

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

February 9, 2021

A regular electronic meeting of the Grand Haven Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Bill Ellingboe at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. On roll call, the following members were:

Present: Ryan Galligan, Robert Grimes, Kevin McLaughlin, Tamera Owens, Kirsten Runschke, David Skelly, Mike Westbrook, Chair Bill Ellingboe (all members were located in Grand Haven, MI)

Absent: Collin Beighley

Also present were Jennifer Howland, Community Development Manager, Ashley Latsch, Assistant to the City Manager, and Pat McGinnis, City Manager.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Grimes, seconded by McLaughlin, to approve the January 12, 2021 minutes was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Call to Audience – First Opportunity *No comments*

Case 21-01: A site plan review for an addition to 206 Washington Avenue (parcel #70-03-20-436-003).

Howland introduced the case. No one was present to speak on behalf of the applicant.

Galligan and Westbrook accept the transparency as proposed. Skelly concurred and appreciates the HCDC review. Runschke researched Boral exterior siding and it meets the composite requirement if that is the material proposed. Ellingboe would have preferred that the applicant was present.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by McLaughlin, to approve the site plan carried unanimously by roll call vote with the following condition:

1. The Planning Commission approves a deviation from the ground floor transparency requirement of the addition per Sec. 40-111.04.C of the Zoning Ordinance because the elevation faces the alley and the residential door and garage door have a reasonable amount of transparency.

Case 21-04: A request for a lot split of 319 South First Street into three (3) residential lots (parcel #70-03-20-454-004).

Howland introduced the case.

Steve Davis asked if the existing sidewalks need to be replaced. Howland said not necessarily, if they aren't damaged during construction and are in good shape. Davis is finalizing the site design for the two-unit dwellings. He asked for feedback on flexibility for allowing shared driveways.

Ellingboe said he hasn't have a chance to give it much thought yet, so he is hesitant to give an opinion.

Howland said that the Planning Commission has authority to approve shared driveways but no designs have been reviewed. Ellingboe asked commissioners to focus on the proposed lot split.

Skelly asked about the timing for demolition of the house. Howland stated that the lot split would be conditioned upon the demolition of the house, and that the split would not be finalized until the house was removed.

Westbrook supports splitting the lot because it meets the requirements. Runschke said shared driveways are not favorable and recommended that a median between driveways be provided for some separation. Owens, McLaughlin, Grimes, Galligan and Ellingboe stated that the proposed split meets the ordinance requirements.

McLaughlin said that when the site plan is submitted, he will have comments at that time.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Westbrook, to approve the lot split carried unanimously by roll call vote with the following conditions:

1. The house must be demolished.
2. Public sidewalks must be maintained along Howard and First.
3. Street trees must be installed, at least one to a lot, along Howard and First, subject to DPW approval.
4. Future driveways will require approval from the Public Works Department and compliance with the Zoning Ordinance.
5. Approval of this lot split does not constitute a pre-approval of any future homes on the lots.

Master Plan Update: The Planning Commission will discuss ideas for the 5-year update to the City of Grand Haven Master Plan.

Howland reviewed the proposed scope of work and asked for feedback and suggestions from the commissioners.

Ellingboe participated in the last update, but he won't be on the Planning Commission when this next update takes place.

Galligan appreciated Howland's suggestions and wants to gather as much public feedback as possible.

Skelly appreciated the proposed framework. He will spend a bit of time on reviewing the current master plan; the proposed scope is fantastic.

Owens said it is a good list and extended congratulations on accomplishments over the last 5 years.

Westbrook said the proposed scope looks great.

Grimes appreciated staff giving the Planning Commission an opportunity to review the existing plan; the scope is fantastic.

Runschke said staff did a nice job putting things together.

McLaughlin liked the scope of work. He asked if updated housing data would be included and asked who would handle this update. Howland said it depends on the scope of work but a consultant would likely be hired.

Ellingboe asked about funding options, specifically related to COVID issues like social zones. He said there are very interesting things happening over the next several years. Many big projects such as Chinook Pier, Harbor Island, etc. There are opportunities for newer concepts like social zones. Several infill housing projects are happening, so that may impact our focus. He suggested looking at the 2016 resiliency focus and consider what we got right/wrong with that, given recent

high water.

McLaughlin agreed with Ellingboe. The Beyond the Pier waterfront master plan will take a long time to implement. He suggested taking a hard look at Harbor Island and what will happen there. The Planning Commission and City should be prepared to address that.

Westbrook added that accommodations for electric vehicles should be a focus again in this next update. Car manufacturers are going to be focusing on this.

Zoning Ordinance: The Planning Commission will review the concept of allowing two-unit dwellings in the MDR, Moderate Density Residential District and continue its discussion about multiple-family residential dwellings in the OS, Office-Service District.

Howland provided an overview of the suggested change to allow two-unit dwellings in all areas of the MDR District, not just key street segments.

Owens liked the idea of adding to MDR everywhere because it allows residents to have more flexibility with their properties.

Westbrook supported the change as a special land use. Runschke agreed; it aligns better with LDR and S districts.

Skelly agreed; he asked Howland for background on why there are limited key street segments in the MDR District. Howland said it is a reflection of historical land uses prior to 2007, including several duplexes on Pennoyer Avenue.

Grimes struggled with the bigger picture, asking what the agenda is about putting more people in our community. He wondered if it was related to tax dollars. He doesn't want to force people to move out of the community, but he can't think of other reasons. He doesn't think two-units should be in the regular neighborhoods.

Galligan supported the proposed change.

McLaughlin agreed with Grimes. The City approved the zoning ordinance update a month ago; he prefers to wait before changing anything in the zoning ordinance until the ordinance matures. Ellingboe said that it seems like this was probably an oversight when we were doing the ordinance review. The change would put it in line with other districts in the City. It gives property owners an opportunity to develop their property where it makes sense and is compatible with the neighborhood. It's a good time for feedback while people are still thinking about the zoning ordinance. If there's no demand for the change then it doesn't need to change.

Howland confirmed a text amendment would require a public hearing.

Howland then provided an overview of the continuing discussion about allowing multi-family dwellings in the OS District.

Westbrook is sensitive to neighbors of the Robbins Road property. We have heard from them already; that's a concern. Each pocket of OS is a little different. The most likely for development is the Robbins Road property, and it is one of the only vacant pieces of property. He is supportive of allowing it by special land use to get public feedback and Planning Commission oversight of impacts on neighborhoods.

Grimes appreciated staff's analysis. The Robbins Road property is most likely for development. He asked what the rush is. The neighbors brought up a tiered level; Grimes asked if the regulations can have a height restriction because neighbors have a one-story limit. He doesn't have an issue with multifamily in that area. However, there should be some protections in place, instead of leaving it to the discretion of the Planning Commission members.

Galligan acknowledged that the Robbins Road parcel is special. He wants to be careful with what the City allows on that property. The Beechtree corridor could be appropriate; a special land use approach could be appropriate in the district as a whole.

Runschke supported requiring a special land use. She understands the concerns related to the

Robbins Road property. She was not sure that a height restriction is going to work, since LDR has a 35-foot height limit. Either way, it should be a special land use.

Skelly acknowledged that this conversation was expected to continue after the ordinance adoption. He asked for a summary of development interest in the last 2-3 years, between MDR and OS, for two-unit dwellings.

Howland said that there has not been much activity related to two-unit dwellings, but many inquiries related to short term renting and accessory dwelling units. Planned Developments are often considered due to site constraints.

Grimes said that the intent of the future land use map concerning 715 Robbins Road was a retirement home, and that was taken care of with the Rosy Mound development so it's no longer needed. Howland asked how Grimes considers retirement age developments to be different from other multi-family developments. Grimes said it is different because it's less traffic and less activity. He does not like that the future land use map is being referenced in general for that property without the additional detail of a retirement community.

McLaughlin did not see a reason to hurry to change this. The developer will likely pursue a Planned Development for the Robbins Road property.

Howland said that the Planning Commission needs to consider all 4 areas of Office-Service. She reminded the commissioners that the reason why it is being discussed again is that the City Council directed staff and the Planning Commission to continue to review it.

Owens said that all pockets of the OS District must work. She shared an experience with another community where change came about much sooner than expected, and that Grand Haven should be prepared for change, too. Owens supports requiring a special land use so Planning Commission review is ensured.

Ellingboe summarized that several members said that a special land use would work. There needs to be a reassurance for neighbors that we are doing our due diligence concerning compatibility as a Planning Commission. He asked to consider changing the special land use language to make sure "compatible" is explained well.

Runschke supported the idea of defining the concept of "compatibility" and creating better parameters. Height restrictions are the same across the board. She suggested maybe some architectural language can be added to the standards.

Ellingboe said that if the Planning Commission denies a project based on incompatibility, we need to define that term.

Howland will work on potential amendments to the special land use regulations for multi-family dwellings and bring it back to a future meeting.

Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison Report

McLaughlin said that there was no meeting, so he has nothing to report.

Community Development Manager's Report

Howland congratulated Ryan Galligan on receiving his Citizen Planner certificate. Galligan said it was really helpful and covered information all commissioners need. He found it to be super useful and the online course is really easy. He estimated that it took 12-15 hours total, on his own pace.

Call to Audience – Second Opportunity

Bob Monetza said that the City Council asked the Planning Commission to review the MDR density. If they are happy with it as-is, that's fine, but it seems incongruous to allow two-units only on key street segments. He wanted to address the comment about why the City is trying to pack people into the city. The Zoning Ordinance Update sprang out of the affordable housing report.

It's hard to say if it went too far or not far enough. The Planning Commission sent the City Council the draft ordinance. If the Planning Commission believes it was too much density, then maybe they shouldn't have recommended it. The Zoning Ordinance is a living document; we haven't had much opportunity to see how it plays out. An earlier draft had higher residential density in the Southside District and Council pushed back on that. Regarding senior housing, the 2010 master plan and sub-area plan clearly shows 715 Robbins Road as a future office or senior housing development. The future land use map shows high density residential. Senior housing isn't a specific land use; it could have been more defined in the master plan. Council was concerned that if there is a Grand Landing style development on the 9-acre parcel, there should be a way to force a proper buffer to the homes to the west. Council didn't want to enact it without proper buffering. He suggested that there be language added to the ordinance, not just what Planning Commission members think is appropriate for a particular project. He also stated that the master plan would support rezoning 715 Robbins Road to MFR. He said that the 2021 master plan update would be an opportunity to adjust the plan. He encouraged Planning Commission members to attend the MSU training.

Andrew Alt, 1803 Pine Court, said that the meeting agenda wasn't posted 18 hours prior to the meeting. He said that is a requirement of Governor Whitmer for remote meetings. He said that he's not opposed to multifamily; he is more concerned about the continuity of the neighborhood. A 15-foot height limit is their restrictive covenant; 35 feet next door would be dominating. The neighborhood is unique.

Mike VanTubergen, 1918 Pine Court, said that the multifamily designation in the master plan was misleading. He referenced the Southwest Business Corridor sub-area plan, where the goal of the property was senior housing.

Denny Dryer said that the window sizing requirement in the CB District is not appropriate and it prevents the use of oval, arch top, etc. windows. He apologized for missing the discussion about 206 Washington Avenue.

Facebook: Todd Lamore, 1920 Pine Court, said he is the first property visible to 715 Robbins Road. He asked the Planning Commission to consider what multi-family would do to property values on Pine Court.

Howland said that as far as she knows, proper notice for the meeting was made.

Adjournment:

Motion by McLaughlin, seconded by Grimes, to adjourn was unanimously approved by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.



Jennifer Howland
Community Development Manager