

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

**Regular Meeting Held September 7, 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.

Present in Person: Commissioners Arendshorst, Duncan, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Mayor Favale

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Charles; Deputy City Manager LaFave; City Attorney Huff; Finance Director Seath; Parks & Recreation Director Melville; City Clerk Brower; Zoning Administrator Gianotti

2021-158. The agenda was approved as published.

2021-159. No public comment was received.

2021-160. Commissioner Hecksel announced there would be a fundraiser for the Fred Bunn Trails at Manhattan Park on September 8 from 4-7 pm.

Commissioner Pachla reminded everyone to drive carefully and pay special attention to kids on bikes now that school is back in session for the semester.

Mayor Favale invited everyone to participate in the Mayor's Grand River Cleanup events taking place this weekend around the area.

City Manager Charles noted the first of the education sessions for the parks millage proposal would take place next week. He further noted the strategic plan proposal and a review of the city manager's first six months would be on the next agenda. Mr. Charles also noted the Reeds Lake Triathlon would take place on Saturday, September 11 and volunteers were still needed.

2021-161. Mayor Favale presented a plaque to the EGR High School Art Club and thanked the student artists involved in repainting the Lakeside Drive Mural earlier this year. The students worked with officials and staff on the approval of a new design, budget and logistics to replace the fading mural originally painted in 2003. Everyone thanked the students for their work and complimented the finished mural's historical design.

2021-162. Zoning variance hearing on the request of Ron & Ginger Springer of 1750 Robinson to allow the installation of a driveway increasing lot coverage by impervious surfaces to 55.9% instead of the 40% allowed.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti explained the Springers have submitted a drainage analysis on their proposed circular driveway as requested by the commission in May and are again requesting approval of the original circular design. Mr. Gianotti noted the city's consulting engineer suggested a T-shape turnaround to reduce the amount of non-porous surfacing and to avoid a second driveway exiting onto Robinson Road. Mr. Gianotti suggested two conditions be added to any approval requiring the exact specifications of a driveway and requiring a post-construction inspection. He also noted that even a smaller T-shape turnaround would require a lot-coverage variance since this property was already over the percentage allowed by ordinance.

Commissioner Walters questioned whether the commission could grant a smaller variance for a T-shape turnaround at this meeting or if the original request would have to be tabled to allow time for the applicant to revise their request. City Attorney Huff stated the commission could grant a less intrusive variance request than what was proposed.

Commissioner Walters asked if the end of the construction at Blodgett Hospital would mean less traffic in this area when the hospital was no longer using the parking lot across the street for employee shuttles. Deputy City Manager LaFave stated the hospital's original goal was to provide enough spaces on site that off-site shuttles would no longer be needed once all the construction work wrapped up.

Commissioner Hamrick questioned whether staff felt that Standard A regarding special conditions existed in this situation. Mr. Gianotti responded that the existing driveway seems sufficient for vehicles to be able to turn around and there are no major safety concerns in the area, even being on a busier road.

Ron Springer, 1750 Robinson, stated the new portion of the driveway would have a sand/aggregate base to absorb all of the runoff from the new driveway. He felt a T-shape turnaround would be only slightly less pavement and would not meet their needs as well. He requested the full circular driveway be approved. He noted there were other circular driveways in the area due to the busy streets.

Commissioner Walters stated that for him it was less about the amount of paving and more about avoiding a second driveway from this property onto Robinson Road adding to the potential for accidents on the street.

Mayor Favale opened a public hearing. The following communications were received at City Hall concerning this variance request:

- Susan Jones, 251 Plymouth In Favor.

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

Commissioner Walters noted he struggled with the variance condition about not being a detriment to the neighborhood as he remained concerned about adding another driveway on Robinson. He felt other options existed to avoid the second driveway and suggested tabling the variance request or approving a smaller T-shape turnaround.

Commissioner Arendshorst stated that while the circular driveway may not be the smallest variance possible, it would have the advantage of allowing vehicles to exit onto the street driving forward instead of backing out, which would be more beneficial than the detriment of a second driveway.

Commissioner Pachla was concerned about approving lot coverage of 55.9% when the normal allowance is 40%. He would like to see a less impactful solution with a smaller lot coverage, such as using permeable pavers in a small T-shape turnaround to allow room for vehicles to turn around safely while keeping the lot coverage variance to the minimum possible.

Commissioner Hamrick agreed there are other less impactful options and shared the concern about lot coverage of nearly 56%. She understood the desire for a circular driveway, but felt there should be more effort to minimize the lot coverage and limit non-conformity. Mayor Favale agreed.

2021-0162-A. Walters-Hamrick. That the request of Ron & Ginger Springer of 1750 Robinson to allow the installation of a driveway increasing lot coverage by impervious surfaces to 55.9% instead of the 40% allowed be tabled to allow the applicant to explore a smaller turnaround area.

Commissioner Arendshorst favored continued discussion as he supported the request. He felt the additional surface and second driveway were not significant and would not raise the lot coverage much above what a smaller turnaround would.

Commissioner Hecksel also supported the original request as he felt the new sand sub-base would do a better job with drainage than the current situation and that the traffic situation made this property unique. He did not support tabling the motion and making the applicant revise their design.

Yeas: Duncan, Hamrick, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 5

Nays: Arendshorst and Hecksel – 2

- 2021-163. Introduction of an ordinance to amend Sections 5.100, 5.101(A), and 5.103 of Chapter 50 of Title V of the City Code establishing a separate Zoning Board of Appeals.

City Manager Charles reported the Planning Commission had reviewed this amendment and recommends approval. The ordinance effective date will be January 1, 2022 to allow the appointment and training of the new members of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

- 2021-0163-A. Hamrick-Arendshorst. That an ordinance to amend Sections 5.100, 5.101(A), and 5.103 of Chapter 50 of Title V of the City Code establishing a separate Zoning Board of Appeals be introduced as attached in Exhibit "A."

Yeas: Arendshorst, Duncan, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 7  
Nays: -0-

- 2021-164. Introduction of an ordinance to amend Section 5.37 of Chapter 50 of Title V of the City Code pertaining to area, height and placement requirements in the C-1 Commercial District.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti outlined the amendment that would eliminate area, height and placement requirements in Gaslight Village to eliminate current nonconformities and allow flexibility for businesses in smaller spaces.

- 2021-0164-A. Pachla-Hamrick. That an ordinance to amend Section 5.37 of Chapter 50 of Title V of the City Code pertaining to area, height and placement requirements in the C-1 Commercial District be introduced as attached in Exhibit "B."

Yeas: Arendshorst, Duncan, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 7  
Nays: -0-

- 2021-165. Duncan-Pachla. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

- 2021-0165-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held August 16, 2021.  
2021-0165-B. Payroll disbursements of \$235,177.10; county and school disbursements of \$7,696,123.09, and total remaining disbursements of \$872,134.92.  
2021-0165-C. A contract with American Athletix in the amount of \$15,660.00 for the repair of bleachers at Memorial Field, Mehney Field and Remington Field from the Joint Facilities Fund.  
2021-0165-D. Payment of invoices totaling \$12,741.38 from Rieth-Riley Construction Co of Wyoming for asphalt materials for street maintenance projects throughout East Grand Rapids.  
2021-0165-E. Preliminary minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting held August 9, 2021.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Duncan, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 7  
Nays: -0-

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until September 20, 2021.

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Karen K. Brower, City Clerk

Attachments: A – Ordinance Amendment to Sections 5.100, 5.101 and 5.103 establishing a Zoning Board of Appeals  
B – Ordinance Amendment to Section 5.37 regarding the C-1 Commercial District

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