

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COMMISSION  
CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

**Regular Meeting Held June 17, 2019**

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, Walters, Zagel and Mayor Seibold

Absent: Commissioner Miller

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

2019-92. Mayor Seibold announced that she was withdrawing the advisory board appointments from the agenda.

2019-93. No public comment was received.

2019-94. Commissioner Zagel reported the Reeds Lake Art Festival last weekend was very successful and noted that the Reeds Lake Run was coming up on June 22. He encouraged people to volunteer to help with the event if they were able.

Commissioner Hamrick reminded everyone of the July 4 Celebration in two weeks. She noted there was still time to sign up to march in the parade.

Commissioner Walters stated he felt it was wise to remove the advisory board appointments due to the emails received regarding some of the appointees.

Mayor Seibold thanked staff for continuing to work on the livestreaming for the public to watch the meetings.

Interim City Manager LaFave noted there would be lots of street maintenance going on in the next several weeks and urged everyone to visit [www.eastgr.org/construction](http://www.eastgr.org/construction) for the latest information.

Mayor Seibold addressed the issue of advisory board appointments by reporting that the City Charter and several ordinances give the Mayor the authority to nominate people to all of the advisory boards subject to the approval of the city commission. The process had been done this way for years and is common in most cities in the area. She stated that her nominations to the Planning Commission were not based on political party affiliation and she felt people were being unkind to imply that the nominees were not qualified for the positions. She noted that the two nominees in question had withdrawn their names for consideration due to the emails. Mayor Seibold expressed frustration that people had started an email campaign against the nominees instead of contacting her to address any concerns they had. She agreed with those who wrote the emails that partisan politics had no place in East Grand Rapids advisory boards but felt that all who wished to participate should be given fair consideration. She asked that everyone be respectful and work together as she prepared a new list of nominees for consideration at the next meeting.

Commissioner Walters asked to address these statements. Mayor Seibold stated she wished to continue with the regular business items and would allow more comment at the end of the meeting.

2019-95. A zoning variance hearing was held regarding the request of Kevin & Karen Helm of 2145 Durant to allow a least side yard setback of 6.8' instead of the required 7.0' and to allow a total side yard setback of 15.3' instead of the required 18.0.'

Zoning Administrator Mizikar explained the applicant wished to split their lot into two parcels, but the split would create two setback issues with the existing home that would require minor variances. He explained the west side yard setback would be only 6.8' instead of the required 7.0' and the combined side yard setback would be only 15.3' instead of the 18' required by the zoning ordinance.

Karen Helm, 2145 Durant, explained they wished to build a new home next door while continuing to live in the existing home to minimize disruption and accommodate their family.

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

- Paige Sawyer, 2200 Durant	In Favor.
- Amie Kreitzer, 2134 Durant	In Favor.
- Jim & Karen Proctor, 2142 Durant	In Favor.
- Dale Stoffer, 415 Lakeside	In Favor.
- Ryan sawyer, 2200 Durant	In Favor.
- Meg Goebel, 2127 Durant	In Favor.
- Carmel Loftis, 2151 Durant	In Favor.
- Lane & Susan Auyer, 421 Lakeside	In Favor.

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

2019-095-A. Walters-Hamrick. That the request of Kevin & Karen Helm of 2145 Durant to allow a least side yard setback of 6.8' instead of the required 7.0' be approved.

Commissioner Walters felt the standards were met for this variance and that it would make very little difference in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Hamrick agreed the impact on neighbors would be minor and she supported the proposal.

Mayor Seibold stated she was happy to see two conforming lots as a result of the split and wished the applicants success with their new home.

Yeas: Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Walters, Zagal and Seibold – 6  
Nays: -0-

2019-095-B. Hamrick-Favale. That the request of Kevin & Karen Helm of 2145 Durant to allow a total side yard setback of 15.3' instead of the required 18.0' be approved.

Yeas: Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Walters, Zagal and Seibold – 6  
Nays: -0-

2019-96. Request to approve the division of land at 2145 Durant.

Zoning Administrator Mizikar explained the request to divide the property into two conforming lots, one containing the existing home and a second parcel of vacant property. Mr. Mizikar noted the newly created lot had been withdrawn from the flood plain maps.

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

2019-096-A. Zagal-Favale. That the request of Kevin & Karen Helm of 2145 Durant to divide the property into two parcels with Parcel A containing undeveloped land with a width of 72,' and approximately 20,111 square feet and Parcel B containing the existing home measuring 72' wide containing 18,387 square feet of property be approved, with the following conditions:

1. The split complies with the surveys and legal descriptions presented in the land division application;  
and
2. The relevant deed(s) or land contract(s) be recorded with the Kent County Registrar of Deeds within 90 days of approval.
3. The approval of the subsequent zoning variances for least side yard setback and total side yard setbacks by the City Commission.

Commissioner Zagel noted the width of the new lot meets the ordinance regulations and that the new home would not disturb any existing wetlands.

Yeas: Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Walters, Zagel and Seibold – 6  
Nays: -0-

2019-97. Permit application for private fireworks show.

Parks & Recreation Director Bunn explained the request for a fireworks show on October 5 as part of Calvin University's homecoming events. He noted the event was well planned last year and the city and Calvin would use the same plan for communicating the date and time of the show to residents in the area.

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

2019-097-A. Walters-Duncan. That a permit application for a fireworks display submitted by Melrose Pyrotechnics, Inc. on behalf of Calvin University for a show over the university on October 5, 2019 be approved.

Commissioner Duncan supported the proposal and thanked the university for working closely with the city to notify the residents.

Commissioner Walters thanked Parks & Recreation Director Bunn for developing the policy for private fireworks shows over the last year to allow these events while providing notice to those in the area.

Yeas: Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Walters, Zagel and Seibold – 6  
Nays: -0-

2019-98. Addition of on-street parking on Shopping Center Road.

Interim City Manager LaFave proposed allowing parking on the west side of Shopping Center Road, adding approximately 13 parking spaces. He stated the road was wide enough to allow parking on one side while still providing adequate room for trucks delivering products to the shopping center. He proposed prohibiting parking from 12 am to 6 am November 15 through March 15 to facilitate snowplowing operations.

Commissioner Walters supported the additional parking but questioned whether the property owners would have concerns. Interim City Manager LaFave noted that staff would work with the owners to address any issues or propose changes if necessary.

Commissioner Walters suggested making the 12 am to 6 am restriction effective year-round to discourage overnight parking or long-term parking from other places and to ensure regular maintenance.

Commissioner Zagel supported the additional spaces that can be used by business employees so that other spaces could be left for customers. He also supported a year-round ban on overnight parking on this street.

Mayor Seibold opened this issue for public comment. No public comment was received. Mayor Seibold closed the public comment.

2019-098-A. Zagel-Walters. That parking be allowed on the west side of Shopping Center Road where legally possible with the restriction of "No Parking from 12 am to 6 am."

Mayor Seibold spoke in favor of the additional parking spaces. She noted that the eventual redevelopment of the adjoining property may necessitate changes in the future but felt these could be made easily if necessary. She further noted that this additional parking was in line with the master plan suggestions.

Yeas: Duncan, Favale, Hamrick, Walters, Zagel and Seibold – 6  
Nays: -0-

2019-99. Zagel-Favale. To approve the consent agenda as follows:

- 2019-099-A. Minutes of the regular meeting held June 3, 2019.
- 2019-099-B. Minutes of the special meeting held June 3, 2019.
- 2019-099-C. Payroll disbursements of \$207,959.02; county and school disbursements of \$-0-, and total remaining disbursements of \$486,115.03.
- 2019-099-D. Resolution amending the FY 2018-19 budget for the quarter ending June 30, 2019 attached as Exhibit "A."
- 2019-099-E. The Joint Facilities budget for FY 2019-20 as recommended by the members of the Joint Facilities Committee.
- 2019-099-F. A contact with Hydrovac, Inc. of Cedar Springs in the amount of \$6,500 for water service line identification services.

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

Nays: -0-

2019-100. Commissioner Walters spoke about the advisory board appointment process by stating that appointments should be non-partisan, especially in light of the important local issues that come under consideration from time to time. He did not want to exclude anyone who wanted to serve but felt that the level of partisanship clearly shown by the Mayor's nominees was too much. He detailed the nominees extremely visible affiliation and work with the various levels of the Republican party as different than other advisory board appointees who did not make their affiliations so well known. Mr. Walters stated he was offended to be accused of orchestrating an email campaign. He felt there were plenty of other people willing to serve who would not be so visibly partisan. Commissioner Walters stated he would not normally attempt to block an appointment based on politics but stated this is different because of the level of active participation by the nominees. He apologized to the remainder of the residents whose nominations were being delayed due to this situation. Mr. Walters concluded that this being a contested election year meant strong participation on party politics was a poor idea and stated these nominees should not have been presented. He suggested a new process to avoid this in the future.

Mayor Seibold asked that people contact her or Interim City Manager LaFave when they have concerns about an agenda item.

Commissioner Walters stated he did not know about the appointments until he heard about it from a citizen and he hoped for better communication in the future.

Commissioner Favale resented the assumption that commissioners were involved in an email campaign.

Commissioner Duncan felt there was no place for personal attacks in the conversation. She stated she had always been uncomfortable with the appointment process as she did not know who had applied and did not have any input on appointees. She felt everyone should participate to avoid partisanship and divisiveness.

Commissioner Hamrick stated she had been unable to find information on the website concerning the appointment process or terms so she could answer questions or solicit applications.

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m., subject to the call of the Mayor until July 1, 2019.

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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.