

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING  
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD  
FARMINGTON HILLS MI 48336  
JANUARY 19, 2023, 6:00 P.M.**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The Planning Commission Special Meeting was called to order by Chair Countegan at 6:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners present:** Aspinnall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Trafelet, Varga, Ware

**Commissioners Absent:** Stimson

**Others Present:** City Planner Perdonik, Staff Planner Canty, Director of Public Services Mondora, City Engineer Sonoga, OHM Consultant Greg Kacvinsky, Planning Consultant Tangari, City Attorney Schultz

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION by Brickner, support by Mantey, to approve the agenda as published.**

**Motion passed by voice vote.**

**STORM WATER STANDARDS PRESENTATION BY PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

Per the January 17, 2023 memo from Director of Public Services Mondora, the Department of Public Services administers the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Water Permit (MS4) issued by the State of Michigan EGLE. This permit has been in effect at the City since 1999.

This permit is required for all municipalities that own and operate a storm water system that discharges flow to the surface waters of the State of Michigan. The permit has several required elements, one of which requires a mechanism for post construction storm water management on private developments. Recent changes to the State's rules require that the City make updates to the existing design standards for storm water management.

To ensure consistency in the application of the new State rules, a coordinated effort by Wayne, Oakland, Livingston, and Macomb Counties was initiated and updated design standards were negotiated with the State. This occurred over a period of several years and over 40 regional meetings to meet and refine the rules. The coordination effort is important so that there is consistency throughout the region and within the development community.

Director of Public Services Mondora, City Engineer Sonoga, and OHM Consultant Kacvinsky led a presentation and discussion relative to the adoption of the updated storm water design standards, as will be presented to City Council, based on a PowerPoint report: *New Oakland County Stormwater Design Standards for Private Development*.

A summary document was also distributed to the Commission: *Oakland County Water Resource Commissioner (OCWRC) Stormwater Rules, Summary of Key Changes*, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

After presentation and discussion, the following motion was offered:

**MOTION by Mantey, support by Trafelet** to receive and accept the report *New Oakland County Stormwater Design Standards for Private Development*.

**Motion passed by voice vote.**

### **NEW MASTER PLAN STUDY**

Planning Consultant Tangari led a discussion that was guided by elements presented in the January 12, 2023 Giffels Webster memorandum, as well as the most recent reading assignment: *Urban Land Institute: Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Business Districts*

Discussion included:

- Farmington Hills is a geographically large and diverse community. Some areas have more compact development than others.
- Options to evolve the commercial district from dispersed commercial uses toward being placemaking areas included zoning regulation, which would be relatively easy, and developing public/private partnerships, which would be more difficult.
- High municipal fragmentation was a challenge in Southeast Michigan in general. The region was in many ways overbuilt. The geographical size of the region created challenges for business owners.
- Differentiating the City was one way to draw people. The City could be differentiated from the typical linear commercial strip that characterized the region, especially in areas such as south of Northwestern Highway and 14 Mile Road, the Twelve Mile Road Corridor, parts of the Orchard Lake Corridor and Grand River.
- The Sterling Heights City Center project was a project the City could learn from, especially in terms of redeveloping old properties into mixed use development.
- The City had limited control over regional transportation and most travel in the City was by car. Parking remained an issue.
- The cost of parking structures (\$30K+/parking space) was not justified when it remained relatively inexpensive to construct surface parking in the City.
- Farmington Hills did not have many areas – if any – that met the rule of thumb mentioned in tonight's reading for suburban business districts. The rule of thumb required 20,000sf of retail use and 2000 dwelling units within a ten-minute walk of each other. There were, however, multiple areas with 20,000sf of retail use.
- Concept drawings for Special Planning Areas that had the potential for creation of a mixed-use commercial district could include form, elevations, infrastructure, and services.
- Mixed use zoning implied more rentals.
- The Master Plan acts as a guide for developers; the updated Master Plan will provide updated guidance. The zoning ordinance will also be updated to reflect the new priorities of the Master Plan.
- Outdoor uses were limited by colder weather, including walking to stores in strip mall configurations. However, any conclusions drawn should be data-driven, including decisions regarding types of shopping people liked to do.
- Farmington Hills residents considered downtown Farmington as their downtown.

- Shopping centers near a residential area, such as Orchard Lake and 14 Mile, could be redesigned with more mixed use.
- Curb space and loading areas should be addressed.
- Currently there was a high demand for drive-thru restaurants. There was also a high demand for downtown style environments. The City could develop both environments.
- In-person shopping provided an experience not available online; new developments and redevelopments should cater to that experience.
- Parking requirements were generally too high everywhere, in and out of Farmington Hills.
- Restaurants on Northwestern Highway suffered through the pandemic because of the loss of office lunch traffic. Diverse development and dense residential options could revitalize the area.
- Commissioners were encouraged to share the current online Master Plan survey within their areas of influence. 140 responses had been received so far. The goal for responses was 600 before the survey closed, hopefully by February 8.
- The second realtor and developer forum was scheduled for February 8 at 1:30 pm at City Hall. The Economic Development Director had received the Planning Commission input relative to outreach that would encourage diverse participation.
- The Planning Commission was scheduled to meet with City Council in joint session on February 16 relative to the Master Plan update. Commissioners were encouraged to provide issues and topics of discussion to staff prior to the meeting.
- Chair Countegan said the Planning Commission should be prepared for active dialogue with City Council about the direction the Master Plan update was taking. It should be clearly communicated that the Planning Commission was open to and supportive of rezoning and Master Plan changes that encouraged creative redevelopment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES November 17, 2022 Special and Regular Meetings and  
December 15, 2022 Special Meeting**

**MOTION by Mantey, support by Varga**, to approve the November 17, 2022 Special and Regular Meeting minutes and the December 15, 2022 Special Meeting minutes as presented.

**Motion passed by voice vote.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

An audience member commented on density issues and said he would participate in the online survey. He was looking forward to the joint meeting.

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioner Mantey noted tonight's assigned reading mentioned that Americans traveling to Europe brought back their experience of dense, walkable mixed-use neighborhoods.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Trafelet, support by Brickner**, to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

**MOTION passed by voice vote.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marisa Varga  
Planning Commission Secretary  
/cem

*Attachment: Oakland County Water Resource Commissioner (OCWRC) Stormwater Rules, Summary of Key Changes*

**Attachment**  
***Oakland County Water Resource Commissioner (OCWRC) Stormwater Rules***  
***Summary of Key Changes***

- I. Based on coordination with Wayne, Macomb, and Livingston Counties (over 40 regional meetings to discuss and refine rules)
- II. Stormwater quality and volume control (new rules) required by the City's MS4 Stormwater Permit through the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).
- III. New rules apply to:
  - a. any development with a construction area equal to or larger than 1 acre (City of Farmington Hills will review these site plans)
  - b. any development discharging to a designated County Drain or going through County parks or property (OCWRC will review these site plans)
- IV. The new stormwater rules reflect the following:
  - a. Consistent and straightforward standards that meet local MS4 permit requirements
  - b. Improved standards for water quality and drainage channel protection
  - c. Consistent standards across Southeast Michigan, effectively balancing economic development needs with necessary environmental protection
  - d. Rainfall depths updated to reflect current climate statistics (increased rainfall)
  - e. Promote design measures that control runoff volume via groundwater infiltration
  - f. Ensure long-term operation and maintenance of stormwater systems
    - i. Landowner's responsibility to maintain, but City's responsibility to inspect and enforce maintenance
- V. Key technical components of the new stormwater rules:
  - a. Water Quality: For 1.0 inch of rainfall, reduce Total Suspended Solids (TSS) by 80% or limit TSS concentration to 80 mg/L
  - b. Volume Control: Infiltrate site runoff resulting from 1.3 inches of rainfall
    - i. Exemption for high groundwater, contaminated soils, or soils with less than 0.24 inches/hour of infiltration capacity
  - c. Channel Protection: Provide extended detention (48 hours) for the runoff volume created by 1.9 inches of rainfall
  - d. Flood Control: control the peak flow from a 100-year rainfall event
    - i. Variable release rate, ranging from 1.0 cfs/acre (sites 2 acres and smaller) to 0.15 cfs/acre (sites exceeding 100 acres)
    - ii. Provides more realistic flow/storage requirements for smaller sites
    - iii. A more restrictive release rate can be required if local conditions warrant
- VI. City of Farmington Hills is obligated under our MS4 permit to implement these rule changes by Ordinance.
  - a. EGLE reviewed the draft adoption ordinance prepared by the City Attorney's office and provided concurrence with the draft language in November of 2022.
  - b. Following presentation to the Planning Commission, staff will proceed with presentation to City Council as well as Introduction and Enactment of the required Ordinance.