

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held April 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, Zagel and Mayor Seibold

Absent: None

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

2016-38. No public comment was received.

2016-39. Commissioners Dills, Miller and Hamrick thanked staff members for all of their work on the presentation materials and publicity efforts for the water-sewer rate information sessions held last week.

Commissioner Zagel reminded everyone to observe safety rules when launching and operating boats on Reeds Lake and other waterways. He noted that a separate kayak launch is available behind the public safety building.

Mayor Seibold also thanked the staff members involved in publicizing and presenting the information regarding the proposed water-sewer rate increase.

2016-40. A zoning variance hearing was held regarding the request of Michael Bosscher of 524 Gladstone to allow the construction of a detached garage with a rear yard setback of 1.0' instead of the required 3.0.'

Zoning Administrator Faasse explained the request to build a new garage with the same rear yard setback as a garage that has been demolished. The new garage will meet the side yard setback.

Michael Bosscher, 524 Gladstone, explained the difficulty with maneuvering vehicles and the desire to place the garage closer to the rear lot line to allow a few extra feet of space. He reported he had spoken with almost all the neighbors and all had supported their request.

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

- Don Markham, 540 Gladstone Supported the request as a good solution to a very challenging situation.

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

- Stephanie & John Eckley, 533 Gladstone In Favor.
- Dave & Melinda Hollis, 520 Gladstone In Favor.

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

2016- -A. Dills-Miller. That the request of Michael Bosscher of 524 Gladstone to allow the construction of a detached garage with a rear yard setback of 1.0' instead of the required 3.0' be approved.

Commissioner Miller agreed the proposed location of the garage would make a difficult situation easier. He thanked the applicants for moving the garage farther from the side lot line than the old garage was.

Commissioner Dills stated this situation was different than others considered recently as there was no room to maneuver vehicles with the layout of the home on the lot.

Yeas: Dills, Duncan, Hamrick, Miller, Skaggs, Zagel and Seibold – 7
Nays: -0-

2016-41. Resolution setting water/sewer rates for FY 2016-17.

Finance Director Mushong and Assistant City Manager LaFave showed various charts and answered questions from city commissioners regarding the life expectancy and the cost of repairing and maintaining the underground infrastructure of the water-sewer system. Mr. LaFave noted that while it was often possible to re-line sewer pipes when they cracked, water mains have to be fixed or replaced immediately because of the water pressure and to avoid the infiltration of contaminants into the drinking water. Replacing and repairing water mains is much more extensive and expensive. City Manager Donovan explained the city analyzes information each year to plan for needed work based on age, life expectancy, repairs completed and the need for other road resurfacing.

The City Commission also discussed the issue of lead water services from the city's mains to individual homes and possible mandates or funding to replace these services in the future. City Manager Donovan stated that since none of the city's water or sewer mains contain lead, the city's plans to replace infrastructure under its streets can move forward and be adjusted at a later time if necessary.

2016- -A. Zagel-Dills. That a resolution setting water/sewer rates for FY 2016-17 be adopted as set forth in Exhibit "A" attached hereto.

Commissioner Zagel stated that updating the city's infrastructure was this generation's issue to deal with and thanked the staff for providing so much information and analysis for the commission to make an informed decision.

Commissioner Miller felt addressing the situation by raising rates to provided needed funding was the right thing to do and the right time to begin. He noted the city had been very up front with residents and asked for input with public input sessions and publicity over the last several weeks.

Commissioner Hamrick agreed and gave her support for the new rates.

Commissioner Skaggs stated he was still not convinced there was a demonstrated problem with the infrastructure or the current schedule of replacement. He favored waiting at least a year until the televising project is done and to see what the State of Michigan will be requiring or providing for the replacement of lead services. He did not feel the public had been informed enough about the increase in rates, especially given the tax increase last year for the street and sidewalk millage.

Commissioner Duncan stated her support for the new rates although she felt the whole process was a bit rushed. She agreed this was the time to be proactive and address the issues before us and not wait any longer.

Mayor Seibold stated that while public communication and input were certainly important, it was the city commission's job to analyze the budgetary needs of the city, including the water-sewer fund. She felt that not taking action now would make things more expensive and disruptive to residents later on. She felt it was unconscionable to deny the issue exists and wait to begin addressing the needs.

Commissioner Dills stated the city commission is elected to make budget and tax decisions on behalf of the electorate and he supported the increase in rates because he felt it was necessary to begin improvements.

Yeas: Dills, Duncan, Hamrick, Miller, Zagel and Seibold – 6
Nays: Skaggs – 1

2016-42. Hamrick-Miller. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

2016- -A. To approve the minutes of the rescheduled regular meeting held March 28, 2016.

- 2016- -B. Report of Finance Committee on disbursement of funds: payroll disbursements of \$408,140.34; county and school disbursements of \$-0-, and total remaining disbursements of \$183,339.44.
- 2016- -C. A contract with Spurt Industries of Zeeland through December 31, 2016 for disposal of yard waste at a rate of \$3.45 per cubic yard with 2,000 cubic yards disposed at no charge.
- 2016- -D. A three-year contract with Pluene Service Company of Grand Rapids in the amount of \$7,632 per year for preventative maintenance of the Community Center cooling system.
- 2016- -E. A contract with Hoffman Bothers of Battle Creek in the amount of \$340,356 for the replacement of a water main on Lake Drive between Conlon and the Breton/Lakeside intersection.

Yeas: Dills, Duncan, Hamrick, Miller, Skaggs, Zagel and Seibold – 7

Nays: -0-

- 2016-43. Finance Director Mushong provided an overview of the upcoming budget process, including financial trends, an update on current assessments and revenues, and the impact of the water rate increase. She also explained the impact of the low inflation rate and the required Headlee rollback on the anticipated millage rate.

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until May 2, 2016.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk

Attachments: A – Resolution setting water/sewer rates for FY 2016-17

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