

**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2025**



A regularly meeting of the Grand Haven Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Dora at 7:00 pm. Upon roll call, the following members were present:

Present: Dan Borchers, Amy Kozeneki, David Skelly, Jennifer Smelker, Vice-Chair Ryan Galligan, Chair Mike Dora

Absent: Magda Smolenska, Tamera Owens, Joe Pierce

Also Present: City Planner Brian Urquhart, Assistant City Manager Dana Kollwehr, Mayor Bob Monetza and members of the public.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by **Skelly**, seconded by **Smelker**, to approve the minutes of the January 14th meeting.
All ayes. **Motion passes.**

Approval of Agenda

Motion by **Smelker**, seconded by **Vice Chair Galligan**, to approve the agenda with the following changes:
Move item C -Case 25-08 under new business to item A.
All ayes. **Motion passes.**

Call to the Audience: First Opportunity
None

New Business

Case 25-08: An overview of proposed façade improvements to VerDuin's located at 623 Washington Ave. (parcel #70-03-21-352-011).

Urquhart introduced the case. Kirsten Runschke of Architecture, on behalf of property owner Mike VerDuin, submitted a site plan application for proposed façade improvements to the building located at 623 Washington Ave. (parcel #70-03-21-352-011). Due to the fact the proposed changes will result in an improvement to the conformity of building transparency and mix of exterior cladding materials in the NMU District, the zoning administrator has the authority to approve the application per Sec. 40-115.09.A. However, the applicant would like the Planning Commission's comment on the facade, therefore the request will be brought before the Commission.

In May 2023, the front wall at 623 Washington Ave. was failing, and the existing brick at the top of the wall was in danger of falling, creating a public safety concern. The building official approved the removal of the brick, and the installation of wall frame attached the roof structure. The repair was intended to be

temporary, including the vinyl signage. After reviewing various designs, Mr. VerDuin has elected to move forward with the permanent improvement to the façade. There will be no change to the interior floor plan. The front façade will include new windows, doors, and replacement of the brick and siding. In the NMU District, the minimum ground floor transparency is 60%. The new windows and doors will increase the transparency from 28% to 56%, nearing conformity with Sec. 40-411.02.G. The brick will be replaced with lighter color brick along the bottom 1/3rd of the wall. The existing horizontal lap siding will remain. Smartside smooth panel siding will match the existing siding in the middle of the front façade between the windows. No lighting is proposed, nor will there be any improvements to the sidewalk.

Staff is requesting the Planning Commission provide feedback on the proposed façade improvements before the applicant applies for a building permit. No formal motion is necessary.

Applicant was present and available for questions.

Commissioners did not have any questions for applicant, and felt this would be a big improvement for Centertown.

Case 25-06: Consideration of a new public parking lot off Beechtree St. (parcel #70-03-22-351-014)

Urquhart presented the case. Leah Bectel of *Abonmarche* submitted a site plan review application for the resurfacing and expansion of the existing Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) parking lot. The project will also include an additional parking lot at the end of Washington Ave. to provide parking for the Beechtree Corridor.

The Site Plan calls for removing the existing trees, stumps, and pavement south of the WWTP parking lot. The new parking lot will consist of 25 parking spaces, with two ADA accessible spaces. The WWTP parking lot has 21 spaces, with two ADA accessible. Also included are four parallel parking spaces off Washington located in front of Sporty's Bar and Grill at 6 S. Beechtree St. A marked crosswalk will connect the parking lot with the existing sidewalk on both sides of Washington Ave. The WWTP has met with neighboring businesses and property owners, all of which were in favor of the parking lot.

The parking area will be illuminated by two light poles 16 ft. in height located in the center and southern portion in the parking lot. The light fixtures will feature 100% horizontal cut off to comply with Sec. 40-317. Although not required, no bicycle racks or electric vehicle charging spaces are shown. The site plan application does note that city staff will plant trees in the parking lot following completion of the project.

Per Sec. 40-115.02 D of the Zoning Ordinance, the Dept. of Public Works requests the Grand Haven Planning Commission acknowledge this facility improvement and expansion project and defer the site plan review to the City Planner for the following reasons:

- 1.) *The project will result in a planned improvement and expansion of an existing use.*
- 2.) *The project will not significantly change the nature of the public use.*

Applicant Leah Bectel and Assistant City Manager Dana Kollwehr were both present.

Kollwehr mentioned that the capacity for EV chargers will be included and bike racks will be installed.

Borchers and Kozeniecki did not have any questions and would be in favor of the bike racks included. Skelly also echoed the sentiments and wanted to verify there would not be special parking permits or overnight parking.

Kollewehr mentioned the plan would monitor how the public would use the parking lot; however, there would not be any permits or overnight parking.

Smelker, Vice-Chair Galligan, and Chair Dora all agree this would be a great plan and would help with the additional parking for the east end.

Motion by **Vice-Chair Galligan** seconded by **Smelker** to approve Case 25-06 consideration of a new public parking lot off Beechtree St. (parcel #70-03-22-351-014) project and defer the site plan review to the City Planner for the following reasons:

- 1.) *The project will result in a planned improvement and expansion of an existing use.*
- 2.) *The project will not significantly change the nature of the public use.*

Roll call vote. Yeas: Skelly, Kozeniecki, Smelker, Borchers, Vice-Chair Galligan, Chair Dora.

Motion passed.

Case 25-07: Noto's PD Final Development Plan at 1223 S. Harbor Dr. (parcel #70-03-29-312-004)

Urquhart presented the case. In late 2024, Greg Gurney of *Bear Sign Company* approached the city regarding an additional sign on the south wall at Noto's at the Bil Mar. The primary reason to attract attention to motorists traveling north on S. Harbor Dr. The applicant justifies the additional sign will improve safety, and there is no practical location for a ground sign.

At the October 8th, 2024, meeting, the Planning Commission determined the sign was a major change. After holding a public hearing at the November 11, 2024 meeting, the planning Commission made a recommendation to approve the preliminary plan for the sign, but restrict the sign to be non-illuminated.

In coordination with Sec. 40-421.08, the Planning Commission shall make a determination of the final development plan. In this case, the final development plan is identical to the preliminary development plan. Should the final development plan be approved, the applicant can apply for the necessary sign, building, and electrical permits.

No additional public comments were made.

Applicant was present. Borchers, Skelly, Smelker, Vice-Chair Galligan, and Chair Dora affirmed approval.

Kozeniecki had no comment.

Motion by **Skelly**, seconded by **Vice-Chair Galligan**, to approve Case 25-07, an amendment to Noto's Planned Development for a sign on the south wall and the associated final development plan located at 1223 S. Harbor Dr. (parcel #70-03-29-312-003).

Roll call vote. All ayes. **Motion passed.**

Case 25-09: Pre-public hearing for multiple-family dwelling at 1445 Columbus Ave. (parcel #70-03-21-477-017)

Urquhart presented the case. Joe Westerbeke of Eng. Engineering and Survey submitted a request for a pre-public hearing for a proposed multiple-family dwelling at 1445 Columbus Ave. (parcels #70-03-21-477-017 & #70-03-21-447-016). The total lot area of the development is 0.86 acres. A multiple-family dwelling is permitted by special land use in the Transitional Industrial (TI) district per Sec. 40-419.02.B.

Recently, a preliminary plan review was held with the city, in which the Building Official, Fire Marshal, Dept. of Public Works and Board of Light & Power did not have any major concerns. The proposed height, lot coverage, exterior design, and access management all met the standards in the TI district. However, the applicant did express a concern over parking requirements. Per Sec. 40-604.03, a multiple-family dwelling requires two spaces per dwelling unit. The applicant is proposing 58 total off-street spaces, with 30 covered spaces on the first floor of the building, and 28 surface spaces along the west and north side of the building. The request is a reduction of 16 spaces from the required 74 spaces.

	Total Dwelling Units	Total Spaces
Required off-street parking	37	74
Requested off-street parking	37	58

The applicant is requesting consideration of a similar approach to multiple-family residential parking the City of Traverse City utilizes, which requires a maximum of 1 space per unit. Although a different local jurisdiction, the applicant believes there is merit to reasonable parking exemptions, in which the parking spaces required are determined by the type of dwelling unit, not just the same amount regardless of unit size. The preliminary floor plan includes:

Dwelling Type	# of units	Proposed parking per unit	Total
Efficiency Units	16	1	16
One-bedroom	19	1	19
Two-bedroom	2	2	4
Total			39

Granting one parking space per efficiency and one-bedroom units, and keeping two-family dwelling at two spaces each, would equate to 39 total spaces.

Section 40-604.02 grants waivers and reductions for parking. The applicant correctly notes a 20% reduction may be permitted by the Planning Commission for a use located within 800 ft. of a year round transit stop.

A year round transit stop located at the corner of Beechtree and Fulton, approximately 300 ft. away. This

reduction could result in 15 spaces.

Sec. 40-604.02.C grants a reduction of 1 space per 4 covered or uncovered bicycles spaces. The site plan calls for 38 bicycle spaces, or a reduction in 9 parking spaces. Therefore, 74 spaces (required parking) – 15 spaces (20% reduction near transit stop) – 9 spaces (38 bicycle parking spaces) = 50 spaces. Taking into account the maximum reduction, the proposed 58 parking spaces would satisfy the ordinance. Other considerations for the applicant to pursue include: reducing the amount of dwelling units, seeking a shared parking agreement with a neighboring property, or applying for a variance from the ZBA for reduction in required parking.

Goal 1 states *“Dwellings in Grand Haven will include a broad range of housing types, including detached and attached, appropriate for all segments of the population. The city should support a variety of housing types and densities and mixed-use developments for all segments of the population that places users near daily services.”* Staff believes by granting the parking reductions, the proposed development would satisfy the goal of the Master Plan.

Peter Oleszczuk with West Wind Construction, 1435 Fulton St, would like to invest in the property, neighborhood, and overall improvement. Looking for feedback from Commissioners.

Borchers was in support of the idea. He was able to verify that units would be rentable, not for purchase. Oleszczuk confirmed they would be for market rate apartments, and would be managed by Beechtree Property. Borchers mentioned his concern regarding parking.

Kozenecki was in support of something on the east side; however, it was leery of the parking situation. Would like to see parking be more creative.

Skelly mentioned he was a fan of the project. Wondered what the ideal customer would be. Oleszczuk responded that it would be all things to all people, from someone fresh out of college, a single parent, or a young couple. The hope would be to endeavor to use Brownsfield Housing Tiff and cater to those who work in our community. Skelly also asked if there would be any restrictions on the number of residents. Oleszczuk responded that he would comply with the regulations set forth by Fair Housing and would not exceed those parameters.

Skelly also raised concerns about the parking. Oleszczuk mentioned that they felt the onsite parking would be more than sufficient and guests could use on street parking.

Smelker wanted to thank the developer for being creative with efficiency units in the East End. She also felt the parking would be justified and encouraged commissioners to take a look at the reduction in the ordinance.

Vice-Chair Galligan stated he agreed with Smelker's comments and wondered about doing some type of shared parking. Oleszczuk responded that conversation could be had.

Chair Dora also joined with the potential of using 4 or 5 spaces with a shared parking lot. He mentioned he felt the location and plan would be great.

Oleszczuk felt he had gained an understanding of the parameters and did not see a reason why accommodations within the guidelines couldn't happen.

Urquhart recapped the discussion to reiterate that the Commissioners were ok with keeping the 37 units, and 74 spaces (required parking) – 15 spaces (20% reduction near transit stop) – 9 spaces (38 bicycle parking spaces) = 50 spaces and seeking out a way to find 4 or 5 additional parking spaces. If these accommodations were met, a Special Land Use Permit could be prepared.

Old Business: None

Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison Report

No Meeting, but we will have one the following week.

City Planner Report

Presented FY 23/24 Community Development Annual Report.

Call to the Audience: Second Opportunity

None

Motion made to Adjourn.

Roll call vote. All ayes. **Motion passed.**

Adjournment: Chair Dora adjourned the meeting at 8:03 pm.



Melissa Bos, Executive Assistant to City Manager