

**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

February 13, 2024

A regular meeting of the Grand Haven Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Dora at 7:00pm. Upon roll call, the following members were present:

Present: Magda Smolenska, Joe Pierce, Vice-Chair Ryan Galligan, Jennifer Smelker, Chair Mike Dora, Tamera Owens

Absent: David Skelly, Amy Kozanecki

Also Present: City Planner Brian Urquhart and members of the public.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by **Galligan**, seconded by **Smolenska** to approve the minutes of January 9, 2024 meeting with corrections. All ayes. **Motion passes.**

Approval of Agenda

Motion by **Galligan**, seconded by **Smelker** to approve the agenda with ZBA Liaison listed as item 6, b. All ayes. **Motion passes.**

Call to the Audience; First Opportunity

None

Case 24-03: A public hearing to consider vacation Colfax Avenue right-of-way from S. Ferry St. and S. Albee St.

Urquhart introduced the case. Grand Haven Christian Schools is partnering with First Reformed Church of Grand Haven to consolidate properties. Part of the overall strategy was to create a safer drop off and pick up for students. The street vacation would close off Ferry St. and provide access to the drop off area from Albee St. The packet included site plans for parking, traffic circulations, and easement locations. Urquhart did state the only review tonight is to hold a public hearing to recommend approval or denial to City Council. Should City Council approve the street vacation, a site plan review would be required.

Urquhart added the City Council passed a resolution of intent to vacate the street on a 3-2 vote to consider vacating Colfax Ave. He said some of the concerns from Council members included the vacation of the right-of-way would compromise the efficient and standard grid-like street pattern, precedent would be established for future street vacation requests, and a traffic study has not been conducted.

Urquhart added the city has not received any correspondence from the public on this case.

Planning Commission Minutes
February 13, 2024

Travis Vruggink of GMB Architects, presented on behalf of Grand Haven Christian School. He reviewed the history of the request going back to 2019. He said GHCS owns the entire block north of Colfax and 3 parcels south of Colfax are owned by GHCS. 1 parcel is owned by First Reformed Church. The property acquisition is what took the greatest amount of time to complete, which is why the request took several years to reach this point.

Vruggink said they held a public information hearing in January, and everyone who attended was in support of the proposed project. He said the benefits would include resource sharing with First Reformed Church, safer access for children, creation of green space, park access, and this would provide incentive for GHCS to remain in the city.

Vruggink reviewed the traffic grid on the east side of town, and claimed the removal of a portion of the street grid would not obstruct traffic flow or be an inconvenience to motorists. He added there are no practical reasons to perform a traffic study.

Chair Dora opened the public hearing at 7:27pm

Jim Hagen, 400 Lake Ave., said precedent has been set by the City with the installation of Grand Haven Middle School swinging gate off 7th St. He said the city should not be giving up its streets

Motion by **Owens**, seconded by **Galligan** to close the public hearing. All ayes. Public hearing closed at 7:29pm.

Pierce said he agreed with the majority of what was expressed at the City Council meeting.

Smelker asked Vruggink asked how many people were contacted for the public engagement meeting. Vruggink said that everyone who owned or resided in property within a block Colfax street closure was contacted. She also asked what current measures are being taken to ensure student safety during drop off and pick up times. Vruggink responded they have crossing guards, signs, and other measures.

Galligan said he has no issue with the street vacation. He feels this compliments the adjacent uses. He doesn't like the 7th Street gate at Grand Haven Middle School.

Smolenska said it would be difficult for the Planning Commission to recommend vacating a major street such as Colfax.

Owens inquired about the current bus drop off situation. Vruggink responded buses drop off students near the Grant Ave. entrance. Owens added she would prefer to see a gate of some kind before recommending approval of the street vacation.

Dora said he was not in favor. He suggested that the applicant may consider other types of traffic control before requesting a street vacation. The request to vacate a street should be the last step.

Motion by **Smelker**, seconded by **Owens**, to recommend **denial** of the Colfax Avenue street vacation request from S. Ferry St. to S. Albee St. based on the following reason:

1. *Street vacation should be considered the last resort for traffic control.*

Roll call vote. Yeas: Smelker, Pierce, Smolenska, Owens, Dora. Nays: Galligan. **Motion passed.**

Case 24-04: Lot Split application of 924 Beechtree St. (parcel #70-03-27-315-011)

Urquhart introduced the case. He said Denny Dryer purchased the 8.31-acre parcel and would like to split it into 5 separate parcels. The lots would meet the required size and width for parcels in the Industrial district. Lot 5 is also located in the sensitive area overlay, and cannot be built upon.

Denny Dryer said the plan is to sell the lots to adjacent property owners. His plans would meet the necessary standards as required by the Fire Marshal with respect to access easements, driveway and connection.

Galligan asked about lot 5 and not having any frontage on a street or an access easement. Urquhart recommended lot 5 would need to be corrected. Dryer noted he would include a 20 ft. wide access easement from lot 2 to lot 5 on the amended plan.

All other members did not have any concerns with the lot split request.

Motion by Smolenska, seconded by Galligan to **APPROVE** Case 24-04, a request to split 924 Beechtree St. (parcel #70-03-27-315-011) into five (5) lots as shown on the certificate of survey, with the following condition(s):

1. The access easement, which provides access to parcels 1, 2, 3, and 4 must be at least 40 feet wide.
2. The driveway serving all parcels must be 20 ft. wide and designed to support 70,000 pounds per the fire marshal.
3. All conditions of the Dept. of Public Works and Fire Marshal shall be met.
4. Approval of lot split does not constitute a pre-approval of any future development on the lots, or change of ownership.
5. Existing mound on parcel 1 must be graded to acceptable means as determined by the City Planner within 90 days after approval.
6. Access easement of 20 ft. in width from lot 2 to lot 5 must be shown on amended plan.

Roll call vote. All ayes. **Motion passed.**

Zoning Board of Appeals

Galligan said he can no longer serve as the PC Liaison to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Dora inquired with members attending if they were interested. Urquhart said he would send an email to the Planning Commission to inquire if anyone would like to volunteer.

Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison Report:

Galligan said there was no meeting in January.

City Planner Report:

Planning Commission Minutes
February 13, 2024

Urquhart said there may be a special meeting in March and will send out an email with possible dates. Smelker asked about the diesel plant redevelopment. Urquhart answered the development team is performing due diligence on possible funding mechanisms with the state, county and city. Construction is anticipated to commence in September.

Call to Audience; Second Opportunity:

None

Adjournment:

Chair Dora adjourned the meeting at 8:03 pm.



Brian Urquhart, City Planner

