

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held February 1, 2021

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. She announced the meeting was also being held electronically as allowed by the recent amendment to the Michigan Open Meetings Act in response to the COVID-19 crisis. She invited any citizen attending by computer or phone to ask questions or offer comments during the public comment times.

Present in Person: Commissioners Hamrick and Mayor Favale

Present Virtually: Commissioners Arendshorst, Hecksel, Pachla and Walters

Absent: Commissioner Duncan

Also Present: City Attorney Huff; City Manager Charles; Assistant City Manager LaFave; Finance Director Seath; Public Safety Director Herald; City Clerk Brower; Recreation Supervisor Fasbender; Planning Consultant LeBlanc; Captain Buikema; Public Safety Officer Buter

2021-16. The agenda was approved as published.

2021-17. Peter Ricketson, 6356 Durham Rd (Whitehall) reported that The Rapid bus service was not correctly enforcing the medical exemption portion of President Biden's order requiring masks on public transportation.

2021-18. Commissioners Hamrick, Hecksel, Arendshorst, Pachla and Walters welcomed Shea Charles to the City as the new city manager.

Commissioner Pachla noted that vaccinatewestmi.com contained extensive information for those wanting information about COVID-19 vaccination eligibility and scheduling.

Mayor Favale reported the blood drive last week was very successful with every reservation slot filled. She also thanked the Public Works Department for their quick response to a resident concern recently.

2021-19. City Clerk Brower administered the oath of office to City Manager Shea Charles.

2021-20. Zoning variance hearing on the request of Bill & Jillane Payne of 741 San Jose to allow the construction of an addition to the home creating a combined side yard setback of 16'9" instead of the required 18.'

Planning Consultant LeBlanc outlined the request for a reduced combined yard setback to allow for an addition to the home accommodating a larger two-stall garage.

Jeremy Frost and Victor Scalzo were present representing the owners to answer questions about the addition.

Mayor Favale opened a public hearing. No other public comment was received. Mayor Favale closed the public hearing.

2021-21. Walters-Arendshorst. That the request of Bill & Jillane Payne of 741 San Jose to allow the construction of an addition to the home creating a combined side yard setback of 16'9" instead of the required 18' be approved as outlined in the Planning Consultant's memo contained in the agenda materials.

Commissioner Walters referenced the analysis in the agenda materials and the fact the home did not sit completely parallel on the lot as his reasons for supporting what he felt was a modest variance request.

Commissioner Arendshorst noted that only a small portion of the garage was causing the need for a variance due to the angle of the lot line in relation to the home.

2021-24. Public Safety Director Herald highlighted several areas of the Public Safety Department's quarterly report and answered questions from the city commission. He noted there had been a decrease in accidents and traffic stops due to people staying home due to the pandemic, while some property and larceny crimes have increased for the same reason.

Chief Herald spoke at length about the collection of racial data for all public interactions and about the lack of data prior to 2021. He conveyed the opinion of several experts who cautioned the use of incomplete data to draw conclusions about bias or inequity. Mr. Herald noted that data would be available on a quarterly basis starting after March 31 when the first quarter data is compiled. Captain Buikema answered questions about new reporting and query options that were being implemented.

Commissioners Walters and Pachla stated they were interested in seeing historical data—even if incomplete—to see if there were conclusions that could be drawn from the limited information.

Mayor Favale the meeting for public comment. The following comments were received:

- Abbie Groff-Blaszak, 2360 Lake Drive Wanted to see historical data because it would be helpful to understand what questions to ask about locations, time of day, etc. Felt justice would be neglected if historical data is not considered.

The following communications were received at City Hall concerning this variance request:

- Haley Raines, 2732 Albert Requested historical racial data.

No other public comment was received. Mayor Favale closed public comment.

2021-25. Pachla-Hecksel. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2021-025-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held January 19, 2021.

2021-025-B. Payroll disbursements of \$256,964.27; county and school disbursements of \$181,055.01, and total remaining disbursements of \$83,878.70.'

2021-025-C. The purchase an installation of a carport structure for cold storage at the Public Works Complex from Midwest Steel Carports in the amount of \$17,770.00.

2021-025-D. Preliminary minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held December 8, 2020.

2021-025-E. Preliminary minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting held January 11, 2021.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 6

Nays: -0-

2021-26. Mayor Favale reopened the meeting for public comment. No public comment was received.

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until February 15, 2021.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk