

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

**Regular Meeting Held June 21, 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 Arendshorst, Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla, Walters and Mayor Favale

Absent: Commissioner Duncan

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

2021-116. The agenda was approved as published.

2021-117. No public comment was received.

2021-118. Commissioner Hamrick reminded everyone to volunteer or participate in the Reeds Lake Trail Blazer on Sunday, July 4.

Commissioner Hecksel urged residents to call city staff or commissioners or to check the city's website if they have a question about services or regulations as information on social media sites can often be inaccurate.

Commissioner Pachla announced the Reeds Lake Run would take place on Saturday, June 26.

Mayor Favale reported the Hall Street reconstruction starts in a few weeks and noted the city's website contained updates on all the summer's construction projects.

City Manager Charles noted there would be input sessions concerning the proposed Parks Improvement Millage on June 23 at 7 pm and at noon on June 30.

2021-119. Zoning variance hearing on the request of Mark Gurney & Mary Yurko of 910 Rosewood to allow the enlargement of an accessory building to 1,180 sq. feet instead of the 720 sq. feet allowed.

Zoning Administrator Gianotti explained the request to enclose a covered patio to create living space in the detached structure.

Mark Gurney, 910 Rosewood, and architect Travis Williams reviewed the plans to convert a storage area and patio into a living room-type area with water, heat and air conditioning.

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

- Robert DiVilbiss, 935 Cambridge	In Favor.
- Kelly Sadowski, 1660 Pontiac	In Favor.
- Amy Ponillon, 925 Rosewood	In Favor.
- Susan Samrick, 915 Cambridge	In Favor.
- Keith & Marie English, 1700 Pontiac	In Favor.
- Leslie & Jacob Plaunt, 934 Rosewood	In Favor.

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

- 2021-120. Walters-Arendshorst. That the request of Mark Gurney & Mary Yurko of 910 Rosewood to allow the enlargement of an accessory building to 1,180 sq. feet instead of the 720 sq. feet allowed be approved as outlined in the Zoning Administrator memo contained in the agenda materials.

Commissioner Walters adopted the zoning administrator's report as his reasoning in support of the variance. He noted he would not support this project if built from scratch, but felt it was a logical request given the history of the building. He further noted the project would not increase the footprint of the building.

Commissioner Hecksel agreed. He stated this was a large lot with no other zoning issues.

Mayor Favale agreed the standards have been met and she supported this variance request.

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

Nays: -0-

- 2021-121. Parks Improvement Debt Millage.

City Manager Charles reported city staff has continued to work with the schools on the details of the millage proposal that affect the school playgrounds. The School Board adopted the joint resolution setting out the expectations at their recent meeting. Mr. Charles presented the joint resolution and the draft ballot language for discussion. He noted the millage is proposed at .56 mills for 30 years for the full \$7 million project list. The city has scheduled additional public input sessions for June 23 and June 30. The deadline to approve ballot language for placement on the November 2, 2021 ballot is July 27.

Commissioner Walters suggested waiting to adopt the resolution and approve the ballot language until after the two input sessions are complete. He supported the plan to secure funding to accelerate the parks and playground projects, but wanted a better feel for the public's input on the specific projects and the total amount of the bond.

Commissioner Pachla questioned how the projects would be determined and approved if the millage passes in November. City manager Charles stated that each project would be researched and discussed with amongst staff and with the Parks & Recreation Commission, City Commission, public sessions and would involve the schools for the playground replacements. Each project would have several steps to discuss, refine and approve prior to accessing the bond funding.

Commissioner Pachla noted the .56 mills of the bond proposal would likely be almost entirely offset by the ending of the Wealthy Pool bonds and the Headlee rollbacks to the city's operating millage.

Commissioner Arendshorst supported waiting to finalize the proposal until after the public input sessions. He appreciated the public feedback during the master planning process, but agreed that citizen feedback for a millage proposal was just as important.

Commissioner Hecksel reiterated that the project list encompassed many concepts that were discussed and supported during the recreation planning sessions, but that the final approval process would again involve the public and would provide more detailed information.

Commissioner Hamrick spoke about the amount of feedback received from those who participated in the parks and recreation master plan process. She supported the millage proposal as it would implement all of the projects at once.

Commissioner Pachla questioned how much staff time and attorney/bond costs have been expended on the millage proposal so far. City Manager Charles stated the costs for bond counsel and attorney fees will likely be submitted later and taken out of the bond costs. He estimated staff time at low-to-moderate at this time, mostly spent on updating project estimates.

Mayor Favale opened this issue for public comment. The following people expressed their opinions:

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| - Michael Ruehle, 1747 Vesta    | Noted incomplete information was being circulated by an outside group. Questioned what other funding sources would be used for projects. |
| - Matt Ludeman, 2258 Englewood  | Suggested the millage be split into 2-3 separate ballot questions. Concerned splash pad and dog park had not been well thought out.      |
| - Sean Sperling, 1779 Whitfield | Noted building material costs were at an all-time high and projects would likely cost more than anticipated.                             |

The following communications were received at City Hall concerning this issue:

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| - 3 emails from residents  | In Favor of bond proposal |
| - 31 emails from residents | Opposed to bond proposal  |

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

Mayor Favale thanked everyone for their input on this matter and announced the issue would be discussed again on July 6 for possible final action.

2021-122. Advisory Board appointments for FY 2021-22.

Commissioner Walters reported the Personnel Committee had reviewed all the openings and applications and had selected candidates with varied experience and from all neighborhoods within the city.

Mayor Favale noted she was proud of the process that has been created for these appointments and thanked all those who volunteered for these open positions.

2021-0122-A. Hamrick-Pachla. That advisory board appointments for FY 2021-22 be approved as follows:

Board of Review (2-year appointment ending June 30, 2023)

1. Jeanne (Sam) Helmrick, 984 Gladstone
2. Kathie Kruizenga, 943 Santa Barbara

Library Commission (3-year appointment ending June 30, 2024)

1. Deirdre Honner, 2011 Argentina
2. Lori Johnson, 3011 Beechwood

Parks and Recreation Commission (3-year appointment ending June 30, 2024)

1. Ryan Burdick, 2904 Pioneer Club
2. Patrick Parkes, 2429 Richards

Planning Commission (3-year appointment ending June 30, 2024)

1. Peter Mitchell, 858 Bellclaire
2. Brian Miller, 1033 Floral

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

2021-123. Defined Benefit Plan annual required contribution.

City Manager Charles reviewed the updated actuarial reports and the recommended annual contribution for the new independent defined benefit plan. He noted a contribution of \$1.3 million for FY 2020-21 is included in the year end budget amendments to be approved later in the agenda. This contribution is \$100,000 higher than the minimum required by the city's consultants to increase the plan assets early in the hopes of higher annual

returns through the remaining years of the plan. The future funding schedule will be reviewed and discussed at a later date.

- 2021-0123-A. Walters-Arendshorst. To accept the updated actuarial report from Watkins-Ross for the City of East Grand Rapids Defined Benefit Pension Plan.

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

- 2021-124. Contract for reconfiguration of the Lakeside/Lakeside/Greenwood intersection.

Deputy City Manager LaFave reported the Infrastructure Committee had reviewed the reconfiguration plans and the feedback from the demonstration project last year. He noted future development at this intersection may require additional changes, but this proposal is a way to address the current needs to update this intersection.

- 2021-0124-A. Hecksel-Pachla. To approve the semi-permanent reconfiguration of Lakeside Drive between Reeds Lake Blvd and Greenwood as outlined in the agenda materials and approval of a contract amendment with Groundhawk Excavating in the amount of \$20,125 to complete this work.

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

- 2021-125. Purchase of wetlands mitigation credits.

Deputy City Manager LaFave explained the completion of the Reeds Lake Trail project in 2010 required the city to replace the wetlands that were filled in to construct portions of the boardwalk. While the city originally planned to fulfill this obligation with the Waterfront Park project, the costs for restoring those wetlands has become too high to complete. As an alternative, the city can purchase wetlands credits through a state-authorized vendor who will complete a project somewhere within the Grand River watershed as required by the original agreement with the state.

- 2021-0125-A. Pachla-Hecksel. To approve the purchase of wetland mitigation bank credits with Gunnell Farms LLC in the amount of \$73,600 for the creation of 0.92 acres of wetlands in the Grand River Watershed.

Commissioners Walters and Pachla spoke in favor of this affordable solution to fulfilling this long-standing obligation at an affordable cost.

Deputy City Manger LaFave thanked former Parks & Recreation Director Fred Bunn and Interim Director Shannyn Fasbender for all the research and work on this project.

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

- 2021-126. Contract for legal representation services.

Commissioners Walters and Arendshorst announced they would be abstaining from voting on this issue as they were partners in the law firm being contracted.

- 2021-0126-A. Hamrick-Pachla. To approve a three-year proposal for legal representation with Varnum as outlined in the City Manager's memo dated June 16, 2021.

Yeas: Hamrick, Hecksel, Pachla and Favale – 4  
Nays: -0-  
Abstain: Arendshorst and Walters – 2

2021-127. Discussion of work session date for Chapter 79C: Marijuana Establishments and Facilities.

City Manager Charles reported staff had planned to use the July 18 meeting to review the current ordinance with the commission; however, there were now officials and staff that would not be in attendance. He asked if there was a consensus for a date that would work better for everyone. After discussion, the commission asked that this matter be placed on the August 16 agenda.

2021-128. Discussion of ordinance change to establish a separate Zoning Board of Appeals.

City Manager Charles outlined the draft ordinance to establish a Zoning Board of Appeals and asked for feedback before sending this issue to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation.

City Manager Huff noted the ZBA would be charged with hearing dimensional and use variances and would be made up of residents, planning commission and city commission representatives, and would provide alternates to ensure complete representation at the hearings. Mr. Huff answered questions on the process of the hearings and other zoning issues.

Commissioners asked that fence variances and sign variances also be directed to the zoning board of appeals. City Attorney Huff will add these to the draft ordinance and will also look at ordinance amendments to other chapters to allow the ZBA to hear the fence and sign variances.

2021-129. Arendshorst-Pachla. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2021-0129-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held June 7, 2021.

2021-0129-B. Minutes of the special meeting held June 7, 2021.

2021-0129-C. Payroll disbursements of \$239,419.31; county and school disbursements of \$-0-; and total remaining disbursements of \$369,670.24.

2021-0129-D. Resolution approving budget amendments for the quarter ending June 30, 2021 as attached in Exhibit "A."

2021-0129-E. A contract for t-shirts for parks and recreation programs be awarded to Hillhouse of Grand Rapids in the amount of \$47,000.05.

2021-0129-F. A contract with Fer-Pal Construction USA LLC in the amount of \$433,570.00 and a total project budget of \$660,000 for cured-in-place pipe rehabilitation, supplies, rentals and contingencies.

2021-0129-G. Preliminary minutes of the Joint Facilities Committee meeting held May 6, 2021.

2021-0129-H. Preliminary minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting held May 10, 2021.

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

Nays: -0-

2021-130. Mayor Favale reopened the meeting for public comment.

Matt Ludeman, 2258 Englewood, complimented City Manager Charles on his performance in the job so far.

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until July 6, 2021.

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Karen K. Brower, City Clerk

Attachments: A – Resolution Approving Budget Amendments

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