

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held December 15, 2014

Mayor Seibold called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers at the East Grand Rapids Community Center and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Commissioners Dills, Duncan, Graham, Johnson, Miller and Mayor Seibold

Absent: Commissioner Skaggs

Also Present: City Manager Donovan; City Attorney Huff; Finance Director Mushong; Parks & Recreation Director Bunn; Assistant City Manager LaFave; Zoning Administrator Faasse; City Clerk Brower

2014-150. Commissioner Johnson announced there would be a dedication ceremony at 11:30 am on Saturday, January 3, 2015 to honor Coach Butch Briggs at the High School Pool.

2014-151. A zoning variance hearing was held regarding the request of Michael & Liz TerHorst, owners of 927 Ogden, to allow the construction of an addition to the rear of the home creating lot coverage of 48.6% instead of 40.0% allowed.

Zoning Administrator Faasse explained the request for a two-story addition to the rear of the home increasing the lot coverage from the current 42.4% to the proposed 48.6%. He noted the proposal included using pervious materials for the new patio.

Joel Peterson of J. Peterson Homes explained there were many similar homes in this area and most would not be able to add on to their homes without obtaining variances. Mr. Peterson noted there were no plans to replace the current concrete driveway as the addition was on the other side of the home and did not require changes to the driveway.

Michael TerHorst, 927 Ogden, stated they were trying to add space to their home for their growing family and that they were excited to be moving back to East Grand Rapids.

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

- Ray & Carol Geskus, 2318 Lake Drive	In Favor.
- Thomas Sarb & Ruth Ann Brevits, 923 Ogden	In Favor.
- Alan & Michelle Davis, 919 Ogden	In Favor.
- Ted & Debbie Cox, 912 Maxwell	In Favor.
- Maggie & Greg Mielczarek, 911 Ogden	In Favor.
- Jeff Hayden, 937 Ogden	No Objection.
- Kath & Larry VandeVoren, 918 Maxwell	In Favor.
- Mary Kaneti, 954 Ogden	In Favor.
- Jennifer & Aaron VanZee, 2346 Lake Drive	In Favor.

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

- A. Graham-Miller. That the request of Michael & Liz TerHorst, owners of 927 Ogden, to allow the construction of an addition to the rear of the home creating lot coverage of 48.6% instead of 40.0% allowed be approved.

Commissioner Graham applauded the efforts to bring older homes up to modern standards and acknowledged it can be difficult to add on to a home that is already over the lot coverage limit. He felt this was a modest addition to the home and he supported the variance.

Commissioner Miller noted the existing home is under the percentage allowed for coverage and that it is the driveway pavement that puts this property over the allowable limit. Given there is no way for these 50'-wide lots to conform to the current ordinance, he questioned whether the City should study the issue further and possibly revise the ordinance accordingly. He stated he did not feel this was an unreasonable request given there was no way for the applicants to conform with the ordinance as written and he would be supporting the request.

Commissioner Duncan reluctantly supported the request because it was a small addition, but felt more effort should be given to replacing the driveway to reduce the lot coverage percentage.

Commissioner Dills agreed this addition would be an improvement to the property, but felt the ordinance was put into place for many very good reasons and should be upheld. He noted that replacing the driveway with pervious materials would reduce the lot coverage to approximately 38%, thereby conforming with the ordinance.

Mayor Seibold appreciated the fact the applicants were renovating the property instead of tearing down the house, but agreed that the ordinance was put into place to maintain greenspace and reduce stormwater runoff. She also agreed that perhaps the ordinance should be reviewed in light of the number of non-conforming properties that are not able to comply with the ordinance provisions.

Yeas: Duncan, Graham, Johnson, Miller and Seibold – 5
Nays: Dills – 1

2014-152. Mayor Seibold reported the Streets & Sidewalks Task Force she convened in October had completed their research and have submitted a recommendation regarding future street funding.

Finance Director Mushong explained the rating system used to rate streets and gave several examples of local street conditions. She reported the Task Force members had spent several hours learning about the funding of local street repairs and maintenance, reviewing road conditions and estimated repair projections, and discussing ways to improve street conditions. The Task Force recommends the City Commission seek a 2.0 mill dedicated street millage to improve street and sidewalk conditions over the next several years. She noted a 2.0 mill property increase would equate to \$300 per year to the owner of a \$300,000 home. Ms. Mushong explained the Task Force and staff had created a proposed policy that would be used to govern how the additional funds from a street millage were spent that would be used if the millage is approved by the voters.

City Manager Donovan explained the Michigan Legislature was currently working to provide additional funding for road repairs, but it is not yet known when or if the City will receive any more funding. The Task Force recommends going ahead with the millage proposal and then adjusting the amount collected if state funding is received.

Mayor Seibold thanked the volunteers who served on the Streets & Sidewalks Task Force for their work on this issue. She announced the City Commission would be accepting public comment until January 19th, including at the January 5th and January 19th City Commission meetings. She urged residents to review the materials on the City's website at www.eastgr.org/streets and to submit comments to City Clerk Karen Brower or to attend one of the January meetings.

2014-153. Johnson-Miller. Motion to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- A. To approve the minutes of the regular meeting held December 1, 2014.
- B. To approve payroll disbursements of \$200,408.76; county and school disbursements of \$170,172.70, and total remaining disbursements of \$414,665.90.

- C. The purchase of a John Deere SUV 825i from Greenmark Equipment of Jenison in the amount of \$21,883.01 and a related budget amendment of \$883.01 for this purchase..
- D. The purchase of six fire hydrants and fittings from East Jordan Iron Works in the amount of \$14,978.19.
- E. The purchase and installation of new fencing along the Reeds Lake Trail near Hodenpyl Rock in the amount of \$11,875.00 from AAA Fence.
- F. The preliminary minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting held October 13, 2014.

Yeas: Dills, Duncan, Graham, Johnson, Miller and Seibold – 6

Nays: -0-

2014-154. Peter Dimitrial suggested the city look for ways to reduce emissions to improve the environment, including having a community work day to rake leaves instead of using leaf blowers and lawn mowers.

The meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until January 5, 2015.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk