

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held May 17, 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 Walters and Mayor Favale

Present Virtually: Commissioners Arendshorst, Duncan, 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; Communications Specialist Licari

2021-87. The agenda was approved as published.

2021-88. No public comment was received.

2021-89. Commissioner Walters congratulated the East Grand Rapids High School Class of 2021.

Commissioners Duncan, Arendshorst and Hecksel announced they were attending the meeting from their homes in East Grand Rapids.

Commissioner Pachla stated he was attending virtually from his home. He reminded everyone that it was National Public Works week and invited everyone to watch the parade of vehicles on Thursday.

Mayor Favale reported the Sustainability Initiative had collected 62 cubic yards of Styrofoam at its collection event last weekend.

City Manager Charles noted the staff was working to incorporate the CDC's latest guidance into city operations, programs and events.

2021-90. Zoning variance hearing on the request of EGR Crew Team to allow the expansion of the Crew Team Boat-house at Collins Park with the addition of an exterior staircase encroaching more than 3' into the side yard setback.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti explained the proposal to add a second story to the facility to add training and meeting space, including an exterior staircase on the south side of the building. With the building sitting approximately 3' from the property line where the staircase is to be constructed, the staircase would be built up to the property line.

Jeff Olsen, representing the EGR Crew Team organization, explained the proposal to expand the boat house and noted the stairway had been proposed on the south side of the building to shield it from the park users and allow the stairs to be secured to prevent public use.

Mayor Favale opened a public hearing. The following people were present to express their opinions:

- Steve Williams, Commodore of GR Yacht Club GRYC Board supports unanimously. No concern with the placement or encroachment of the staircase.

- Matt Stares, 270 Lakeside Vice Chair of Crew Team and Coach who supported the concept and noted the location was to provide security.

The following communications were received at City Hall concerning the expansion proposal:

- Lakeshore Club Condominium Assn. Expressing concerns about the height, visual impact, traffic, lighting, signs as proposed.

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

- 2021-91. Walters-Pachla. That the request of EGR Crew Team to allow the expansion of the Crew Team Boathouse at Collins Park with the addition of an exterior staircase encroaching more than 3' into the existing non-conforming side yard setback of 3.1' be approved as outlined in the Zoning Administrator memo contained in the agenda materials.

Commissioner Walters felt the standards for a zoning variance for the stairway encroachment are met by this proposal as it was not a detriment to the surrounding area and was already a public use permitted by the ordinance. Mayor Favale agreed.

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

- 2021-92. Zoning variance hearing on the request of EGR Crew Team to allow the expansion of the Crew Team Boathouse at Collins Park with eave overhangs of 4' instead of the allowed 1.'

Zoning Administrator Gianotti explained the new second story would have a covered observation area on the east side and a matching overhang on the west side covering the main entry.

Mayor Favale opened a public hearing. The following people were present to express their opinions:

- Steve Williams, Commodore of GRYC Yacht Club approves of this feature as well.

The following communications were received at City Hall concerning the expansion proposal:

- Lakeshore Club Condominium Assn. Expressing concerns about the height, visual impact, traffic, lighting, signs as proposed.

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

- 2021-93. Walters-Arendshorst. That the request of EGR Crew Team to allow the expansion of the Crew Team Boathouse at Collins Park with eave overhangs of 4' instead of the allowed 1' be approved as outlined in the Zoning Administrator memo contained in the agenda materials.

Commissioner Walters adopted the Zoning Administrator's analysis as his reasons for supporting this variance request. He noted this was different than a residential area where the overhangs would look out of place.

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

- 2021-94. EGR Crew Team Building Expansion Site Plan Approval.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti reported the crew team held a neighborhood meeting to explain the renovation proposal prior to the Planning Commission's review on April 13. Mr. Gianotti noted the new second story will add 5' to the height, but will not change the footprint of the existing building or look substantially different from the street. A street-level entrance on Lakeside Drive and a new sign will be added on the west side of the building by the sidewalk.

2021-96. Manhattan Park Multi-Use Trails.

City Manager Charles reported the West Michigan Mountain Biking Alliance (WMMBA) was proposing to construct multi-use trails for walking, running and biking on a 3- to 4-mile loop through the wooded areas at Manhattan Park. The WMMBA is seeking conceptual approval of the trail proposal so that fundraising and design work can begin. The city would provide \$75,000 in funding of the estimated \$150,000 cost for the initial construction; the WMMBA will oversee construction and then maintain the trails in the future. The preliminary plans have been reviewed and approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission. Mr. Charles noted the trail system would likely not attract significant bike traffic due to the relatively short combined length and multi-use design. He cited similar trail systems in Kent County and noted appropriate rules and signage could be developed and adapted to ensure walker, bikers and runners can all use the trail safely.

Mayor Favale opened a public hearing. The following communications were received at City Hall concerning the proposed trails:

- Reynolds Brander, 2648 Lake Drive	Concerned.
- Brian Dokter, WMMBA President	Fully support the project and future partnership.
- Jamie Kusmierczak, 230 El Centro	Concerned trails will become unsafe for hikers and children.
- Susan Laffrey, 921 San Jose	Opposed to changes to the trails.
- David Langley, 1032 Floral	Support as improvement to community.
- Lisa McLean, 880 Bradford NE	Lives nearby and look forward to using new trails.
- Brian Miller, 1033 Floral	Support because of multi-use/WMMBA maintenance
- Sandra & John Quick, 619 Manhattan	Oppose splash pad at Manhattan Park
- Jeremy Tesch, 2739 Maplewood	Support improvements to current overgrown trails
- Joelle Williams, Ottawa Hills	Support multi-use trails
- David Chandler, 1036 Lakeside	Additional trails are very welcome
- Lori Mann, 671 Manhattan Rd	Excited about new and improved trails

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

2021-096-A. Arendshorst-Duncan. That the conceptual plans for multi-use trails at Manhattan Park be approved as outlined in the City Manager's memo of May 12, 2021 including the need for public input and the development of a formal agreement regarding the construction, funding model and ongoing maintenance of the trail system.

Commissioner Arendshorst stated he was impressed with the plans and the commitment from the WMMBA.

Commissioner Hecksel supported the development of the trail system as he was familiar with other trail systems designed by the WMMBA.

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

2021-97. Joint Resolution regarding Parks Improvement Debt Millage.

City Manager Charles explained the initiative to accelerate the implementation of several items in the Parks & Recreation Master Plan and the placement of a millage request on the November 2021 ballot to fund the improvements. Projects would include updates and additions to Manhattan Park, Waterfront Park, several natural areas, sports courts, and the replacement one city playground and four school playgrounds. He estimated the cost to be between \$6.3 and \$7 million, which would equate to about .5 mills to approved by voters. He asked for feedback from the city commission on the general plan and presented a joint resolution to be adopted at an upcoming meeting by both the City Commission and the Board of Education regarding the basic understanding of the playground replacements before moving forward. Mr. Charles also noted the schools were considering an early renewal of their recreation millage to be placed on the same ballot.

The commission discussed the points of the resolution, whether to be specific or general with the ballot language and the deadlines for placing an item on the ballot. Mr. Charles suggested holding a community engagement meeting to discuss the proposal and get input before deciding on final details.

Commissioner Walters supported the concept of a millage proposal and taking advantage of community support for recreation upgrades and the favorable interest rates. He wanted to discuss the project list and what to include before making a final decision.

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

City Manager Charles will continue discussions with school officials and have more information at an upcoming meeting.

2021-98. Introduction of an ordinance to amend Section 7.124 of Chapter 79B of Title VII of the City Code pertaining to the placement of telecommunication pedestals.

Deputy City Manager LaFave stated the ordinance change would allow use of in-ground vaults for equipment to minimize pedestals and poles in the outlawsns.

2021-098-A. Walters-Pachla. That an ordinance to amend Section 7.124 of Chapter 79B of Title VII of the City Code pertaining to the placement of telecommunication pedestals be introduced as attached in Exhibit "A."

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

Nays: -0-

2021-99. Pachla-Arendshorst. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2021-099-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held May 3, 2021.

2021-099-B. Payroll disbursements of \$249,377.79; county and school disbursements of \$0, and total remaining disbursements of \$390,860.48.

2021-099-C. A contract for mulch for city landscaping projects with Green Pro Landscape Management in the amount of \$6,850.00 with reimbursement from the EGR Public Schools for their portion of the expenses.

2021-099-D. Contracts with B&V Mechanical in the amount not-to-exceed \$40,521 plus 15% contingencies for a boiler at Wealthy Pool, mini-split systems at the Community Center and air ventilation systems at the Public Works garage, as well as associated electrical work with GR Electric of Grand Rapids within the existing purchasing policy and budgeted amounts.

2021-099-E. A contract with Groundhawk Construction, as well as engineering and other expenses relating to parking lot improvements at the Public Works Complex and Remington Park up to the budgeted amount of \$118,000 for the entire project.

2021-099-F. The Joint Facilities Operating and Capital Fund budgets for FY 2021-22.

2021-099-G. Preliminary minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held April 13, 2021.

2021-099-H. Preliminary minutes of the Joint Facilities Committee meeting held April 20, 2021.

2021-099-I. Preliminary minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held April 26, 2021.

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

Nays: -0-

2021-100. City staff presented the FY 2021-22 City Manager's Recommended Budget and answered questions from the City Commission. City Manager Charles reported that details of the funding from the American Rescue Plan were expected soon and then the commission could discuss how to use these additional monies.

Mr. Charles discussed the necessary funding for the new independent defined benefit plan and noted staff was working to get more information on the required annual funding amounts prior to the adoption of the budget.

Commissioner Walters again suggested better alignment of goals and priorities with budget items in the future. He also requested additional examples from 2010 through 2020 on the impacts of Proposal A on tax bills.

2021-101. Mayor Favale reopened the meeting for public comment. No public comment was received.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until June 7, 2021.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk

Attachments: A – Ordinance Amendment Section 7.124 regarding telecommunications pedestals

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