

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held March 29, 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, Duncan, Hecksel, Pachla and Walters

Absent: None

Also Present: City Attorney Huff; City Manager Charles; Deputy City Manager LaFave; City Clerk Brower; Interim Parks & Recreation Director Fasbender; Finance Director Seath; Public Safety Director Herald; Traffic Consultants Zull and Schultz

2021-57. The agenda was approved as published.

2021-58. No public comment was received.

2021-59. Commissioner Hamrick reminded everyone of the Manhattan Trails meeting at 6 pm tomorrow evening.

Commissioner Pachla congratulated the boys swim team and girls basketball teams on their recent district championships and the H.S. Science Olympiad team for their 2nd place in the Region 12 tournament.

Commissioner Hecksel reminded everyone to call the city with questions/concerns or to use the “submit a request” icon on the website to submit the request online.

Commissioner Walters also congratulated the high school dive team on their recent state results.

Mayor Favale announced that yard waste pickup starts on Monday, April 5. She also encouraged everyone to make use of the Styrofoam recycling event on May 15 at the DPW Garage.

City Manager Charles reported staff was working on updating the city’s bond rating for the refinancing of the community center bonds. He also noted that the public safety data collection discussion was being moved to May 5 due to staff vacation schedules.

2021-60. Presentation of draft Mobility Bike Action Plan.

Chris Zull and Suzanne Schultz of Progressive AE reviewed the draft of the Mobility Bike Action Plan compiled after several public input sessions and citizen surveys to determine areas of interest and concern. The plan provides a framework for various types of treatment to improve access, safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. The mobility plan is the beginning of a multi-year process of capital improvement planning, short- and long-term plans and suggestions for policy updates that should be considered.

Mayor Favale asked for public comment on the draft plan.

Tom Tilma, 1635 Hall, noted it was a great start but didn’t contain enough specific action items. He suggested taking three months to refine the plan, update ordinances and explore federal grants and programs like the Safe Routes to School and then submit a revised plan for implementation. He did not feel that the public was aware of this plan and should be allowed additional time to comment.

Mayor Favale closed the public comment.

Commissioner Walters felt the plan was a good overview of the issues but also felt that more specific actions, including 1-year, 5-year and longer plans, should be added. He also wondered how residents would prioritize and embrace some of the suggestions in the plan when the changes are slated for their streets and neighborhoods.

Commissioner Arendshorst looked forward to working through the ideas in the plan as staff designs street and sidewalk improvements each year.

Commissioner Pachla agreed the plan was a good foundation and community input would be important as each step was implemented. He suggested adding more definitive timelines to the plan.

Commissioner Hamrick wanted to see alternative shadow routes developed and promoted to take traffic and congestion off the main streets.

Mr. Zull noted that pages 34-37 of the Mobility Bike Action Plan outlines many recommended short-mid- and long-term suggested changes for various locations.

2021-61. Discussion of Lakeside Drive mural replacement request.

High School Art Club students Abby Schad and Audrey Grunwaldt presented a preliminary design for a new mural and a draft budget for materials. The design includes many current and historical landmarks of East Grand Rapids and would take about 10 days to complete. They requested approximately \$587 for paint, supplies and possibly sandblasting to remove the old mural before repainting.

Commissioners enthusiastically approved of the historical design elements and thanked the students for all their work in research, designing and planning the mural. Mayor Favale suggested the city approve the requested funding with the possibility of additional material costs if necessary.

2021-061-A. Pachla-Arendshorst. To approve the submitted mural design and to direct staff to work with the student group to provide adequate supplies for the project.

High School Art Teacher Terry Szpieg thanked the commission for being receptive to the new ideas and for providing the supplies.

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

Nays: -0-

2021-62. Discussion of options for virtual and in-person meetings.

City Attorney Huff reported the current Open Meetings Act exemption allowing virtual participation on public meetings was expiring on March 30. However, the Act does allow virtual participation if there is a state of emergency. Due to the continued rise in COVID-19 cases, it is advisable to continue limiting in-person gatherings. Therefore, as allowed by Chapter 6 of the City Code, Mayor Favale has declared a local state of emergency for the purpose of allowing public bodies to meet virtually until June 30, 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The City Code requires the City Commission to affirm the decision of the Mayor. The state of emergency can be rescinded before its expiration if necessary.

City Manager Charles reported Kent County had also declared a state of emergency through June 30.

2021-062-A. Walters-Pachla. To affirm the decision of the Mayor to declare a state of emergency until June 30, 2021 to allow remote participation in meetings due to the continued need to restrict gatherings to slow the spread of COVID-19 be adopted as attached in Exhibit “A.”

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

Nays: -0-

2021-63. Approval of Goals & Objectives document.

City Manager Charles reviewed the changes made following the work session at the March 15 meeting.

2021-063-A. Arendshorst-Hamrick. That the revised Goals & Objectives document be adopted as presented.

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

2021-64. Hecksel-Pachla. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2021-064-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held March 15, 2021.

2021-064-B. Payroll disbursements of \$224,920.31; county and school disbursements of \$-0-, and total remaining disbursements of \$412,748.82.

2021-064-C. The purchase of six computers and docking stations for Public Safety vehicles from SBC Tech Partners in the amount of \$19,100.00.

2021-064-D. A four-year contract for catch basin, manhole and storm sewer rehabilitation with Havener Tech Inc. of Troy, Michigan in the amount of \$350 per structure plus \$50 per additional foot and \$10 per pound for fill materials up to the budgeted amounts for fiscal years ending June 30, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

2021-064-E. An amendment to the dispatching agreement with Kent County extending the agreement until December 31, 2025 as attached in Exhibit "A."

2021-064-F. An amendment to the agreement with the City of Grand Rapids clarifying cost allocations for the improvements for the Hall Street Reconstruction Project as attached in Exhibit "B."

2021-064-G. Resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to sign contracts with the Michigan Department of Transportation for the 2021 Hall Street Reconstruction Project as attached in Exhibit "C."

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

2021-65. Mayor Favale reopened the meeting for public comment. No public comment was received.

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until April 19, 2021.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk

Attachments: A – Contract extension for dispatching services
B – Contract amendment for Hall Street project
C – Resolution authorizing Mayor and Clerk to sign Hall Street agreements

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