

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held October 6, 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, Skaggs, Schwartz, Wessely and Mayor Favale.

Absent: None.

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

2025-146. The agenda was approved as presented.

2025-147. Hearts of Gold presentation.

EGR High School students, Hillary Griffin and Vivian Cherveney, spoke about Hearts of Gold and what the group does.

2025-148. Public comment:

Mark Armstead, 2202 Elmwood, spoke about the higher costs of living in East.

Aaron King, 245 Hodenpyl, stated that the new traffic circles are challenging.

2025-149. Mayor and City Commission comments, including committee liaison reports.

Commissioner Skaggs stated that she has received a lot of concerns and questions lately regarding electric scooters and ebikes.

Commissioner Burdick reminded everyone about Harvest Fest on October 18th. He also has received questions and concerns about electric scooters and ebikes.

Commissioner Wessely agrees with the ebikes and electric scooter concerns and noted the increased break-ins in the 2nd ward.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak said that the Library Commission needs members and also has concerns regarding electric scooters and ebikes.

Commissioner Schwartz is looking forward to future meetings regarding ebikes and electric scooters.

Mayor Favale reminded everyone to slow down while driving and for all pedestrians to be alert when crossing/riding in streets with it getting darker earlier.

- 2025-150. Consider awarding the sidewalk rehabilitation and replacement program contract not to exceed \$200,000 for Fiscal Year 25/26, and \$250,000 for Fiscal Year 26/27.

Deputy City Manager La Fave reviewed the information.

- 2025-0150-A. Wessely-Burdick. To award the sidewalk rehabilitation and replacement program contract to AJZ Concrete LLC not to exceed \$200,000 for Fiscal Year 25/26, and \$250,000 for Fiscal Year 26/27.

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

- 2025-151. Consider casting a vote for two candidates for the Michigan Municipal League Liability and Property Pool.

City Manager Charles reviewed the information.

- 2025-0151-A. Schwartz-Skaggs. To cast a vote for the two candidates seeking election for the Michigan Municipal League Liability and Property Pool.

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

- 2025-152. Consider final reading and approval of Gaslight Investors PUD amendment and resolution.

City Manager Charles reviewed the information and noted that a protest petition was received at the end of the day today.

City Attorney Huff's stated that he believes the site plan is administrative not legislative therefore the petition is void and also noted that it is not complete as there is no information to verify the property owner information.

Commissioner Hunter asked what the purpose of the petition was. City Attorney Huff stated that it would raise the number of votes needed to pass to 2/3.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked if there was a policy for this. City Attorney Huff stated that there was not, but had it been submitted sooner, they could have been directed and noted again that this is an administrative action.

There was discussion regarding the protest petition.

City Manager Charles reviewed the five changes to the resolution as proposed at the last meeting.

Commissioner Schwartz asked for clarification on the maintenance standards. City Manager Charles stated that the language is that they will maintain and repair any defects. Deputy City Manager La Fave noted that there have not been any issues with items being enforced.

Commissioner Schwartz asked about the decorative fence around the social hub, if it was for safety in the seated area and if it will be for all or private. Mr. Lennon stated that the City will have the last word whether it will be a fence or if it is seated. It was thought of something to make it aesthetically pleasing.

Wessely asked about turning it into a grassy space if nothing is built.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak sent language following the last meeting regarding maintenance. She wondered if it was considered. She would like stronger language regarding maintenance.

Commissioner Schwartz asked how we handle maintenance. Deputy City Manager La Fave stated that it is based on resources and guidelines.

Mr. Lennon stated that they should not have to tear up a new street if something changes but it would get brought up to code when maintenance is done.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak wants stricter language regarding maintenance and would like open space language to be shorter and simpler at this time.

Mr. Lennon stated that that standard applies later during the final plan. Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked if he would be comfortable with shorter language. Mr. Lennon stated that they are comfortable with how it is currently written.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked to see and discuss the protest petition. Thinks they need to be talked about and the implications.

Mayor Favale reviewed the inaccuracies in the postcard that was sent out by EGR Responsible Development group.

Bonnie Mulder does not support the concept plan.

Nick Cursio, Nunica, MI, spoke about the protest petition.

Win Irwin, 1860 Lake Dr, stated the concept plan is a huge step in the right direction to meeting housing needs.

Nyal Deems, 701 Laurel Circle, said that he has nothing new to say and disagrees with the Mayor's comments.

A resident on Richards stated that charm will be lost if development is built.

Betsy Anderson, 435 Edgemere, said to vote against the concept plan.

Tom Miller, 1753 Asbury, thanked staff for their work in this, but he has some concerns about the density of the plan.

Bob Bonofiglo, 2033 Coronado, asked for a reasonable document to be put together and put before the voters.

Steve Gerow, 1635 Seminole, is supportive of the development but said that there are too many questions to take a vote tonight and is against the tax abatement.

John Fuger, 2738 Elmwood, read a quote and spoke about traffic studies.

Sam Massie, 1250 Woodshire, is against the current concept plan.

Stuart Citron, 2615 Oakwood, spoke about school parking and the concept plan.

Chip George is all for the project.

Jan Palm, 3030 Bonnell, agrees with the concerns and has concerns about safety and parking.

Brienne Postema, 2213 Wealthy, is concerned about more empty stores, empty streets, no places for elderly residents to move to and noted that it is hard for businesses to succeed.

Tricia Bosman, 547 Cambridge, has concerns about traffic and safety of pedestrians.

John Chronowski, 775 Bagley, has concerns about the development.

Calder Stanley, 2235 Boston, spoke about the housing issues, young people not being able to afford to purchase house and is in favor of adding housing.

Tom Koperski, 2550 Oakwood, feels that studies need to be done.

A resident at 1540 Woodcliff said that Gaslight is a destination and thinks businesses will make it.

Nancy Pattison, 2104 Gorham, wants to know why people support the project.

Sarah Massie, 1250 Woodshire, read a letter from David Decker.

Jerry Anderson, 435 Edgemere, spoke about the previous concept plan and the current one.

Chris Chappus, 1026 Monterey, voiced concerns about communications with the developer's attorney and City Manager Charles.

Janet Dietsch, 526 Greenwood, is confused about the 2nd reading of the resolution.

Brian Hamrick, 3004 Oakwood, is happy to see development finally happening in this space, found transparency with this and is in favor of the project.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak made a motion to move Item 9.A and the protest petition discussion before the vote on this. Commissioner Hunter seconded the motion.

Commissioner Schwartz's preference is to keep the agenda as it is.

Mayor Favale feels the same.

Commissioner Hunter the key central point is the action being administrative vs. legislative and the vote hinges on this.

Commissioner Skaggs questioned going into closed session. Commissioner Groff-Blaszak prefers to stay in open session.

Commissioner Schwartz thinks we are doing a disservice to our residents if we discuss this in open session and that we need to protect the city in the future.

Commissioner Wessely thought this was for information only. City Manager Charles said that this was just to lay out the process if approved.

Yeas: Commissioners Groff-Blaszak, Hunter and Skaggs - 3

Nays: Commissioners Burdick, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale - 4

Motion failed.

2025-0152-A. Burdick-Wessely. To approve and adopt the final reading of the PUD ordinance amendment and resolution.

Commissioner Hunter spoke about standards and thinks the Commission could vote if this is an administrative or legislative action.

Commissioner Wessely doesn't think it is necessary to reopen the discussion about Standards or character.

Commissioner Schwartz spoke about choices made, public opinion is at the heartbeat and that Gaslight is extremely emotional for everyone. She also noted that the concept plan is a rough draft only.

Commissioner Burdick stated that Commissioner Schwartz stated it very well. This is not the final plan and is in favor of the Master Plan being the guiding document.

Commissioner Hunter is confused if the City Commission can say if this is a legislative or administrative.

There was a lot more discussion regarding the protest petition and Item 9.A.

Yeas: Commissioners Burdick, Schwartz, Wessely and Favale – 4

Nays: Commissioners Groff-Blaszak, Hunter and Skaggs. – 3

Roll call vote. Motion carried.

2025-146. Right to referendum information.

City Manager Charles noted that this was for information only and the clerk will provide petitions if requested.

Commissioner Groff-Blaszak asked if the motion carried or not. Mayor Favale and City Attorney Huff stated that it did.

There was more discussion regarding the protest petition.

Commissioner Schwartz said that this is an administrative decision and is curious if the petition is valid.

Mr. Lennon stated that he didn't feel the petition was valid due to this being an administrative action.

Commissioner Burdick is not comfortable voting on the petition without looking at it and asking questions.

Commissioner Schwartz would like more information also.

2025-147. Wessely-Hunter. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2025-148. Minutes of the regular meeting held September 15, 2025.

2025-149. Disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$320,464.67 and \$313,210.49; county and school disbursements of \$1,007,834.34, and total remaining disbursements of \$805,889.53.

2025-150. Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting held on August 25, 2025.

2025-151. Communications.

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

Nays: None.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until October 20, 2025.

Lori A Parmenter, City Clerk