

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN  
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES



November 16, 2021

An as-needed second meeting of the Grand Haven Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Robert Grimes at 7:00 p.m. at the Grand Haven Council Chambers. On roll call, the following members were:

Present: Collin Beighley, Ryan Galligan, Eric Inlaw, Magda Smolenska, Chair Robert Grimes

Absent: David Skelly, Mike Westbrook, Tamera Owens

Also present was Jennifer Howland, Community Development Manager.

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

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**Case 21-49: An overview of proposed façade improvements to JW's Food & Spirits located at 6 N 7<sup>th</sup> St (parcel #70-03-21-357-012).**

Howland informed the commissioners that the proposed façade update did not require Planning Commission review but that the applicant wanted to bring it to them for feedback on some exterior cladding options.

Kirsten Runschke of Architektura provided an overview of the project and asked the commissioners for feedback on saving the stucco or replacing it with fiber cement board siding. The commissioners were in consensus that saving the stucco would be preferred, but that fiber cement board was a good alternative. The applicant will seek feedback from the Historic Conservation District Commission later in the week.

**Master Plan Kickoff**

Suzanne Schulz and Julie Tschirhart of Progressive AE reviewed the proposed scope of work for the master plan update. Commissioners shared their ideas of what success would look like, and what barriers might make the planning process challenging.

Smolenska said that current topics include parking, residential density, and affordable housing. She would like to see the City increase density in the downtown and allow less density as you get further out. She wants to identify ways to grow while preserving the beauty of Grand Haven. She felt that barriers to success would be balancing people's opinions.

Beighley said that success would mean collaboration and public engagement; he wants to hear from a lot of the community. He felt that a barrier would be getting people involved.

Galligan said that success would mean that the community provided input and he supports encouraging density downtown, including residential density.

Inlaw said that there is room in the township for housing and he was concerned that allowing the downtown to become overcrowded would be negative. He identified success as new businesses downtown and new activities for kids. He would like to see a beautiful anchor store, fine dining,

new money and higher tax base. He supports taking advantage of our unique waterfront.

Grimes said that success to him means a simplified process, avoiding use of acronyms and terms that the general public doesn't understand, and a diverse audience. He wants to change the mindset about affordable housing and instead focus on providing a wider range of housing prices. He identified confusion and complexity as barriers to success.

Mayor Cathy McNally, 100 Franklin Ave, said that she wants to protect what we have (greenspace, water access, historic downtown). She wants to see the aesthetics of neighborhoods protected while improving functions. She advocated for incentivizing affordable housing rather than making blanket zoning changes. McNally noted that the community is walkable but it could be improved.

Kevin McLaughlin, 407 Ohio Ave, said that the City has huge opportunities: Harbor Island, the diesel plant, and Chinook Pier. He wants to keep development in scale but recognizes that the City needs investment and growth.

Howland provided a brief summary of the 2016 master plan update, which focused on resiliency planning. The group offered ideas for engagement included QR codes on coasters at bars and restaurants, going to Mulligan's Hollow in the winter to talk to people, advertising on business windows, and placing yard signs in the community. The commissioners expressed interest in holding a joint meeting with the City Council to discuss the master plan.

The consultant will develop a community survey to verify that the community is in general alignment with the overall vision, goals and objectives of the current master plan, which will help the team understand whether the proposed level of public engagement and timeline will be sufficient.

#### **Discussion about 1021 Jackson Avenue Amendment**

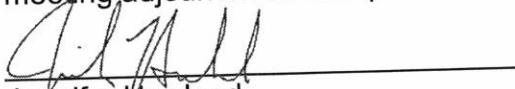
Howland informed the commissioners that Denny Dryer had submitted a proposed amendment to the approved plan for a new shopping center at 1021 Jackson Ave. The amendment would be considered a major amendment to the Planned Development, which would require reconsideration of the entire project by the Planning Commission and City Council. The commissioners agreed that it is a major amendment, not a minor amendment. Howland said that she would be reaching out to the applicant to explain the review process after she gets clarification on the medical marihuana facility land use aspect of the project from the City Attorney.

#### **Call to Audience – Second Opportunity**

Jeff Parriott, 1028 Washington Ave, is looking forward to participating in the master plan update and wants it to be a reflection of what the community values. He wants to see the consultant offer the best planning practices and challenge what we hear throughout the process. He encouraged the team to ask the community multiple times for input.

#### **Adjournment:**

Motion by Beighley, seconded by Inlaw, to adjourn was unanimously approved by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.



Jennifer Howland  
Community Development Manager