

**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN  
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026**



The regular meeting of the Grand Haven Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Ryan Galligan at 7:00 pm. Upon roll call, the following members were present:

**Present:** Amy Kozanecki, Vice-Chair Joe Pierce, Dan Borchers, Chair Ryan Galligan, Tamera Owens, David Skelly, Magda Smolenska,

**Absent:** Jennifer Smelker

**Also Present:** City Planner Brian Urquhart, Mayor Bob Monetza, and members of the public.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by **Skelly**, seconded by **Smolenska**, to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2025 meeting.

All ayes. **Motion passes.**

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion by **Pierce**, seconded by **Smolenska**, to approve the agenda as written.

All ayes. **Motion passes.**

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**Call to the Audience: First Opportunity**

None

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**Public Hearing**

- A. Case 25-34: An application for a zoning change request from TI, Transitional Industrial District to PD, Planned Development District and associated Preliminary Development Plan for a mixed-use development at 1500 Kooiman St. (parcel #70-03-28-301-019).**

Urquhart presented the case. Denny Dryer of Dryer Architectural has submitted a request for a zoning change from TI, Transitional Industrial to PD, Planned Development District and a Preliminary Development Plan for a mixed-use development at 1500 Kooiman Ave. (parcel #70-03-28-301-019). Per Sec. 40-421.02, a Planned Development District can be considered in any part of the city. This request is primarily a rezoning to a PD. The site plan for 12 condominium units in two buildings at 1500 Kooiman St. was approved in September 2024. The Planning Commission approved an amended site plan during the July 2025 meeting.

Urquhart stated that Mr. Dryer approached the Planning Commission during public comment at the September 9th meeting, stating that the 1500 Kooiman project is proceeding well, however, there is difficulty for buyers to obtain affordable and reasonable mortgages. He states that by rezoning to PD, the land will not be zoned industrial anymore and therefore, Fannie Mae and Freddy Mac can purchase the mortgages without special arrangements.

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Urquhart also stated that there is no request to remove the sensitive area overlay. That's going to remain. This plan is almost identical to what was approved in July 2025 except for this portion where you go from traditional zoning to a plan development. According to Sec. 40-421.02, PD Districts are allowed for any portion of the city. However, as a condition of rezoning to PD, the applicant must demonstrate that the PD will result in a recognizable and substantial benefit to the ultimate users and occupants of the project, and to the community. Mr. Dryer states the benefit is buyers would be able to obtain an affordable and reasonable mortgage and is now proposing a public wetland viewing area in the southeast section of the development. The development will be comprised of owner-occupied condominiums under jurisdiction of a homeowner's association. The plan calls for removal of the existing asphalt public sidewalk along Kooiman St., replaced with concrete sidewalk. A public wetland viewing area can be considered a community benefit to the public and users of the development. By way of example, the 233 Washington Hotel PD was approved with the condition provided the area commonly known as "Sherwood Forest" remain open and accessible to the public for the duration of the Planned Development. In the Grand Landing PD, the applicant provided a public accessible kayak launch on the Grand River.

Last month, during the conversation, some members expressed concern over the applicability of the small observation deck on the wetland area. However, some other members agree that the planned development is an appropriate rezoning choice and that this portion of the city is in a transitional phase and development should be encouraged.

Urquhart stressed that there is a recognizable and defined public benefit should this be recommended for approval and reminded Commissioners that they have done this before in previous plan development requests such as Sherwood Forest, at the Hotel Plan development, and then also with the public parking at the planned development over there by First and Harbor Dr.

Urquhart stated a loan comparison was included in Commissioner's packets. The loan comparison shows that there's the conventional residential mortgage at our interest rate of six and versus a commercial lending loan at 7.5%; both over 30 years with a 400,000 purchase for a property with a downpayment of \$48,000 and \$40,000. The monthly payment for the commercial loan as it is under currently according to the applicant is \$407 a month and during the duration of the loan it totals out to \$146,000 greater.

As of the date of this memo, staff has received 5 emails regarding the PD, all in favor of the zoning change to Planned Development, particularly the addition of a wetland viewing area.

**Chair Galligan** opened the public hearing at 7:08 p.m.

Todd Anthes, 500 Montague St. – stated that while this is a zoning request change it is different than most zone changes because this is a planned development which is project based but it is overlay in nature and it's meant to aid not only the general public but also the end user and the developer in making a viable development. The end users are telling us that they cannot get financing for these. Not only can they not afford the increase mortgage, but they cannot find a financing period. We have potential buyers who will back out if they cannot get conventional residential mortgage financing. Also stated that this project and the rezoning is completely consistent with the Master Plan that was created in 2023.

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Motion by **Owens**, seconded by **Smolenska**, to close the public hearing.  
All ayes. Public Hearing closed at 7:18 p.m.

Commissioners:

Borchers: stated that there are different feelings regarding this area that is currently a vacant lot, and the Master Plan has opened this door regardless of how anyone feels about it. He also asked a clarifying question regarding something that was in the packet.

Kozanecki stated concerns about changing the approved project because it has already been approved by the Planning Commission board. She questioned if enough research has been done to know for sure if changing this classification will make any difference in end users securing mortgage finance. She also stated that she does not believe the wetland overlook is enough of a public benefit with the mortgages.

Owens stated her support for this change simply because this change follows the Master Plan.

Smolenska stated that as far as the project goes, regardless of the financing, this zone change fits.

Skelly concurred with Smolenska.

Vice-Chair Pierce asked for a project update and asked if this re-zone was approved and if the mortgages still could not be financed would the project stop. He also stated concerns with changing to PD when the project is already approved along with concerns that the wetlands overlook is not enough to qualify as a public benefit.

Dennis Dryer, 220 1/2 Washington Ave, answered commissioner Pierce's question regarding a project update and what would happen to the project if mortgages cannot be financed.

Chair Galligan stated that it seems the primary reason for the rezone is for financial reasons due to an oversight on the developer's side and that it is not enough of a reason to re-zone the property to a PD.

Skelly reiterated his support and urged his fellow commission members to be careful around using the public benefit language and to compare the public benefit of the wetland overlook with the public benefit of other PD projects that they have seen over the past year or so.

Kozanecki reiterated her previous comments.

Urquhart reminded commissioners that we are just recommending the re-zone to City Council. The finer details regarding the public and the viewing platform along with possibly other regulations or provisions can be put in the final development plan when we move forward later.

Motion by **Skelly**, seconded by **Owens**, to recommend approval of Case 25-34 to City Council, an application for a zoning change request from TI, Transitional Industrial District to PD, Planned Development District and associated Preliminary Development Plan for a mixed-use

development located at 1500 Kooiman St. (parcel #70-03-28-301-019). Based on the information submitted for review and subject to the following conditions:

1. The wetland viewing platform in the corresponding area shall always remain available and open to the public. The applicant shall submit a complete installation, maintenance, and preservation plan to the City prior to final development plan approval which shall be duly recorded in the Master Deed of the Homeowners Association.
2. All conditions approved in Planning Commission cases 24-30 and 25—23 shall remain.

And the following findings of fact:

1. All standards found in Section 40-421.06 are met.

Roll Call Vote.

Yeas: Skelly, Smolenska, Owens, Borchers,

Nays: Kozanecki, Pierce Galligan

**Motion passed**

**B. Case 26-01: A special land use for a drive through business at 1319 S. Beacon Blvd. (parcel #70-03-28-302-008).**

Urquhart presented the case. Ken Prins, of Midwest Construction Group, on behalf of property owner JRB Corporation, has submitted a special land use permit application and site plan review application to include a drive-through at Russ' Restaurant at 1319 S. Beacon Blvd. (parcel #70-03-28-153-001). A drive-through facility is permitted in the Commercial district as a special land use per Sec. 40-414.02. B.

Urquhart stated that Russ' currently has a large expansive parking lot with access off of Beacon Blvd. They are proposing to carve away the landscape island on the south side and build out a four by six service window where traffic would come through for the drive-through window. They will continue to have dine-in services. The plan includes having an island where the menu board would sit and traffic would circulate around the building counterclockwise to order and pick up food on the south side of the building. The landscape island is shown to be protected by a curb and bollards. Only a menu board sign is shown. No natural landscape plantings are shown.

Urquhart stated there are standards in section 40-521 that discuss drive-through facilities. The first standard is that automobile queuing shall be separated from other off street and on-site traffic patterns. The plan does not show any major changes to the building. There would be about a four by six service drive-through window addition that would accommodate drive-through traffic.

The second standard is that pedestrian areas shall be clearly marked. The site plan does not include any indication of where pedestrians would enter and exit the restaurant where the vehicle traffic would cause conflict. It shows that there's an employee door that would be used for employees walk out and deliver food to the customers waiting in the appropriate noted parking spaces.

The third standard is that the drive-through lane shall be designed to accommodate a full-size passenger vehicle pulling a recreational vehicle trailer. The drive-through lane contains an aisle

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with about ten feet with a turning radius of about 17.3 feet. This does appear on the calculations by the engineers that would accommodate this vehicle with an RV trailer behind it.

The fourth standard is that vehicle stacking areas for the drive-through facility are adequate to handle the highest volume likely at the facility without encroaching in the public right-of-way or the drive aisles or any parking or pedestrian area on site. The plan calls for removing nine parking spaces from the west and creating an area that would be striped "no parking." The entire circulation and parking would be able to traverse around the building, including fire trucks and delivery trucks as shown on the site plan. This is a very large parcel so no vehicles will encroach in the drive aisle of public right-of-way. Urquhart urged the applicant to share with the Planning Commission expected wait times so that they can be aware if there will be backups.

The fifth standard is that any commercial establishment with a drive-through facility which adjoins a property zoned or used for residential purposes shall be effectively screened from view from such property. All properties near Russ' are zoned commercial.

The sixth standard is that the proposed site shall front upon a paved public street and all ingress and egress shall be from said street. This says Russ' takes access existing from egress and ingress from South Beacon Blvd. The egress and ingress will not experience any changes at this time.

Finally, the seventh standard is that outdoor speakers for the drive-through establishment shall be located in a way that minimizes sound transmission toward adjacent property and results in sound levels of less than sixty decibels at any property line. The applicant should provide details when applying for the necessary building and electrical permits to ensure levels are below 60 decibels.

Urquhart stated some parking spaces would be relocated or removed. The restaurant currently requires 62 parking spaces. However, there are 117 parking spaces. The applicant will remove 15 spaces, which will allow for 9 stacking spaces and 4 parking spaces will be reserved for after order waiting area. The total of 102 spaces meet our ordinance for dining room services.

Urquhart also stated that there are no changes to the dumpster enclosure, or the lighting shown. Delivery and garbage trucks would still be able to back up into the area. However, it is recommended that directional signs or arrows should be installed to direct vehicles through the drive-through lane in the parking lot.

At the time of this memo, the city has not received any public correspondence.

**Chair Galligan** opened the public hearing at 7:50 p.m.

No one spoke.

Motion by **Skelly**, seconded by **Smolenska**, to close the public hearing.

All ayes. Public Hearing closed at 7:51 p.m.

Commissioners:

Owens had no concerns with this.

Smolenska stated no issues.

Kozanecki stated no issues; it's a great project.

Skelly asked questions regarding removal of parking spaces and clarification of where the pull up spots will be. He also inquired about how many of their other locations have a drive-through.

The applicant answered Skelly's questions and mentioned wait times will be dependent on the food that is ordered but is not worried about it causing backups.

Pierce stated no issues.

Chair Galligan stated no issues.

Motion by **Pierce**, seconded by **Borchers**, to approve case 26-01, a request for special land use and site plan review for a drive thru at 1319 S. Beacon Blvd. (parcel #70-03-28-302-008), subject to the following conditions:

1. All conditions of the BLP, Fire Marshal, and DPW are met.

Roll Call Vote.

Yeas: Kozanecki, Borchers, Owens, Skelly, Smolenska, Pierce, Galligan

Nays: None.

**Motion passed**

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## **New Business**

### **Centertown Vision Plan update**

Urquhart presented an update regarding information and invitations to commissioners to attend a public open house happening during Wine about Winter at 707 Event Center. This open house gives the public the opportunity to discuss what they want to see in Centertown, what defines it, etc. Feedback from this event along with a community survey will eventually help to update the Master Plan.

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## **Old Business**

None

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### **Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison Report**

Kozanecki presented a ZBA update. They had two cases. One was on the one hundred block of Howard and was regarding a rear yard setback. The ZBA approved the setback for a garage.

The second case was regarding Earth's Edge's sign. Their case was originally brought to the ZBA about a year ago for a sign and it was approved but they needed a letter from MDOT, which they would not provide, so instead Earth's Edge moved the sign back so the sign is now on Earth's Edge's property, but it overhangs on the MDOT right of way and required reapproval from the ZBA. This case was approved by the ZBA.

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### City Planner Report

Urquhart presented. He stated he has received the construction plans for the hotel at Third and Washington. He also stated that we are coming up on the year date of when the City Council approved Grand Landings plan development and is hoping to speak with them soon about moving forward. Chinook Pier is also moving along although they are not quite at the level of providing drawings for the Planning Commission to review.

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### Call to the Audience: Second Opportunity

Mayor Bob Monetza, 945 Washington Ave, stated that TI or Transitional Industrial District was created because the Industrial area was changing to include residential and retail spaces. He suggested commissioners may consider changing the name of Transitional Industrial to Transitional Mixed-Use or something similar if needed.

Borchers asked a question regarding the two big AC condenser units by the post office that do not seem to meet ordinance.

Urquhart responded and stated that he will do a site plan inspection.

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Motion by **Kozanecki**, seconded by **Skelly**, to Adjourn.  
All Ayes. **Motion Passed.**

**Chair Galligan** adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.



Brian Urquhart, City Planner