

**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
HISTORIC CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021 AT 5:00 PM
GRAND HAVEN CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
519 WASHINGTON AVENUE**

Call to order: Chair Liza Dora called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Members Present: Chair Liza Dora; Vice-Chair Karen Casey; Board Members Erik Bye, Bonnie Cowles, and Robyn Vandenberg.

Members Absent: Secretary Justin Forrest, excused and Paul Martin, excused.

Others Present: Mary Angel, Administrative Liaison; Erin Pilarski, Tri-Cities Museum Advisory Member; Jennifer Howland, Community Development Manager.

1) General Business Call to Viewing Audience

Ben Tabor, owner of The Grand Armory Brewery made a presentation regarding improvements planned for the Armory Building located at the corner of 2nd and Franklin in the Downtown Historic District. They are seeking a State Historic Building Grant to offset costs and are asking for a letter of recommendation from the HCDC to submit with the Grant application. It was explained that the commission currently has a moratorium on Landmark Applications due to an ordinance rewrite. Members asked about timing of the grant and construction and were informed that grant applications are accepted year round. They are looking to begin construction in fall of 2022.

2) Approval of the September 9, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Bye, seconded by Commissioner Cowles, to approve the Historic Conservation District Commission's regular meeting minutes of September 9, 2021. This motion carried unanimously.

3) City Staff Review of Text Amendments to Chapter 19 – History of the City of Grand Haven Ordinances. Jennifer Howland, Community Development Manager presented an overview of our changes to confirm the HCDC intent. Suggestions were made to make some changes to streamline the ordinance to focus on landmarks and properties within historic districts at this time. She will make some adjustments and present at the November meeting.

4) Planning Commission Site Plan Reviews

There were none at this time.

5) Tri-Cities Museum Advisory Member Update

Report By Erin Pilarski, Museum Advisory Member, informed the commission that Collective Access is now available to utilize their online collection database. Jared Yax, Curator of Collections, is the person of contact if you would like to sign up. She reported that the Halloween party was a huge success. They are currently preparing for the Holly Jolly Family Day on December 4 before Jingle Bell Parade. She handed out flyers for this to commissioners.

6) Loutit District Library Events Update

There was no report.

7) Depot Update

There was no report. Depot Committee has not met recently.

- 9) Approval of 2022 Historic Conservation District Meeting Schedule.**
One error was found. The January date should be 1/20/22 rather than 1/21/22.

Motion by Commissioner Cowles, seconded by Commissioner Bye, to approve the 2022 Historic Conservation District Commission Meeting Schedule, as follows:

HISTORIC CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meets monthly, 3rd Thurs, 5:00 pm, City Hall

01/20/22	04/21/22	07/21/22	10/20/22
02/17/22	05/19/22	08/18/22	11/17/22
03/17/22	06/16/22	09/15/22	12/15/22

This motion carried unanimously.

- 10) Annual Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Secretary. *Grand Haven Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Administration, Article V. Boards and Commissions, Sec. 2-76.1 Officers, terms.***

Motion by Vice-Chair Casy, seconded by Commissioner Vandenberg, to nominate Commissioner Erik Bye as Chair of the Historic Conservation District Commission. This motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Erik Bye, seconded by Vice-Chair Casey, to nominate Commissioner Vandenberg as Vice-Chair of the Historic Conservation District Commission. This motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Chair Dora, seconded by Commissioner Cowles, to nominate Commissioner Forrest as secretary of the Historic Conservation District Commission. This motion carried unanimously.

11) Other Business Not On The Agenda

Casey recommended that a letter be written from the HCDC on behalf of the Grand Armory to include with their submission of the grant application. Casey volunteered to draft a letter for Chair review (Attached).

Motion by Chair Bye, seconded by Vice-Chair Vandenberg, to ask Commissioner Casey to compose a letter on behalf of the Historic Conservation District Commission in support of the historical significance of the Grand Armory building. This motion carried unanimously.

12) Second General Business Call to Viewing Audience

There was no response.

13) Adjournment 6:40 PM

Respectfully Submitted by,
Liza Dora, Acting Secretary



City of Grand Haven

Historic Conservation District Commission

October 25, 2021

Mr. Ben Tabor
Grand Haven Armory Condo Association and Grand Armory Brewing
17 S. 2nd St.
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Dear Mr. Tabor:

The Historic Conservation District Commission (HCDC), City of Grand Haven, Michigan, is pleased to recognize the Grand Haven Armory building, 17 S. 2nd St., as an historically significant structure. The current Armory building, constructed in 1905, the second armory facility built on the site, is listed as a contributing structure (#17) in the **Grand Haven Central Historic District, United States Department of the Interior National Register of Historic Places**, and lies within the designated local Downtown Historic District (<https://grandhaven.org/city-services/boards-and-commissions/historic-conservation-district/>). The 1905 Armory was designed by architect Fred Gronewelt (also spelled Groenevelt), Grand Haven, and was built by local contractors. It has a full and varied history, all components of which contribute to the rich fabric of Grand Haven's history and culture.

The building's significance is documented and highlighted in the highly regarded DIRECTORY: BUILDINGS AND SITES NORTHWEST OTTAWA COUNTY, Ewing, PhD, Wallace K., ©1999-2013, Tri-Cities Historical Museum, Grand Haven, Michigan. Per Ewing (paraphrased):

- "Yates Light Infantry" was organized in Grand Haven, Michigan in April, 1879. The infantry was appointed for state service as Company F, Second Regiment of the Michigan State Troops, part of the then official Michigan Militia.
- Although a regiment of the state's forces, Company F was required to raise its own funds and relied on local financial support.
- Company F was a social, as well as a military organization. The company purchased the Music Hall and Opera House, 17 S. 2nd St., in 1881 to use as its headquarters. The facility also remained as a public entertainment venue. It was renamed the Company F Opera House in 1886.
- In 1881, Company F was mustered into service twice, once to the county jail to protect a prisoner in danger of being murdered by fellow inmates, and once to Muskegon during a large sawmill strike.
- In April, 1898, Company F was mobilized into service for the Spanish-American War, and was linked with 32nd Regiment of the Michigan Volunteer Army.
- Four years later, the original Company F Opera House was destroyed by fire on Thanksgiving Day. The loss of the building was intense not only for Company F, but for the community as a whole as it had housed performances by some of the most prominent acts of the day.
- In 1905, local subscriptions paid for the construction of a new armory and music hall at the same location. This is the structure that stands today, 116 years later.
- Company F merged into the 32nd "Red Arrow" division for WWI combat. "Upon their return, the men were met at the Armory by cheering family and friends." (Ewing)
- The building was purchased by the State of Michigan in 1920.
- During World War II Company F saw forty-one months of overseas service in the Philippines and New Guinea, twenty-one months of which included combat duty.
- In 1967 the soldiers were called to civil duty to help maintain order during Detroit's period of racial tensions and urban disturbances.

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RE: Grand Haven Armory Building Historical Significance

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- The next year the company was divided between armories in Ohio and other locations. The company was briefly reunited in 1989; split again in 1993.
- As previously noted, the Armory served as a community venue as well. Grand Haven's first Auto Show was held at the Armory in 1935. Twenty-five cars were put on display. Over the years the Armory gym was used for community dances, stage shows and high school basketball games. The stage area was known as the Armory Theater and, for a brief time, the Parquet.
- From 1963 to 1976 the building housed the newly organized Grand Haven YMCA.
- Financial constraints forced the Armory to close in 1995.
- In 1996 the building was sold to the Antioch Christian Center.
- In 2004 the Armory was remodeled into a residential, retail and medical spa facility.

In 2015, as you know, the main floor of the structure became home to the Grand Armory Brewing Company. The brewery, additional businesses and condominiums currently are housed in the building. While the interior has changed over the years, the façade of the military-inspired structure remains much the same as it appeared in 1905. Its Richardsonian arch, first floor entry is apropos of the period in which it was built. The building is constructed of Chicago Brick, very typical of commercial and public structures of its day, and gives the Armory similar coloring and appearance, albeit it a different style, to the historic Story and Clark Piano Factory and the Grand Trunk Depot, also key features of the downtown Grand Haven landscape.

As you have discussed with Mary Angel, Executive Assistant to the Grand Haven City Manager and staff liaison to the HCDC, currently, there is a moratorium on applications to the commission for historic Local Landmark designation while the applicable section of current city ordinance goes through review. The Grand Haven Armory certainly would be a candidate for such a designation once the application process is reopened. The HCDC encourages the Grand Haven Armory Condo Association and Grand Armory Brewing to apply for Local Landmark designation when applications again are available. Certainly, the Grand Haven Armory is a significant, historic asset in the city's downtown.

Sincerely,



Erik Bye, Chairperson
Historic Conservation District Commission

KC:maa

C City Manager Pat McGinnis