

**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
HISTORIC CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2019**

The regular meeting of the Grand Haven Historic Conservation Commission was called to order at 5:02 p.m., Thursday, September 19, 2019 by Chairperson Marsha Peterson at the City Hall Council Chambers, 519 Washington Avenue, Grand Haven, Michigan, 49417.

Roll Call of Members Present: Chairperson Marsha Peterson; Board Members Karen Casey, Bonnie Cowles, Cynthia Crane, Liza Dora, and Jane Stoepker.

Others Present: Mary Angel, Administrative Liaison; GVSU Student Faith Vlasma, Bob Monetza, Council Member.

Members Absent: None.

- 1) **Introduction of New HCDC Member and GVSU Student Guest**
Members introduced themselves and welcomed new member Karen Lowe and GVSU Student Faith Vlasma.
- 2) **Approval of the August 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes.**
Moved by Cynthia Crane, seconded by Bonnie Cowles to approve the August 15, 2019 Historic Conservation District Commission minutes. This motion carried unanimously.
- 3) **Annual Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Secretary. *Grand Haven Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Administration, Article V. Boards and Commissions, Sec. 2-76.1 Officers, terms.***
All city boards and commissions shall annually elect a presiding officer no later than the end of September. The following motions were made.
 - a. Moved by Cindy Crane, seconded by Bonnie Cowles, to elect Marsha Peterson as Chair of the Historic Conservation District Commission for the next year. This motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Moved by Karen Casey, seconded by Cindy Crane, to elect Liza Dora as Vice-Chair of the Historic Conservation District Commission for the next year. This motion carried unanimously.
 - c. Moved by Karen Lowe, seconded by Bonnie Cowles to elect Jane Stoepker as Secretary of the Historic Conservation District Commission for the next year. This motion carried unanimously.
- 4) **Consideration of Local Landmark Application**
Moved by Cindy Crane, seconded by Karen Lowe, to approve the local landmark application from Tony and Michelle Ciccantelli for the Washington Street Inn at 608 Washington, Grand Haven. This motion carried unanimously.

The process was discussed and it was noted that the applicant would be notified of the commission's acceptance of the application. The Ciccantellis would be invited to an upcoming Council Meeting to receive their local landmark designation.
- 5) **Christmas Party – December 12.**
Marsha Peterson offered to host this year's Christmas party at her home. It would be kept simple and small with just members of the Historic Conservation District Commission, administrative staff support and their spouses or guests - all were encouraged to bring a dish to pass. The committee was in favor and thanked Marsha for her offer.

6) **Lighthouse Conservancy Update.**

Cynthia Crane, HCDC Member Representative, gave a report on the Lighthouse Phase II reception that was held on Saturday, September 14 to kick off the "Inside Out Project" for the next phase of the lighthouse rehabilitation. It was a beautiful night and there were about 300 people in attendance.

7) **Tri-Cities Historical Museum (TCHM) Advisory Member Update.**

Marsha Peterson, also TCHM President, noted that the Tri-Cities Historical Museum will be holding a fundraiser on October 10, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Spring Lake Country Club in recognition of their 60th Anniversary (invitations were handed out). She also noted that there was a significant change in staff recently. Erin Pilarski, Curator of Exhibits; Kate Crosby, Curator of Education; Jared Yax, Curator of Collections (formerly of exhibits). The Museum is in a five-year process of meeting the criteria for Michigan Museum Certification.

8) **Loutit District Library Events Update.**

Members noted that the library holds several events throughout the year including cemetery tours, Artwalk and films, movies, etc. Event details can be found online at loutitlibrary.org

9) **Other Business Not on the Agenda.**

a. **Correspondence from Barb & Karl Rowe, 215 S Fourth Street**

Members acknowledged the letter received from Barb Rowe regarding the recent zoning amendment relating to fencing.

b. **Proposed Grand Trunk Depot Design Concepts**

A discussion took place regarding the most recent proposed drawings that were presented by City Manager Pat McGinnis relating to the depot building at the August Historic Conservation District Commission meeting. After that meeting the consensus was that they were more accepting of these new renderings than of earlier concepts. Questions were raised whether the drawings followed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and whether the renovations would remove the depot from the National Register of Historic Places and prevent it from being eligible for federal historic tax credits, façade and other grants. City Manager McGinnis has not yet reported back on his findings and was still looking into it.

Members commented on the Council Meeting Work Session that was held on September 16. Many of the members reiterated their concerns about the possible loss of national historic designation. Concerns were also expressed in regard to changing the size of the openings, the roof line, and being able to match up the brick work and maintain the historical façade. Upon further reflection, the consensus of the committee was that they may have responded too quickly in agreeing to a "compromise."

Chair Marsha Peterson would write a letter on behalf of the commission to City Manager McGinnis and members of Council reflecting their current viewpoint. (Attachment A).

10) **Member Resources Drop Box Link**

Staff Liaison Mary Angel noted that she sent out an email this afternoon to members containing a drop box link with resources to information for members, including the ordinance, Chapter 19, History, historic districts, landmark designation, current member lists, brochures, etc. She asked members to give her feedback on how well this might work.

11) **Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Angel
Staff Liaison

From: Marsha Peterson <petersonmarsha@ymail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 3, 2019 9:19 PM
To: Geri McCaleb <gmccaleb@grandhaven.org>; Mike Fritz <mfritz@grandhaven.org>; Josh Brugger <jbrugger@grandhaven.org>; dscott@grandhaven.org; Robert Monetza <rjmonetza@charter.net>
Cc: Cindy Crane <cicipaup@netscape.net>; Jane Stoepker <sixheaded@charter.net>; Karen Lowe <kalowe126@icloud.com>; Karen Casey <caseyk@msu.edu>; Liza Dora <lizadora2026@gmail.com>; Bonnie Cowles <bcowles65@hotmail.com>; Mary Angel <mangel@grandhaven.org>; John Martin <jmartin@loutitlibrary.org>
Subject: The Depot

Dear Mayor and Council members

I was stunned to see that a motion to approve the remodel of the depot is on the October 7 Council agenda. We as the Historic Conservation District Commission members just discussed our reluctance to approve the plans provided by City Manager McGinnis.

We desire a slower approach which would consider the real impact on it's historic designation. Our committee presented rational for keeping the windows and doors as built but replacing with clear tempered glass.

We have been cautioned that the idea of replicating the arches will not be successful nor historic and the brickwork will never look like the original.

This HCDC is asking that more research be done before approving something that will sacrifice the Depot's historic integrity. Presently, there are no financing options or real purpose for the depot that would be compromised by postponing your approval of questionable designs.

This is not a decision that should be made without verification of "best practices" for historic renovations which were presented to you by the HCDC, The DDA, and the TCHM earlier.

Please do not rush into a decision that will negatively impact our historic recognition.

Marsha Peterson
Chair, HCDC

From: Casey, Karen [mailto:caseyk@msu.edu]
Sent: Friday, October 04, 2019 11:35 AM
To: randy@michiganrag.com; 'Marsha Peterson'; Geri McCaleb; Mike Fritz; Josh Brugger; dscott@grandhaven.org; 'Robert Monetza'
Cc: 'Cindy Crane'; 'Jane Stoepker'; 'Karen Lowe'; 'Liza Dora'; 'Bonnie Cowles'; Mary Angel; 'John Martin'; Patrick McGinnis; Linda Browand
Subject: Re: The Depot

Dear Mayor McCaleb, Mayor Pro-tem Fritz and Council Members Monetza, Scott and Brugger,

As a member of the Grand Haven Historic Conservation District Commission (HCDC) and of the Preservation and Place Committee (P&PC), Grand Haven Main Street - as well as, simply, but importantly I believe, as a year-round resident of the City of Grand Haven who very much values the historic architecture and nature of the community - I am writing to echo and support the e-mails below sent to you by Marsha Peterson, HCDC Chairperson, and Randy Smith, Chairperson, P&PC. --

The City Council Meeting Agenda for Monday, October 7, 2019, states, under New Business, Item C.: "Consideration by City Council of a resolution to affirm a renovation design for the Grand Trunk Depot Building that creates a more inviting presentation and orientation toward the water by installing arched double doorways while acknowledging and respecting the historic period during which the depot served the traveling public on our waterfront." --

What is troubling to me within this statement is the phrase, "... that creates a more inviting presentation and orientation toward the water by installing arched double doorways ..."

While I respect that some may see the arched double doorways to be more inviting, there are those, myself included, who do not. I find the statement to be subjective, the view of some, but not all. Granted, the arched doorways are an improvement over earlier proposed renovation designs, but they are far from ideal. Instead, what is welcoming, and seen as necessary, to others is the preservation of the exterior of an officially recognized historic structure, one that speaks to the rich heritage of Grand Haven as once a railroad city - and one that continues to be a port community. One can indeed argue that the current view of the depot from the Waterfront offers an inviting presentation as it is - as it mirrors a time that helped build Grand Haven to the point where it is today.

In her e-mail, Marsha writes, "This is not a decision that should be made without verification of "best practices" for historic renovations which were presented to you by the HCDC, The DDA, and the TCHM earlier." She also states, "We [HCDC] have been cautioned that the idea of replicating the arches will not be successful nor historic and the brickwork will never look like the original." I wholeheartedly encourage the Council to take these statements under consideration and to defer any action regarding changing the integrity of the Depot. --

The line (whether seen as an adage or a cliché) comes to mind here, "If it's not broke, don't fix it." ... The Depot is not broken as it exists. It does need some TLC such as clear, tempered glass windows, brighter lighting and, perhaps, reconfiguration of some of the interior spaces once its full repurposing as a business and/or event/training space are/is clear. However, with its beautiful, historic, arched doorways that are already ADA compliant, the exterior facing the Waterfront of this historic Grand Haven structure does not need to be changed.

Thank you for your time in considering this letter.

Sincerely,
Karen McKnight Casey, Member
Grand Haven Historic Conservation District Commission and
Preservation and Place Committee, Grand Haven Main Street
838 S. Harbor Dr.
Grand Haven

From: Liza Dora [mailto:lizadora2026@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, October 06, 2019 11:06 AM
To: Geri McCaleb; Mike Fritz; Josh Brugger; dscott@grandhaven.org; Bob Monetza; Dennis Scott
Cc: Marsha Peterson; Casey, Karen; kalowe126@icloud.com; Cynthia Crane (cicipaup@netscape.net); Jane Stoecker (sixheaded@charter.net); Liza Dora; Bonnie Cowles; Mary Angel; John Martin (jmartin@loutitlibrary.org); Patrick McGinnis
Subject: Re: Grand Trunk Depot

Dear Mayor and City Council Members:

I am writing this letter to reiterate the concerns of my fellow Historical Conservation District Commission members. I also feel that you should table any decisions to make any exterior changes to The Grand Trunk Depot. After a lengthy discussion at our last meeting, we are concerned that any exterior changes will jeopardize the historical integrity of this 150 year old structure.

The Grand Trunk Depot building is a historical cornerstone of the rich history of our very old transportation town. According to our historical experts, at one time there were over 90 trains stopping in Grand Haven every day. It is important that we keep this building in its original form to emphasize its significance to Grand Haven history.

It is not just a building that should change to fit the needs of the downtown and waterfront. We understand that the inside can be used and changed to fit any need but the exterior must remain to emphasize that it is a train depot. Any interior use will not be inhibited by the amount or size of doors or windows. It is quite a gamble to expect that the brickwork could be matched if you make the proposed opening changes.

If you have interested investors willing to contribute to the remodel of this historical building, they are most likely interested due to the building's historical significance and/or appearance. I don't expect that any of them have asked you to tear it down in order to build the perfect building.

Please reconsider making any decisions at this time. Please consider leaving the exterior the same and only updating the necessary items to make it safe, secure, electrical compliant, HVAC upgraded and other basic interior needs. I strongly feel that the citizens of this historical town would want the building's historical appearance to remain intact. Our residents seem to appreciate the preservation of any historically significant structures, lighthouse/pier catwalk lighting as the most recent example.

Thank you for the time and consideration you have given, and will continue to give this historically significant building.

Liza Dora

Vice-Chair HCDC

October 6, 2019

Dear Mayor McCaleb, Mayor Pro-tem Fritz and Council Members Monetza, Scott and Brugger,

As a member of the *Grand Haven Historic Conservation District Commission (HCDC)* and full time resident of the City of Grand Haven, I am writing to echo my support of the e-mails sent to you by Marsha Peterson, HCDC Chairperson and others as well as that you to defer taking any action regarding changing the integrity of the Grand Trunk Depot building's exterior.

Since I am unable to make the council meeting Monday evening to voice my concerns, I would like to remind the council of two additional points:

(1) **The Grand Trunk Depot building is the anchor to our City's historic district.** According to the *US Department of Interior's National Register of Historical Places*, the depot 'anchors' our historic district: *"Anchoring the historic district on the west at the end of Washington Avenue are two important early transportation structures, the 1869-70 Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad Depot at 1 N Harbor and the 1895 Goodrich Steamship Ticket Agency building at 1S Harbor. (Section 7, p.4)*
<https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/16000584.pdf>

(2) **The depot's arched windows and doorways hold important architectural and historical significance for our community.** As you all know, the National Register helps project planners know which properties are most valuable to a community, so projects can be designed with minimal impact on those properties. It helps developers identify which parts of a building or property are most important to a community's identity and sense of value. "Built in 1870, the Grand Trunk Depot was designed in the Italianate style. Its architecturally significant features included the semicircular arched windows and regularly spaced brick pilasters. The large, decorative brackets that supported wide, overhanging eaves also were typical of the Italianate style" (SOURCE: Ewing, Wallace K. *A Directory of Building and Sites in Northwest Ottawa County*, 1999). Given that these architecturally and historically significant windows and doorways are already ADA compliant, there appears to be *no compelling reason to change the exterior*, other than replacing the windows with tempered glass.

To many of us, the Grand Trunk Depot building represents a collective past that knits us together as a community and place of character. Please defer taking any action regarding changing the integrity of the building's exterior.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Karen Lowe
Member, HCDC
kalowe126@icloud.com
92 Poplar Ridge
Grand Haven, MI 49417

From: Jane Stoepker [mailto:sixheaded@charter.net]

Sent: Saturday, October 05, 2019 7:27 AM

To: Marsha Peterson

Cc: Liza Dora; Bonnie Cowles; Cindy Crane; Karen Casey; Karen Lowe; Mary Angel; John Martin

Subject: Re: The Depot

Dear Committee members:

I am currently in Europe, so am unable to attend the Council meeting. However, what I would like to add is, I am surrounded by buildings that were built hundreds of years ago and are still in use with integrity and charm. People are still devastated by the fire that ruined a major portion of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. That will never be the same. The beauty of so much of Europe, is the history and age of their buildings and homes. It has hit me very hard as I reflect on what is being discussed for the train depot.

I encourage the council to slow down and think about the grace, history and charm the train depot adds to our community. Making everything "new" isn't always "better" We can see out the current windows just fine!

The train depot and its architecture must remain as a celebration of a day gone.

Thank you,
Jane Stoepker