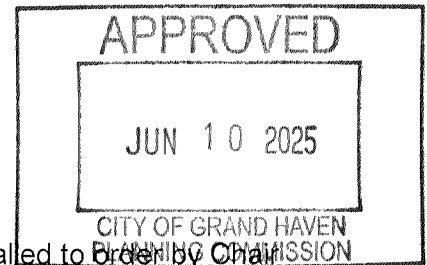


**CITY OF GRAND HAVEN  
GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025**



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

**Present:** Amy Kozanecki, Joe Pierce, Dan Borchers, Vice-Chair Ryan Galligan, Tamara Owens, Magda Smolenska, Chair Mike Dora

**Absent:** David Skelly, Jennifer Smelker

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

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by **Pierce**, seconded by **Smolenska**, to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2025 meeting.

All ayes. **Motion passes.**

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion by **Galligan**, seconded by **Kozanecki**, 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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**New Business**

**Case 25-19: Site Plan review for an addition to the funeral home at 1500 Robbins Rd. (parcel #70-03-34-100-027)**

Urquhart introduced the case. Denny Dryer of Dryer Architecture, on behalf of property owner Scott Klaassen, has applied for a Site Plan Review for a small addition to Klaassen Funeral Home at 1500 Robbins Rd. (parcel #70-03-34-100-027). The additional storage is to meet a new requirement by the State of Michigan for Funeral Homes.

The plans call for a 16' x 24' addition to the southeast corner of the building for storage. The building will remain in compliance with the 6 ft. side yard setback for a corner lot in the OS district.

The addition will maintain an exterior cladding of horizontal siding in a complimentary color matching the existing brick façade. The dumpster and enclosure will be removed. The storage area will include space for refuse and recycling containers and landscape equipment.

No changes to parking and landscaping are proposed.

Denny Dryer, 220 ½ Washington, was present for any questions.

All Commissioners did not have any questions and were ok with moving forward.

Motion by **Smolenska**, seconded by **Owens**, to approve case 25-19, a request for a Site Plan Review for an addition to the funeral home for additional storage located at 1500 Robbins Rd. (parcel #70-03-34-100-027) based on the information submitted for review, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) *All conditions of the BLP, DPW, and fire marshal shall be met*

Roll Call Vote.

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

Nays: None

**Motion passed.**

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## Public Hearing

**Case 25-17: A special land use permit for a 42" tall retaining wall located 12" from the property line at 1521 Stuart St. (parcel #70-03-28-400-071).**

Urquhart presented the case. Property owner Diane Sypniewski submitted a special land use request for a retaining wall located at 1521 Stuart St. (parcel #70-03-28-400-071). The retaining wall measures 42 inches from grade and is located 12 inches from the south lot line, creating an angle greater than 45-degrees, which requires review by the Planning Commission per Sec. 40-327.A.2.b.

The applicant is requesting a 143 ft. long retaining wall along their south property line to provide for easier maintenance. The photograph included in the packet depicts a small area of land between the garage and property line that is considerably sloped. The site plan depicts retaining wall will provide eight ft. width of level grade between the garage and property line. The proximity to the lot line prompted the need for a special land use, as previously listed in Sec. 40-327.A.2.b. In addition, the applicant is proposing to fill in a portion of the rear yard. All improvements are permitted in the Low Density Residential District.

Section 40-327 of the Zoning Ordinance provides requirements for retaining walls and outlines provisions for administrative approvals and Planning Commission approvals.

No formal correspondences have been submitted.

Brian Sypniewski, a representative of the John-Diane Sypniewski Trust, was present for any questions.

All Commissioners did not have any questions and were ok with moving forward.

Vice-Chair Galligan made a recommendation to move retaining wall reviews to staff.

Dora opened a public hearing at 7:12 p.m.

Derek Gajdos, 1603 Stuart St, spoke, stating that the retaining wall would benefit both his and 1521 Stuart St. properties and that he fully supports it.

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

All ayes.

Public Hearing closed at 7:14 p.m.

Motion by **Pierce**, seconded by **Galligan**, to approve case 25-17, special land use permit for a retaining wall 42 inches in height located 12 inches from the property line at 1521 Stuart St. (parcel #70-03-28-400-071) subject to the following conditions:

- 1) *A retaining wall and land use permit shall be submitted.*

Roll Call Vote.

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

Nays: None

**Motion passed.**

Magda Smolenska asked to be recused before discussing the next case.

**Case 25-18: A special land use permit for a retaining wall greater than 48 inches in height at 1118 S. Harbor Dr. (parcel #70-03-29-154-037).**

Urquhart presented the case. Andy Brooks of *Callen Engineering*, on behalf of property owner Chad Betz, submitted a special land use request for retaining walls located in the front yard and side yard at 1118 S. Harbor Dr. (parcel #70-03-29-154-037). The retaining walls are greater than 48 inches in height, which requires review and approval by the Planning Commission per Sec. 40-327.A.2.b.

Callen Engineering has been contracted to assist in permitting the replacement of the west retaining wall near the parking spaces and the beginning of the slope at 1118 S. Harbor. According to the plans submitted, the retaining wall will not exceed 49 inches in height. The project also includes the installation of a new retaining wall along the south and west of the home. The condition of the dune is failing with erosion occurring. The applicant will install a stone block retaining wall, approximately eight ft. in height. The plan also depicts the replacement of the 237 sq. ft., deck with a cantilevered 524 sq. ft. deck in the front yard.

Section 40-327 of the Zoning Ordinance provides requirements for retaining walls and outlines provisions for administrative approvals and Planning Commission approvals. An EGLE Permit has been approved.

No correspondence has been received.

Kiersten Renske, Architectura, was present for any questions.

Dora opened public hearing at 7:18 pm.

Jeffery Miller, 1120 S. Harbor Dr., said he supported the improvements.

Motion by **Pierce**, seconded by **Borchers**, to close the public hearing.

All ayes.

Public Hearing closed at 7:19 p.m.

Commissioners were all in agreement to support this project.

Motion by **Kozanecki**, seconded by **Galligan**, to approve case 25-18, a special land use permit and sensitive area overlay permit for a retaining wall that exceeds 48 inches in height at 1118 S. Harbor Dr. (parcel #70-03-29-154-037) subject to the condition(s) below:

1. *A building permit shall be submitted*

Roll Call Vote.

Yeas: Pierce, Skelly, Galligan, Smelker, Borchers, Kozanecki, Owens, Dora

Nays: None

Abstain: Smolenska

**Motion passed.**

**Case 25-16: An application for a zoning change request from CB, Central Business District to PD, Planned Development District and associated Preliminary Development Plan for a hotel at 233 Washington Ave. (parcel #70-03-20-432-017).**

Urquhart presented the case. Kevin Einfeld of BDR on behalf of property owner 233 LLC, has submitted a request for a zoning change from CB, Central Business District, to PD, Planned Development District, and a Preliminary Development.

Plan for a 128-room hotel at 233 Washington Ave. (parcel #70-03-20-432-017). With respect to the majority of parcels in the CBD, the parcel is large, 1.41 acres, with frontage on Columbus Ave., 3rd St., and Washington Ave.

A Planned Development requires approval of a preliminary development plan and rezoning of the property, which is subject to a recommendation by the Planning Commission and approval by the City Council. The applicant submitted a formal Planned Development and Rezoning application for the public hearing. Following approval of the preliminary development plan and rezoning, the applicant will provide a final development plan to the Planning Commission for approval. That plan will include the level of detail expected from a traditional site plan review per Sec. 40-115.04.

During the April 22nd work session, the Planning Commission expressed approval for the proposed preliminary development plan and rezoning to a Planned Development. Some concerns were raised about building height. However, proper design could minimize the broad application of the building height limitations.

The intent of Grand Haven Hotel PD is to provide additional lodging in the city located on an existing commercial site. 233 Washington is situated on the edge of the downtown, serving as the eastern entrance to downtown. The Central Business District does permit hotels by special land use, but the proposal for a 128-room professionally managed hotel offers guests the luxury

of being positioned near downtown Grand Haven's bountiful amenities.

It's anticipated the project will occur in multiple phases.

**Building Massing:** Guidance standards do not place a limit on lot coverage. The preliminary plan calls for approximately 25% lot coverage. The development is largely compatible with the surrounding community.

**Building Height:** Sec. 40-421.03.C provides guidance on building height for commercial uses, four stories or 52 ft., the same as the CBD District. The preliminary development plan calls for a 5-story hotel with one main lobby, and 4 room levels. The height of the building triggered the option to pursue a Planned Development rezoning. Sec. 40-421.03 does permit building height in a Planned Development to a maximum of 96 ft. The applicant is proposing 1-story greater than the guidance standards and states the building layout and massing is vital for an effective business model.

**Fumes & Odors:** The development is not anticipated to produce any fumes or odors. All accessory uses will take place inside the hotel.

**Dust & Litter:** The preliminary development plan calls for dumpster enclosures located in the northwest corner. The project narrative states the existing parking lot will remain largely intact, reducing any dust that may occur during the construction phase.

**Architectural Character:** The architectural features of the conceptual rendering depict a traditional historic inspired brick exterior on the upper stories, and masonry block on the main level, aligning with the exterior cladding materials required in the CBD District. The conceptual rendering also includes building articulation every 20 ft. along the front walls. The main level appears to approach the required building transparency of 75%, and the upper stories also appear to satisfy the 40% transparency requirement. The roof will contain a different level of pitches and design, breaking up the building from street view, into an appropriate downtown scale. The conceptual rendering depicts upper stories that are slightly set back, establishing a breakup of the front walls. More details will come available for the final development plan which includes elevation drawings, façade details, and transparency calculations.

**Artificial Lighting:** Building lighting and parking lot lighting have not been detailed. All lighting shall meet Sec 40-317.

**Traffic & Access:** The preliminary development plan depicts three access drives off Columbus Ave. Internal parking will provide a drop-off and pick-up area. The parking lot will connect with the existing public alley behind the 200 block of Washington Ave buildings.

**Stormwater Runoff:** Stormwater will not be impacted as the site is currently built out. The applicant may consider the possibility of green roofs.

**Noise:** The hotel will generally produce the same amount of noise as any other commercial building. The hotel pool will be indoors, and outdoor cooking and gathering areas will be similar to any other hotel.

Visual Screening: The site is entirely built out, and screening can be difficult to apply practically. It is recommended the parking areas and spaces near the rear entrance receive visual screening in the form of landscaping.

Outdoor Storage: No outdoor storage is proposed.

Signage: The preliminary plan calls for minimal exterior signage. The applicant has indicated an illuminated wall sign, and projecting sign will be installed along Washington Ave. A full signage plan should be prepared for the final development plan.

Parking: The preliminary development plan calls for 128 parking spaces. Sec. 40-604 requires one parking space per hotel room. There will be 89 off street parking spaces located behind the building. The plans also include 39 on street spaces off 3rd St. and Washington Ave., near the front entrance. The ordinance does allow for a reduction of off-street spaces by permitted up to 50% of spaces to be on street. The current plan calls for approximately 29.6% of parking as off site. The applicant denotes the expected guest occupancy will exceed the 89 onsite parking spaces for only a 3-month period during the summer months. A Planned Development provided opportunity for a departure from parking requirements. Staff encourages a full detailed parking plan to accommodate full occupancy prior to final development plan approval.

Land Use: The future land use map in the adopted Master Plan identifies this property as central business district. A hotel aligns with the compatible uses of the CBD. The plan will also incorporate "Sherwood Forest" into the design. The space is intended to act as a quasi-public facility, maintaining a level of walkability and integration into existing downtown design. A maintenance agreement for the space may be implemented.

The City Planner has received around a dozen correspondences regarding this project. The main concerns are parking, the overall process, and height.

Tom Welling, 6pm Hospitality was present and talked about the economic impact. He also said the hotel would not be a Marriott corporation but would have local investors. He also mentioned during the majority of the year, there would be about 60% occupancy, which would meet the parking requirements. He mentioned discussions would be had with the surrounding neighbors during the busiest times in the summer to help accommodate. They also chose not to do food or beverage components in order to promote downtown businesses.

Dora opened public hearing at 7:40 pm.

Kelly Larson, 19373 Rosemary Rd. Spring Lake spoke, stating she was in favor of the hotel and requested that everyone be held to the same rules.

Amber Bushinski, 101 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, directly across from the site, feels that parking is an issue and that the parking lot in the complex she lives in will take the overflow. She also feels that this would not benefit her current residence.

Donna Schmidt, 528 Elliott, shared that her biggest concern is the additional traffic in the downtown area. She is also worried about her property values.

Kathleen Nicholson, 216 Elliott, shared concerns about the infrastructure, general parking, and traffic issues and doesn't believe this will benefit the city.

Erin Lyons, 620 Clinton and owner of Jumpin Java at 215 Washington Ave., shared that she was excited about this project and had no concerns. She believes the hotel would serve as an anchor. She also loved that Lynne Sherwood would be used for open public parking.

Darrin Breen, 215 N 3<sup>rd</sup>, would like to know what the collaboration for parking is and feels it would eliminate a lot of concerns. He mentioned parking is reduced in the winter when snow is piled on them. Offered a suggestion of a green roof to help potential drainage.

Denny Dryer, 220 ½ Washington, stated he had concerns with the esthetics and having no setbacks.

Mike Star, 302 Grand, spoke in support of the hotel. He did voice concerns regarding parking and how overnight parking would be monitored.

Larry Hall, 300 Washington Unit 18, spoke regarding concerns about the balance between development and quality of life and the addition of traffic congestion and parking.

Tony Sicentelli, 608 Washington, also expressed concern about the parking situation. Feels that if the parking could get worked out, it would be a good thing for the city.

Roger Bergman, 214 Washington spoke in support of the hotel.

Jeffery Miller, 1120 S. Harbor, compared the hotel to existing hotel stats.

Tim Hemphill, 11 S First St., said he felt the hotel would be similar to a Residents Inn that does short-term rentals weekly and biweekly. Also, I feel more information is needed about the hotel.

Motion by **Pierce**, seconded by **Owens**, to close the public hearing.

All ayes.

Public Hearing closed at 8:09 p.m.

Borchers spoke regarding an all-on-site parking preference. He also wondered if there would be an on-site meeting space or banquet room. He feels there is still a lot of information that needs to come out before he feels comfortable voting either way.

Pierce stated he generally liked the plan and is interested in collaboration for parking. He also mentioned using more mass transit opportunities and felt that having a public parking area is also a great addition.

Kozanecki stated parking is a problem. She would like to see some type of agreement for the additional parking and apply the requirements equally. While she is in favor of the hotel, she is not favorable with the height. She also feels more information is needed.

Owens spoke, stating she was not concerned with the height. She is also not as concerned with traffic due to the ebbs and flows of guests. She would like to see a softened exterior rather than

a brick wall. She also mentioned that the applicant asked for less than 30% of parking to be off-site and is in full support of the hotel.

Smolenska also echoes what fell commissioners said and fully supports an anchor for downtown. She also appreciated the block and brick style.

Vice Chair Galligan agreed with much of Commissioner Pierce's statement. He also appreciated what local business owners brought up and would also be okay with off-site parking.

Chair Dora expressed his appreciation for all who came out to speak. He felt this gave the developers an opportunity to hear many unanswered questions. He also mentioned that there would be future public hearings.

Motion by **Smolenska**, seconded by **Galligan**, to recommend to City Council approval of Case 25-16, a zoning change request from CB, Central Business District to PD, Planned Development District, and a preliminary development plan for a 5-story hotel located at 233 Washington Ave. (parcel #70-03-20-432-017), based on the information submitted for review and subject to the following conditions:

- 1. A departure from the building height guidance standard is approved to allow for a 5-story tall building, provided the roof pitch contains variations as depicted in the preliminary development plan.*
- 2. The existing right-of-way dividing the parcel shall be vacated prior to the final development plan approval.*
- 3. The "Sherwood Forest" portion of the preliminary development shall remain open and available for public use.*
- 4. The tree lawn along Columbus Ave. will be re-established per Public Works specifications.*
- 5. Landscaping around the perimeter of the property should be provided wherever possible to soften and screen the site.*
- 6. The dumpster enclosure is limited to 6 feet in height and may be located on the property line.*
- 7. Signage plan shall be submitted with Final Development Plan.*
- 8. Exterior cladding materials shall meet the standards of the Central Business District.*
- 9. The project will provide 89 on-site parking spaces. The remaining 39 parking spaces will be finalized through recorded shared parking agreement or other off street parking exemptions prior to final development plan approval.*

And the following findings of fact:

- 1. The Preliminary Development Plan conforms to the future land use plan and zoning plan in the adopted 2023 Master Plan.*
- 2. The 128-unit hotel satisfies the DDA Master Plan, by providing a residential-style lodging accommodations to meet increased visitor demand. Also supporting a walkable, vibrant, and economically reliant downtown.*
- 3. The preliminary development plan conforms to goal 10 of the adopted Economic Development Plan in which hospitality and tourism is an important part of the local economy, structured to offer visitors year-round memorable and enjoyable*



*experiences, while balancing the interests of local residents and the other key sectors of the economy.*

Roll Call Vote.

Yeas: Owen, Borchers, Kozanecki, Skelly, Smolenska, Galligan, Pierce, Smelker, Dora

Nays: None.

**Motion passed**

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## Old Business

### **Case 25-13: Zoning Text Amendment to Sec 40-411.02.A, to permit short term rentals in the Centertown Overlay in the Neighborhood Mixed-Use District.**

Urquhart presented the case. John Groothuis submitted an application for zoning change to amend Sec. 40-411.02.A of the Zoning Ordinance, a text amendment to allow short term rentals by right in the Centertown Overlay within the Neighborhood Mixed-Use district. Short term rentals are permitted in the following districts:

District	Permitted
CB, Central Business	By right
WF-2, Waterfront 2	By right
PD, Planned Development (some)	By right
DR, Dune Residential	By special land use
S, Southside	By special land use on a Key Street
OT, Old Town	By special land use on a Key Street

A robust and healthy discussion was held on April 30th during the joint meeting with the DDA. It was determined the best course of action would be to amend the zoning ordinance to permit short term rentals by special land use in the Centertown Overlay. The current standards listed in Sec. 40-513 for short term rental special land uses do not directly apply to the Centertown District. A subcommittee would be formed to create specific standards appropriate for the Centertown Overlay.

No action is required by the Planning Commission at this time. The direction is for the subcommittee to meet and draft specific short term rental special land use standards for Centertown Overlay. The text amendment would incorporate all other applicable sections, tables, charts, etc., necessary to avoid any contradiction.

If received in time, the language from the subcommittee for text amendment could be reviewed during the June Planning Commission meeting. Staff will need to confirm with legal counsel for any public hearing requirements.

Chair Dora mentioned that he was looking to get a consensus concerning the commissioner's direction regarding the subcommittee formed to meet and draft specific short-term rental special land use standards for Centertown Overlay.

Smolenska asked to be recused.

Borchers supported the subcommittee.

Pierce would like to give input on what standards for short-term rentals within the Centertown Overlay. Dora explained that the subcommittee would develop the standards, and the Commissioners would vote to add or subtract various restrictions. Pierce said there would be potential to support special land use but would have input regarding the process.

Kozanecki felt similarly to Pierce. However, she felt the special land use would be more of a compromise and was willing to see if they could make it work.

Vice-Chair Galligan stated he felt it should be allowed by right but would also be ok doing the special land use.

Owens agreed with Kozanecki about short-term rentals in Centertown. She also stated that she supports forming the subcommittee to draft the standards.

Dora was also in favor of moving ahead with the subcommittee and mentioned that David Skelly and Jennifer Smelker were interested in being part of that committee. He encouraged any other commissioners to see Brian if interested.

#### **Election of Officers:**

Discussions were held to elect Ryan Galligan as Vice Chair, Magda Smolenska as Secretary, and Mike Dora as Chair.

Motion by **Kozanecki**, seconded by **Borchers**, for the slate of officers to remain from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

All Ayes **Motion Passed.**

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

**Chair Dora** made a motion to reappoint Amy Kozanecki as Zoning Board of Appeals Liaison, term beginning July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. This was seconded by **Borchers**.

Kozanecki reported last month's meeting was canceled.

#### **City Planner Report:**

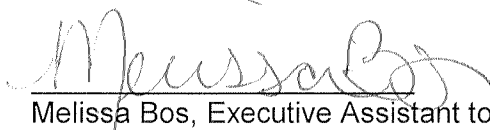
City Planner thanked the Commissioners for their patience and hard work as they continued to work through these big developments and talked about how these decisions concerning rezoning and overlays. This will only help set things up for the Master Plan Review in the future.

**Call to the Audience: Second Opportunity:**

Darrin Breen, 215 N 3<sup>rd</sup> St, spoke regarding the subcommittee and advised that the rules would be easy for City employees and residents to follow.

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

Chair Dora adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Melissa Bos", written in dark ink.

Melissa Bos, Executive Assistant to City Manager