

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

Regular Meeting Held December 18, 2017

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 Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Miller, Walters, Zagel and Mayor Seibold

Absent: None

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

2017-171. Mary Dersch, Curator of the EGR History Room, announced that the history room has applied for a grant from the Clarke Historical Library to digitize some of the past editions of the Cadence Newspaper and asked commissioners to assist with a social media and postcard campaign to help win the grant.

2017-172. Commissioner Walters thanked the Public Works crews for the outstanding work on snow removal over the last two weeks. He also asked citizens to report any incidents of fliers left on signs and utility poles to the Public Safety Department.

Commissioner Zagel noted that the ice on local lakes is not yet safe to walk on and urged everyone to stay off the ice until it is thicker.

Mayor Seibold also thanked the Public Works Department for plowing the streets and sidewalks recently. She noted that the city's sidewalk plowing efforts are meant to mark a path for children walking to school and others to use the sidewalk to avoid walking in the street. The plowing is not meant to achieve bare pavement as the equipment available is not able to go all the way to the pavement or to remove compacted snow and ice.

2017-173. Mayor Seibold presented former commissioner Jeff Dills with a proclamation and a gift commemorating his eight years as a City Commissioner and thanked him for his many contributions to issues over the years.

2017-174. Zoning variance request of Victoria Schnaidt of 1552 Lake Grove to allow the construction of a detached garage with a separation from the home of 2.5' instead of the required 10.0'.

Zoning Administrator Urquhart reported staff had researched the issue of whether a retractable awning that is attached to the home and is not a freestanding structure would be subject to the separation requirement. He stated a retractable awning would not interfere with the 10' separation requirement as it could be folded in when access to the back yard is needed.

2017- -A. Duncan-Hamrick. That the request of Victoria Schnaidt of 1552 Lake Grove to allow the construction of a detached garage with a separation from the home of 2.5' instead of the required 10.0' be approved with the condition that the area under the awning remain unenclosed be taken from the table for consideration.

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

- Victoria Schnaidt, 1552 Lake Grove

Proposed a smaller, permanent canopy than the original request that would allow shade and covered access into the home while reducing the square footage within the required 10' separation distance. The existing canopy would either be modified to reduce the size or rebuilt to a smaller size to replace the existing one. She preferred a permanent canopy over a retractable one because of the weight of snow and the short life span of a canvas awning.

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

Commissioner Miller noted that while the square footage of the canopy proposed by Ms. Schnaidt would be smaller, it would still be only 2.5' from the garage and still did not alleviate the safety and accessibility concerns he expressed at the last meeting. He was not in favor of granting further nonconformity to a structure that already been granted significantly reduced side and rear yard setbacks.

Commissioner Zagel felt the garage could be constructed without further variances and that the resident could still use the property as intended.

Commissioner Walters stated that after corresponding with Chief Herald, he would be willing to discuss a separation of 5' from the home, but felt the 2.5' proposed as unacceptable to be able to provide access to the back yard when needed.

Commissioner Duncan also stated she could not support the 2.5' proposed in either scenario.

Mayor Seibold explained there were different setbacks for attached garages versus detached garages and the need for separation between homes and detached garages. She agreed with others that two setback variances had already been granted for this structure to allow a two-still garage to be constructed and she did not support adding a further encroachment.

Vote on 2017-168-B.

Yeas: -0-

Nays: Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Miller, Walters, Zagel and Seibold – 7

2017-175. Request to accept the donation of property at 431 East Beltline and 439 East Beltline.

City Manager Donovan announced that Richard and Christina Martin have offered to donate 2.9 acres of land located in Grand Rapids Township adjacent to Manhattan Park to the City of East Grand Rapids to expand Manhattan Park. Grand Rapids Township supports this transaction as it will keep the area along the East Beltline from seeing further development and keep the land as greenspace. The Parks & Recreation Commission has reviewed this proposal and recommends accepting the donation. The Parks & Recreation Commission will now consider how best to use this additional land.

Nyal Deems, attorney for Mr. and Mrs. Martin, stated his clients had considered developing the land, but decided it was best used as an addition to the park.

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

2017- -A. Miller-Hamrick. Motion to accept the donation of land located at 431 and 439 East Beltline from Richard and Christina Martin to be added to Manhattan Park and to authorize the city manager to sign any necessary documents for the donation.

Commissioner Walters stated that he would be abstaining from this vote due to the fact that his firm represents Mr. and Mrs. Martin.

Mayor Seibold and others thanked Mr. and Mrs. Martin for their generous donation of this land and looked forward to seeing it used for park purposes in the future.

Yeas: Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Miller, Zagel and Seibold – 6

Nays: -0-

Abstain: Walters – 1

2017-176. Duncan-Zagel. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

- 2017- -. To approve the minutes of the regular meeting held December 4, 2017.
- 2017- -A. To approve payroll disbursements of \$213,282.12; county and school disbursements of \$59,818.87, and total remaining disbursements of \$238,514.08.
- 2017- -B. Appointments and committee assignments as recommended by Mayor Seibold.
- 2017- -C. The appointment of Diana Schad of 448 Cambridge to the Board of Review for a term ending June 30, 2019 and the appointment of Jeff Dills to the Planning Commission for a term ending June 30, 2020.
- 2017- -D. A one-time bonus of two vacation days for the City Manager in recognition of his recent performance evaluation.
- 2017- -E. A three-year extension of the dispatch agreement with Kent County ending December 31, 2020 as set forth in Exhibit "A" attached hereto.
- 2017- -F. The preliminary minutes of the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting held November 13, 2017.
- 2017- -G. The preliminary minutes of the Planning Commission meeting held October 10, 2017.

Yeas: Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Miller, Walters, Zagel and Seibold – 7
Nays: -0-

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until January 2, 2018.

Karen K. Brower, City Clerk

Attachments: A – Dispatch contract extension with Kent County.

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