

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held January 18, 2016

Mayor Seibold 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.

Present: Commissioners Dills, Duncan, Hamrick, Miller, Skaggs and Mayor Seibold

Absent: Commissioner Zagel

Also Present: City Attorney Huff; City Manager Donovan; Finance Director Mushong; Public Safety Director Herald; Zoning Administrator Faasse; City Clerk Brower

2016-04. Elizabeth Welch, EGR School Board, was present to express concern about the new state law that prohibits local bodies from communicating with their constituents in the 60-day period prior to an election. She encouraged the City Commission to communicate with legislators about removing these restrictions to allow non-biased information to be provided to residents. Mayor Seibold agreed the city shared these concerns and would be drafting a letter.

2016-05. Commissioners Dills, Hamrick and Duncan thanked the Public Works Department crew members for all their work during the recent snow events and the water leaks.

Commissioner Miller thanked the schools for holding the Martin Luther King day march earlier today despite the cold weather.

Commissioner Skaggs thanked the members of the school board for coming to the meeting. He stated he supported the efforts to repeal the 60-day prohibition to allow voters to make informed decisions and to keep governments accountable to their residents.

2016-06. A zoning variance hearing was held regarding the request of Brian & Amy Steketee of 551 Belvedere to allow the construction of an addition to connect the house and garage, creating a side yard setback of 5' instead of the required 7' and a rear yard setback of 5.5' instead of the required 25.'

Zoning Administrator Faasse explained the proposal to connect the existing home and garage, creating side and rear setbacks less than required by ordinance. He suggested the commission consider conditioning any variance to restrict any upward expansion of the garage to keep the mass of the building away from neighboring properties. He explained the zoning code has different setbacks for attached garages and detached garages. Detached garages can be placed closer to the lot lines because they are limited in size and are generally smaller structures with less impact on neighbors.

Ryan LaHaie of 42° North Architects was present to explain that the homeowners wished to be able to carry groceries and other items from the garage to the home without going outside.

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

- John Green, 563 Belvedere Supported the variance request.
- Jim Trout, 509 Edgemere Supported the project as it will be keeping with the character of the home.

The following communications were received at City Hall concerning this variance request:

- Sean Welsh, 515 Belvedere In Favor.

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

- 2016- -A. Miller-Dills. That the request of Brian & Amy Steketee of 551 Belvedere to allow the construction of an addition to connect the house and garage, creating a side yard setback of 5' instead of the required 7' and a rear yard setback of 5.5' instead of the required 25' be approved with the condition that there be no upward expansion of the garage or new addition within 25' of the rear lot line.

Commissioner Miller felt this project would not impact neighbors because the two structures already exist.

Commissioner Duncan supported the variance and the condition.

Commissioner Skaggs stated the project would be hidden from most neighbors and supported granting the variance.

Yeas: Dills, Duncan, Hamrick, Miller, Skaggs and Seibold – 6
Nays: -0-

- 2016-07. Skaggs-Miller. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

- 2016- -A. To approve the minutes of the regular meeting held January 4, 2016.
- 2016- -B. Report of Finance Committee on disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$257,818.20; county and school disbursements of \$853,238.91, and total remaining disbursements of \$197,036.22.
- 2016- -C. The purchase of five sets of turn-out gear from Apollo Fire Equipment of Romeo, Michigan in the amount of \$9,230.00.
- 2016- -D. The purchase of LED retrofitting materials for city streetlights from Graybar of Belleville, Michigan in the amount of \$23,548.70 plus shipping, and a contract with Ada Electric of Grand Rapids for installation of the streetlights.
- 2016- -E. The preliminary minutes of the Library Commission meeting held September 28, 2015.
- 2016- -F. The preliminary minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held November 10, 2015.
- 2016- -G. The preliminary minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting held November 10, 2015.

Yeas: Dills, Duncan, Hamrick, Miller, Skaggs and Seibold – 6
Nays: -0-

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until February 1, 2016.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk