

- ii. That the use shall operate according to the application and per testimony as recorded in the Planning Commission minutes.
 - iii. That this approval does not include any proposed signs, and any future signs shall be subject to the requirements of Article 15 of the ordinance and permits received prior to installation.
 - iv. That a Land Use Development Services (LUDS) permit, building permit, and all other required permits be obtained from the City of Grand Rapids prior to construction, demolition, or operation.
 - v. That any expansion of the approved Special Land Use requires an additional Special Land Use review and approval by the Planning Commission.
 - vi. That the proposed use will comply with all other applicable City ordinances and policies and all State laws.
 - vii. That this approval shall take effect 16 calendar days after the date of the Planning Commission's decision.
2. That the use shall comply with Section 5.6.08.H.5.d., which requires that no window covering or screening shall cover more than twenty-five (25) percent of windows or doors that are used to meet transparency requirements.
3. That any safety film installed on the storefront windows shall be transparent.
- SUPPORTED by Dr. Wallace.

Ms. Bersche asked if it was necessary to include a condition related to hours of operation.

Ms. Turkelson replied that the hours are included in the application material and the Planning Commission is approving per plans.

The question was called. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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|------------------|---|
| RESULT: | APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Laurel Joseph, Vice Chairperson |
| SECONDER: | Adrienne Wallace, Secretary |
| YEAS: | Rozeboom, Van Strien, Bersche, Swem, Joseph, Wallace, Shannon, Williams, Jonker |

C. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments - Housing Policy

Applicant: The City of Grand Rapids Planning Department

Requesting: **Requesting amendment of various sections of the Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 61 of the City Code). Notable amendments modify regulations pertaining to accessory dwelling units, unrelated occupants, group living uses, small scale residential infill and residential parking requirements, all intended to address the need for housing supply, diversified housing types and housing affordability. Other text amendments are intended to provide additional information, clarity, and consistency.**

Requirements: 5.12.10. Zoning Ordinance Text and Map Amendments

Case Number: PC-TXT-2023-0115

Staff Assigned: Kristin Turkelson
Type of Case: Text Amendment
Effective Date: City Commission approval

Ms. Turkelson introduced the public hearing on proposed text amendments, the majority of which relate to the housing policy changes that they've been discussing since last July. There are additional amendments included in the packet that are intended for clarity or clean up. She explained that her presentation would focus on the housing amendments but if there are any questions related to the other amendments staff can assist with that. Ms. Turkelson indicated that she would provide some context to set the stage for how and why we are here and provide a summary of the proposed amendments. She recalled that at the January 11th meeting they went through the red-lined version of the amendments for the Planning Commission's consideration. If it is necessary to delve back into specifics, that is also something that can be accommodated.

Ms. Turkelson related that there are a number of colleagues present to assist. Ryan Kilpatrick, Housing Next, will provide part of the presentation as he can speak to the needs assessment as well as some of the market and demographic trends. Others present include Mobile GR, Assessing, Building Dept., The Rapid, and Economic Development to assist with any questions she is unable to answer.

Ms. Turkelson provided some history relating that over the past several years the City has worked with Kent County and embarked upon a housing needs assessment which was initially completed in 2020. It was updated in 2023 and there was no surprise that the need was greater. They recognized that there could be some additional work that was needed. Zoning Reform is a conversation that likely most every community is having across the state in that there is a critical need for housing and it is important to consider what tools are available to address that need. There is quite a bit of research that City staff has done through conferences they've attended at the State and National levels. There is a lot of conversation in the planning world about Zoning Reform. Many of the recommendations being considered today are informed by that research, best practices around the country that may be tailored to Grand Rapids, and some Zoning Reform aspects that have come out at the State level.

Ms. Turkelson recognized that there has been quite a bit of commentary in the packet, in the letters, and also something that they discussed initially in that they are currently in the process of updating the Community Master Plan and why aren't these amendments something being considered upon the completion of that. Ms. Turkelson explained that the answer is that there is a critical need for housing; it is needed sooner than later. The decision was that the Master Planning process would not yield changes for another couple of years from now. They don't anticipate adoption of the Master Plan until the fall of this year and then there will be a year or two of an adoption process, namely through the rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance. However, it is important to understand that there is alignment between the recommendations being discussed today and what has already been coming up through the three rounds of the Master Plan that have been completed. It is also important to note that within the Request for Proposal that was sent out, and within the contract that was signed with Planning Next, the consulting firm hired to work on the Community Master Plan, there was language included that was approved by the Steering Committee, Planning Commission, and by the City Commission that talked about the fact that there might be opportunities to pull forward some housing solutions in the short term.

Therefore, this isn't necessarily something they hadn't been thinking about for several years; the RFP went out in 2022.

Ms. Turkelson elaborated on what they've heard through the Community Master Plan process. Round 1 was the big ideas where they went out to the community and asked about hopes, dreams, and big ideas. Some of those emerging trends is that they were hearing about the need for housing; all types and all price points. There was a lot of conversation and community feedback about looking at our transportation systems and specifically about parking. There are a variety of thoughts and feelings on what that should look like but the overall message is that the City might need to do something different than what we currently have. It was also asked, if we know we need housing where does it go. One of the exercises done during the Round 1 engagement was to have a large map and ask the participants to place a dot where they think additional housing should go if looking at infill housing and higher densities. The vast majority of the community that participated in the exercise looked to higher volume street corridors as to where the density should go. That then informs the later conversation they will have today regarding multi-family and looking at the Network Residential and Link Residential streets.

Ms. Turkelson explained that in Round 2 they took a deeper dive looking at developing visions, values, and goals. What they heard with respect to housing when envisioning the future was a desire to promote single-family ownership, encourage mixed-use housing types, encouraging diverse and affordable housing including ADUs, apartments, and townhomes, and allowing higher density on certain corridors. Some of the themes, what they heard during Round 2, also aligns with the conversations they've had more recently relative to the proposed amendments.

Ms. Turkelson provided history on the amendment process. In April of 2023, Ryan Kilpatrick provided the City with an update on the Housing Needs Assessment. At that time the City Commission requested a recommendation from the Planning Commission as to what we could do now to bring forward housing policy changes. That was the Planning Commission's charge that started the conversation. It is the Planning Commission's responsibility to advise the City Commission on land use recommendations and changes. On July 11, 2023 there was a presentation to the Committee of the Whole where Ms. Turkelson provided the City Commission with a starting point and received general consensus that the ideas sounded good, which helped inform what was brought forward to the joint meeting. On July 13, 2023 the Planning Commission and City Commission had a joint meeting to ensure they had alignment. If talking about housing policy changes, what are the topics both Commissions are comfortable with? Those categories continue through the proposed amendments recommended today and each of the changes can be aligned with those topics.

Ms. Turkelson explained that during the later summer months staff worked to pull together research, inundating the Planning Commission with articles that they read as evidenced by what came through in many of the conversations they had earlier. In September they began having the conversation about Accessory Dwelling Units and unrelated occupants. That conversation was informed by the research staff had done, the zoning reform that has been taking place, and asked for some direction from the Planning Commission as to what the expectations would be when bringing forward actual proposed text amendments. On November 9 they did something very similar but focused the discussion on group living uses, specifically around Single Room Occupants (SRO) and Emergency or Transitional Shelters. That discussion also included infill

housing opportunities and parking. The infill housing discussion related to small-scale multi-family and duplexes.

Ms. Turkelson recalled that on January 11, 2024, the Planning Commission reviewed draft proposed language going through the red-lined version of what is before the Commission today. Today is the public hearing related to those proposed changes.

Ms. Turkelson recalled that at the joint meeting on July 13 they went through the topics to determine what they agreed upon. There was agreement that we need all housing at all price points, that every neighborhood needs to allow for some change, and a desire to use the Vital Streets or Transportation Plan to help inform the land use changes. There was an understanding that there would likely be an impact to traffic; likely increase traffic. There was also the acknowledgement that it wouldn't be exceeding the capacity of the streets. It was also necessary to discuss an incremental approach. Best practice from a planning perspective is to move forward incrementally, assess, and then continue to move forward again and make changes as needed. It is also necessary to acknowledge that Zoning Reform in and of itself is not going to solve the housing shortage. It is one tool the City has very strong control over but there are other tools that also need to be considered. Many of those tools largely lie with Community Development, Economic Development, and Mr. Kilpatrick's work. Ms. Turkelson also recalled that they discussed the data specifically. That from the 2023 Assessment they know that approximately 14,000 housing units are needed, which is an average of 2,800 units per year. Since 2015 the city has averaged 538 new units, which is grossly underproducing the number of units needed to keep up with the stated need within the Assessment. Ms. Turkelson recalled that they broke that data out a bit further and what they know is that the types of housing within that 538 average units per year since 2015 is that we are largely producing large, multi-unit complexes of 20 or more units. That has an impact on neighborhood scale and character. It also requires significant capitalization by the development. Those kinds of issues that are tied to this model that the Ordinance is currently supporting also makes it much more difficult for the local community that may wish to enter into the development world by not really providing space for small-scale development for those individuals.

Ms. Turkelson displayed the analysis of how zoning will work with other aspects and how zoning is one tool to narrow in on. Land costs and construction costs have an impact. There are financing challenges and economic development incentives. The way the equation is currently adding up is producing large-scale development within the city. There is very limited opportunity to add duplexes or 4-plexes, the missing middle style home, that tends to be a more affordable solution.

Ms. Turkelson displayed the topics that were considered with the City Commission and Planning Commission. The intent is to increase housing supply, diversify housing types, and increase housing affordability. Zoning does not have the ability to control cost of rentals or price points; that is a State law. Therefore, there are some limitations. The proposed solutions are largely focused on adding supply. Mr. Kilpatrick can better articulate how that supply affects affordability and stabilization of markets. Zoning, in and of itself, does not have the ability to only permit certain housing types, for example, tied to an affordability component.

Ms. Turkelson identified the topics discussed with the City Commission. The Accessory Dwelling Units conversation included streamlining the process and looking at some of the regulatory structure currently in place. Another topic was Unrelated Occupants. Currently only 4 unrelated occupants can reside in a dwelling unit and they considered the opportunity to increase that number and what impact that may have. The Group Living Uses is a broad category in the Ordinance and the conversation was focused on SROs and Transitional Shelters. There was also consideration of allowing some of those small-scale group living uses within residential zone districts where they are not currently permitted. Another topic was Small Scale Residential Infill and streamlining the review process for what has been determined to be less than 6 units, connecting that to the Vital Streets Plan, and also looking at the dimensional requirements for residential housing. The final topic related to parking. Ms. Turkelson explained that many of the solutions of the four previous topics simply cannot work if not also prepared to look at the parking requirements. The decision can't be made to find a four-unit complex acceptable and then expect to carry 1.5-2 parking space requirements per unit forward; it doesn't fit on the lot sizes in the city. If continuing to require those parking numbers it will have a greater impact on the neighborhood pattern that has been identified as being important.

Ms. Turkelson thanked Mr. Swem for preparing the graphic related to Accessory Dwelling Units. She recalled that at the January 11th meeting they recognized some additional work that was necessary related to the height and setback requirements of the Ordinance, which have been adjusted since then and are now in the version before the Planning Commission today. Specifically, detached ADUs would be allowed to go up to 25 ft. in height.

Ms. Turkelson provided a summary of the proposed text amendments:

Accessory Dwelling Units

- Streamline the review process and allow as a permitted use, meaning it would be a staff level review, unless waivers or modifications were necessary.
- Removing the owner-occupancy requirement
- Modify the height and setback requirements
- Permit in association with single- and two-family dwellings
- Eliminate the parking requirement

Unrelated Occupants

- Modify definition of Family, increasing unrelated occupants from four (4) to six (6)

Group Living

- Modify Single Room Occupancy (SRO) requirements:
 - Modify SRO definition
 - Allow small-scale SROs in residential zone districts
 - Provide a tiered review process for small, medium, and large-scale SROs
 - 6 or fewer units would be permitted in residential zone districts
 - 7-12 units would be allowed as a Special Land Use
 - 13+ units would not be permitted in the LDR zone or requires Special Land Use in the MDR district
 - Require a Good Neighbor Plan when permitted as a Special Land Use

- Increase tenancy requirement from 32 to 90 days
- Modify Transitional/Emergency Shelter requirements:
 - Allow small-scale shelters in residential zone districts as a Special Land Use
 - Add additional use regulations
 - Require a Good Neighbor Plan when permitted as a Special Land Use

Small Scale Residential Infill

- Within the TN-LDR Zone District:
 - Reduce lot area and width requirements for two-family and multiple-family residential developments of six (6) or fewer units
 - Permit multiple-family residential developments of six (6) or fewer units when located on Link Residential or Network Residential streets (as defined by the Vital Streets Plan)
 - Eliminate established (i.e. median) lot area and width requirements
 - Allow conversion of existing single- and two-family housing stock to higher densities

Ms. Turkelson clarified that requirements for setbacks, green space, and density remain in place. In the TN-LDR Zone District there is still a requirement for 2,000 sq. ft. of lot area for every dwelling unit. If a lot is not 12,000 sq. ft. it would not support six units even though it is a permitted use.

Ms. Turkelson advised that City staff is working on the creation of a map that will be searchable by address. When there is a question about what type of street a property is located on, it will be possible to search by address for that information, including an aerial image and parcel information.

Parking

- Within the TN-LDR Zone District, eliminate parking requirements for developments of six (6) or fewer dwelling units on Link Residential or Network Residential streets
- Modify the required distance to transit (from 300 ft. to ½ mile) to allow for increased utilization of the parking reductions

Ms. Turkelson clarified that these changes do not mean that a development cannot add parking to their development. It is more that the City is not imposing a minimum parking requirement. The maximum allowance remains in the Ordinance. She noted that this change was made in the City Center Zone District in 2015 and, to date, not a single new development has gone in without private parking being included. Additionally, the City and The Rapid are much further along on the mobility journey than they were previously. Mobility options include the Dash, The Rapid, and scooters and electric bikes. There are a number of options and choices available to encourage and support a mode shift rather than solely relying on the personal vehicle.

Ms. Turkelson summarized that the proposed zoning amendments focus on increasing housing supply and housing types. This is felt to be an incremental approach although it is a significant shift from the conversations in 2002 with the Master Plan and the implementation work in 2008. The recommendations are informed by State and National zoning reform but are tailored to the City of Grand Rapids. The proposed amendments align with the recommendations of past planning work that has been done; Great Housing Strategies of 2015, Housing Now in 2018, and

the Community Master Plan that is in progress. Ms. Turkelson acknowledged that there are tradeoffs. It may be more difficult to find a parking space in front of one's home. Remaining focused on housing and prioritizing people and the need for housing over proximity to your vehicle, these are the tradeoffs that must be considered. Ms. Turkelson also noted that the proposed amendments are working in conjunction with other efforts.

Ryan Kilpatrick provided some history relating that a Housing Needs Assessment was completed in 2022 and released in early 2023 that found a need for approximately 14,000 additional units in the City of Grand Rapids. Over the most recent 2-3 year time period census data has shown a slight population decline in Grand Rapids. In reading some of the public comment submitted, there have been some very good questions posed. If there is a population decline, how can we need more housing units? It is necessary to understand the demographic trends underlying the need for housing despite the slight decline in population. Mr. Kilpatrick referred to the graph provided in the memo he submitted. The graph shows an increase in total households, despite a small decline in population. He provided the example of his family. His parents are in their mid-70s and he and his sister are in their early 40s. Twenty years ago they all occupied the same house. Over the course of 3-4 years, he and his sister moved out but stayed in the same city. They didn't add to the population but were now consuming two more housing units. Mr. Kilpatrick explained that that is playing out across the city; young adults are moving out of their parents' homes and now need to consume housing in the market that doesn't exist. They are competing with low-income households, moderate-income households, with each other, and with baby boomers that want to down size. Simultaneous to that, over the last 15 years there has been a shift toward more walkable, amenity rich neighborhoods. The more amenities in a neighborhood, the more desirable it becomes for a lot of people to move into making those neighborhoods more expensive when there isn't enough housing to go around. We will continue to see that the neighborhoods with a lot of amenities will be attractive to more people. There are also neighborhoods where there hasn't been that kind of investment; where there isn't a lot of retail and restaurant amenities. Therefore, the same price pressure isn't being experienced in those neighborhoods. Part of the challenge is considering how to get more equitable distribution of investment across the city and where there is that investment activity, how to continue to allow for more residential housing.

Mr. Kilpatrick noted that what the City has done very well over the last 20 years is allowing for more large-scale and moderate-scale multi-family housing on the corridors. There have been a lot of projects introduced by great construction firms and developers building 40, 60 - 100 units at a time on some of the major corridors. The zoning ordinance has been well-tailored to do that, including a more recent amendment that allows for four stories by right and ground floor residential. What is present in the current economy are high interest rates and high construction costs that make the large-scale multi-family products difficult to get financed. There is not a decrease in demand for additional housing units but there are more complications in terms of how much more of that big, multi-unit apartment projects are we able to get financed in the near term. Hopefully interest rates will continue to go down over the next couple of years but the other big challenge as it relates to the large multi-family projects is who gets to participate in the process of generating wealth and the process of doing development. Most are boxed out of those kinds of projects because they are so expensive. Part of the value of allowing for more missing middle housing typologies is it levels the playing field for those interested in development but that can't compete financially with the big development projects. It provides more opportunity

for a lot more homeowners, especially moderate and lower-income home owners that have owned their homes for 20 years, to get more flexible in terms of what they can do. Mr. Kilpatrick provided the example of an older home owner being able to put in an Accessory Dwelling Unit or secondary unit within the main dwelling; it may help them financially. Being able to do that by right vs. going through a long, laborious process is valuable. The process is currently daunting and isn't necessarily designed for success. Much of what has been proposed is helpful to allowing the average property owner to be able to get through that process in a more streamlined fashion while still keeping some controls and checks in place. It will not result in a ton of development. Mr. Kilpatrick acknowledged that we also have to be mindful of the existing economics. Allowing for conversion of existing single family homes or the creation of new, small-scale multi-family still doesn't solve all of the housing challenges; it won't suddenly result in 14,000 new housing units because of these amendments. Economics and local culture are still at play. There are a lot of property owners and home owners that don't really want someone else living on their property that won't create a duplex or ADU despite having the right to do so. Conservatively, Mr. Kilpatrick feels we would be thrilled if there is roughly a 1% participation rate over the next five years. There are nearly 76,000 dwelling units in Grand Rapids currently and approximately 42,000 of those are owner-occupied. If 1% of property owners added units to their property it would be very valuable in his opinion. Those would be housing units and types that likely wouldn't get built by traditional developers because there isn't enough margin there. Mr. Kilpatrick stated that he doesn't expect a flood of new development and investment occurring in neighborhoods; it isn't likely given the current economics, construction costs, labor shortages, etc. What is more likely is a low-scale up-tick happening incrementally over time.

Ms. Turkelson advised on next steps. Today is the public hearing. If the Planning Commission feels additional changes are needed it is possible to table and ask staff to continue to work on changes, in which case it would come back to the Planning Commission at a subsequent meeting. Otherwise, the request is for a recommendation to take forward to the City Commission.

Ms. Joseph recalled discussing removing the minimum of 400 sq. ft. required for an ADU, which has been done in the red-line version. However, it states that "an ADU shall not exceed 40% of the gross floor area, or 400 sq. ft., whichever is larger". She asked why that change was made.

Mr. Swem explained that he had the opportunity to help work through that with staff last week. Grand Rapids has a number of post-war neighborhoods with very small-scale residential, some less than 700 sq. ft. and many that are 750-850 sq. ft. Forty percent of that results in a unit that is so small it doesn't work. The intent is that a 400 sq. ft. unit would still be subordinate and would not zone entire neighborhoods out of the opportunity.

Mr. Rozeboom noted that there were comments regarding the elimination of the owner-occupancy requirement for ADUs. He asked for additional comments on that proposed amendment.

Mr. Kilpatrick stated that allowing for an ADU on a non-owner occupied property is very similar to allowing for small-scale residential. Adding that one additional unit makes a difference for the individual or household that gets to live there. If owned by a non-owner occupant it will have the exact same standards that would apply to any other rental property in Grand Rapids. He isn't sure it makes a big difference to have an owner-occupant vs. a non-owner occupant when it

comes to enforcement. Community Development staff does the same thing in terms of enforcement if there is a nuisance. The big difference is do the neighbors feel like they have a relationship with the person that owns the property; that they feel like they can go knock on the door and ask questions or ask for something to change. Building those relationships is the important thing.

Mr. Swem related that one place he has run into this in the past is with some of the non-profits in town that are working on homelessness and trying to house less fortunate individuals. Sometimes the non-profit already owns properties that could benefit from an ADU but an agent of a non-profit doesn't count as owner-occupied so they wouldn't be able to add an ADU. With the proposed change it provides that opportunity for those non-profits.

Ms. Turkelson added that if an owner-occupant builds an ADU and then goes to sell there property, if the owner-occupancy requirement is in place it automatically limits the resale of that property because of the limited pool of potential buyers.

Mr. Rozeboom opened the public hearing and invited public comment.

Bryan Cody, Heritage Hill Association President, was present on behalf of the Heritage Hill Association. He read their submitted letter into the record.

Adam Wise, resident of the West Grand neighborhood, expressed his support for the proposed text amendments. Mr. Wise feels the loosening of parking requirements, expansion of by-right 6-plex construction, and deregulation of ADUs will go a long way toward allowing new and varying housing typologies to be built in Grand Rapids. It will help in the journey of meeting the housing deficit of 14,000 units in Grand Rapids/35,000 in Kent County. Contrary to a lot of fear being thrown about as to how these changes will affect neighborhoods, the mid-density being prescribed in the amendments is the exact kind of gentle density people are often asking for when projects are before the Planning Commission of the 3-4 story, double-loaded corridor variety. The advantage of a number of these changes, especially the reduced parking requirements, is that a lot of the new multi-plex developments can be built on single lots vs. taking up multiple lots. It is a much softer transition into density for neighborhoods. Mr. Wise also stated that allowing more density in the neighborhoods will help to support the transit system and in turn the transit system will help to support residents. Car ownership is very expensive. Being able to choose a more affordable transit option is very important. Mr. Wise again expressed his support for the proposed text amendments.

Dane Gates, resident of the Baxter community, stated that it is critical that the housing crisis be addressed rapidly. It is even more crucial that it is done well. Accessory dwelling units provide an additional approach to the current housing crisis. Owner-occupants residing in ADUs contribute to long-term community stability, which is critical to housing. With respect to more than 4 unrelated people residing in a residence, Ms. Gates stated that it has been her personal experience that it creates an environment of a revolving door; it is about whoever has the rent. That is not stable or good for any individual to live that way. It also adds stress to neighborhoods that may be struggling with housing. Ms. Gates stated that parking has become a strain on neighborhood streets and is often a concession during the development process. Ms. Gates has lived in her home for 39 years and has never seen more cars on her street before. She urged the

inclusion of diverse community voices as the Commission prepares to make important decisions that would be included in the Master Plan. There is an opportunity to make a huge impact on the future with what is done to address housing today. Ms. Gates asked that the Commission be intentional in avoiding development by-right and holding people accountable for their actions. She reminded the Commission that unintended consequences do have consequences. Housing is a human right and she hopes that 2024 is the year to do better than has been done before.

Laurel Schantz, resident of the Belknap area, related that she is also a member of Together West Michigan, which is why she is present. She stated that she has been following the progress of the proposed text amendments. As an individual as well as a representative of Together West Michigan, she wished to express strong support for these changes. There is a need to look at the options available. She understands these changes aren't going to solve the problem on their own but there needs to be a start and it needs to be now. In the future, as other options present themselves, she would hope there is an openness to further zoning changes that may be a benefit. Ms. Schantz expressed her support.

Ted Hartzell related that he is the leader of the housing team for Together West Michigan. TWM is a broad-based organization centered in Grand Rapids that collectively represents or serves an estimated 18,000 people. Mr. Hartzell stated that he is a member, along with Ms. Schantz, of West Michigan Presbyterian Church where much of his TWM work is centered. In the past two years they have had dozens of research meetings with non-profit housing agencies working on the crisis. They sat in on many governmental meetings, including discussions by the Planning Commission about the proposed zoning amendments. They've read a significant number of news articles and have supported what they consider workable approaches. Just this week, Mr. Hartzell and another leader heard alarming stories as they met with staff of Family Promise and the Bates Place Neighbors Association about people displaced from homes in Grand Rapids that they lived in for years, stories about people living in cars, those getting eviction notices with no time to find another home, and of rents rising so high that they would be laughable if not so painful. Mr. Hartzell stated that he has also sat in on several Master Plan sessions over the last couple of years. He agrees with Ms. Turkelson's comments today that the process seems far enough along and the need pressing enough that waiting for the formal completion of the Master Plan doesn't seem like a wise idea. They know from their research that there isn't one path out of this crisis of affordable housing. They consider the proposed amendments to be just one creative approach and would urge the Planning Commission to unanimously recommend them to the City Commission.

Laura Cesa, resident of the 2nd Ward, expressed support for all of the proposed text amendment proposals. She wished to address some of the concerns, specifically regarding increased density, voiced by fellow citizens. Ms. Cesa related that she read all of the letters sent in regarding the proposed text amendments. While their concerns are certainly valid, many are not born out by the data. Everyone is aware by now of the critical need for Grand Rapids, like most cities across the country, to build more housing. Far from unproven policy, the data is clear that upzoning works. There is a negative correlation between the number of new housing units built and rent values both in real terms and adjusted for inflation. On the other hand, when you don't build enough homes, vacancy rates go down and rents go up. When both are true, the rates of homelessness go up. It is as simple as supply and demand. With respect to the population, it has been noted that Grand Rapids is losing population. While it is true that the City of Grand Rapids

lost residents last year, the total metropolitan area is growing steadily by approximately .5% each year since 2020, albeit a drop from the 4% growth seen from 2015 to 2020. Regardless, there is not enough housing for the people that live here now and we will certainly not be attracting new residents without enough housing. Ms. Cesa noted that many of her neighbors worry about increased crime with more density. In reality, the rates of violent and property related crime in US cities have been falling for decades with cities actually being much safer than suburban or rural areas when accounting for all risks of accidental death and injury, particularly when it comes to traffic safety. Ms. Cesa also addressed the concerns related to traffic and parking. In dense cities with mixed-use development, safe transit, and micro-mobility infrastructure, car ownership is a choice and not a necessity. In other American cities, like New York and Boston, car ownership is inversely linked to population density rather than income. The same is true in reverse. The more people that own cars the less dense the city becomes in the long run. By encouraging more residents to walk, bike, roll, or take transit, traffic congestion can be reduced even with increased density. Finally, there has been nothing but community engagement, which she appreciates, going all the way back to the 2002 Master Plan. The attendees at the Heritage Hill discussion were over 90% homeowners and most are white. Ms. Cesa related that she is present today as a white homeowner and this is simply not representative of Grand Rapids as a whole. A vocal, privileged minority of voices cannot be allowed to dominate the conversation and block real progress.

Nancy Beckwith, 264 Paris SE, asked how many Planning Commissioners live in a mixed neighborhood with rental. She has lived in her property for nearly 50 years. In the last 50 years there has been a decrease in the density of Heritage Hill but there is still parking congestion. Ms. Beckwith stated that the two properties she just circulated is an example of the houses on her street. One example is the Butterfield mansion that had been six units and is now four units and owner occupied. It is now a lot better cared for. The other property, 265 Paris, is directly across from her property. It was a pure ghetto property when they moved to the neighborhood. The landlord should have paid the tenants to live there. It was purchased, totally gutted, and is now a single-family but it is owned by an investor in Texas that rents it out. Ms. Beckwith commented on parking. During the sewer construction in the 1990s they lost approximately 6 parking spaces on the street; there is only parking on the west side of the street. That change was due to the dove downs. If you park within 3 ft. of the dove down you will get a ticket. Their block has two homes with no driveways and they are both two-family homes. They also had a single-family next door that had no driveway until 1995 when they were allowed to use 6 inches of Ms. Beckwith's property so they could have a driveway. There are 16 homes on their block between Cherry and Wealthy that share a driveway and only six of those homes are single-family. Three of those six used to be two units. The same has to apply to all of the older neighborhoods. Heritage Hill has gone down in the number of housing units and still has more cars than ever. Students have better cars than most that live on the street. Ms. Beckwith concluded her comments stating that 9 ADUs in 20 years isn't very successful.

Nathan Biller related that he is a developer focused on missing middle housing in the city. Mr. Biller thanked the Commissioners for their dedicated service. Their commitment to improving Grand Rapids is evident in the thoughtful reforms proposed and he strongly supports all proposed reforms and urged the Planning Commission to recommend them to the City Commission. He wishes the reforms had gone further. Allowing ADUs to be approved like one- and two-family homes, vs. Director Review, with an additional \$1,332 fee will result in fewer

ADUs being built and less of an increase in tax revenues. He also wishes that small infill development and elimination of parking requirements was happening citywide. While NIMBYs may not appreciate or even recognize the restraint, Mr. Biller noted that there are folks on both sides and the rule of thumb is that this is a good compromise when neither side is completely happy. The NIMBY delay tactics disguised as reasonable precautions against the imagined horrible outcomes have real costs which Grand Rapids residents shouldn't be forced to bear. Reading the letters of concern, which he also read through all of, he heard many that are looking for a measure of effectiveness for whether zoning changes work. Mr. Biller wished to provide an example that they do. Two years ago he purchased a vacant lot in the 3rd Ward and a fire damaged property next door. Using the zoning rules this Commission put in place a few years ago, he split them into four lots and built four townhomes. Just this week he received his new tax assessments that illustrate that adding density to Grand Rapids benefits not only the housing entrepreneurs who decide to take the risk and do the work but also tenants who have access to high-quality housing as well as all GR citizens in the form of more money to fund other services. This year he will begin contributing 33 times as much tax revenue to the City as it was previously receiving from the vacant lots; almost \$16,000 more annually. Mr. Biller believes that an increase to the city's tax base is a credible example of the effectiveness zoning changes can offer. While Mr. Biller cannot provide an exact dollar amount of what delaying the reforms further would cost, why should GR citizens be deprived of these funds because a small, yet vocal group of NIMBYs don't like the idea of sharing their tax payer subsidized street parking with other tax payers. People are more important than cars and increased density can simultaneously provide increased demand for non-car modes of transportation while also providing increased tax dollars to pay for it. The Planning Commission wields the power today to make this a future reality with a vote to advance these reforms. The quiet majority stands behind the Planning Commission and is counting on them. Mr. Biller related that he attended two of the evening Community Master Plan engagement sessions and agrees with the City staff's assessment that these reforms align with the feedback given by engaged citizens participating in those meetings and also aligns with experts such as Shane Phillips who shared the cost-sharing tale of Los Angeles and what not to do, which includes postponing decisions. Mr. Biller expressed his appreciation for prioritizing people over parking. That is the correct order of this city's values.

Mike Voevodsky, Heritage Hill resident at 45 College SE, stated that he is speaking on behalf of three of his neighbors because he just happened to have the availability today. Mr. Voevodsky believes one of the constraints with meetings and processes like this is the fact that most people are working and don't have the ability to be on top of all the issues. They are all concerned about the changes being proposed. He asked, on behalf of his neighbors, that the Planning Commission slow the process down. He understands there is a sense of urgency but he would like to have the Planning Commission take a no vote or non-vote today so they, as residents of the community, have a chance to understand the implications of the changes being proposed. Mr. Voevodsky stated that as a resident of the neighborhood for eleven years, which is short compared to many that live in the neighborhood, they have witnessed changes in terms of cars and construction that really do have implications. The unintended consequences are important to understand and have a chance as owners in the community to review those so they can make good decisions and then move quickly to do their part in supporting what they hope to do to meet the housing needs. Mr. Voevodsky again asked the Planning Commission to take a no vote or non-vote today and give them a chance to review the plans and implications so they can make good decisions and then move quickly.

Lisa McManus, 300 College SE, agreed with Mr. Voevodsky. Everyone she has talked to hasn't even heard that this is going on and they are shocked when they see how much of a change this is, particularly when talking about allowing everybody with a single-family home to turn it into a duplex. Ms. McManus stated that they have everything in their neighborhood; apartments, duplexes, large houses converted to multi-units, and single-family houses. They are the missing middle talked about. The neighborhood wasn't built for cars; it had horses and streetcars. What happens in Heritage Hill is radically different than what happens in Highland Park or other neighborhoods that have more space. Ms. McManus asked that the residents be given a chance to take a look at that, particularly thinking about the fact that across the US, and globally, this financialization of housing is very scary. It sets it up so that we no longer have people owning houses, where houses aren't built for community they are built for investment, which is what happened to Heritage Hill 50 years ago. They see this in their neighborhood as a way of going back to the way it was. If that is not the case, they need to understand why and they haven't been given that information. Ms. McManus asked that meetings be held to help them understand what is going on. It isn't just Heritage Hill; it is Baxter, Oakdale, Boston Square... This is setting up a dream situation for absentee landlords and those trends are forceful. Ms. McManus asked that the Planning Commission hold their vote today and allow them a chance, as a community, to understand how it impacts their neighborhoods.

Andrew Carley, Director of Outreach for Strong Towns Grand Rapids, related that he is a resident of the 3rd Ward in the Boston Square neighborhood and a very vocal participant of the Boston Square Neighborhood Association. Mr. Carley related what happens when these amendments are not approved. He works in a field working with people who are housing disadvantaged, job disadvantaged, etc., on a daily basis. There are times he has cried at work. When someone comes in telling him they are losing their home, losing their apartment, their rent has gone up and they can no longer afford it, they need a better paying job or they will be on the street it affects him emotionally. He has had people and families coming in and telling him they can no longer afford their rent and are living out of their vans. It is depressing. He hears it every week. The problem is that we aren't building homes, not allowing homes to be built, not getting the small incremental development at a rate that needs to be happening resulting in increased housing costs. Mr. Carley stated that his house has increased in value 3 times over a short period of time. He bought his house for \$100,000 in 2018 and could sell it today for \$330,000 and there would be a bidding war on it. He hasn't improved his home that much; he painted and installed a patio. His neighbor's rent has tripled. They are paying \$2,800 a month in a neighborhood that the rent used to be under \$700 when they moved in in 2018. He doesn't know how they can afford it; he couldn't, even making a healthy salary. He has a friend that has been looking for housing in Grand Rapids for 2 years and can't afford to rent or own a home. His parents will give him a \$100,00 down payment and he still can't afford a house in the City of Grand Rapids. Mr. Carley stated that his manager, who makes significantly more money, struggled to buy a home in Grand Rapids. He ended up buying a new built home on the edge of Standale to be able to afford a home. People are losing their homes because we are not effective at building affordable housing. Mr. Carley stated that his neighborhood used to be diverse but that is no longer the case due to this crisis.

Patrick Tischler stated that he is also a resident of Heritage Hill. He is offended by the NIMBY comments. He has made Heritage Hill his home for 20 years and believes Heritage Hill should

be part of the solution of the housing crisis but he also believes it should be done thoughtfully. Mr. Tischler provided some background relating that he has made his adult livelihood as a property owner and manager of primarily rental units in Heritage Hill. Therefore, he feels he is qualified to address what it takes to own and manage an apartment. A few years ago they sold several units to the same company. They were not located in Grand Rapids and, as it turns out, the same company has bought several apartment buildings in Heritage Hill and much to his dismay and regret he has watched the condition of these properties gradually decline over the past several years. They are not careful about who they allow to rent, don't take care of the buildings, and haven't lowered the rents. All of the infill won't lower rents in Heritage Hill or anywhere else. If someone adds an apartment or ADU to their property they will charge market rent; it won't drive rents down. Mr. Tischler stated that his biggest concern is that there might be the unintended consequence of groups like the one that bought their buildings to be absentee landlords. It opens the door to other corporations buying property, even private investors from anywhere in the country, who will be hands off and are just looking for a payday. Mr. Tischler is concerned that this is being rushed and should be slowed down. He asked that this be tabled and reevaluate ways to ensure things like this don't happen. Mr. Tischler also suggested that using Vital Streets as a guiding principle for what is allowed on a particular street may be short sighted because even one street can change block by block. He suggested looking at a block and evaluating the current density in that block and allow that to be the guiding principle for what is allowed in addition to what is already existing. He suggested taking a step back to ensure they are considering all the unintended consequences that may arise from these changes.

Janelle Rai acknowledged that altering the status quo has good and bad consequences but will definitely trigger a deep emotional response. She stated that narrow streets, a mix of large and tiny apartments, interspersed with shops and businesses in close walking distance is the most desirable neighborhood in a city, and across the country, but it's been made illegal to build any more like it. This type of place has many distinctive placemaking elements; compact urban form, complete neighborhoods anchored by local shopping streets, public spaces that foster community, streets for people, high-quality public transit, smart parking strategies, a mix of housing types in a small parcel fabric. Ms. Rai indicated she would like to live in a place like that. She had that opportunity five years ago in Germany, on a street with a tram line. That apartment was the first time she experienced a life-style opposite of a car dependent sprawling community where one lives in single-family homes and spends most of their time by themselves in a metal box on four wheels. That apartment setting allowed her to access everything she needed within a short walk or bicycle ride and it was a quick walk to the tram and on to the train station where she took high speed trains to Viena, Austria, or Paris. Ms. Rai related that she never owned or rented a car yet had options to travel. Her neighborhood in Germany was filled with people of diverse backgrounds and economic status. That was also the first time she experienced that. Ms. Rai feels residential zoning in the US today has carried class separation to great extremes, which you can see if you travel by air; areas of large single-family homes on large lots, another area of mobile homes, and in another direction a pod of apartment buildings. It is a place of every income and every income in a separate place. It is detrimental to the strength of a community and hinders economic mobility. Ms. Rai stated that we struggle with this in Michigan when we alter cities and towns for car only movement and swaths of sprawling development. Everything has been frozen in place with zoning. We don't have a zoning code that allows us to adapt to the changing housing needs and preferences of the residents and the residents we want to attract. We don't have the density to support transit nor a comprehensive,

protected bicycle network. To be a fiscally solvent, attractive city we need zoning to make land use flexible, not freeze things in place. While the proposed changes aren't perfect, from the other places she has lived besides Grand Rapids, she feels the proposed amendments will help achieve a more flexible, diverse community. Ms. Rai expressed her support.

John Carpenter related that he grew up on the southeast side of Grand Rapids and he is currently living in the third house he has owned in the 3rd Ward; 2152 Chesaning. Mr. Carpenter related that he was made aware of the proposed changes. He also related that they had their first gun incident four months ago, a drive-by shooting in their neighborhood, and he had a \$500,000 offer for his house today, unsolicited, from a source that won't identify who they are. Mr. Carpenter stated that everyone needs to be educated, not just the current stakeholders. Vital Streets is a wonderful idea but it is necessary to talk to everyone on those streets. If there are 70,000 homes and 40,000 are ADUs in the city then there are 30,000 that are not owner-occupied. Every home in every neighborhood in his district was owner-occupied and now anyone with \$500,000 is being given the right to buy a house and turn it into whatever they want. It is necessary to educate and move forward. Mr. Carpenter related that he has watched downtown Grand Rapids over the years. His first job at 14 was downtown and he took the bus. Today it took him 45 minutes to take the bus because he wanted to find out what it would take for him to get from his house to downtown. Mr. Carpenter reiterated that everyone needs to be educated. Walk into the neighborhoods and bang on doors or notify those on a vital street that their street has been identified as such. He asked who will buy his house and what will they do with it if these laws get changed and his neighbors don't know what is going on.

Doug Meeks, resident of Heritage Hill, noted that they had submitted a petition and he wished to submit 32 additional signatures. He believes that is 164 signatures they've gathered in the last couple of days asking the Planning Commission to slow this down. January 11th was the day that the actual wording of the amendments came out to allow residents to digest what is being done. He has been at Planning Commission meetings since July and still has a hard time understanding what is going on with the amendments. He doesn't feel a request to delay this and wait for the Master Plan is asking too much. It is best practice to have a Master Plan prior to zoning changes. Mr. Meeks recalled Mr. Kilpatrick stating that we aren't going to get a ton of development as a result of these changes. He talked about 1%. This concept is moving forward for a 1% gain. What is happening is that the neighborhood's voices are being silenced. Most people don't know this is going on and when they find out about it, they have concerns. Mr. Meeks asked this Commission to do exactly what they ask applicants to do; reach out to the neighbors to make sure that what is proposed has buy in. There isn't anyone that doesn't believe in affordable housing or want to help. It is quite apparent that there is a passion and desire to do what is best for Grand Rapids. The name calling needs to stop. When you make statements that are derogatory toward others you have already lost your argument and it isn't necessary. Everyone loves this city and they should continue to advocate for it. Mr. Meeks also noted that the Planning Commission asks applicants for a traffic analysis but that hasn't been done in the neighborhoods. He would ask that that work be done. Ms. Turkelson has worked hard on these proposed amendments and his desire is that this is done right. He asked that this not go too fast, settle the underlying issues, and try to communicate with the neighborhoods to make sure they are on board. Not every neighborhood will be on board, and they respect that, but it is necessary to try to build consensus. Mr. Meeks doesn't believe the neighborhoods are there, based on the conversations he has had.

Sara Lachman, 20 yr. real estate litigator and member of the Board of Zoning Appeals, noted that she submitted an email. Ms. Lachman stated that the proposed amendment to 5.09.02. states that the Planning Commission shall have the authority to waive or alter the use regulations contained in this article provided the standards of Section 5.12.09. are substantially met from a reviewer perspective. Ms. Lachman stated that is a very mushy thing to be changing. How would anyone be able to review any decision that is made with any sort of standardized process. *Substantially met* is a litigator's dream. To allow it to be altered, does that mean for projects that the Planning Commission likes but where three different standards aren't met that they could still deem it appropriate and how would a review board be able to determine whether or not they were substantially met based on that? What if something meets all the criteria but the Planning Commission doesn't like it? Are they then able to alter the criteria, per the language that says you'd be able to alter it, and then deny something? Ms. Lachman feels the language provides unchecked, unreviewable authority and while all of the existing Commissioners may take good care with that standard there will be others that sit in their seats in the future. Ms. Lachman asked that the Planning Commission not accept that amendment. She also wished to address what is being called an ADU. In her opinion they appear to be non-conforming lot splits, by right, with common ownership. That looks to be the opposite of what we've had. When there are non-conforming lots of common ownership the City asks that owners combine those lots. It has been that way for decades. To the extent that there isn't owner-occupancy, why is that accessory dwelling permitted. It is simply allowing for a non-conforming lot and splitting it in half so long as it has a common owner but that doesn't mean there is an owner-occupancy requirement. Ms. Lachman feels that creates confusion. It is a nice sales word. Ms. Lachman stated that the word NIMBY is offensive and unhelpful. She wished to note that out of 30 neighborhoods, Heritage Hill is 25th in population and 4th in density. Heritage Hill is out in force because Heritage Hill already did the work. It is already very dense and they are very aware that it has a huge target on its back because 75% of the Hill is already not owner-occupied and the investors are coming in and stripping the homes of the hardware and selling those things and going in reverse, where they don't want to be. Ms. Lachman wished to point out that the developer who shared his testimony was able to develop under the current ordinance.

Jeff Phillips, 221 Paris, understands that a lot of work has gone into all of the information presented. The Planning Commission is being asked to vote to pass this but they only have half the plan. No one has talked about the execution of this process, which is half of the plan. When looking at an execution plan and how you will manage and measure it, he would like to have the actions mapped out. He would like to know the owners, the time frame, the measurements of success, the anticipated issues that might arise and how those will be adapted to. Mr. Phillips stated that he would also like a geographical map of Grand Rapids with all of these zoning elements laid over it to see where the benefits come by area. Different parts of 30 neighborhoods make up Grand Rapids. They will have different views because they are different neighborhoods. Why have one plan for 30 different neighborhoods? It isn't one fits all. It is necessary to be strategic and not just a broad-brush statement. Mr. Phillips would also like to know how potentially undesirable actions that could occur will be blocked. How do we manage mid-term and short-term leases. How will we look at outside organizations/corporations that look at real estate not as a community but as an asset, as a way to invest money in our market? As Mr. Carpenter related, he was offered \$500,000 for his home. That isn't just a neighbor expressing interest in his house. Mr. Phillips asked how development costs will be managed. Is part of the

plan to consider reducing permit fees, tax relief incentives for low cost housing? Where is that in the plan so citizens understand. He would also like to know how they will manage when people purchase land and then leave it vacant like the property at Eastern and Cherry. It has been dormant for a number of years and could be a great property for rentals. He asked how we address the construction area. We don't have the resources of people that do drywall, carpentry work, electrical work, masonry. How will all of this building transpire? Mr. Phillips wished to conclude his comments with a couple of action steps. How do we get the community engaged in this? He saw the calendar of events. It was internally focused based on the Planning Commission and the staff and not the public. Mr. Phillips added that a Master Plan is a guide and zoning changes are law. Where do we put a law in place before doing the visioning? Planning is vision first, followed up with strategies and tactics to achieve the objective. He asked that the Planning Commission not do this because it isn't a complete plan they are voting on.

Ed Clifford, 539 Paris, related that he bought his house in 1980 when they were making about \$12,000. At that time you could buy a house with \$12,000 in Grand Rapids. The house needed major repairs. It was previously an absentee landlord that owned it, as were basically all of the houses on the street. There may have been 8 owner-occupied and the rest were very nasty and needed everything. Every couple of weeks for the past year he has received text messages relating that they want to buy his house now for cash. Heritage Hill was dense in the 30s and 40s with additions put on buildings, rooming houses, etc. and 75% of it was going to be demolished in the 60s with urban renewal but it was saved. When they bought, they did so so that they could walk to work downtown. People saw the houses, liked the looks of them, and fixed them up. Just last year one sold for \$900,000+. Having the absentee landlord will do nothing to help a neighborhood be a neighborhood; it will just give money to an investor from out of state with no stake in the community.

Betsy Westman directed the Planning Commission to a letter submitted by Jim McClurg. She asked that the Commission take the opportunity to read it in its entirety and she would just address a couple of highlights. Mr. McClurg asks that the Planning Commission table the vote on the proposed zoning ordinance changes until proper community engagement, risk assessment and appropriate amendments have been completed. He makes the comment that the proposals are structured to create more density in areas of the city that are already dense. The plan targets the smallest, not the largest, land parcels suitable for infill development. Ms. Westman feels Mr. McClurg speaks for them all when he says our leaders are not listening. Ms. Westman stated that she and Mr. McClurg are neighbors and have been in the neighborhood for 40 years. What they want to do is avoid history repeating itself with the problems of the past. He goes on to say that if the Commission is inclined to proceed at some point with the proposed amendments, they should not apply to Heritage Hill because they are incompatible with the Heritage Hill Master Plan. Ms. Westman asked that the Planning Commission table the vote.

Kara Phillips expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to express her concerns regarding the proposed zoning changes that are being recommended prior to the completion and adoption of the new Master Plan. She understands that the Planning Commission is not the ultimate decision makers. However, the Planning Commission is responsible for the physical shaping of their space and community. The Planning Commission recommendations will become the laws that shape this city for years to come thereby impacting the communities that reside within them. That is a very important job and she would ask that they do it well. Grand Rapids is home to

many wonderful and distinct neighborhoods, many of which have active neighborhood associations with established views on their community's voice. Creston Neighborhood Organization states that they organize residents to have a voice about land use and development, organizing neighborhood voices that affect projects in their community ensuring that their neighbors have a say in the future of their neighborhood. Midtown is another wonderful neighborhood community and very popular with residents and businesses alike. Threatened by its own redevelopment along Michigan Street, community representative Mark Stoddard stated that Midtown is working diligently to remind those at City Hall, and the developers working within their neighborhood, of the need to focus on uses that do not weaken or destroy the fabric of Midtown and help them to protect the economic diversity of their residents, which is a matter of pride amongst so many in Midtown. Additionally, the Chair of the Highland Park Neighborhood Association penned in his letter dated 1/02/23 that they should be the strongest voice for how their neighborhood will change. Ms. Phillips stated that she couldn't agree more, which is why she is present to ask that the Planning Commission consider a hybrid planning approach in an effort to nurture and enhance neighborhoods and allow community input. As for her neighborhood, Heritage Hill, they are a neighborhood association born from the dust of demolished landmarks and homes. Yet, in the time span in which many have invested in their homes and community they have gone from being the solution to being a problem. Being referred to as NIMBYs is very insulting. They are commonly mocked and ridiculed as such. They aren't newly seeking the zoning protections that preservation would provide under the umbrella of historic preservation. They are a neighborhood that far pre-dates those issues and those current tactics. Ironically, they so pre-date them that they have the disheartening vantage point of potentially seeing things come full circle. Ms. Phillips asked that the Planning Commission table the vote on the proposed zoning changes until community engagement and impact studies have been completed. She also asked to look around the room, see the faces present, and consider the fact that maybe they don't have the representation of city views here because the meeting time doesn't make it possible.

Coleen Hamman, Heritage Hill resident, also requested that the Planning Commission delay the vote on the proposed zoning ordinance text amendments until the Master Plan has been fully completed. Ms. Turkelson stated that for proposed changes to be effective there would need to be additional major changes to the City's zoning ordinance after the Master Plan is completed. These proposed changes must receive thorough review and study of implications by the neighborhood after the Master Plan is completed. Ms. Hamman stated that this seems like a broad brush stroke of changes, one size fits all. Each neighborhood is unique and deserves more assistance from the City to better understand the impacts of such changes on each neighborhood. This is Grand Rapids, and we are unique, not Auckland, New Zealand or Minneapolis, Minnesota and we need to focus on what works best for the city and its neighborhoods. Ms. Hamman asked for more details on the Vital Streets map. It is confusing to some and is important information. She would like to know where her street is and how it will be affected. That makes a difference of what it will mean to her. She understands there is a need for more housing but they need to better understand the impact of the changes. Ms. Hamman stated that she also questions the information put forth that we need 14,106 units by 2027 yet the document that came out in the last couple of days stated we need 14,000 units over the next five years. She asked what the number is. It seems that there is a lot of information coming around. She is concerned that changes are being made to the ordinance before they truly understand what the reality is of what really needs to happen. Ms. Hamman also expressed concern about removing the owner-

occupancy requirement. They've proven in their neighborhood that it does make a difference in how their neighborhoods thrive. She is also concerned with the by-right changes. It takes away her right to come and express her opinion. She has been impressed that the Planning Commission always tells applicants to go back and talk to homeowners. She encouraged that to continue rather than taking her voice away.

Mr. Rozeboom closed the public hearing and thanked those that came to speak, as well as those that submitted their comments in writing.

Ms. Turkelson responded to public input. There were a number of requests to pause and wait for the Community Master Plan process. Ms. Turkelson reminded the Planning Commission that the City Commission has requested a recommendation. She doesn't feel it is within the Planning Commission's purview to make that decision to delay. That could be the recommendation to the City Commission but it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to provide a recommendation on housing policy changes. It isn't appropriate for the Planning Commission to independently make that decision. If there is a desire to table to request changes to the proposed amendments, that is possible. With respect to the comments regarding engagement, that was something discussed early in the process; that the Planning Dept. doesn't have the capacity at this point to conduct individual engagement for these particular amendments. If that was desired, then the Community Master Plan is the right avenue for that. However, Ms. Turkelson feels it is equally important to understand that there has been a lot of engagement that has taken place about housing policy over the last 8 years. In 2015 there was a robust engagement effort called Great Housing Strategies. A number of the proposed amendments tie directly back to those recommendations. In 2018 the City worked on the Housing Now effort. Additional engagement took place relative to housing policies and many of the proposed amendments tie back to those conversations. There have also been 3-4 rounds of engagement work within the Community Master Plan process. Although the Plan update is not complete, there has been a lot of engagement; approximately 2,900 people have participated in the first three rounds of engagement work, which doesn't include the last month or so of participation. A lot of the feedback received aligns with these recommendations. While there hasn't been a separate engagement effort for the Ordinance amendments specifically, there has been a lot of engagement done that has been used to directly inform the proposed amendments.

Ms. Turkelson asked Mr. Kilpatrick to speak to the comments about investors coming in and the fear that this would perpetuate that taking place in the city. She also asked that he clarify the data related to the need for 14,000 units over 5 years.

Mr. Kilpatrick clarified that the Housing Assessment study was produced in 2022. The five-year period is from 2022 to 2027; the period that the study estimated that roughly 14,106 units were needed. He also clarified that Bowen National Research provides that study. It is an estimate based on a number of indicators, not just population or household growth. It is also job growth in the region, commuters that would prefer to live here but can't find something, and a number of other factors. Housing Next has a database from Bowen National Research that outlines how they come up with those estimates. Mr. Kilpatrick responded to the matter of investors. He feels it is important to honor the experience many home owners in the community have been through and went through over the last 30 years with landlords that weren't good stewards of property; that is relevant context for the conversation. Additional context is that as we continue to have a

scarcity of housing supply there are investors now buying single-family homes to rent them as single-family homes. He isn't sure that the investor-owned property issue goes away if you don't adopt zoning changes. Ms. Turkelson has mentioned a number of times that Code Enforcement could use more staff/more funding. There are always some issues that need to be addressed. He isn't able to say there would be more or less if having a greater ability to build additional housing units. There were problems in the 1960s and 1970s and there were heroic efforts by members of the community to stop the decline in many neighborhoods. Much credit is due to homeowners in Heritage Hill that stopped the demolition of historic homes. However, the problems they solved in the 60s and 70s aren't the problems of today. In that period of time there was significant disinvestment occurring. There were government subsidized highways that were funneling people out of the city and into the suburbs. There was a long history of white flight that was the result of urban renewal. All of those things were fueling disinvestment in neighborhoods as was red-lining, which was still occurring with home owner loans even though it was no longer legal. Mr. Kilpatrick explained that it was difficult for people to continue to be home owners in neighborhoods experiencing disinvestment and it was much easier for landlords to move in. We are now seeing the reverse; younger households, dual incomes, and no kids, that are able to afford much more expensive homes in neighborhoods and older households with quite a bit of equity they are able to spend in those neighborhoods. There is a lot of investment occurring in many of the neighborhoods and it is excluding many people from being able to participate both in housing choice and in the opportunity to build equity in neighborhoods. However, that doesn't invalidate any of the comments received today. He can't say that there won't be issues or code enforcement problems; all of those things will occur. The question is whether there will be a significant increase in any of those issues.

Ms. Turkelson recalled comments related to the concern about significant conversions of homes. She feels it is very important to understand that current building codes have grown over the last several decades and converting an existing single-family home to a two-family is not for the faint of heart. Many homes would not lend themselves to a conversion without significant investment taking place. In some cases, because of fire separation requirements and other building codes, it isn't always practicably feasible to convert existing structures. When adding that into the market, the cost of construction, ability to rent, getting the return on the investment, that type of situation is not going to take place in mass; it will take place on a smaller scale because of those factors. While it may be feasible with the proposed amendments, it isn't always practical.

Ms. Turkelson recalled the comments about Area Specific/Neighborhood Plans vs. the City Plans. Many present have likely participated at either a neighborhood plan level or city-wide plan level. It is true that the City has a Community Master Plan and that is the umbrella for all of the other neighborhood plans. One of the expectations or requirements of the current Master Plan, as well as the Ordinance, is that the individual plans align in policy and vision. When it is a neighborhood plan you aren't seeing a discrepancy between the two categories but rather taking the larger vision and taking it to a neighborhood or parcel scale. The current Community Master Plan is not at that parcel level. Ms. Turkelson feels there is alignment between the neighborhood plans and the city-wide Master Plan. It is not best practice or common to see zoning ordinances done at a neighborhood-by-neighborhood level. That overly complicates the use of a zoning ordinance, when you have so many different zone districts, and it tends to produce outcomes that aren't helpful to the community's overall vision.

Ms. Joseph recalled one speaker mentioning a study about traffic and parking. Some of that information was included in the packet. She asked that the Mobile GR representative explain the assessment that was done.

Ariana Jeske, Mobile GR, explained that as part of their operations at Mobile GR they are keepers of parking data. They do counts in the spring and the fall. What they look at is basically every block face in the city, including commercial and residential areas. They use that data to inform their recommendation when something comes before the Planning Commission with a request for a variance/waiver for parking. It also helps inform where they may put Residential Parking Programs in place. They are seeing some neighborhoods on the cusp of that but they did find that within residential neighborhoods that occupancy is about 70%; there is available parking but it may just not be directly in front of your house. When people think about parking, they think about it as right in front of their house. They have the data and ability to institute that program. It is a \$30 annual fee but there are also opportunities to waive that for hardships. They are compiling that information so they can see historical data and be able to implement that. She provided the example of some of the new development on the west side that may put more parking pressure on those neighborhoods with some of the lots going away. It is something they are aware of and are trying to stay ahead of it in a very data-informed way.

Ms. Shannon asked if the data shows that 70% of on-street parking is occupied at any given time.

Ms. Jeske replied that it would be an average over the day. They do counts in the morning, evening, and mid-day.

Ms. Shannon asked if they have the data by neighborhood, for instance Heritage Hill.

Ms. Jeske replied that she doesn't have that information on hand but can provide that data.

Ms. Shannon indicated that she has lived in several neighborhoods, including Heritage Hill and the Riverside Park area where rarely there was parking on the street. Heritage Hill was the opposite.

Ms. Jeske stated that they do look at individual neighborhoods. The Belknap neighborhood currently has the Residential Parking Program in place. They do have a couple years of data available.

Ms. Joseph asked how implement these changes on the Link and Network Residential streets correlates with the micro-mobility zones, availability of transit service, etc.

Ms. Jeske related that there are parameters where they see sustained occupancy. There are some areas they know have outside pressures, such as near GRCC. Those are factors they look at when considering implementing that. When looking at the request for parking variances they look at the demand, pressure, and intensity of uses coming in, and also where there are micro-mobility zones and the proximity to transit. It is an interesting fact to know that 48% of the city is 500 ft. away from a bus stop. Those are the things they look at before providing their input on a requested parking waiver.

Ms. Turkelson added that is where they also look at other tools in the toolbox with Mobile GR. The Rapid evaluates their transit routes and updates their master plan and that directly corresponds to ridership/use. Increased density would tend to increase ridership. They also look at different mobility options that have recently been employed by the City and would continue to evaluate where density is increasing and what micro-mobility options are available. It goes back to some of the tradeoffs discussed. It will likely increase the use of parking on the street. There are other options such as transit, scooters and bikes, and the City has invested heavily in bike lanes and has a bike plan. A separated bike facility was recently completed on Turner. Again, it is prioritizing people over vehicles and understanding that vehicles might not go away entirely but if people have options for how they move about the city, that is also part of the conversation.

Mr. Rozeboom invited Planning Commission deliberation.

Mr. Van Strien thanked everyone for sharing their thoughts. He spent a lot of time reviewing all of the letters received for this meeting, as well as past meetings. One of the unfortunate notions they've heard in some of the letters and testimony is that there hasn't been an opportunity for community engagement. He politely disagrees. He has been on the Planning Commission for a while and considered it an important part of their responsibility back in 2015 and 2018 to participate in the community engagement process around housing needs then and appreciates the work of Housing Next and the continued work of the Planning Dept. to bring some of the needs of the community to light and to share their thoughts. Mr. Van Strien doesn't feel they are uninformed on the challenges the community is facing. A lot of good work has been done and a lot of information has been provided, including studies, reports, and articles. He feels they do understand the challenges and that action is necessary. One of the things pointed out is that the proposed amendments come out of those rounds of engagement and work. He was disappointed after the Housing Now recommendations were made to the City Commission in 2018 that the Planning Commission's recommendations were watered down and only a few were implemented. At the time, he believes the feeling was they needed to be more incremental and couldn't take such big steps. Mr. Van Strien believes this is the next incremental step in trying to help address some of the needs of the community. He tends to agree with some that commented today and some that provided correspondence that he would be comfortable going further with some of these recommendations. However, he believes what is before them is good and right and it is the time to act. As Ms. Turkelson pointed out, even though the Master Plan process is in progress, much of the feedback received aligns with these recommendations and he feels it is important for them to take action. His hope is that through the feedback they continue to receive through the Community Master Plan process that they will take further action in the future on these needs. Mr. Van Strien stated that he is personally very excited to see this go through and he considers it one of their greatest achievements since he has been on the Commission.

Mr. Swem expressed his appreciation for those sentiments. He also appreciates all of the comments received. His opinions don't necessarily align with everyone's but what he finds intriguing is that they know something needs to change. Nearly everyone that made comments said they understand change needs to happen and something needs to be done about housing in the city. The polarization of everything that happened today is an example to him that they are doing something right. Polarization is a good thing because it means somebody is actually doing something. If they had everyone sitting in here, or no one sitting in the room because no one cared, it would be because they aren't doing enough or trying hard enough. He understands it is

frustrating and scary but he really appreciates the fact that enough work has gone into this and enough effort to try to make a move toward measurable changes.

Ms. Shannon expressed her appreciation to those that came out and spent the afternoon to have the opportunity to express their input. Ms. Shannon also appreciates the work staff has done on looking at how to incrementally solve the crisis and preserve and improve upon the wonderful city Grand Rapids is. Ms. Shannon related that she came here today after having read the extensive packet of information and all of the correspondence with the thought that she was inclined to vote in favor of the amendments. However, several issues did come up in the comments that make her think she may be inclined to pause. Ms. Shannon recalled Ms. Lachman's concern related to the subjectivity of some of the things that have been written. Ms. Shannon related that she supports the changes related to ADUs, parking changes and things like that but she wonders if they should take another opportunity to go back and look at some of the language. Ms. Shannon stated that she is also having second thoughts about allowing ADUs on properties where it isn't owner-occupied. Having lived in Heritage Hill for 20 years, it is an outstanding example of a neighborhood in our city that has diversity, income diversity, ethnic diversity, beautiful housing, and a walkable neighborhood. Ms. Shannon wants to be sure the Commission pays attention to what they've said. They have done many of the things such as ADUs and houses that have been converted to apartments or condos. There are more opportunities for that and we should follow the example of how Heritage Hill has grown, struggled, and worked to maintain that kind of diversity. Ms. Shannon asked Ms. Turkelson's thoughts on the language that Ms. Lachman brought up about opening the door for unintended consequences and is there room to look at that more. She clarified that she wasn't suggesting not taking it forward to the City Commission but perhaps pausing to look at that and have more discussion on allowing non-owner occupied properties to add ADUs.

Ms. Turkelson indicated she would need more time with Ms. Lachman to understand her comments about the non-conforming splits. She is assuming that she is talking about the conveyance of the property separately, which would not be permitted. Ms. Turkelson indicated she would be happy to discuss her concerns with her. With regard to the waiver of Article 9 regulations, that is something that has historically been in the Ordinance that the Planning Commission has used routinely. The purpose for that is to provide some degree of flexibility of the regulations that the Planning Commission is responsible for justifying and articulating. Many years ago, there were requirements around multi-family and the Planning Commission had to go through deliberation about whether it was appropriate to waive a specific use regulation using the standards. It was an exercise in planning and making a determination as to whether a waiver of the standard was necessary or helpful to produce the desired outcomes per the Area Specific Plans or the Ordinance. She stated that the Planning Commission has had that tool in the past and it comes with great responsibility and it is part of a public process to go through the exercise. When going through the Ordinance, staff found that with updates that were recently made with Municode somehow it was misunderstood that that should be removed; it was an unintentional elimination of the provision. The proposed amendment puts that tool back into the Ordinance. Ms. Turkelson commented on the owner-occupancy provision, which is a policy decision. At this point AARP best practices would suggest not having an owner-occupancy requirement. Studies from the state of California that have had significant changes in State requirements have come a long way with data and research to suggest that the owner-occupancy is a barrier to the creation of ADUs. However, it is a policy decision for the Planning Commission. These are the

recommendations/language discussed to date. The Planning Commission could make a different decision and say that based on public feedback and further consideration they would amend that specific provision, which is true of all of the proposed amendments.

Ms. Jeske wished to clarify/correct her previous statement. There are 123,000 parking spaces in residential areas and the average occupancy of those spaces was 21.7%. In Traditional Neighborhood areas there are 63,000 spaces with an occupancy of 30%. There is data showing that there is excess parking.

Mr. Williams stated that they aren't living from 50,000 ft. in the air making these decisions. Planning Commissioners live in these neighborhoods. He related that he lives in Eastown and walks to the stores, spends time on Wealthy, and walks through Heritage Hill, which is a beautiful neighborhood. Mr. Williams has friends that would love to move to the city. One is an engineer that graduated recently and can't afford to move to Grand Rapids. The decisions they make are also decisions they will have to live with. Mr. Williams stated that before the public hearing he was hesitant on much of the proposed language due to some of the concerns raised about parking and owner-occupancy. Through this meeting he is now fully in support of all of the proposed amendments because he feels they have addressed all of these things. He also feels that much of the fear is exaggerated and unrealistic. Mr. Williams is not in favor of waiting for the Master Plan. It is something that needs to be done now. Waiting until the Master Plan is in place is the wrong idea because we are already running out of time and already behind. This is a good start. As noted, they don't expect that overnight there will be massive change as a result of these amendments. However, this provides an opportunity for those that want to be able to do this. They are also residents, paying taxes, and want an opportunity to do with their property as they will. Additionally, this is not a requirement. If you don't want an ADU on your property, don't develop one. Mr. Williams stated that he is in favor of the proposed amendments. He is pleased with the discussion and being able to discuss the parking and understand availability. Parking is an issue everywhere and that comes with a growing city. However, what some experience doesn't necessarily align with the data; there is parking somewhere.

Ms. Bersche related that she has a lot going on in her thoughts in reaction to the public comment and discussions they've had, and not just today; they have been having these discussions for a long time. Ms. Bersche stated that she attended a couple of the Master Plan conversations and a lot of what they are talking about here were addressed in those conversations. She doesn't feel they are putting the cart before the horse; she feels these two things are happening side by side and complementing one another rather than restricting one or the other. Ms. Bersche feels that the amount of engagement and people that have come out and spoken at the Master Plan meetings have addressed these issues. There has been so much conversation around these things over the past 5-6 years; this isn't new. Grand Rapids is a growing city and there is a housing need. If we continue as being the largest city in West Michigan, we continue to recruit young people, new people, and people moving across country for jobs. We have an incredible health system here now and we are recruiting industrial facilities here as well. We want our city to grow and have the amenities and with that comes struggles with parking, but the bigger struggle is housing. Where are the people going to move? If she is convincing her friends to move to Grand Rapids, she wants them to be able to have a home to move into and be able to come here and maybe rent for a couple of years and eventually be able to buy a home. We need to continue to come up with ways to address the housing crisis whether it is for a doctor moving to work at

Corewell or a teacher. Ms. Bersche stated that we need a variety of housing and, while this isn't going to solve the problem, she feels it will help reduce the issues we're facing. She offered her support.

Mr. Jonker noted that he has been a Planning Commissioner for approximately a year and has attended some of the Master Plan sessions as well. They have heard comments on these issues for months and they are complicated issues. These changes are not without consequence and he believes those consequences will be positive, hopefully in the creation of additional housing units that are necessary. Mr. Jonker also feels there may be negative consequences that they don't understand quite yet. He does believe we are in a crisis. They've heard the personal stories about housing and the challenges of finding it. His own children, high school and college age children, genuinely don't believe that housing is ever going to be something that they will find attainable and it creates in them and their peers a lack of excitement about the future and a lack of interest in attempting to think about careers because what difference does it make if they don't have a place to live and will never be able to move out of mom and dad's. He stated that it is real in the community. Mr. Jonker recognized that much of the feedback they've received is from the Heritage Hill neighborhood. In many ways that neighborhood could be and is a model for what we would like to see in our neighborhoods; diverse, walkable communities with resources and amenities. Zoning can't or shouldn't be restricted to certain neighborhoods or areas of the city. Zoning is a very blunt tool. He is hopeful that these amendments will create something similar to the positive things that Heritage Hill has in other areas. It is hard to believe that this will not increase the interest of private equity and investors in the city. Every article in national publications talks about Grand Rapids being a top ten city to find housing because it remains relatively attainable as compared to other areas of the country. All of those things drive money into our community and make it more challenging. He doesn't know there is much that can be done to diminish that. It will happen regardless of what they do and he does think it will happen more because of some of these changes. Mr. Jonker also noted that these changes aren't going to be easy. He doesn't feel anyone will be adding an ADU at any time soon because the cost is going to be quite restrictive unless they have a parent or someone who really needs some housing and you want to create that environment. It isn't a financial choice. Unfortunately, private equity can sometimes come in and make investments that the average individual cannot, and make those choices profitable at some point. Mr. Jonker stated that he is very attuned and appreciates the comments here today and the effort and thoughtfulness that has been put into those comments. This is a difficult vote. In the end he feels the benefits outweigh the potential consequences and he will support these changes.

Dr. Wallace asked Ms. Turkelson to comment on the concern of Code Enforcement becoming more and more challenging. She believes some of the fear comes from that. The Planning Commission isn't going to make a decision solely on that but she would like some discussion on that as context to this decision making process.

Ms. Turkelson related that there is a nuisance/property maintenance code and historically they have relied on those types of tools. As time has progressed, zoning has also been layered on in an effort to encourage behaviors that we've wanted to see. If you scale back that regulatory structure or make it more permissive there may be consequences such as parking in a front yard because one can't find parking on the street. That is likely to trigger a code compliance case. That is something she has discussed with the Managing Director of Community Development

and it was also part of the conversation that modifying some of these zoning requirements may increase potential pressure or needs for additional code compliance, which may increase the need for additional resources. It is one of the tradeoffs. We would no longer be relying on zoning to control certain things but rather looking to the property maintenance and nuisance codes to respond to potential complaints.

Ms. Shannon wished to add that she does support these initiatives. What she also finds interesting is the information they were given about how we have less people but more housing need. We have an older population with many living alone. Many of the young people are not having large families or any children at all. She feels that has also changed the kind of housing we need. Grand Rapids is moving more toward high rises and those kinds of things because we are a built-out city. The opportunity to encourage that as we move forward is going to be important. We are doing a lot of things right here because we have people moving in and good jobs coming in, unlike some other cities in Michigan. She is convinced to move forward and approve these amendments. Her thoughts were mostly technical and she doesn't want to stop the momentum.

Mr. Williams added that there was discussion related to equity and diversification of neighborhoods. While he supports the proposed amendments, he doesn't believe it has any effect on diversifying our neighborhoods. The truth of the matter is that a recent college graduate beats one black family in any neighborhood every day. The idea that policies like this as an incremental step to equity is something good to say but he isn't inclined to believe that. It isn't a pro or con but he doesn't believe it has any effect. Unfortunately, those are elements outside of the Planning Commission's control; it is happening in a broader economy and with historical things they have no control over.

Ms. Joseph agreed that there are a lot of things out of their control and appreciates the comments. She indicated that she appreciated everyone's comments. She is in support of all of the proposed text amendments. As others have said, it might not make a huge difference in terms of increasing housing units by 50% but it is a good and logical incremental step to make. Ms. Joseph acknowledges, in terms of the parking requirements, that the street typologies we are looking at are in the denser neighborhoods but those are also the areas that have better access to different transportation options. In the long run, as we grow as a city, better transit and mobility options also attract people to come to our city and we should be making changes that support better mobility and not just support single occupancy vehicles. Ms. Joseph also wished to remind everyone that it is still required to meet setback and green space requirements and density limitations. She appreciates all of the comments, the discussion, and hours and hours of work that staff and consultants have put in on this. Ms. Joseph offered her support for the amendments, including those that haven't received as much discussion.

Ms. Shannon added that growth without jobs and without housing is not the ultimate goal. It has to be growth that increases the community, livability, opportunity, and equity. She added that while she hates to see schools close, there are 12 properties that might be very good for housing.

Mr. Swem recognized the number of Heritage Hill residents present today. He noted that Heritage Hill exists and existed in an environment that was mostly unregulated; pre-zoning ordinance. Thankfully residents and others were able to save Heritage Hill from being

demolished during urban renewal. The zoning ordinance made it so that the things that happened in Heritage Hill could not happen anywhere else. These ordinance changes are trying to allow other neighborhoods to be more like Heritage Hill, to enable other neighborhoods where it hasn't been an option and to have access to a level of housing diversity that hasn't been available. Mr. Swem recalled a comment about who would be building these things. He feels that is potentially one of the most exciting pieces of this whole discussion. If ADUs start showing up and smaller developments start to happen, we begin to have real opportunities for micro-local contractors and a work force that hasn't previously had the opportunity to exist. It can lead to new businesses that are creating jobs and fulfilling the need of helping to support the housing crisis.

Mr. Rozeboom thanked everyone for their comments. He offered his support for the proposed amendments. There is clearly a demand for more housing and these are prudent steps to help with total demand and diversifying the housing types, which is often an understated issue we have.

Mr. Van Strien MOVED, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission recommends that the City Commission approve the proposed Text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposed amendments are consistent with the purpose and intent of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance because the amendments support the 2002 Grand Rapids Master Plan, Chapter 3 Great Neighborhoods, which recommends that a range of housing choices should be made available to people of different ages, ethnicities, and income levels in all neighborhoods of the city. The amendments support past planning work, including the Housing Now community planning process recommendations as well as the Great Housing Strategies and State and National zoning reform work being done.**
- 2. The proposed amendments will enhance the functionality or character of the future development in the city because the amendments will provide opportunities for infill development in already developed areas of the city.**
- 3. The proposed amendments will enhance the natural features and environmental integrity of the city because the proposed amendments will encourage compact development, which takes up less land and resources.**
- 4. The proposed amendments will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public because the amendments are consistent with the objectives of the Grand Rapids Strategic Plan which support housing development and services that help keep people in their homes and efforts to ensure all residents have safe, stable, and permanent housing; the amendments will contribute to the efficient use of existing land and infrastructure; allowing for added density in select residential districts will encourage the vibrancy of the adjacent commercial districts; and allowing for additional density could result in increased use of public transit and fewer trips by the personal automobile, helping to mitigate carbon emissions and their deleterious impacts to human health.**
- 5. The proposed amendments are needed to correct an error or omission in the original text because the amendments represent the evolution of zoning policy designed to address city-wide needs.**

6. **The proposed amendments will address a community need in physical or economic conditions or development practices because the proposed amendments will help relieve the current lack of housing supply within the city and, pursuant to the 2020 Grand Rapids Housing Needs Assessment, the city will need at least 14,106 more dwelling units by 2027 to satisfy demand.**
7. **The proposed amendments would not result in the creation of significant nonconformities in the city because the proposed amendments would effectively eliminate many existing nonconforming conditions.**

SUPPORTED by Dr. Wallace. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Rozeboom thanked Director Turkelson and staff for all of their work.

Ms. Turkelson advised that the next step in this process is that she will work with the City Manager to determine when this will go before the City Commission. She would expect that she will be providing at least one briefing, if not two. There has been conversation about the appointment of a new 3rd Ward City Commissioner so there are other priorities at the City Commission level they will be balancing. Ms. Turkelson would expect that at the earliest there would be a 2/20/24 briefing at the Committee of the Whole and from there the City Manager's office and the City Commission will help set the schedule for moving forward.

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| RESULT: | RECOMMENDED TO CITY COMMISSION [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Kyle Van Strien, Board Member |
| SECONDER: | Adrienne Wallace, Secretary |
| YEAS: | Rozeboom, Van Strien, Bersche, Swem, Joseph, Wallace, Shannon, Williams, Jonker |

V. Planning Commission Discussion

VI. Public Comment

Doug Meeks asked what the next steps are.

Ms. Turkelson explained that the Planning Commission has made their recommendation to the City Commission today. The Ordinance has not changed at this point. Only the City Commission has the authority to make the changes effective. The next step in the process is for staff to bring this forward to City Commission. Major policy changes like this have a briefing provided by the Planning Director to help bring the City Commission up to speed as to what the recommendations are, the Planning Commission process and deliberations, and they will have access to all of the information provided to the Planning Commission. Ms. Turkelson indicated that she doesn't have a specific time line at this point. She will work with staff to determine how that can best be communicated to keep the community informed.

Ms. Turkelson clarified for Mr. Meeks that everything given to the Planning Commission will be accessible to the City Commission and it will be part of their packet. If there is new information someone would like to submit, it can be submitted to the City Clerk who would include it in the City Commission packet.