



City of Grand Haven Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

Thursday March 26, 2026, called to order at 5:31 p.m.

City Hall [519 Washington Grand Haven, MI 49417]

The Highlights:

The regular meeting of the Grand Haven Human Relations Commission was called to order by Comm. Mendiola-Suarez at 5:31 p.m. in the council chamber of Grand Haven City Hall [519 Washington Ave. Grand Haven, MI 49417]

Commission Members present: Amber Mendiola-Suarez, Amanda Pretzer, Cara Mazure, John Siemion, Steve TerMolen, Steffi Thayer, Luke Kulikamp, Paige Howland, Estrellita Bazuin

Commission Members absent:

Community Members present: Ashley Latsch, City of Grand Haven Liaison

1. Upon the presentation of the Agenda, Comm. Siemion motioned to approve said agenda with Comm. Pretzer seconding the motion, approved by majority vote .
2. Upon the presentation of the February meeting Minutes, Comm. Pretzer motioned to approve said meeting minutes with Comm. Siemion seconding the motion, approved by majority vote.
3. Welcome Student Commissioner Paige Howland
4. A welcome call to the audience is made by Comm. Mendiola-Suarez.
 - a. No audience members
5. Welcome Guests
 - a. Kate Maver – Friendship Bench Coordinator from Momentum Center
 - i. A way to help people find someone to listen and talk to
 - ii. 13 volunteers so far trained in active listening and basic problem-solving skills
 - iii. Not therapy, just listeners
 - iv. Grand Haven will be part of a very small number of Friendship Benches in the United States
 - v. Located at Loutit Library, Spring Lake Library, there will be a schedule posted at the library and in the newspaper
 - vi. Reduces feelings of loneliness and depression within 6 months of starting the program
 - vii. Not a literal bench, could just be a couple chairs at the library or a booth at a restaurant during off hours

- viii. 27 hours of training required, volunteers will volunteer 8 hours a month with 1 hour of check-in
 - ix. Looking for more places that could hold space for this program
 - x. Volunteers have resource sheets to hand out, and notify those utilizing the Friendship Bench that conversations are confidential unless there is a concern for harm to self or others, at which point emergency services would be contacted
- 6. Liaison Report
 - a. No report
- 7. Old Business:
 - a. Kate Maver (Friendship Bench Coordinator)
 - i. See 5.a.
 - b. Remaining signatures for the Code of Conduct
 - c. Volunteers to read the remaining Proclamations
 - i. Lita – Mental Health Awareness
 - ii. Cara – Child Abuse Prevention
 - iii. John - Pride
 - d. Recap on Women’s History Month Event
 - e. Mental Health Awareness Month Potential Collaboration
 - i. Prom with a Purpose May 15th
 - f. Approval of April, May, and June’s Proclamations
 - i. Motion to approve Child Abuse Prevention and Pride Proclamations by Comm. Siemion, seconded by Comm. Kulikamp, motion approved by majority vote.
 - ii. Mental Health Awareness tabled to next month
 - g. Approval of Welcome Packet
 - i. Motion to approve addition “Section Two” language to page 3 of packet by Comm. Bazuin, seconded by Comm. Pretzer, motioned approved by majority vote.
 - h. Resource list for the City’s website
 - i. Comm. Bazuin creating list
 - i. Commissioner ending terms
 - i. Comm. Thayer will end June 2026
 - ii. Comm. Mendiola-Suarez will end June 2026
 - iii. Comm. Siemion will end June 2026
- 6. New Business:
 - a. Potential Kids Food Basket Event
 - i. Food drive
 - ii. Bag coloring event
 - iii. Sidewalk decorating for awareness months
 - iv. July 2026?
 - b. New ideas

- i. Child Abuse Prevention Month, pinwheel planting at Loutit Library next Tuesday March 31st 11:30am, display inside
 - ii. Comm. Siemion discussed flow of HRC Google Drive to preserve order and efficiency going forward.
 - iii. Swag for HRC for events like Pride to give out, barrier is that there is no budget, could ask for donations
 - iv. Purple Heart event August 7th
 1. HRC could volunteer at event
 2. Comm. Kulikamp volunteering to lead
 - v. Coast Guard Parade
 1. Comm. Kulikamp volunteering to lead
7. A second call is made to the audience by Comm. Mendiola-Suarez.
 - a. No audience members
8. Motion to adjourn by Comm. Siemion, seconded by Comm. Mazure, approved by majority vote at 6:50pm.
9. The next Human Relations Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday April 23rd, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes submitted by Comm. Amanda Pretzer **3-26-26**