

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held July 15, 2019

Mayor Seibold 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 Duncan, Hamrick, Miller, Walters, Zagel and Mayor Seibold

Absent: Commissioner Favale

Also Present: City Attorney Huff; Interim City Manager LaFave; Finance Director Mushong; Zoning Administrator Mizikar; City Clerk Brower; PSO Wallace

2019-108. Peter Dimitriou, 2621 Inverness, warned about the increase in greenhouse gasses.

2019-109. Commissioners Walters, Hamrick, Duncan and Mayor Seibold thanked all of the staff members from the Parks & Recreation Department, the Public Safety Department, Public Works Department and administrative offices that worked so hard to prepare for and oversee the events held on the 4th of July. All activities were well organized and appreciated by those in attendance.

Commissioners Miller and Hamrick commented on the attendance and great ideas from the Parks & Recreation master plan process and looked forward to seeing the draft plan document.

Interim City Manager LaFave announced that all the street construction and maintenance projects are done for the summer. There is still minor utility work being done.

Mayor Seibold thanked the Public Works Department for all their organization of the road work this summer, especially the pavement maintenance projects that upgrade the road surface and prolong the life of the roads. She thanked Spectrum Health for sponsoring the entire July 4 celebration. Mayor Seibold also presented an award received recently from the Daughters of the American Revolution for proper care and display of the American flags in East Grand Rapids.

2019-110. A zoning variance hearing was held regarding the request of Daniel Blandford of 1626 Robinson to allow the construction of an attached garage resulting in a total building coverage of 38% instead of the allowed 35%.

Zoning Administrator Mizikar explained the request to build an attached garage and connector mudroom would cause the building coverage to exceed the limit of 35%.

Daniel Blandford, 1626 Robinson, noted it would be very difficult to improve this property without going over the coverage limit due to the small lot size. He noted the garage would allow him to park vehicles off the street in a neighborhood where on-street parking is always full.

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

2019-0110-A. Miller-Hamrick. That the request of Daniel Blandford of 1626 Robinson to allow the construction of an attached garage resulting in a total building coverage of 38% instead of the allowed 35% be approved.

Commissioner Miller supported the request due to the small lot size and the fact that the total impervious coverage was still below the 50% required by ordinance.

Commissioner Zagel noted the variance standards were met. He encouraged the owner to plant new trees in the right of way after the project.

Commissioner Hamrick agreed the new garage and driveway would help with parking in the area and the addition would be an improvement to the neighborhood.

Mayor Seibold agreed the project would improve the home. She supported the request because the total impervious surface requirement was met and backyard access was not an issue due to the lot configuration.

Yeas: Duncan, Hamrick, Miller, Walters, Zigel and Seibold – 6
Nays: -0-

- 2019-111. A zoning variance hearing was held regarding the request of Sonja & Hans Cubillo of 1139 Eastwood to allow the construction of a covered front porch encroaching into the front yard setback by 7.7' instead of the 6' allowed.

Zoning Administrator Mizikar explained porches were allowed a 6' encroachment into the average front yard setback, but due to the fact this home sits slightly closer to the street than average, a 6' front porch would need a variance.

Sonia Cubillo, 1139 Eastwood, stated the new porch would add curb appeal and value to their home as well as allow them to enjoy their neighborhood.

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

- 2019-0111-A. Duncan-Walters. That the request of Sonja & Hans Cubillo of 1139 Eastwood to allow the construction of a covered front porch encroaching into the front yard setback by 7.7' instead of the 6' allowed be approved.

Commissioner Duncan felt this was a reasonable request and would have a minimal impact on the area.

Commissioner Hamrick agreed this was a beneficial project to allow the owners to engage their neighbors and enhance the friendly feel of the street.

Commissioner Zigel noted there were several similar porches on this street and supported this request.

Mayor Seibold also noted many surrounding homes had similar porches and she had no issues with this request.

Yeas: Duncan, Hamrick, Miller, Walters, Zigel and Seibold – 6
Nays: -0-

- 2019-112. A zoning variance hearing was held regarding the request of Diego Rojas & Lindsay Snyder of 2645 Hall to allow the construction of an 8' high privacy fence instead of the allowed 6' height.

Zoning Administrator Mizikar reviewed the proposal to place an 8' fence along the northern property line because the neighboring property sits higher in elevation and the owners did not feel a 6' fence would provide enough privacy. He noted there is a slight depression along the property line for water drainage that would cause the fence to sit slightly lower than the rest of the property.

Diego Rojas, 2645 Hall, stated the neighboring property owner completely supported a taller fence. He stated the existing fence and invasive trees needed to be removed and he would like to build an 8' fence because of the drainage depression and the height of the neighbor's property. He noted the request for a taller fence was to increase privacy and to protect his children due to the pool on the next property.

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

- 2019-0112-A. Miller-Hamrick. That the request of Diego Rojas & Lindsay Snyder of 2645 Hall to allow the construction of an 8' high privacy fence instead of the allowed 6' height be approved.

Commissioner Hamrick supported the request because the flag-shaped lot and the height difference were a unique situation. She felt no one else would see this fence so it would not be an issue for the other properties.

Mayor Seibold noted that many homes in East Grand Rapids had some type of grade level change between properties and this would set a precedent for future requests.

Commissioner Miller did not feel the flag lot or elevation change created a unique situation but agreed the drainage depression would render a privacy fence less effective along this property line.

Commissioner Walters felt this particular fence would not have an impact on surrounding properties but worried about the precedent for other variance requests. He did not feel the elevation change was peculiar enough to this property to support the request.

Commissioner Duncan agreed that grade level changes were present for many, many property owners in the City and this property was not unique in that regard.

Mayor Seibold noted that other fence requests had been denied and that many properties in East were higher or lower than their neighbors and could claim the same situation to request taller fences. She also noted that privacy could be increased with trees and landscaping along the border.

Yeas: Hamrick – 1

Nays: Duncan, Miller, Walters, Zigel and Seibold – 5

2019-113. Duncan-Hamrick. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2019-0113-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held July 1, 2019.

2019-0113-B. Payroll disbursements of \$229,353.47; county and school disbursements of \$-0-, and total remaining disbursements of \$454,957.67.

2019-0113-C. Approval of a Memorandum Clarifying Easement Description for storm sewer easement at 2951 Bonnell as attached in Exhibit "A."

2019-0113-D. A one-year contract extension with Olameter Inc. for water meter reading services at a cost of \$0.885 per reading.

2019-0113-E. Preliminary minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held May 14, 2019.

Yeas: Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Miller, Walters, Zigel and Seibold – 7

Nays: -0-

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until August 5, 2019.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk

Attachments: A – Memorandum Clarifying Easement Description

Attachments listed above are available for inspection at the office of the City Clerk.