

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held May 3, 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 and a local declaration of emergency 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 Duncan, Walters and Mayor Favale

Present Virtually: Commissioners Arendshorst, Hecksel and Pachla

Absent: Commissioner Hamrick

Also Present: City Attorney Huff; City Manager Charles; Deputy City Manager LaFave; City Clerk Brower; Finance Director Seath; Public Safety Director Herald; Interim Parks & Recreation Director Fasbender; Zoning Administrator Gianotti; Captain Buikema; Communications Specialist Licari

2021-78. Mayor Favale announced the zoning variance request for 2536 Maplewood had been withdrawn from the agenda at the request of the applicant.

2021-79. No public comment was received.

2021-80. Commissioner Walters congratulated the three residents who are running for city commission seats in November. He also encouraged people to apply for positions on the city's advisory boards that will be open for the next fiscal year.

Commissioner Pachla announced that COVID-19 vaccines were readily available now and urged everyone to get vaccinated. Mr. Pachla noted he was attending the meeting virtually from his home in East Grand Rapids.

Commissioner Hecksel stated he was attending the meeting virtually from his home in East Grand Rapids.

Commissioner Arendshorst reported he was attending virtually from his home in East Grand Rapids.

City Manager Charles announced that construction work has begun on several local streets already.

Deputy City Manager LaFave noted the Hall Street project would begin after school in mid-June and be completed by mid-August.

2021-81. 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 applicants wish to install a circular turnaround with a secondary driveway exit to avoid backing out onto Robinson Road. The property currently has 52.2% of impervious surface coverage due to a pool and tennis courts, and the additional paving for the driveway would increase this to 55.9%. Since this property sits slightly below Robinson Road, there have been some past drainage problems in this area that may be exacerbated by additional pavement. Mr. Gianotti reported the city's traffic consultant had reviewed the proposal and recommended a smaller "hammerhead" turnaround on the property instead of another driveway exit on Robinson.

Commissioner Walters asked how to evaluate the standard relating to a detriment to the neighborhood for the reported drainage issues. City Attorney Huff noted that since the city is aware of past drainage issues on this property, the burden would be on the applicant to show additional problems would not occur.

Ronald Springer, 1750 Robinson, stated the increase in impervious surfaces was only 3.7% above the current coverage. He noted their driveway was across from the Aquinas Performing Arts Center which made it difficult to exit their driveway, necessitating a multi-point turn in their driveway to exit facing forward. He stated the new curb installed along Robinson Road has solved the prior drainage issues.

Commissioner Walters asked if the Springers had considered using some type of porous pavers to alleviate some of the surface area. Mr. Springer stated it was more expensive and would not match the other surfaces.

Commissioner Arendshorst questioned whether there were other options for turning around on the property. Mr. Springer noted a space closer to the home would save only a small amount of paving and would not drain in the right direction. Mr. Springer further noted that while there is a wide shoulder on the side of Robinson Road used by delivery trucks, it was not meant for backing out.

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

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| - Sarah & Rhett Rainero, 1700 Robinson | In Favor. |
| - Greg Metz, 303 Briarwood | Opposed. |

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

Commissioner Walters agreed that special circumstances exist due to the driveway entrance on Robinson and the complications of traffic and Aquinas College's driveway. However, he did not feel he had enough information about whether the drainage issues exist and whether additional water runoff would be detrimental to the neighborhood. He suggested taking the time to get an engineer's review of the drainage as he did not feel he could vote for the proposed variance without that information.

- 2021-82. Walters-Arendshorst. 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 provide additional expert drainage analysis.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Duncan, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 6
Nays: -0-

- 2021-83. Public Safety quarterly report for the period ending March 31, 2021.

Public Safety Director Herald briefly reviewed historic data from 2016 to 2020 comparing traffic crash and traffic stop information pulled from the old data system prior to requiring racial data to be entered by officers. He noted this data was anecdotal and only for basic information since it was incomplete.

Chief Herald then reviewed the data collected during the first 90 days of 2021 and noted that Hispanic will be added as a race field going forward. Mr. Herald answered questions from commissioners on various numbers and totals.

Commissioner Walters asked that racial data be collected for the verbal warnings category as he wanted to know if race affected who received warnings versus tickets. Mr. Walters felt the existing data was cause for concern. He called for the city to hire an expert as soon as possible to begin interpreting the data so that changes could be made sooner rather than later if warranted and to analyze the historic data. City Manager Charles noted there have already been discussions about selecting an expert to assist with this data.

City Manager Charles noted the overall safety of our streets in East Grand Rapids means there are very few crashes to provide data, and this could be somewhat misleading without looking at a much larger sample than three months of information. Chief Herald added that socioeconomic influences could also play a factor in the numbers, resulting in a disparity that is not necessarily racial discrimination. Lower travel volumes due to COVID-19 could also be influencing numbers.

Mayor Favale asked if there was any public comment on this report. No public comment was received.

2021-84. Duncan-Arendshorst. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

- 2021-084-A. Minutes of the rescheduled meeting held April 9, 2021.
- 2021-084-B. Payroll disbursements of \$224,799.52; county and school disbursements of \$-0-, and total remaining disbursements of \$340,849.58.
- 2021-084-C. A four-year contract with Pluene Service Company for heating, ventilation and air conditioning preventative maintenance services for city facilities in the amounts of \$13,596 for FY2021-22 and FY2022-23, \$13,596 for FY2023-24, and \$14,410 for FY2024-25.
- 2021-084-D. A four-year contract for cleaning services for city facilities with West Michigan Janitorial in the amount of \$147,330 for FY 2021-22 with increases of 2.5% each subsequent year.
- 2021-084-E. The purchase of replacement vehicles and equipment for FY 2-021-22 as outlined in the Deputy City Manager memo of April 10, 2021.
- 2021-084-F. An updated Investment Policy as attached in Exhibit "A."
- 2021-084-G. Preliminary minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting held April 12, 2021.

Yeas: Arendshorst, Duncan, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Favale – 6
Nays: -0-

2021-85. City staff reviewed the capital improvement document for FY2021-22 and answered questions from the commission on the various requests.

Commissioner Arendshorst suggested removing funding for replacement patrol rifles for the Public Safety Department as he did not feel additional weapons improved safety. He didn't like the idea of these guns being carried around when they weren't needed since officers already have handguns. Chief Herald noted these are a standard tool for law enforcement and were only used in high-risk traffic stops or in case of an active shooter situation at the schools or hospital. Mayor Favale and Commissioner Walters felt the rifles should be available in the unlikely event they are ever needed.

City Manager Charles noted staff is looking at several long-term projects at the Community Center to replace aging mechanical equipment. Additional information and possible funding requests will be brought to the commission in the future if changes from the budgeted amounts are recommended.

Commissioner Pachla asked that staff continue to evaluate the use of electric and hybrid vehicles when replacing vehicles in the future, even if they are more expensive than traditional replacements.

2021-86. Mayor Favale reopened the meeting for public comment. No public comment was received.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until May 17, 2021.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk

Attachments: A – Investment Policy

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