

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN  
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

August 10, 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, Collin Beighley, Eric Inlaw, Tamera Owens, David Skelly, Mike Westbrook, Chair Kevin McLaughlin

Absent: Magda Smolenska, Robert Grimes

Also present was Jennifer Howland, Community Development Manager

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Owens, seconded by Galligan, to approve the July 13, 2021 minutes was approved unanimously by voice vote.

**Call to Audience – First Opportunity** *No comments*

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**Case 21-37: An application for a Special Land Use Permit for a Tattoo & Piercing Parlor at 302 S Beechtree St (parcel #70-03-27-103-001).**

Howland provided an overview of the request.

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

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

Garrett Gosch was present to answer questions. Skelly asked if Gosch had communicated with the neighbors; Gosch said he had not, but he has a good working relationship with Primm & Proper tattoo studio to the south. Skelly asked if Gosch would be open to improving the parking lot; Gosch stated he would.

Motion by Westbrook, seconded by Inlaw, to APPROVE Case Number 21-37, an application for a Special Land Use Permit for a Tattoo & Piercing Parlor at 302 S Beechtree St (parcel #70-03-27-103-001) based on the information submitted for review, and subject to the following condition:

1. The parking lot will be re-stripped.
2. Hours of operation are limited to 10am to 6pm daily.
3. Sufficient separation exists between the proposed tattoo and piercing parlor and the next closest one at 616 S Beechtree St.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.

**Case 21-39: An application for a Special Land Use Permit and site plan review for a mixed**

**use development (multi-family residential and small public assembly) at 315 Franklin Ave (parcel #70-03-20-437-005) and part of 300 Washington Ave (parcel #70-03-20-437-010).** Howland provided an overview of the request.

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

Motion by Skelly, seconded by Beighley, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by voice vote.

Owens likes the alternate plan roofline, but the increased transparency would not look as aesthetically pleasing. The intent of transparency is to create a pedestrian-friendly scale. Being primarily a residential development, the lower transparency makes sense on the middle unit.

Westbrook, Galligan, and Inlaw like the roofline of the alternate design.

Applicant David TenCate provided information on the deed restriction for the Girl Scout House, stating that if the Girl Scout organization stops using the property, it would revert to the City of Grand Haven, which are the same terms as the existing Girl Scout House at 315 Franklin Ave. There is a recent City Council agreement to transfer the deed restriction to this new development. TenCate confirmed that the Girl Scout organization board has had significant input on the project and has signed off on the plans. However, they did not seem supportive of the additional transparency on the alternate design.

Beighley received confirmation from Howland that the removal of the curb cut off Franklin Avenue was acceptable to the City plan review team.

Skelly said that the higher transparency of the alternate design would be out of place. He likes the addition of the bike rack for added public value.

Motion by Beighley, seconded by Galligan, to APPROVE Case 21-39, an application for a Special Land Use Permit and site plan review for a mixed use development (multi-family residential and small public assembly) at 315 Franklin Ave (parcel #70-03-20-437-005) and part of 300 Washington Ave (parcel #70-03-20-437-010) based on the information submitted for review, and subject to the following condition:

1. The storm water management plan must be approved by Public Works prior to issuance of construction permits.
2. Transparency will be 36% on the ground floor and 26% on the second floor.
3. Parapets will be flat per the alternate design.

The motion passed unanimously on roll call vote.

**Case 21-40: A site plan review for a façade update at 100 N 7th St (parcel #70-03-21-354-009).**

Howland provided an overview of the request.

Property owner/applicant Tim Meyer said the building has suffered from neglect. They have installed a new roof and made repairs to the west façade. The south wall will receive insulation and siding. Matt Meyer (son) owns the business; he prefers metal siding. In response to questions about using vinyl siding on the garage portion, Meyer stated that his preference is to repair and

paint the existing siding.

All commissioners agreed that the metal siding would be appropriate and that vinyl siding would not be appropriate. They expressed appreciation for the proposed improvements to the property.

Motion by Galligan, seconded by Skelly, to APPROVE Case Number 21-40, a site plan review for a façade update at 100 N 7th St (parcel #70-03-21-354-009), subject to the following conditions:

1. The concrete block will be covered with metal siding.
2. The garage, if updated, will use conforming cladding materials; vinyl is not permitted.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.

**Case 21-38: A proposed text amendment to Sec. 40-201.19 and Sec. 40-413.D of the Zoning Ordinance, to change sign band regulations in the Central Business District.**

Howland reviewed the proposed text amendment.

McLaughlin advocated for hearing from the Historic Conservation District Commission (HCDC). Signage downtown should be consistent without a lot of variation.

Skelly said that the ability to use a 60 sq. ft. allowance “as they see fit” is too much of an open door approach. He likes the variation of sign size, color and shape in the downtown; it doesn’t look all flat and monotone. However, some constraints and limitations are appropriate. HCDC input would be valuable because design elements and historic buildings are unique. He expressed concern about allowing illuminated wall signs on upper stories.

McLaughlin was surprised that sign permits gets issued administratively.

Westbrook asked for clarification on why Sandi Gentry applied for the change. Howland explained that due to corporate restrictions, she cannot advertise “Sandi Gentry Real Estate” with the “ReMax” signage, so she is asking to advertise one on the sign band and one at the top of the second story.

Adrienne Guzman from Advanced Signs was in the audience and asked to speak. She is not here on behalf of Sandi Gentry. Guzman pointed out that upper stories don’t have wall signage because many are residential units. Signage should be displayed where the business occupies the space; that is why signage is located above first floor windows.

Per the Planning Commission’s direction, Howland will take the request to the Historic Conservation District Commission and the MSDDA for input and assistance with crafting the possible language.

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

Howland reviewed the proposed text.

McLaughlin questioned why the ordinance would have to change for public assembly uses; the educational signage requirements were well-applied at Grand Haven Christian School. It is small, has nice landscaping around it, and it is not a detriment to the neighborhood.

Guzman stated that a lot of churches are in residential districts. They are currently limited to manual changeable copy. The intent is to make it easier to change the sign content. McLaughlin asked why it has to change every 5 minutes. Guzman clarified that 5 minutes is the minimum change allowance, and that churches have several messages to display. There would be no animation.

Beighley asked Howland to determine the number of churches in the City. He feels that the sign at Grand Haven Christian School is not an issue, but he doesn't want to be bombarded by sign requests.

Guzman pointed out that the proposed sign style will not be bright or distracting like a billboard. It will be dimming, with 0.3 foot-candles above ambient light. The signs will turn off 10pm-6am to not interrupt residents. She likes the proposed 25-foot setback from residential property lines.

Guzman said that she is working with just one church client in the City right now, but other churches have expressed interest in having them, too.

Skelly asked about retrofitting existing signs and installing new signs. Howland explained that a public assembly use in a residential neighborhood would be limited to a 32 sq. ft., 6-foot-tall ground sign. An electronic message board could be 50% of an existing sign or 50% of a proposed new sign.

In response to Inlaw's inquiry, it was clarified that any changes to these regulations would require City Council approval and would become law. Changing the makeup of the Planning Commission would not change the law.

Westbrook is not supportive of allowing electronic message boards, especially when homes are nearby. He supports the concept of requiring a special land use permit if the amendment is adopted.

Howland will map potential properties based on the concept of minimum 2 acres and 100 feet of frontage on a major street.

Owens stated that a quick online search yielded 20 churches in town, but she is not sure how many would be eligible based on size and frontage. She likes the language Howland provided. Guzman believes that the proposed language will provide signs that work in residential neighborhoods. It is consistent with other municipalities' regulations. St. Mary's in Spring Lake is a good example of a new sign in the area.

Dennis Burns of St. Paul's Church at 1401 S Griffin St stated that the commissioners' worry about sign proliferation was unrealistic because electronic message boards are very expensive. Not all churches have the finances to buy one. St. Paul's proposes to retrofit their existing ground sign. He asked why the decision couldn't be made tonight.

McLaughlin informed Burns that such decisions affect the whole City, and it requires City Council approval to change the ordinance. This is the process the Planning Commission will follow.

Howland asked Guzman to provide shop renderings of ground signs they have installed that would

be similar to what the City is contemplating allowing.

A map of eligible properties will be reviewed at the September meeting.

**Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison Report**

Galligan reviewed the case heard by the ZBA at the July 21, 2021 meeting: approval of a lot coverage variance at 503 Fulton Avenue to add an attached mudroom and garage.

**Community Development Manager's Report**

Howland reviewed the FY20/21 annual report. She also informed the commissioners that an RFP for the master plan update will be released soon. The scope of work will be based on the Planning Commission's approved scope of work from February.

**Call to Audience – Second Opportunity** *No comments*

McLaughlin informed the commissioners that the residential density discussion would take place at the September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting if there is room in the agenda and asked the commissioners to keep September 21<sup>st</sup> open as well.

**Adjournment:**

Motion by Skelly, seconded by Beighley, to adjourn was unanimously approved by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.



Jennifer Howland

Community Development Manager