

**CITY OF GROSSE POINTE FARMS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 14, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.**

A regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Grosse Pointe Farms was held at City Hall, 90 Kerby Road and called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, October 14, 2024, by Mayor Louis Theros.

- 1. Pledge of Allegiance.**
- 2. Roll Call.**

Present: Mayor Louis Theros, Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding, Councilmembers Sierra Leone Donaven , Joe Ricci, Neil Sroka and Lev Wood.

Absent: Councilmember John J. Gillooly.

Others Present: Shane Reeside, City Manager, Derrick Kozicki, Assistant City Manager & City Clerk; Tim Rowland, Finance Director; John Hutchins, Director of Public Safety, Andrew Rogers, Deputy Director of Public Safety; and William T. Burgess, City Attorney.

There was a quorum present.

MOTION: Motion by Councilmember Sierra Leone Donaven, seconded by Councilmember Neil Sroka to excuse the absence of Councilmember John J. Gillooly.

VOTE: Yes: 6; No: None; Absent: Councilmember John J. Gillooly. CARRIED 6 to 0. **Motion carried.**

- 3. Reading and consideration of the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on September 16, 2024.**

MOTION: Motion by Mayor Louis Theros to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on 9/16/2024.

VOTE: Yes: 6; No: None; Absent: Councilmember John J. Gillooly. CARRIED 6 to 0. **Motion carried.**

- 4. Consideration of a site plan review for Chase Bank located at 460 Moross Road.**

David Stengal, Architect 200 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago Illinois, Cathy Constance, 11 Polaris Parkway, Columbus, Ohio and Tony Bore 11 Polaris Parkway, Columbus, Ohio were present on behalf of the applicant Chase Bank.

Councilmember Lev Wood asked the applicant if they had reviewed the McKenna Report and their recommended conditions for approval.

The applicant stated they have read the report and accepted the recommended conditions in the McKenna report.

Councilmember Lev Wood asked the applicant if they would accept the condition that an alternate maple tree be considered.

The applicant stated they would accept the condition that an alternate maple tree be considered.

Councilmember Joe Ricci asked the applicant on a scale of one to ten, how far along are the plans for the building façade renovation.

The applicant stated that they were close to completing those plans.

Mayor Louis Theros opened public comment at 7:15 p.m.

Andrew Dervan, 306 Fisher Road wanted a confirmation that the wall would be brick.

Mayor Louis Theros stated the wall would be brick.

Gay Jackson, 444 Moross Road requested clarification whether five feet was being added or removed from her existing rear yard landscaping.

The applicant stated five feet would be given in addition to the river rock border.

Mayor Louis Theros opened public comment at 7:18 p.m.

MOTION: Motion by Councilmember Lev Wood, second by Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding that the City Council approve the site plans submitted on September 12, 2024 by Kimley-Horn, engineers for the applicant, for the property located at 460 Moross Road, the Chase Bank branch.

Approval of the site plan will allow the applicant to remove the existing screen wall at the rear and side yards and replace it with a new brick mason screen wall, to remove an approximately five-foot wide strip of landscaping at the rear of the wall and replace it with stone mulch and to remove numerous parking spaces and replace them with turf and other pervious surfaces.

To reach this decision, the City Council has reviewed Matt Baka’s memo dated October 14, 2024, a review report from McKenna, site plans and a Drainage Memorandum submitted by Kimley-Horn.

Approval of this site plan is subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant agrees to install shielded lighting fixtures aimed to avoid casting glare towards the neighboring residences.
2. All site development will not deviate from the site plans and the Drainage Memorandum submitted by Kimley-Horn unless approved by the Director of Public Services.
3. Details of the proposed screen wall construction will be provided to the City to ensure that the new wall meets the appearance indicated on the submitted plans.
4. Details of the proposed dumpster enclosure construction will be provided to the City for review and approval by the Department of Public Services.
5. Elevation drawings, and plans as necessary, that are specific about the proposed scope and include material colors and specification will be provided to the City for administrative review.
6. All new tree and shrub species will be native to Michigan. Petitioner agrees to meet with residents, Matt Baka and the city arborist to review appropriate replacement trees for the four Red Maples called out in the plans.
7. Any new stormwater management systems will meet both Wayne County and City of Grosse Pointe Farms standards.

VOTE: Yes: Mayor Louis Theros, Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding; Councilmembers Sierra Leone Donaven, Joe Ricci, Neil Sroka and Lev Wood; No: None; Absent: John J. Gillooly. **CARRIED 6 to 0.**

5. Consideration of a request for variance for 350 Hillcrest Avenue.

Chris Feck, 350 Hillcrest Avenue was present to answer questions regarding the variance request.

Councilmember Lev Wood stated the relative visual impact of this variance will be minimal due to the width of the driveway. He added that the practical difficulty is that the dilapidated garage needed to be demolished and the new garage needs to be taller to accommodate modern storage requirements.

Mayor Louis Theros opened public comment at 7:30 p.m.

No public comment was heard.

Mayor Louis Theros closed public comment at 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Theros asked Mr. Blake to respond to the concerns about the existing tree line and equipment access to the property.

MOTION: Motion by Councilmember Sierra Leone Donaven, second by Councilmember Lev Wood to grant a dimensional variance to Mr. Chris Beck, the owner of 350 Hillcrest Avenue, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236, to construct an accessory garage with a height of 20 feet. This property is located in the R-1 Residential District, where the zoning ordinance permits accessory structures up to a maximum height of 15 feet. Therefore, the proposed 20-foot height requires a variance of 5 feet.

In making this decision, the Board of Zoning Appeals has reviewed the following:

- McKenna's report dated 10/7/24,

- Memo from Matthew Baka dated 10/14/24,
- Zoning Board of Appeals application submitted by Mr. Beck on 9/10/24,
- Site plans, and
- Eight letters of support from neighboring property owners.

The variance is supported based on these findings:

Practical Difficulty - The difficulty is not self-created. The homeowner purchased the property with an unsafe and dilapidated garage, which had a heaving foundation, rotting sills, and unstable wall studs. The proposed garage will address these issues and provide adequate storage to meet the homeowner's specific needs.

Necessity of the Variance - Granting this variance ensures substantial justice for the homeowner, allowing the construction of a garage that provides adequate storage and is consistent with other properties within the zoning district.

Impact on Neighboring Property Owners - Granting the variance will not interfere with or injure the rights of neighboring property owners. In fact, no letters of objection have been received, and eight letters of support from neighboring property owners have been submitted.

Intent and Purpose of the Zoning Ordinance - The variance aligns with the intent and purpose of the zoning ordinance. The siting, character, location, and intended use of the proposed garage are harmonious with the surrounding district. Construction will follow the plans Mr. Beck submitted in his application dated 9/10/24.

Population Density and Resource Requirements - The variance does not increase population density, nor does it require additional governmental resources beyond those already in place or planned.

Conditions - The space above the garage is designated for storage only, with no plumbing or sleeping quarters to be installed.

VOTE: Yes: Mayor Louis Theros, Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding; Councilmembers Sierra Leone Donaven, Joe Ricci, Neil Sroka and Lev Wood; No: None; Absent: John J. Gillooly. **CARRIED 6 to 0.**

6. Consideration of a request for variance for 117 Mapleton Road.

Dr. Theodore Pantos, 117 Mapleton Road, Property Owner and Applicant was present to answer questions about the requested variance. Fikret Medic, 51 Sheridan, Mount Clemens who works for Dr. Pantos as a property manager was also present.

Councilmember Sierra Leone Donaven asked Dr. Pantos to specify which addresses on Mapleton Road have additions that are similar to the addition he has proposed.

Dr. Pantos was unable to provide the addresses but stated he would get that information.

Councilmember Lev Wood asked City Attorney William Burgess if the fact that the existing structure is non-conforming, thereby precluding any modifications to the structure without a variance, is a practical difficulty.

City Attorney William Burgess stated that the fact that the existing structure is non-conforming is not adequate by itself to permit a finding of practical difficulty, since that would be circular logic. City Attorney Burgess further stated that a practical difficulty could be based upon a factual finding that the current structure does not provide adequate living space given normal expectations for single-family dwellings, and that the small size of the lot could justify the need for a variance to provide such adequate living space.

Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding requested more fact finding and a more detailed presentation that includes the exact addresses of similar additions.

Councilmember Neil Sroka stated he was concerned that the description of the practical difficulty has shifted over time.

Mayor Louis Theros stated that there are properties nearby that have larger additions. He requested that Dr. Pantos have his architect make a detailed presentation regarding the variance request at the next meeting.

Mayor Louis Theros opened public comment at 8:00 p.m.

Stephanie Tyler, 121 Mapleton Road stated that she is opposed to the granting of this variance because there is no practical difficulty.

Mayor Louis Theros closed public comment at 8:05 p.m.

MOTION: Motion by Councilmember Neil Sroka, second by Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding table the public hearing for 117 Mapleton until the November City Council Meeting.

VOTE: Yes: Mayor Louis Theros, Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding; Councilmembers Sierra Leone Donaven, Joe Ricci, Neil Sroka and Lev Wood; No: None; Absent: John J. Gillooly. **CARRIED 6 to 0.**

MOTION: Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding, second by Councilmember Sierra Leone Donaven to adjourn the Board of Zoning Appeals and reconvene the City Council meeting.

VOTE: Yes: Mayor Louis Theros, Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding; Councilmembers Sierra Leone Donaven, Joe Ricci, Neil Sroka and Lev Wood; No: None; Absent: John J. Gillooly. **CARRIED 6 to 0.**

7. Road Program Update from Hubbel, Roth and Clark.

The City Council heard an informational presentation regarding the road program and road millage from Eddie Zmich from the City’s engineering firm Hubbell, Roth and Clark.

Mayor Louis Theros opened public comment at 8:32 p.m.

Andrew Dervan, 306 Fisher Road stated that he would like a copy of the presentation.

Mayor Louis Theros closed public comment at 8:32 p.m.

City Council requested that a copy of the presentation and meeting recording be posted to the front page of the City website following the meeting.

No formal action was taken.

8. Consent Agenda.

- a. Consideration of a request from Public Safety to approve the Grosse Pointe Santa Claus Parade and Grosse Pointe Lions Club Run/Walk.
- b. Consideration of a request from the Parks and Recreation Director to approve the refinishing of the floors at the Pier Park Community Building.
- c. Approval of September 2024 invoices.

Mayor Louis Theros opened public comment at 8:33 p.m.

No public comment was received.

Mayor Louis Theros closed public comment at 8:33 p.m.

MOTION: Motion by Councilmember Sierra Leone Donaven, second by Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding to approve the Consent Agenda.

VOTE: Yes: 6; No: None; Absent: Councilmember John J. Gillooly. CARRIED 6 to 0. **Motion carried.**

10. Reports

- a. **Receive the September 2024 Public Safety Report.**

Council received the September 2024 Public Safety Report.

11. Other Business

City Manager Shane Reeside recapped the Grosse Pointe Farms Foundation Fundraiser Party and Concours d’Elegance, the Public Safety Department Open House and the Pier Park Autumn Harvest.

Councilmember Sierra Leone Donaven informed attendees that the Grosse Pointe Farms Beautification Advisory Commission will hold their annual awards ceremony on 10/15/2024.

Councilmember Neil Sroka informed attendees that 10/14/2024 is Indigenous People’s Day.

Mayor Pro Tem Beth Konrad-Wilberding reminded attendees to vote in the Presidential Election.

Mayor Louis Theros stated Autumn Harvest was a success.

Mayor Louis Theros opened public comment at 8:39 p.m.

Catherine Saurbier, 234 Provencal Road spoke against the Senior Services Millage.

Mayor Louis Theros closed public comment at 8:50 p.m.

Having reached the end of the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Mayor Louis Theros

Derrick Kozicki, Assistant City Manager & City Clerk