



CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 02, 2026

4:00 PM

Chair Bignall called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL:

PRESENT

Commissioner Betsy Johnson
Commissioner Paul Bignall
Commissioner David Marquardt
Commissioner David Kreitzer
Commissioner Isaac Meyer

ABSENT

Commissioner Amanda Lamppa

STAFF

Will Richter
Rob Mattei
Aurimy Groom

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consider approval of minutes from the February 5, 2026 regular meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner Kreitzer, Seconded by Commissioner Marquardt to approve the minutes from the February 5, 2026 regular meeting. The following voted in favor thereof: Johnson, Bignall, Marquardt, Kreitzer, Meyer. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

2. Consider a recommendation to the City Council on the Vacation of a municipal street right-of-way near Blandin Beach.

Zoning Administrator Richter provided background information. Community Development staff have initiated a street right-of-way vacation at Blandin Beach. This vacation would allow for improvements which include a new building that would sit in the current right-of-way. The review committee have no objections to the proposed vacation.

The Commissioners reviewed the considerations for the record:

1. Is the right-of-way needed for traffic purposes?
Why/Why not? No, there is no need for a road in that location.
2. Is the right-of-way needed for pedestrian purposes?
Why/Why not? No, there is already a sidewalk for pedestrians.
3. Is the right-of-way needed for utility purposes?
Why/Why not? No, it is not need to maintain utilities.
4. Would vacating the right-of-way place additional land on the tax rolls?
Why/Why not? No, it is city property.
5. Would vacating the right-of-way facilitate economic development in the City? Why/Why not? Yes, improvements to the public space adjacent to the Hwy 2 project could attract future development.

Motion by Commissioner Kreitzer, second by Commissioner Meyer that, based on the findings of fact presented here today, and in the public's best interest, the Planning Commission does hereby forward to the City Council a recommendation to approve the vacation of public right-of-way described as:

6th Street NW right-of-way Adjacent to Blocks 8 and 9, Grand Rapids Second Division, Itasca County, Minnesota.

The following voted in favor thereof: Meyer, Kreitzer, Marquardt, Bignall, Johnson. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

3. Consider a recommendation to the City Council on a text amendment to the Municipal Code increasing the maximum height in R-4 zoning.

Staff provided a power point on the proposed amendment. Recent housing projects have required variances from the maximum height requirement in R-4 districts which led to the evaluation of the current code. After review it was determined to better reflect current building and land use trends the maximum height should be increased from 45' to 60' in an R-4 zoning district.

The Commissioners reviewed the considerations for the record:

1. Will the change affect the character of neighborhoods?
Why/Why not? No, it is already a high density zoning district.
2. Would the change foster economic growth in the community?
Why/Why not? Yes, it will allow for more projects and better land use.
3. Would the proposed change be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance?
Why/Why not? Yes, it will.

4. Would the change be in the best interest of the general public?
Why/Why not? Yes, it will provide more housing which aligns with the Comprehensive Plan.
5. Would the change be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?
Why/Why not? Yes, it does as stated in question four.

Motion by Commissioner Meyer, second by Commissioner Johnson that, based on the findings of fact presented here today, and in the public's best interest, the Planning Commission does hereby forward a favorable recommendation to the City Council regarding a draft amendment to Table 2A District Development Regulations; Principal Structures - increasing the Maximum Height for R-4 zoning to 60'. The following voted in favor thereof: Johnson, Bignall, Marquardt, Kreitzer, Meyer. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

4. Consider the election of Planning Commission Officers

Commissioner Marquardt nominated Commissioner Bignall as Chair
Commissioner Johnson nominated Commissioner Lamppa as Vice Chair

There were no other nominations.

Motion by Commissioner Marquardt, second by Commissioner Johnson to elect Commissioner Bignall as Chair and Commissioner Lamppa as Vice Chair. The following voted in favor thereof: Johnson, Bignall, Marquardt, Kreitzer, Meyer. Opposed: None, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Individuals may address the Planning Commission about any non-public hearing item or any item not included on the Regular Meeting Agenda. Speakers are requested to come to the podium, state their name and address for the record and limit their remarks to three (3) minutes.

There was no input from the public.

REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES:

5. Zoning Administrator update on multifamily unit analysis.

Zoning Administrator Richter provided an update on the development of an alternate calculation for units in the GB, LB and R-4 zones. Chair Bignall and Commissioner Meyer volunteered to work with staff reviewing the how the unit count is calculated in the Municipal Code and determine if there is a more reasonable method.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Aurimy Groom, Administrative Assistant