

**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
HISTORIC CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 24, 2023 AT 5:00 PM
GRAND HAVEN CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
519 WASHINGTON AVENUE
GRAND HAVEN, MI 49417**

Call to order: Chair Liza Dora.

Roll call of members present: Chair Liza Dora, Vice-Chair Erik Bye, Secretary Linda Rosema, Members Chad Fisk, (vacancy) Wendy Knoth, Robyn Vandenberg and Patrick Qua.

Members absent: None.

Others present: Mary Angel, Administrative Liaison; Jeannette Weiden, Loutit District Library Representative; and Kate Crosby, Tri-Cities Museum Advisory Member; Ashley Latsch, City Manager, Tim Price, Assistant City Manager; Brian Urquhart, City Planner.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dora at 5:00 p.m.

1. General Business Call to Viewing Audience

A general business call to the viewing audience was made. Former mayor and current mayoral candidate Bob Monetza thanked the commission for their interest in the future of the building at 18-20 N Fifth Street in regard to its historical significance to Grand Haven.

2. 18-20 N 5th Street Building

- a. Historical Significance as defined by the Grand Haven Central Business District National Register of Historic Places - Chad Fisk reviewed the RFP and stated that 18-20 N. 5th St. is a contributing property to the central historic district along with City Hall (1934) and the firehouse (1935), both examples of colonial revival architecture. Part of the federal government's federal works program - WPA. City Hall has been designated a local historic landmark, but the firehouse was not.
- b. 18-20 N. 5th St. landmark status – The consensus of the commission was that it is important to save this building. Unfortunately, it was not given landmark status at the same time as City Hall. Ashley Latsch, City Manager, was receptive to adding the northern and southern walls to be included on the RFP.

Moved by Member **Fisk**, supported by **Bye**, to recommend to the City to amend the original RFP to add the northern and southern walls constructed in 1935. The motion was carried unanimously.

- c. Annex building, RFP - Correction of name/address of building on RFP. The Commission proposed to refer to the building as the "historic Grand Haven Police and Fire Department Building, 18–20 N. 5th St.," rather than the "annex."

Moved by Member **Vandenberg**, supported by Member **Bye** to recommend revising the text in the RFP referencing "annex" to be amended to the "historic Grand Haven Police and Fire Department Building, 18–20 N. 5th St." This motion was carried unanimously.

- d. Tax credit opportunities – the historic Grand Haven Police and Fire Department Building, 18–20 N. 5th St., is within the Central Historic District, and Member Fisk stated that they could obtain tax credits for 25% of renovations.

Member Fisk suggested that the commission consider proposing a text amendment to Chapter 19 of the City Ordinances for applicants within the historic districts to submit proposals to the commission for initial review for significant projects. It would be a good idea to involve the public in understanding the role of the historic commission.

3. 18-20 N. 5th St. landmark status – Continued

Further discussion was held about adding landmark status to 18-20 N. 5th St., after being advertised for sale. The commission cannot apply for landmark designation; the owner of the property would need to do this. In this, case, submission of the local landmark designation application would require Council approval; and, after the submission of the local landmark application, the commission would approve it. The commission felt that they were responsible for taking action to preserve our buildings. Bids on 18–20 N. 5th St. close on August 23, 2023.

The following motion to recommend to the City to apply for Local Landmark Status for 18-20 N 5th Street Fire Department Building:

Moved by **Fisk**, supported by **Bye**, to recommend that the City of Grand Haven apply for local landmark designation of 18-20N 5th Street based on the following facts:

1. It shares the same legacy as City Hall in that;
 - a. It was built and publicly financed at the same time as city hall during the Great
 - b. Depression (1935),
 - c. In the same style, using the same architect,
 - d. and shares the same description of importance as City Hall on the National Registry of Historic Places.
2. As one of only two contributing buildings of this era in the entire Central Historic District, any removal or demolition of the remaining structure threatens to destroy the historic district's status on the National Registry of Historic Places
3. In the spirit of Section 19 of our local ordinance, not protecting this contribution of the National Registry threatens to do harm to our City's legacy.

This motion was carried unanimously.

City Manager Latsch requested that the commission write the application for the city.

The commission set a special meeting at 10:00 a.m., August 2, 2023, at Kenzie's Be Café to draft the application for the city. Member Fisk would prepare a draft for a PowerPoint Presentation and coordinate that and the application with members Dora and Vandenburg.

The commission would like to review other city properties that may qualify for landmark status. The City would work on compiling a list of landmark buildings.

4. Second General Business Call to Viewing Audience

A general business call to the viewing audience was made. Second General business called to viewing audience five minutes, so I thanked us again for considering the importance of 18–20 N. 5th St., and its historical significance in gaining landmark status.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Linda Rosema, Secretary