A regular meeting of the Grand Haven Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Bill Ellingboe at 7:30 p.m. in the Grand Haven City Hall Council Chambers. On roll call, the following members were:

Present: Tim Deiters, Andrea Hendrick, Kevin McLaughlin, Mike Westbrook, Chair Bill Ellingboe.


Also present were Jennifer Howland, Community Development Manager and MaryAnn Poel, Administrative Assistant.

Motion by Deiters, seconded by McLaughlin, to approve the January 14, 2020 regular minutes was approved by voice vote.

Call to Audience

Rhonda Kleyn from Neighborhood Housing Services (part of the city’s Community Development Department) gave a presentation about the services her department provided. Lynne Balkema was their Housing Counselor and Nan Soper was their Housing Educator Assistant. All of their services were free except a small fee for the First Time Homebuyer program. This program helped educate about the home buying process and the class included information from a local home inspector, realtor, lender and an insurance professional. Other programs included lender referrals, homeless counseling, mortgage default prevention, the Home Purchase and Repair program (HPR), a Homeowner Rehab program (HOR), a Neighborhood Impact Program (NIP), a Neighborhood Enhancement program (NEP) and a new city program called On Bill Finance that was a means by which a homeowner who met the guidelines could finance replacing water and sewer lines. Information on Neighborhood Housing Services and the programs they provided could be found online at https://grandhaven.org/residents/housing-grants-services/. Kleyn also spoke about the need for affordable housing and that the upcoming zoning ordinance update might be an opportunity to incorporate some changes.

Case 20-01: A Public Hearing for an application for a Special Use Permit for retaining walls located at 38 Crescent Hill (parcel #70-03-29-320-002).

Howland explained this request was to remove and replace some existing retaining walls. The proposed retaining walls needed Planning Commission approval because the wall was not going to be built in the same footprint. Some of the retaining wall would exceed 4 feet in height and one wall projected above the 45 degree angle from the right-of-way as established by Section 40-327 of the Zoning Ordinance. At the work session last month Deiters had asked if engineered plans would be required and it had been determined by the building inspector that engineered plans would need to be submitted along with the building permit.
Chair Ellingboe opened the public hearing for the case.

Public Comment:
1. Joseph Skendzel, 32 Honeymoon Hill, asked if the tram that was built last year on the city sidewalk area was going to be relocated.
2. Dave Schamper, 34 Lovers Lane, stated he was in favor of it being rebuilt.
3. Ara Pridjian, 38 Crescent Hill, stated he was hoping to retire and live here and thanked the Commission for their consideration.
4. Dave Kellogg of Everett's Landscape Management, 7884 Eastern Avenue in Grand Rapids, explained that in this proposed plan, they were looking at dismantling the tram steps and pulling it about a foot away from the sidewalk. At the worksession there was a concern about that design of the wall so they took another look at it and decided to redesign it. They would now use a concrete reinforcement that used a permeable aggregate that would bond to the block and would also allow the water to flow. They were working on getting the engineering seal on the plans.

Correspondence:
None

Motion by Deiters, seconded by McLaughlin, to close the public portion of the case carried by voice vote.

McLaughlin stated all of his concerns had been addressed.

Hendrick and Westbrook also agreed.

Deiters commended him on the new design.

Chair Ellingboe had no other concerns.

Motion by McLaughlin, seconded by Deiters, to approve the Special Use Permit for retaining walls located at 38 Crescent Hill (parcel #70-03-29-320-002) based on the information submitted for review and subject to the following condition:
1. The building inspector will require a seal from a design professional prior to issuing the building permit.

The motion passed on the following roll call vote: Ayes: Hendrick, Westbrook, Deiters, McLaughlin, Chair Ellingboe. Nays: None.

Case 20-02: A request from the Board of Light and Power to defer the site plan review and sensitive areas overlay review to the zoning administrator for an expansion to the Harbor Island Substation located at 1231 North 3rd Street (parcel #70-03-20-200-013).

Rob Shelly, BLP Engineering Manager, explained there were currently 3 substations on Harbor Island. The plan was for the one due east and the smaller one to be demolished. Then the remaining building would be enlarged, with no change to the height of the existing building, and would get all new upgraded equipment. The actual power plant was going to be demolished as well.
The current plan was to start on this substation building then about June 1 start the demolition of the main power plant.

Hendrick asked if there would be any landscape changes and Shelly stated no.

Deiters asked if there would be any security gates and Shelly explained it was already a secured facility with a fence and a security guard.

Motion by McLaughlin, seconded by Westbrook, to defer the site plan review and sensitive areas overlay review to the zoning administrator for an expansion to the Harbor Island Substation located at 1231 North 3rd Street (parcel #70-03-20-200-013) carried by voice vote.

**Case 20-03: A site plan review for building and site improvements related to a change of use from Retail and Office to Residential Above Retail and Office located at 224 Washington Avenue (parcel #70-03-20-436-011).**

Howland explained that new owner Kyle Doyon was going to redevelop the old Grand Haven Jewelry building into retail space in front, office space in the rear and residential units on the second floor. He would also change the rear façade. She explained there was no on-site parking so the applicant had to request a parking exemption from Council which was approved.

Denny Dryer, 220 1/2 Washington, stated at the rear of the building there was 26 inches of rise so they would have to build a ramp in order to gain access from the rear. He stated the second floor had been empty for a very long time and the main level had been empty since the jewelry store left.

Westbrook liked the design and asked if the parking would be designated for those tenants. Howland stated it would not be designated and explained that tenants would have to purchase an overnight parking pass from the kiosk in the parking lot.

Deiters asked how garbage would be handled and Doyon stated all tenants would have to use the city dumpster.

Chair Ellingboe was pleased this would bring more residential units to the downtown.

Motion by Westbrook, seconded by Hendrick, to approve the site plan for building and site improvements related to a change of use from Retail and Office to Residential Above Retail and Office located at 224 Washington Avenue (parcel #70-03-20-436-011) based on the information submitted and subject to the following condition:

1. The maximum floor area dedicated to office use on the first floor shall be 60 percent and cannot front on Washington Avenue.

The motion passed on the following roll call vote: Ayes: McLaughlin, Hendrick, Westbrook, Deiters, Chair Ellingboe. Nays: None.

**Case 20-04: A work session to determine whether the application for a Special Use Permit for a retaining wall located at 1116 South Harbor Drive (parcel #70-03-29-154-036) is complete and ready to schedule a public hearing.**
Howland stated the wall had already been built and explained that some of the wall was located on city property with an encroachment permit.

Richard Buitenhuys of Buitenhuys Builders, 14936 Riverside Trail, stated during construction of a project next door, the owners of 1116 S Harbor hired his excavator to help with a failing wall. The wall ended up being moved to help support their existing stairway.

Hendrick asked about the work already being done and Buitenhuys stated the owners of 1112 S Harbor gave their permission for a bit of the retaining wall to be on their property because it would help support their existing stairway.

Consensus was the plan was ready to move forward.

Motion by Deiters, seconded by Hendrick, to set the public hearing for the March 11th meeting carried by voice vote.

Case 20-05: A work session to determine whether the application for a Special Use Permit for an Automobile Wash located at 832 Robbins Road (parcel #70-03-33-100-055) is complete and ready to schedule a public hearing.

Howland explained this was currently a gas station and car wash facility and the new owners propose to demolish the building and construct a larger car wash business. They also plan on splitting the property.

Steve Witte, project engineer from Nederveld, 217 Grandville Ave SW Ste 302, Grand Rapids, stated that Quality Car Wash (QCW) was based in Holland and there was a purchase agreement in place for this property. He stated they planned to rebuild a 5,200 sq ft building, narrow the east drive, the traffic pattern would be similar to what it was now, there would be 5 parking spaces along the building and 10 vacuum spaces along the Beacon frontage. They hoped to be able to reuse the existing sign but it was in the MDOT right-of-way so they would have to get approval for that to remain. The oil change building would remain. He explained that several variances were being requested and that hearing was next week before the ZBA. Depending on the outcome of that meeting they may end up needing to make a few changes to their plan before the public hearing. They were working on meeting the 60% transparency. They currently had 58% on the east side but only 10% on the north side. Three parking spaces and the dumpster would be shared with the oil change business.

McLaughlin stated his only concern was stockpiling going into the car wash.

Hendrick asked if they were removing the gas tanks and Witte stated yes and an environmental study had been ordered.

Deiters asked what the hours would be and Witte replied 6am to 9pm 7 days a week.

Westbrook and Deiters stated it was ready to move forward.

Chair Ellingboe pointed out the Planning Commission did not have the authority to lessen the transparency requirement so that would have to be met.
Witte stated that the north side was going to be problematic.

Howland suggested they get more information regarding the vacuums and also some pictures for the ZBA meeting.

Chair Ellingboe asked if there were going to be changes he would appreciate the Commission getting those as soon as possible before the next meeting.

Motion by Westbrook, seconded by McLaughlin, to set the public hearing for the March 11th meeting carried by voice vote.

ZBA Liaison Report – There was no meeting last month.

Community Development Manager’s Report
Howland reported they would be getting a draft from the zoning consultants very soon. Her plan was for the Commission to review it and give some comments, then she’ll send those back to the consultants for another draft. After that the Commission could go through a section or two at a time for a deeper review. She stated it might be a good idea to have some conversations about transparency and the possibility of adjusting amounts for corner properties.

Adjournment:
Motion by Deiters, seconded by McLaughlin, to adjourn was unanimously approved by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

MaryAnn Poel
Administrative Assistant
Community Development Department