

**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN  
HISTORIC CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2021 AT 5:04PM  
ELECTRONIC REMOTE**

The regular meeting of the Grand Haven *Historic Conservation District Commission* was called to order, as an electronic, remote meeting at 5:04 PM on Thursday, May 20, 2021 by Chairperson Liza Dora.

**Members Present:** Chair Liza Dora; Vice-Chair Karen Casey; Secretary Justin Forrest; and Commission Members Erik Bye, Robyn Vandenberg, and Vacancy.

**Members Absent:** Bonnie Cowles.

**Others Present:** Mary Angel, Administrative Liaison; Erin Pilarski, Tri-Cities Museum Advisory Member; Pat McGinnis, City Manager; Mayor Bob Monetza and Councilmember Mike Dora.

**1) General Business Call to Viewing Audience:**

Members of the viewing audience were given an opportunity to address the Historic Conservation District Commission (HCDC) on any item, whether on the agenda or not. Those addressing the HCDC were asked to provide their name and address and were limited to three minutes of speaking time.

**Kyle Doyon- 321 Washington, Grand Haven MI.** Mr. Doyon's home at 321 Washington was recently designated as a local landmark. When he applied for the designation, he was told that there would not be any historical permit applications that would require approval for additions, alterations, renovations, etc., but has since found out that, according to the existing ordinance, there are [Section 19-16 (1)]. Mr. Doyon was informed that the Commission has just begun review of the ordinance and is considering revisions to that text.

**Gary Breen- 15400 148<sup>th</sup> Ave, Spring Lake MI.** Has an offer pending rezoning of 310 Fulton. He is seeking support from the HCDC for rezoning from Central Business District to Old Towne.

**2) Approval of the April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes:**

Moved by Vice-Chair Casey, seconded by Commission Member Bye, to approve the regular electronic remote meeting minutes of Historic Conservation District Commission of April 15, 2021. This motion carried unanimously.

**3) Planning Commission Site Plan Reviews:**

On May 13 2021, the Commission received a request from Gary and Kathy Breen to provide input on the historical significance and possibility of rezoning from Central Business District to Old Towne to be a Single-Family Residence for the structure at 310 Fulton Street. Gary Breen, City Manager McGinnis, Mayor Bob Monetza and Councilmember Mike Dora were in attendance during the discussion. The consensus of the Commission was that the building itself was worth preserving and the Commission would love to see the property restored to a single-family home; however, concerns with the rezoning request, how it relates to the Master Plan and future land use were expressed. The HCDC was in support of the preservation of the structure but felt that the rezoning request was best left up to a decision of the Planning Commission. Vice-Chair Casey would draft a letter by June 8, 2021 with the Commission's stance and a special meeting would be held to review the letter before submitting it to the Planning Commission (Attachment A).

**Note:** On May 24, the HCDC was informed that the Breens had officially withdrawn their application for the rezoning of 310 Fulton. No public hearing would be held by the Planning Commission and, therefore, no special meeting of the HCDC would be required. Thank you to Vice-Chair Casey for composing the draft letter before the Breens had officially withdrawn their application.

**4) Tri-Cities Museum Advisory Member Update: Report By Erin Pilarski, Museum Advisory Member**

A new exhibit opened today on Silent Films and Speakeasies: Entertainment in the Roaring Twenties. The exhibit would be opened to the public until October 3, 2021. The museum was also working on upcoming summer programming and working on documenting any photos of historic homes they think may be of interest to the HCDC upon their research and server move.

**5) Loutit District Library Events Update:  
Report By John Martin, Library Director**

John was unable to attend tonight, however, he was able to provide an email update for future library events.

**"Monday, May 24 @ 6:30**, historian Larry Martin (no relation!) presents an interview he conducted with WWII veteran Colin McKenzie. McKenzie first served aboard the USS Pennsylvania, a large battleship stationed at Pearl Harbor. He was an anti-aircraft gun loader when the attack on December 7th, 1941 happened and was horribly burned. He was then transferred to the European Theatre of Operations where he fought aboard a destroyer that took part in the D-Day landing at Normandy France. This is a Zoom program and registration will be required. Visit <http://loutitlibrary.org/calendar> to register.

**Tuesday, May 25 @ 6:30**, Join in a virtual interview with author Viola Shipman, aka Wade Rouse, as he talks about his newest novel, The Clover Girls, which was released on May 18. Ten copies of the book will be given away to participants who ask questions throughout the talk! This event will be hosted on Loutit's main Facebook page in partnership with Spring Lake District Library, The Tri-Cities Historical Museum, and The Bookman.

**June 1 to 6 in Central Park** - Take a StoryWalk® at Central Park! Brighten your day with a walk while you read "Daniel's Good Day" by Micha Archer. Pages from this beautifully illustrated picture book will be posted on signs along the path for your family to read together - along with ideas for things to look for and do as you walk!"

**6) Depot Update: Justin Forest, Secretary**

No update tonight.

**7) Beyond the Pier Revised Draft Plan:**

The HCDC discussed the proposed Beyond the Pier revised draft plan issued earlier this month. The Commission was pleased with the possibility of potential new development along the waterfront, while still appreciating the historical aspects that we help preserve now and for the future. One point of concern was the relocation of the current playground that is near the coal tipple. The Commission expressed their plea for the playground to remain by the train and coal tipple or for the placement of a new play structure. With the history of the Pere Marquette Train and the Coal Tipple, the HCDC believes the playground helps with exposure to this area, as a whole, and allows for some great discovery of history within our town and on the steel rails of the railroad industry in Grand Haven. Secretary Justin Forrest would draft a memo on behalf of the Commission urging that the playground remain in its current location.

**8) BLP Diesel Plant Tour Follow-up and Future Hosting of Community Open House:**

The HCDC was given a tour of the BLP Diesel Plant on Harbor Drive along with members of the Tri-Cities Museum and the Loutit Library. The Commission expressed their gratitude to those who helped organize the tour of the building; much was learned about the current state of the building itself and what is inside, hidden from the public view. The HCDC was in support of offering a fall public open house (and possibly multiple tours) of the building with collaboration from the City, as well as the BLP, Tri-Cities Museum, and

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Loutit Library. A BLP Diesel Plant Open House Tour Sub-Committee was created and will be supported by HCDC members Justin Forrest and Erik Bye in preparation and organization of the open house.

**9) Discussion & Review of Text Amendments to Chapter 19 – History of the City of Grand Haven Ordinances:**

A draft of markups to Chapter 19 – History was received by Commissioners prior to the meeting. City Manager McGinnis explained that he conveyed to Community Development Manager Jennifer Howland that the Historic Conservation District Commission had expressed interest in being an advocate in public education, culture, and social support of our history and not having a regulatory role. Historically, permits had not been reviewed and local landmarks were not regulated. City Manager McGinnis had asked Community Development Director Howland to clean out anything that was regulatory and keep anything that supported advocacy; i.e., education, tours and promoting awareness of Historic Districts. City Manager McGinnis clarified that the draft was not staff's recommendation but action under what they felt was the recommendation of the HCDC.

Members of the HCDC reviewed the strikethroughs and additions and Chair Dora asked for feedback, suggestions, and comments regarding the proposed revisions of the ordinance. Concerns were expressed that too much of the regulatory text was stricken. The consensus was that one of the purposes of the commission was to advise people on historical architecture and to be there to educate people to preserve the history of Grand Haven. Commissioners would hate to lose historical buildings after-the-fact. Commissioners still wanted a voice regarding changes to the façade that would impact the historical integrity of a building but without having to review routine projects. The draft would be a good place to start and members expressed their appreciation to Ms. Howland for her help in getting us started. The goal would be to streamline the efficiency of permit reviews and still have input to help advise and educate the citizens on any issues or questions. The Commission recognized that they do not have the capacity to review every permit for properties located within historic districts; however, members did appreciate and expressed interest in continuing to receive site plan reviews for projects located within historic districts that Ms. Howland had been providing, which allowed the Commission to provide input prior to public hearings of the Planning Commission.

City Manager McGinnis suggested coming up with language that involves not looking at every single permit but, rather, actual changes to historic properties without delaying routine projects and using discretion. Possible language such as, "Review permit applications that involves physical alterations to properties in historic districts prior to the issuance of permits" could be used in Section 19-14 (9). In addition, an expedited process for review could be worked on.

Further review and discussion of the ordinance re-write of Chapter 19 would continue next month.

**Karen Casey left the meeting (excused) at 6:26 PM.**

**City Manager McGinnis left the meeting at 6:30 PM.**

**10) Grand Haven Public Works Monument Discussion:**

Commissioners were given a copy of the presentation that was in the Council Work Session packet of April 12. The consensus of the Commission was that the efforts and hard work of the City's Department of Public Works and nationwide DPW employees were appreciated; however, there seemed to be a disconnect with the proposed waterfront location as well as the substantial size of the monument. Commissioner's felt that there may be other areas that are more appropriate and relevant to DPW. Commissioners would like to see the monument hosted elsewhere, within the City, rather than abandoning the project.

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**11) Other Business Not on The Agenda:**

Chair Dora watched the ZBA meeting and relayed that two historic buildings received their requested approvals; the new owners of the Artisan building requested a change to the lot lines to make them more even and to turn it into a residential home. The Crescent Theater Building, 1103 Washington, would be returning its entrance to the original façade on the front of the building facing the corner of Washington and Ferry.

Chair Dora also stated that there is still have a vacancy on the HCDC and encouraged applicants.

Member Vandenberg mentioned that a large piece of property may be changing hands on Lake Avenue.

**12) Second General Business Call to Viewing Audience:**

At this time, a second call to the audience was made to address the HCDC on any item, whether on the agenda or not. No comments were made by the public at this meeting.

**13) Adjournment:**

Chairperson Dora adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Secretary Justin Forrest

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May 21, 2021

To: Jennifer Howland, Manager, Community Development, City of Grand Haven  
From: Liza Dora, Chairperson, Grand Haven Historic Conservation District Commission  
Re: 310 Fulton Ave., Application for rezoning from Central Business District to Old Towne

Thank you, Ms. Howland, for forwarding to the Historic Conservation District Commission (HCDC) the request from Kathy and Gary Breen, potential owners, 310 Fulton Ave. (also noted as 310 Fulton St.), Grand Haven Michigan, regarding the Breen's application to the City of Grand Haven for rezoning from Central Business District to Old Towne. The HCDC understands from the rezoning application, a memo from Kathy Breen received by the HCDC and Gary Breen's comments during the May 20, 2021 HCDC meeting that the Breen's intent is to restore the home to an historically-accurate, single-family dwelling and that the sale of the property is contingent on the reclassification to single-family dwelling. 310 Fulton Ave is located in Grand Haven's Northwest Historic District, but also currently falls within a commercial classification for property use given its simultaneous location in the Central Business District.

The Historic Conservation District Commission (HCDC) has completed preliminary research on 310 Fulton Ave. and corroborates that it is an historic home. The home is featured on both the cover and the interior of the Northwest Historic District Walking Tour brochure. (Please note that the date built of 1924 shown in the brochure is inaccurate. Additional research by the HCDC, the Tri-Cities Historical Museum and Loutit District Library staff shows that the house was built in the early 1900's.; [https://grandhaven.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf\\_documents/boards\\_commissions/hist\\_commission\\_northwest\\_walking\\_tour.pdf](https://grandhaven.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf_documents/boards_commissions/hist_commission_northwest_walking_tour.pdf))

The **DIRECTORY BUILDINGS AND SITES NORTHWEST OTTAWA COUNTY**, Ewing, Wallace K., PhD, © 1999, Tri-Cities Historical Museum, notes the following for 310 Fulton:

**310 Fulton Avenue**

Kate and Peter Koopman II made their home at this address in the early 1900s. Koopman owned the Eagle Saloon at 120 North Third. Kate, Koopman's wife, was found dead with a bullet wound in her back at her home at this address on November 31, 1922. He was convicted, but never admitted he killed her. Kate Koopman's ghost is said to haunt the house. In the late 1920s Elizabeth Stone lived here. In 1992 the residence was converted to a consignment shop. Linda Forbes purchased Second Impressions three years later. In 1992 Forbes and Linda Stansberry started another consignment shop at 118 North Third. It was called Earthly Possessions. [The 1920 census lists the Koopman house address as 308 Fulton, but the 1908 City Directory cites it as 310.]

(Note: Loutit District Library staff confirmed that a previous, street re-numbering process would have changed 308 Fulton Ave. to 310 Fulton Ave.)

Tri-Cities Historical Museum staff also has researched the home and has verified its historical significance, noting confirmation that the house was owned by Kate and Peter Koopman in the 1920's.

As 310 Fulton Ave. has been verified as an historically significant home in Grand Haven, and as a primary function of the HCDC is to "safeguard the heritage of the City of Grand Haven by preserving landmarks and sites which reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history."

([https://grandhaven.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf\\_documents/boards\\_commissions/hist\\_commission\\_brochure.pdf](https://grandhaven.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf_documents/boards_commissions/hist_commission_brochure.pdf)), the HCDC asks that the Planning Commission give full and due consideration to appropriate mechanisms that would allow the house at 310 Fulton Ave. to be preserved intact. This preservation

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would include the current, original footprint of the structure itself, as well as the unique, interior spiral stair case that remains. As the property currently is in the Northwest Historic District, and, although currently falls within the Central Business District and a clearly commercially-appearing block, it also is contiguous to Old Towne, a residential area, separated only by Fulton Ave. itself. The HCDC sincerely respects the work of the Planning Commission and does not wish to disrupt its policies and practices. However, given the historical significance of 310 Fulton Ave, as a once single-family home, perhaps there is a viable way to annex 310 Fulton into Old Towne. The HCDC asks that due consideration be given.

Thank you, again, for encouraging input from the Historic Conservation District Commission on the property.