

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

May 18, 2021

A regular electronic meeting of the Grand Haven Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Bill Ellingboe at 7:01 p.m. via Zoom. On roll call, the following members were:

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

Absent: Collin Beighley, Robert Grimes

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

Call to Audience – First Opportunity No comments

Beyond the Pier Waterfront Master Plan

Maleah Rakestraw of Williams + Works reviewed the changes made to the draft Beyond the Pier Waterfront Master Plan since the Planning Commission last reviewed it.

Runschke liked the changes made, including the focus on one continuous waterfront development.

Westbrook appreciated the hard work done and thought it was smart to focus on the waterfront. He asked what would be in the eco oasis location. Rakestraw stated that it would be a passive open space area with elements like picnic tables and yard games. The area would reconnect the boardwalk and could serve as an outdoor café area for the farmers market. Westbrook said that sounded great but he is bummed that the eco oasis was removed. He really likes the boulevard extension idea.

Owens said it is good to focus on the waterfront. She asked how much of the plan relies on private land acquisition. Rakestraw stated none, although the plan includes an idea to partner with Covenant Life Church to use their parking lot for food trucks, shared parking and potential future growth of their deed restriction was lifted. Howland clarified that the deed restriction is private; the city is not party to it.

Galligan supports some infill development. He liked the downtown growth section and the reference to infill development in the long term priorities list.

Skelly appreciated the process followed and that everyone listened to the community's passionate feedback. He asked for information about the Franklin Avenue two-way conversion reference on page 28. Howland stated that this is not the first time that concept has been considered. She reminded everyone that the plan is a vision. It provides direction and ideas. Many elements would require further planning, engineering, and public input. Skelly suggested that the lagoon image on page 56 be swapped out.

Ellingboe said that the wayfinding programming would be an important aspect of the Franklin Avenue two-way conversion discussion.

McLaughlin thanked Maleah and Jennifer for their work on the project; the plan really captures the comments of City Council and the community at large.

Ellingboe asked for some background on the Downtown Growth section on page 44-45. Howland stated that much of what is suggested in that section is already permitted by right, such as adding stories to downtown buildings. She wanted to include this section to honor the important discussion that the community had about downtown infill development because it informs the planning process. Rakestraw said that the section references good planning principles which the City can use to assess future development projects.

Ellingboe stated that the parking analysis section was influenced by the Peerless Flats development in terms of parking space supply and demand. Rakestraw said that the analysis includes the added demand from the residential development. Howland stated that Peerless Flats will provide a 24-space public parking lot and enhanced on-street parking around the site, which will all be for public use. Rakestraw also stated that the community would gain parking spaces around the farmers market area and on-street spaces along Harbor Drive to help offset the loss of the Stanco property that was allowed to be used by market shoppers in past years. Ellingboe noted that the public parking would be used by market shoppers in the earlier hours and by others in the later hours. Ellingboe also appreciated the reference to the traffic light concept at 3rd and Jackson as it is a busy crossing.

Skelly asked Howland to review the priorities framework. Howland explained that the short, mid and long range priorities are our best estimate as to when different elements would be worked on. Depending on funding availability and other circumstances, something on the short term list may shift to the mid-term list, etc.

McLaughlin and Runschke supported the concept of the RFP scope covering a broader area of the waterfront and not just one particular parcel or building site. Howland expects developers to review the entire waterfront master plan and other planning documents so they are well informed before submitting a proposal.

Motion by McLaughlin, seconded by Skelly, to accept the plan as presented, passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Call to Audience – Second Opportunity

Howland informed the Planning Commission that the June 8th meeting will be held at the Community Center.

Adjournment:

Motion by Owens, seconded by McLaughlin, to adjourn was unanimously approved by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.



Jennifer Howland

Community Development Manager