

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

July 13, 2021

A regular meeting of the Grand Haven Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Kevin McLaughlin at 7:00 p.m. at the Grand Haven Council Chambers. On roll call, the following members were:

Present: Ryan Galligan, Robert Grimes, Tamera Owens, Magda Smolenska, Mike Westbrook, Chair Kevin McLaughlin

Absent: Collin Beighley, David Skelly

Also present was Jennifer Howland, Community Development Manager

McLaughlin informed the commissioners that Case 21-35 would be moved to the beginning of the agenda to accommodate out of town applicants.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Owens, to approve the June 8, 2021 minutes was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Call to Audience – First Opportunity *No comments*

Case 21-35: A sensitive areas overlay review and site plan review for a new office and member amenities center at Safe Harbor Grand Isle Marina, 1 Grand Isle Dr (parcel #70-03-21-200-008).

Howland introduced the case. Kayla Tear of S3 Architecture provided an overview of the site plan and proposed improvements.

Westbrook said that if there are no environmental impacts, the design looks good and it is an exciting project. Smolenska said it was a much needed improvement. All other commissioners agreed.

Motion by Westbrook, seconded by Grimes, to APPROVE Case Number 21-35, a sensitive areas overlay review and site plan review for a new office and member amenities center at Safe Harbor Grand Isle Marina, 1 Grand Isle Dr (parcel #70-03-21-200-008) based on the information received.

Case 21-22: An application for a Special Land Use Permit to operate a Short-term Rental located at 106 Prospect St (parcel #70-03-29-154-080).

Howland introduced the case. Applicant Kelly Rossman-McKinney was present to answer questions.

Chair McLaughlin opened the public hearing.

Howland referenced an email received from Tom and Ann Schneider of 116 Prospect. They are concerned about noise, trespassing, and litter.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Galligan, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by voice vote.

Westbrook said that the property is secluded with no amenities close to neighbors. Grimes verified with Howland that four parking spaces are provided.

Motion by Owens, seconded by Grimes, to APPROVE Case Number 21-22, an application for a Special Land Use Permit to operate a Short-term Rental located at 106 Prospect St (parcel #70-03-29-154-080), based on the information submitted for review, and subject to the following condition:

1. Sleeping occupancy is limited to 12 due to the availability of four (4) parking spaces.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.

Case 21-27: An application to rezone 305 N Beacon Blvd from NMU, Neighborhood Mixed Use District to C, Commercial District (parcel #70-03-21-306-005).

Howland introduced the case. Arturo Orduno of Arturos Tacos was present to answer questions.

Chair McLaughlin opened the public hearing.

Adrienne Guzman of Advanced Signs stated she is familiar with Grand Haven zoning and she supports this request. The NMU and C districts are very similar and there is no reason why the property shouldn't be rezoned.

Howland informed the commissioners that the MSDDA submitted an email in support of the proposed rezoning.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Westbrook, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by voice vote.

Owens asked about why Traditional Neighborhood Mixed Use was in this area as the future land use category. She also asked for an overview of the electronic message board regulations. Howland stated that there is a mix of commercial and residential uses in the NMU District, and at the time, residential was not permitted in the C District. She believes this may have contributed to the development of the Traditional Neighborhood Mixed Use District. Howland also reviewed the regulations for electronic message boards.

Galligan said the sign is a poor reason to rezone but there are other reasons to rezone the property to C. He wasn't on the commission when the car wash properties were rezoned. He may not have supported that request but he is ok with the current proposal because its adjacent.

Grimes supported the request. The future land use is evolving and needs to be updated. This section makes sense to be commercial.

Smolenska said that properties along Beacon Blvd or a block or half block in should be commercial

McLaughlin agreed that the corridor should be evaluated.

Westbrook said the rezoning makes sense because it is contiguous to the C district and fronts on Beacon Blvd.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Galligan, to recommend APPROVAL of Case Number 21-27, an application to rezone 305 N Beacon Blvd from NMU, Neighborhood Mixed Use District to C, Commercial District (parcel #70-03-21-306-005) because the neighboring properties are commercial and could also be rezoned to the Commercial District.

The motion passed unanimously on roll call vote.

Case 21-28: An application for a Special Land Use Permit to operate a Short-term Rental located at 58 Poplar Ridge (parcel #70-03-29-321-002).

Mike Risko of Risko Law Office, 250 Washington Ave, was present to represent the Rudkins. Risko reviewed the history of the change of use and renovation. He stated the property is in the Highland Park Association, which has its own rules for rentals. Two designated spots plus a 3rd one in front of the house are provided. Vehicles in the photos submitted by neighbors are not theirs. The Rudkins will add a sign for one parallel parking space only and will add a security camera. Risko confirmed it was not possible to connect all floors of the home together internally but it will be used as a single family home. He also stated that issues with punch list items mentioned in neighbor comments will be addressed by Rich Buitenhuis with the City inspector next week; they have no bearing on the short term rental request. The property will be managed by Briggs Investments on Slayton Ave. He stated that the property is not incompatible with what is in the neighborhood; there are rentals in the immediate neighborhood. Regarding the issues raised by the owner of 59 Poplar, the bedroom looked in on an open porch before the renovation. The deck is out further and is lower so it creates a better situation for the home to the south.

Chair McLaughlin opened the public hearing.

Jay Whitelaw, 99 Poplar Ridge, requested that the permit not be approved until issues have been addressed. 1) dangerous parking; he parked those SUVs in front of the property to demonstrate how they would encroach into the roadway if parked perpendicular. 2) owner paved over the public sidewalk which forces people to walk in the roadway. 3) tripping hazards (drain pipes) forcing walkers into the street. 4) drainage from pipes may be causing an issue with future damage to the street, overwhelming two small city drains.

Laurie Kelley, 59 Poplar Ridge, has a clear view of half of the deck. The lattice has been removed so it's worse. They didn't stop construction per Highland Park rules. There is no one to contact when they have a problem. They would prefer that the deck be removed to the south end of the slider and wrap around the other side of the house, or the property should not be approved as a short term rental. She provided map of rentals in the immediate area.

Stephanie Cook, 37 Lovers Ln, stated that the neighborhood has always been a family community. She is concerned about renters ignoring Highland Park regulations. Renters are noisy, they park everywhere, and cause fire concerns. The use is not in keeping with the historic district; it's too dense with too many renters.

Rich Buitenhuis, 504 Clinton Ave, is the contractor for the project. The parking space in front was designed for one parallel parking space. It would be dangerous to misuse it. He feels they sidewalk was improved in front of the house. Regarding the drainage pipes, he will cut them back if permitted to work, but there were two scuppers in those areas prior to the renovation. The roof area hasn't increased. They received exceptions from the Association for additional construction activity. The corner of the house at 59 Poplar encroaches onto 58 Poplar so that contributes to the close proximity.

Jay Whitelaw saw contractors working a few days ago. He doesn't believe association bylaws were followed, but he is not currently on the board.

Howland referenced receiving email from Kristin Witney, which the commissioners received in advance. Howland stated the city has received no formal comment from Highland Park Association.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Galligan, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by voice vote.

Smolenska asked if we are evaluating it based on historic land use or current land use. Howland said current land use.

Westbrook asked about the commission's ability to require screening on the deck. Howland explained that buffering could be added to protect properties from additional short term rental activity.

Risko stated that the house is now a single-family home so activity should be less than before. They closed off the open porch; now it is completely closed with a window rather than open with lattice. The deck is now out farther and down lower and complies with all codes. The idea of demolishing the deck and starting over is cost-prohibitive and unreasonable.

Westbrook stated that the Planning Commission has the authority to require a shield of some sort on the existing deck. The neighbor concerns are legitimate. Risko said lattice or a couple of taller plants would work.

Smolenska suggested that the parking space be striped. Risko stated that unauthorized vehicles will be towed.

Westbrook received confirmation from Howland that there are 3 dedicated parking spaces for the property.

Grimes said that if Highland Park Association wants to prohibit short term rentals they could do so. Grimes said people can call public safety to complain about blocking the street if it happens.

Galligan would be ok with requiring some screening but he is concerned about the applicability to other properties. A sign for the parking space seems sufficient; he does not think striping is warranted.

Owens said screening would be polite but she is not sure requiring it would be the right way to go. Photos show the deck being a less intense connection to the neighbors than the previous

porch.

Laurie Kelley shared a photo of her bedroom view looking out to the deck. Risko clarified that window covered with blinds is where the open porch used to be.

Owens said there is not a reasonable expectation of privacy from neighboring windows; properties are close together. Signage is sufficient for the parking space. Cutting drainage pipes needs to be done. Howland said code enforcement will address the pipe encroachment and she encouraged people to contact Public Safety with noise complaints or other issues.

McLaughlin said the State legislature wants to allow short term renting across the whole state, so he advised seeing what happens before the City makes a bunch of changes. He was on the ZBA when the nonconforming use expansion case was denied. The ZBA denied the request for some of these same reasons discussed tonight.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Galligan, to APPROVE Case Number 21-28, an application for a Special Land Use Permit to operate a Short-term Rental located at 58 Poplar Ridge (parcel #70-03-29-321-002), based on the information submitted for review, and subject to the following condition:

1. Parking signage shall be installed to indicate one parallel parking space in front of the house.
2. Owner should weigh their neighborly options for shielding their property from the neighbor to the south but no measures are mandatory.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.

Case 21-29: An application for a Special Land Use Permit to operate a Short-term Rental located at 422 Jackson Ave (parcel #70-03-21-301-007).

Howland introduced the case.

Michelle Giddings is purchasing the property; she runs a short term rental in Florida. She asked for clarification on the sleeping occupancy. Howland stated that the current long term certificate is set for 4 people; she has enough parking to support 6 occupants but the sleeping occupancy is set based on the International Property Maintenance Code.

Chair McLaughlin opened the public hearing. There were no comments.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Galligan, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion by Westbrook, seconded by Owens, to APPROVE Case Number 21-29, an application for a Special Land Use Permit to operate a Short-term Rental located at 422 Jackson Ave (parcel #70-03-21-301-007), based on the information submitted for review, and subject to the following condition:

1. The ingress and egress easement and license for 2 parking spaces on 426 Jackson Avenue must be recorded at the Register of Deeds and contain the language referenced in Sec. 40-605.04 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.

Case 21-30: An application for a Special Land Use Permit and site plan review to construct retaining walls located at 206 S 7th St (parcel #70-03-21-364-003).

Howland introduced the case.

John and Julie Bohrmann reviewed their construction process. They relied on their local building team and building inspector to ensure it was constructed according to the rules. They assumed they were in compliance when they received their certificate of occupancy. The new retaining walls were built on an existing retaining wall along the property line. The patio built in July 2020; the guardrail was installed per city inspector requirements. The neighbor's deck is higher than their patio so the screen wall was 6 feet tall for privacy. Changes to the city-approved plan were done in the field by the builder Keven Gancarz in coordination with the neighbor to the north. Bohrmann acknowledged the neighbor's concerns would have been better to be addressed during the construction phase.

Bohrmann reviewed the concerns referenced in the letter from Sara Schwartz and Nick VanZanten at 202 S 7th St. The Bohrmanns had no knowledge it was against zoning; they followed the builder's suggestions. The garage elevation doesn't violate any zoning regulations. There is a 4-foot drop on their property to the northeast corner of the patio. The patio is at garage level, which is about 3 feet lower than the first floor house elevation. Bohrmanns have agreed to move the screen wall to the south to be in line with the north wall of the house. They are confident that engineering for storm water management is and will be effective. They are ready to install the lawn as a final erosion control measure. Erosion observed was equivalent to about a 5-gallon bucket. Bohrmann reviewed text message history with neighbor at 202 S 7th St.

Chair McLaughlin opened the public hearing.

Mark Hills, attorney representing Sara Schwartz and Nick VanZanten, stated that the case is more than a special use and site plan review; it's about respect for neighbors. The architect and builder are agents of the applicant. City inspections don't give people a pass on following regulations. The building permit did not include a patio or retaining wall as constructed. They did not notify the City of the proposed change. Referencing a large photo of the wall from the north, he pointed out the 5-foot-tall concrete block wall plus the 6-foot-tall metal fence on top. That is a significant change to the property. Sand continues to leach under the wood retaining wall. McLaughlin asked what relief they are seeking. Hills stated that it needs to be removed. Otherwise others will request the same thing.

Larry Foose, 712 Clinton Ave, is the adjacent property owner. He looks at the property every day. It is not an eyesore or a problem. The Bohrmanns took the worst house in the neighborhood and made it a beautiful place. Every home in the neighborhood is noncompliant in some way. It's not an issue and should be approved.

Sara Schwartz, 202 S 7th St, stated that it is not an issue of the aesthetics of the home or retaining wall. The retaining wall, patio and fence violate multitudes of zoning ordinances. The erosion onto her property is constant. She is not sure whether the wall is on the property line. She asked the commissioners to look at the zoning ordinance.

Sue Foose, 712 Clinton Ave, can see both properties. If you can't depend on your builder and city, who can you depend on? Since issue came up, she has attempted to find retaining walls in

the City in the front yard; they are not more than 48 inches tall. Retaining walls in backyards are taller. This wall is in their backyard. This issue didn't start until April with a heavy rain caused erosion onto the neighboring property. Since then, she has observed no further erosion issues along the wall. The wall is covered with vegetation from the yard at 202 S 7th St.

Motion by Westbrook, seconded by Galligan, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by voice vote.

Grimes asked Howland for some background on the project review. Howland explained that zoning approved plan showed the patio stopping at the north wall of the house. The building inspector inspected for building code compliance; a zoning inspection didn't happen. Howland was made aware of the zoning violations after meeting with Schwartz on her property to discuss the erosion issues.

Smolenska asked if the review would be different if the wall was not yet constructed. Howland said it would have required the same review – a special land use permit from the Planning Commission. Smolenska asked about the guardrail shifting to the south. Bohrmann stated that the screen wall runs the full length of the patio so shifting it would be ok for the required guardrail.

Grimes asked if the northern concrete could be removed and arborvitae be planted to soften the area. Bohrmann said that the wall and patio were built as one structural unit. Any changes would compromise the structure. Bohrmann said he could cut holes in the concrete and plant into the patio surface, or he could add a 6-foot-tall privacy fence along the north property line. The retaining walls is approximately 1 foot from the north property line.

Schwartz said that the property line has not been surveyed; the line is not straight. There is no place to plant anything along the line in all parts of the wall. The backyard was dug out and a hill was built up. Sand is pouring over the edges. No other neighbor is affected by this. There is no sensible remedy for this; there is no way to fix this. The yard needs to come back down to the grade that was approved prior to construction. There are no permits that approve this. It continues to damage their property. It's not a question of whether the wall is pretty or not.

Bohrmann stated that there is no geotextile fabric along the wood wall; if approved, the fabric will be added. Smolenska said that if the fabric doesn't work, the wood wall should be replaced with a concrete wall. Bohrmann said that there is a channel drain under the steps which points into the backyard. The lowest point in the area is in the backyard of 202 S 7th St, but only water should be flowing onto their property, not sediment. He's willing to add a fence along the property line but is confident geotextile fabric will fix it.

Westbrook said he understands both sides. He's trying to find common ground and allow the applicant to keep the structure, but he is unsure of the solution.

Nick VanZanten said that conversations with the builder to coordinate the project did not take place.

Hills received confirmation from Howland that the retaining wall, patio and fence would require a permit. Howland stated that the approved plan included only a patio and steps. Howland clarified that the Planning Commission has the authority to approve the retaining wall as proposed but they must look to the special use standards of Article 1 for support.

Galligan said that if it were his neighbor, it would not be an issue. If it were to come before the planning commission prior to construction, the neighbor's concerns would likely lead them to make some sort of change to the design.

Owens said that if the screening wall were moved to be in line with the north wall of house, it would serve as the required guardrail. She asked about access from the west. Bohrmann said their A/C unit blocks access to the wall from the west. Owens would not have been in favor of the request pre-construction. It is not the Planning Commission's role to arbitrate between neighbors. Asked Howland for clarification on what would happen if the request was denied. Howland said the wall would have to be moved to the south to not require a special land use permit.

McLaughlin asked Howland when the wall would have been built. Howland doesn't know. McLaughlin would have required them to put something on the back of the wall, but it sounds like sand is the big issue, not aesthetics. Something should be put behind the wood wall to prevent erosion.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Westbrook, to APPROVE Case Number 21-30, an application for a Special Land Use Permit and site plan review to construct retaining walls located at 206 S 7th St (parcel #70-03-21-364-003), based on the information submitted for review, and subject to the following conditions:

1. The metal screening wall/fence must be shifted south to be in line with the north wall of the house.
2. The metal screening wall/fence will be finished on the outside with approved fencing materials per Sec. 40-327.B.
3. Geotextile fabric will be installed on the south side of the wood retaining wall to prevent erosion.

The motion passed on roll call vote: Ayes: Smolenska, Grimes, Westbrook, McLaughlin. Nays: Owens, Galligan.

Case 21-31: An application for a Special Land Use Permit to operate a two-unit Short-term Rental located at 106 N 2nd St (parcel #70-03-20-429-012).

Howland introduced the case. The applicant was not present.

Chair McLaughlin opened the public hearing. There were no comments.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Owens, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion by Owens, seconded by Galligan, to APPROVE Case Number 21-31, an application for a Special Land Use Permit to operate a two-unit Short-term Rental located at 106 N 2nd St (parcel #70-03-20-429-012), based on the information submitted for review, and subject to the following conditions:

1. A second driveway may be installed as shown on the site plan, but it is not required to meet the parking requirements.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.

Case 21-17: A proposed text amendment to Sec. 40-413.03.D of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow greater flexibility on window openings and to eliminate regulations concerning windows facing an alley or private property in the Central Business District.

Howland introduced the case.

Chair McLaughlin opened the public hearing. There were no comments.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Westbrook, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by voice vote.

Grimes asked about whether the proposal would lead to blank walls. Howland stated that the CB District prohibits blank walls. Denny Dryer, applicant, stated that windows are added if the building code permits it because people like daylight.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Galligan, to recommend APPROVAL of Case Number 21-17, a proposed text amendment to Sec. 40-413.03.D of the Zoning Ordinance as proposed in the attached ordinance, concerning window openings in the Central Business District.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.

Case 21-32: A proposed text amendment to Sec. 40-402.01, 40-404.02.B and 40-526.B of the Zoning Ordinance, to allow two-unit dwellings as a special land use throughout the MDR, Moderate Density Residential District, rather than only on key street segments.

Howland introduced the case.

Chair McLaughlin opened the public hearing.

Lori Vieau, 201 Woodlawn Ave, is completely opposed to the text amendment. There is not enough parking to accommodate people now. The city has changed a ton and not for the better. Her neighbors are mad.

Kennard Creason, 2106 Jane C, owns a family house at 824 Lake Ave. The recent ordinance change led to the only interest of their property to develop it into 6 lots. This latest amendment would allow 12 units on the property. Creason is concerned about impacts of regulations on properties like his. Estates may be sold developed. He suggested re-evaluating how we are looking at this. Neighbors have no idea this is going on.

Chad Fisk, 709 Lake Ave, likes the close proximity to downtown and nature. He likes a thriving downtown and is not opposed to two-unit dwellings. He is concerned about the specific area near Duncan Park allowing two-unit dwellings where there is really no density there. If it changes, the character could be completely different. Demolition related to development could harm the ecosystem.

Cara Hines, 315 Woodlawn Ave, stated that recent development has been staggering. We are losing the character of Grand Haven. She wants her daughter to ride her bike down the street, but it is pretty dangerous. She is concerned about safety and density. She wants to preserve the unique quality of the neighborhood and historic homes.

Bobbi Sabine, 703 Lake Ave, had no idea this was on the radar and is completely opposed to it.

Traffic is nuts on Lake Ave, with street parking allowed on one side. It is not wide enough for two cars to pass. This problem would be compounded if twice as many people lived in the neighborhood.

Bob Monetza, 945 Washington Ave, stated that the City noticed that we had greater restrictions on MDR than LDR. They thought it might have been an oversight. The Planning Commission can evaluate LDR again, or MDR. Council isn't trying to cram more tax base into the community. The updated zoning ordinance was a result of the Affordable Housing Task Force, which recommended more housing opportunities via gradual changes

Lori Vieau said that COVID affected public input and she believes the zoning was changed by sliding it under affordable housing recommendations.

Howland referenced an email received from Erin Kauth, 500 Lake Ave, who is opposed to the text amendment.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Westbrook, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by voice vote.

McLaughlin said that a lot of council members said we should take a look at density across the city at their most recent meeting and consider going back to 45 feet width (instead of 44 feet). He asked for a joint meeting with City Council to discuss this. Council is putting pressure on the Planning Commission to make recommendations, but he doesn't want to make one that is not in step with what Council wants. He is not supportive of the proposed text amendment. He also suggested removing two-unit dwellings from the LDR district.

Grimes said that city streets haven't changed but we have added more residential density. We are not Grand Rapids or Muskegon. The goal should be to increase property values. People should be able to live where they work, but people who live miles away from work are fine. Why do we need more density in Grand Haven and cause more congestion? He supports the suggestion for a joint meeting.

Westbrook said there is a need for two-unit dwellings in Grand Haven, but not everywhere. He doesn't support the proposed text amendment but he acknowledged it is incongruent as written today (LDR vs. MDR). He shares thoughts about density with Grimes. He advocated for reviewing density across the whole city.

Smolenska advocated for looking at the entire city and preserving neighborhoods where nice single-family homes are. She would support two-unit dwellings where they are appropriate, but not on Woodlawn or Lake Ave.

Galligan lives in the MDR district but not on Lake Ave. In his neighborhood, it makes sense to have two-unit homes. He opposes text amendment as proposed.

Owens supports meeting with Council and re-evaluating the ordinance. She suggested considering adding more key streets in MDR but not the entire zone. Howland clarified that key streets were based on historic land use patterns but that could be adjusted.

Chad Fisk, who is a licensed architect, does a lot of affordable housing projects. He advised

locating higher density near downtown to lower traffic because housing would be close to amenities (walkable). Further away, you become more dependent on the automobile.

Monetza said that the zoning districts were created in 2007 by combining former districts into MDR and LDR largely based on lot size. Council looks to the Planning Commission to study the issues and bring recommendations to Council. Council is not the expert on zoning or planning. A meeting with the city manager, Howland, McLaughlin and the Mayor could take place to review the process moving forward.

Monetza encouraged the commissioners to review the MDR District, as it is expansive. It could be broken up. It is entirely appropriate to consider potential adjustments. Howland said that although the zoning ordinance update process was deliberate and careful with public input, the ordinance is a living document and can be changed.

Grimes said that consultants hired are urban-focused planners. The process focused on affordable housing, rather than a cohesive review. He referenced Bentonville Arkansas as a community to emulate. Howland said ordinance changes were based on the scope of work that was agreed upon, so that is why the consultant focused on that.

Staff will work with the Planning Commission to determine next steps for potential text amendments. This particular text amendment won't be moving forward.

Case 21-34: A site plan review for a proposed building addition at 1103 Washington Ave (parcel #70-03-21-453-013).

Howland introduced the case.

Steve Signor of Dryer Architectural Group reviewed the proposal and stated that the intent is to bring as many original building elements back as possible.

Grimes stated that this case is a great example of how transparency requirements would have negatively affected this project if the Planning Commission didn't have the authority to deviate as they do.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Westbrook, to APPROVE Case Number 21-34, a site plan review for a proposed building addition at 1103 Washington Ave (parcel #70-03-21-453-013) based on the information submitted for review.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.

Case 21-36: A site plan review for a warehouse development at 815 Verhoeks St (parcel #70-03-28-112-002).

Howland introduced the case.

Denny Dryer, applicant, said the project will provide nice storage units with full bathrooms.

Howland reviewed the proposed conditions for approval in the staff report.

Westbrook received clarification for the proposed use from the applicant, which will be private storage.

Motion by Grimes, seconded by Galligan, to APPROVE Case Number 21-36, a site plan review for a warehouse development at 815 Verhoeks St (parcel #70-03-28-112-002) based on the information submitted for review and subject to the following conditions:

1. The fire marshal's plan review is pending.
2. The warehouse units must be owner-occupied and not leased so the project cannot be classified as a self-service storage unit.
3. Existing vegetation along the south property line will serve as the required parking lot landscape screening.
4. The storm water management plan must be approved by the DPW Director prior to issuance of any permits.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.

Case 21-18: Continued discussion about a proposed text amendment to allow electronic message boards on properties where religious institutions are operating.

Howland introduced the case.

Adrienne Guzman of Advanced Signs, said that her initial proposal was for religious institutions, but it was broadened to include all public assembly uses. Changeable copy boards are impractical. Their proposal would comply with all existing electronic message board requirements.

Howland reviewed her considerations in the staff report. Guzman brought examples that allow them in residential zones per the commission's request. Guzman said regulations can include provisions such as a 90-foot setback from a residence, turn off between 10pm and 6am, etc. to protect residential areas. Spring Lake just adopted it into their ordinance. They require a Planning Commission site plan review, perhaps for a period of time as the ordinance is new.

Grimes respects what they are trying to accomplish. Many churches are right in residential neighborhoods. Allowing a lighted sign in the front yard isn't something he can fathom. If sign regulations work for a business, it can work for a church.

Guzman asked if the sign at Grand Haven Christian School is a nuisance or if people object to it. People have this idea of a glaring sign, but it has dimming capability with not more than 3 foot-candles above ambient light. The idea is to get a message out without distracting people.

Dennis Burns, St. Paul's Church, 1401 S Griffin St. said that his church is across the street from two schools. Their changeable copy sign cannot be changed easily due to weather, timing, and physical constraints of the sign itself. They want to bring it more up to date. They have a message they want to give to the community. They will abide by whatever regulations the city imposes. Their property has no houses in front of the sign.

Grimes agreed that St Paul's has schools across the street but some applications would have houses across the street.

Adrienne could have brought many more examples but shared more restrictive ones that are applicable to Grand Haven. Churches want to share events and messages with the broader community.

The commission agreed to hold another work session after Howland develops proposed ordinance language.

Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison Report

Ryan Galligan is the new ZBA Liaison. There was no ZBA meeting in June.

Community Development Manager's Report


Howland informed the commissioners that the Beyond the Pier Waterfront Master Plan and RFP would be considered for approval by the City Council at their meeting on July 19th.

Call to Audience – Second Opportunity

No comments

Adjournment:

Motion by Owens, seconded by Grimes, to adjourn was unanimously approved by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:41 p.m.



Jennifer Howland
Community Development Manager