

CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN
SPECIAL MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

May 19, 2020



A special electronic meeting of the Grand Haven Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Bill Ellingboe at 7:01 p.m. via Zoom. On roll call, the following members were:

Present: Tim Deiters, Ryan Galligan, Bob Grimes, Andrea Hendrick, Kevin McLaughlin, David Skelly, Mike Westbrook, Chair Bill Ellingboe.

Absent: Kirsten Runschke.

Also present were Jennifer Howland, Community Development Manager, Jeremy Swiftney, MSDDA Executive Director, and Zac VanOsdol, Human Resources Manager

Call to Audience – first opportunity (no comments)

Approval of Procedures for Electronic Remote Meetings

Ellingboe verified that the document referenced YouTube and/or Facebook in the event one or both platforms are used.

Motion by McLaughlin, seconded by Westbrook, to approve the Procedures carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Case 20-13: Proposed text amendments to the Grand Haven zoning ordinance related to regulations governing business operations such as but not limited to sidewalk cafes and temporary use permits in an effort to aide businesses in the transition back to full operation following the pandemic.

Howland provided an overview of the proposed text amendments.

Ellingboe opened the public hearing. Bob Monetza, 945 Washington Avenue, asked that language be added to ensure that approvals of these temporary uses not grant legal nonconforming status to uses/structures in the future. The commissioners agreed that was important to include.

Motion by Deiters, seconded by McLaughlin, to close the public hearing carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Deiters requested that the Planning Commission be notified of approvals and Howland stated that was covered in the text amendment. Skelly asked whether the old language would be referenced in the future in the event the text amendment was to be reversed. Howland confirmed that former versions of the Zoning Ordinance would be kept on record.

Howland confirmed that the sidewalk café administrative review was proposed to be a permanent change. Grimes asked if staff was comfortable with the approval authority. Howland

confirmed that staff was comfortable with the approach because it would be a team effort across several departments. The conditions for exception approval in Section 40-111.01.E also clarify the review process.

Jeremy Swiftney, Main Street DDA Executive Director, said that the DDA was appreciative of the proposed changes, felt it was a positive step, and that no specific requests had been received yet. Hendrick mentioned that it sounded like the State Liquor Control Commission was also reviewing proposed changes to designate certain consumption areas, so they were also heading in a good direction.

The commissioners discussed whether to reference COVID or calendar year 2020 in the text amendment and reached consensus to not reference either and instead reference any declared local, state or federal emergency.

Motion by Hendrick, seconded by Deiters, to recommend approval of the proposed text amendments, with the reference to calendar year 2020 removed, the reference to any declared disaster added, and with the addition that any approvals made during these emergency situations would not create a legally nonconforming use or structure carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Case 20-09: Zoning Ordinance Update

Ellingboe asked the commissioners to provide comments on Articles 5, 6, and 8, as well as any other comments they wished to discuss.

Article V Comments

Deiters said that he did not realize that Southside was restricted to Franklin Avenue for new short term rentals. Howland explained that the City Council adopted that language several years ago, although it may not have been what the Planning Commission had recommended. The reference in Section 40-513 was not a new regulation but just a restatement of a regulation found in Article IV. Ellingboe encouraged the public to reach out to the City Council members if they wished to open up the short term rental discussion again.

Hendrick asked about requiring or incentivizing ground floor commercial when considering commercial parking facilities to ensure an attractive street front. McLaughlin said the proposed uses would depend on the developer, land and other factors and indicated that the City should not be in the business of constructing parking garages because they are a money pit. Howland explained that our zoning ordinance is not currently set up to incentivize things outside of the Planned Development process. Howland pointed out that the CB District does allow for a 5th story to be added if there is internal parking provided.

Deiters asked about why Bed & Breakfast Establishments have a limit on number of days. Howland will look into that and get back to the group.

Hendrick asked if the hours of operation for a Commercial Daycare should be omitted so businesses can have flexibility. The consensus was that the language does allow for evening hours but gives the commission an opportunity to restrict them somewhat to be considerate of the surrounding land uses.

Ellingboe asked why Golf Course was eliminated; Howland stated it was an unlikely land use in

the city limits. McLaughlin suggested that Refuse Incineration also be eliminated. Ellingboe asked about considering allowing Retail in Old Town in more areas, as the special use regulation restricts it to certain street segments, rather than all Key Street Segments. He was looking forward to public input on that concept. Hendrick recommended involving DPW and Harbor Transit in that discussion related to future fixed transit routes and other infrastructure.

Article VI

Deiters requested that residential driveway 9 ft x 20 ft aprons be permitted to go to the side property line, and he suggested that a rolled curb could provide some stormwater management. Howland explained that the 3 foot setback provided space to open a car door, walk past the vehicle, and also reflected the same setback we require for accessory structures. Grimes thought the setback would also help with snow removal and stormwater management. McLaughlin agreed with Deiters that it should be eliminated. Deiters also asked that the regulations be reviewed to ensure that Accessory Dwelling Units would have adequate access.

Hendrick requested that the team consider including some impervious surface regulations, especially given current flooding concerns. Ellingboe recommended reviewing the Homeowners Guidebook for ideas. Howland said she'd work with the consultant on some ideas.

Skelly requested that bicycle parking waivers include some guidance for the commission to apply to requests. Howland said she would work on that.

Ellingboe suggested that driveway regulations be relaxed to help those properties that don't have adequate off street parking. He said the minimum 18 foot wide driveway for all properties was a helpful addition. Howland said that the Zoning Board of Appeals would be an avenue for unique properties, and that Public Safety reviews winter on-street parking requests annually.

Article VII

Westbrook asked why the Catalpa tree was not permitted; Howland said it was messy.

Deiters asked why fences were limited to 6 feet in height. Grimes said a taller fence could ruin someone's view and suggested that landscaping could give people more privacy. Howland also suggested that the ZBA would be an option for unique properties.

Westbrook inquired about the reason for downgrading parking lot screening. Howland explained that staff felt there should be a distinction between screening requirements for compatible land uses and incompatible land uses, and that dense screening interferes with business visibility.

Other Comments

Hendrick asked if parking requirements could be altered depending on what zoning district you were in, stating that parking needs for businesses were different between Beacon, Beechtree, and downtown. Perhaps similar districts could be grouped together and provided with alternate parking requirements.

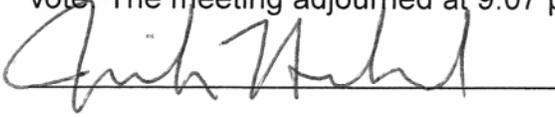
Ellingboe asked what the process was moving forward. Howland said she would work through all comments with Williams & Works and post revised chapters on the website. Additional public engagement efforts would be made before a public hearing was scheduled.

Call to the Audience – second opportunity

Howland read one comment from the YouTube feed. Laura LeBlanc Girard from Surf Shop at 16 Washington Avenue thanked the commission for allowing small businesses more options to think outside the box to help businesses survive.

Adjournment:

Motion by McLaughlin, seconded by Grimes, to adjourn was unanimously approved by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Howland", written over a horizontal line.

Jennifer Howland
Community Development Manager