

MEETING MINUTES
GRAND HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
DECEMBER 15, 2020
Remote Electronic Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Grand Haven Charter Township Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Voss.

II. ROLL CALL

Board of Appeals members present: Voss, Slater, Loftis, Behm, Hesselsweet, and Egedy-Bader (alternate)
Board of Appeals members absent: None

Also present: Community Development Director Fedewa and Associate Planner Hoisington

Without objection, Hoisington was instructed to record the minutes for the meeting.

III. STATEMENT ON REMOTE MEETINGS

It was noted the ZBA was meeting remotely on the Zoom platform because of health concerns associated with COVID-19 pandemic. Information on this remote meeting has been posted so the public may participate. All members present noted they are meeting remotely and are located within Grand Haven Charter Township.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Without objection, the minutes of the August 25, 2020 ZBA Meeting were approved.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. ZBA Variance Application No. 20-03 – Grand Rapids Filtration Plant – Solar Arrays

Party Requesting Variance:	Wayne Jernberg, City of Grand Rapids
Applicant Representative:	Krishnan Kandasamy, CMS Energy
Address:	One Energy Plaza, Jackson 49201
Parcel Number:	70-07-28-100-011
Location:	11177 Lakeshore Drive

The City of Grand Rapids is requesting to place a 3.5-acre ground-mounted solar array in the front yard. Section 3.03.A.2.a prohibits solar arrays in the front yard. The applicant indicated other locations for the solar array will not provide equivalent benefits.

Fedewa provided an overview through a memorandum dated December 11th.

Representatives from the City of Grand Rapids, Alison Sutter – Sustainability and Performance Management Officer and Wayne Jernberg – Water System Manager were present as were staff from CMS Energy, Krishnan Kandasamy – Director of Strategic Projects and Julio Morales – Executive Director. A presentation provided the following information:

- The City of Grand Rapids is committed to programs increasing efficiency.
- Proposed solar installation would reduce operating costs which would result in savings for customers.
 - An estimated \$1.2 million net savings is projected.
- Water treatment plant site has enough open space to make a solar array feasible.
 - Clarified the City needs to own the property where the solar panels are located in order to make financial sense, which limits the available site options.
 - Another City-owned site being considered for a large-scale array is the “Butterworth Landfill” in Grand Rapids.
- Multiple locations on site were reviewed for viability.
 - Desire to preserve existing forested areas on site.
 - Site options are limited by floodplain, wetlands and critical dune areas.
 - Sloping land elevations can impact the efficiency of the arrays.
 - The roof elevations vary on the buildings. Some roof areas in need of repair/replacement. The schedule to repair/replace the roof does not align with the timing of solar panel project. Do not believe it is suitable as an alternate location.
- Believe the proposed location is the best option but can review other possibilities and bring more detailed information to the Board.
- Noted the concern about the arrays impacting the view but were unsure of what views would be blocked as the property is not on the lakeshore.

The Board discussed the application and noted the following:

- Inquired about alternate locations on site to place the array.
 - Questioned if the internal gravel roads could be relocated to allow for placement in the southeast corner of the operations area.
 - A roof-mounted option appears to be a viable alternative. Will need evidence, preferably by a third party, to explain why the roof cannot be utilized.
 - Noted that the variance standards cannot be met if a compliant location exists on site.
- Clarified that financial gain cannot be a consideration in approving a variance request. Whether it be the projected cost savings of the renewal energy or the costs involved with repair/replacing the roof.
- Noted concern in correspondence received by surrounding property owners.

- Questioned the impact of the solar arrays on the view.

Following the initial discussions, the Chair opened the public comment period:

- William Goodman – 17447 Lake Michigan Drive, Grand Haven, MI 49417
 - Owns property close to the water filtration plant.
 - Would prefer to see an alternate placement for the solar array, possibly behind the main building.
- Jan O’Connell – 201 Ivanhoe Avenue NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49456
 - Supports renewable energy and the proposed solar array.
 - Suggested alternate solutions to allow for placement of arrays in the NW corner – including berms or redesigning the shape of the array placement to lessen the visual impact.
- Randall Price – 11025 Lakeshore Drive, Grand Haven, MI 49417
 - Owns property close to the water filtration plant.
 - Believes priority should be given to the residential nature of that area and not add to the industrial features of the site.
 - Suggested the proposed area of the site be planted with trees.
 - Advocated the City place solar arrays off site in rural or industrialized areas.
- Mark VerBerkmoes – 1020 Marion Avenue, Grand Haven, MI 49417
 - Director of Public Services for Grand Haven Township.
 - Asked if a solar array could be installed on the roof structure.
 - Suggested the weight be supported by the wall structure rather than the roof itself.
 - Identified another alternate location to consider near the settlement ponds.
- Mary Ellen Mika – 12905 Wilderness Trail, Grand Haven, MI 49417
 - Part of the Grand Rapids Energy Council.
 - Supports solar panels as part of a long-term goal towards efficiency.
- Sharon Wolters – 11139 Lakeshore Drive, Grand Haven, MI 49417
 - Requested the ZBA consider the impact on property owners in the area.
- John Job – 12905 Wilderness Trail, Grand Haven, MI 49417

- Questioned if another industrial building could be placed in a similar area.
 - Staff confirmed the site could have additional buildings constructed as long as the minimum setbacks are met.

Following the discussion and public comments the Board felt additional information was needed before a decision could be made. The applicant’s team will have the opportunity to provide further information on the case for the Board to review.

Motion by Voss, supported by Hesselsweet, to **table** the Grand Rapids application due to the amount of information received and to provide an opportunity to consider this information prior to making a decision. This matter will be taken up at the next regularly scheduled meeting. **Which motion carried unanimously**, as indicated by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Voss, Slater, Loftis, Behm, Hesselsweet
 Nays: None
 Absent: None

B. Housekeeping – Reappointment of Officers and Meeting Date Schedule

i. Appointment of Officers

Without objection, existing officers are reappointed to their current positions:

- Chair Voss
- Vice Slater
- Secretary Loftis

ii. 2021 Meeting Date Schedule

The Board discussed alternate meeting dates to avoid future scheduling conflicts for staff because they are now the contractual planners for the Village of Spring Lake and meetings are held on the same day and time.

Motion by Slater, supported by Hesselsweet, to **approve** the 2021 Meeting Date Schedule to hold meetings on the 2nd Tuesday and direct staff to revise the Bylaws accordingly, and authorize the Chair and Secretary to execute the revised Bylaws. **Which motion carried unanimously**, as indicated by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Voss, Slater, Loftis, Behm, Hesselsweet
 Nays: None
 Absent: None

VI. REPORTS

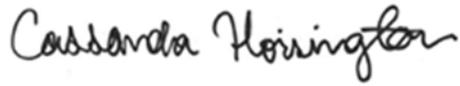
- The ZBA welcomes newest member Karen Egedy-Bader.

VII. EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cassandra Hoisington". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Cassandra Hoisington
Acting Recording Secretary

DRAFT