be sponsored by Corewell Health, for the 2025 4<sup>th</sup> of July Firework show.

Parks and Recreation Director Melville highlighted the request.

- 2025-014-A. Skaggs-Burdick. To approve a one-year contract with Great Lakes Fireworks in the amount of \$30,000, to be sponsored by Corewell Health, for the 2025 4<sup>th</sup> of July Firework show.

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

- 2025-15. Consider approving the Permit for Fireworks allowing Great Lakes Fireworks to produce our July 4<sup>th</sup> display for 2025.

Parks and Recreation Director Melville highlighted the request.

- 2025-015-A. Burdick-Wessely. To approve the Permit for Fireworks allowing Great Lakes Fireworks to produce our July 4<sup>th</sup> display for 2025.

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

- 2025-16. Consider approving a three-year contract for our annual streetscape planting program for a total three-year price of \$41,330.00.

Parks and Recreation Director Melville highlighted the request.

- 2025-016-A. Hunter-Wessely. To approve a three-year contract with Romence Gardens for our annual streetscape planting program for a total three-year price of \$41,330.00.

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

2025-17. Consider awarding the Breton Road and Hall Street traffic signal project in the amount of \$251,635 with contingency of 10%.

Deputy City Manager La Fave highlighted the request.

2025-017-A. Wessely-Skaggs. To award the Breton Road and Hall Street traffic signal project to Strain Electric in the amount of \$251,635 with contingency of 10%.

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

2025-18. Wessely-Burdick. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2025-018-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held January 6, 2025.

2025-018-B. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$346,100.43; county and school disbursements of \$1,419,275.81, and total remaining disbursements of \$437,281.26.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until February 3, 2025.

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Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk