

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION
FARMINGTON HILLS COMMUNITY CENTER – HAWK, HARRISON HALL
SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 – 6:00 PM

The special joint meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council and Planning Commission was held at the The Farmington Hills Community Center-The Hawk in Harrison Hall and called to order by Mayor Barnett at 6:04pm.

Council Members Present: Barnett, Boleware, Bridges, Knol, Massey, Newlin and Strickfaden

Council Members Absent: Orr

Planning Commission Members Present: Brickner, Countegan, Mantey, Schwartz, Stimson, Trafelet, Turner and Varga

Planning Commission Member Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Valentine, Director Gardiner, Planning Consultant Arroyo and City Attorney Joppich

VISION 2040 PROCESS

Planning Consultant Rod Arroyo, Gifflels-Webster, outlined the history of city visioning efforts to date and explained that the visioning process takes a much broader scope than what is addressed in the Master Plan process.

MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Mr. Arroyo presented a power point explaining the following:

- Why the city prepares a Master Plan
- The statutory authority of the Planning Commission to prepare the Master Plan
- The Michigan Planning Enabling Act
- Preparation steps for the Master Plan
- Final approval of the Master Plan that lies with the Planning Commission

Mr. Arroyo pointed out that while the statutory authority and final approval are that of the Planning Commission; the city could also authorize approval by the City Council but historically has not done so.

Mr. Arroyo pointed out that Council involvement from the beginning is important and this work session would be helpful to the master planning process through the sharing of ideas. While this was not historically done, he would recommend it and as the Planning Commission continues forward in the process perhaps updates could be provided to Council.

MASTER PLANNING AND VISIONING IN FARMINGTON HILLS

Mr. Arroyo asked for open discussion on the visioning and master plan process.

Commissioner Brickner commented that if Council has new ideas, it would be good to share so that they might be included in the Master Plan process.

Mayor Barnett stated that City Council would like to see code or ordinance and Master Plan changes that would allow for new concepts for land use, recreational use, underground wiring and environmental elements such as green space, solar roofs and infrastructure for electric vehicles.

The following comments/suggestions were expressed:

- Suggested that Council first review the new census data and trends and allow the Planning Commission to provide them a report of all of the cool things they have already done or tried, such as adopting an electric vehicle ordinance, overlay zonings and attempting to dramatically change the Orchard Lake Road corridor with no success due to the market at the time
- Consider revising the Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance to limit the criteria
- Suggested that the City better advertise ordinances available to developers and determine what is drawing young families to certain areas of the city
- Concerns with developing certain areas of the city properly and suggestion to make model areas within the City of Farmington Hills
- Review the zoning ordinance as it relates to land use
- Remove software elements in the Capital Improvement Plan
- Strip malls closing are of concern and how to re-purpose those areas
- Flexibility in ordinances and the Master Plan to allow for market changes and the need to be realistic about demographics and needs and what development is economically feasible
- Include realtors and developers in with Council and Planning at a future meeting to discuss ordinances and developments and their needs/wants
- Frustration over the Grand River corridor and Orchard Lake Road corridor and efforts to provide flexibility to improve those areas but developers not taking advantage of the ordinances
- Need for a vision to provide to developers so that they can bring forth creative developments
- Researching funding available through MEDC or using ARP funding
- Request for 10 areas that Council would like the Planning Commission to focus on and include in the Master Plan
- Right-of-way issues hindering corridor improvements
- The City should leverage the fact that there will be city-wide broadband that would allow for more Smart Initiatives
- Need for ordinances and Master Plan to have flexibility to allow for future ideas and enhanced development even if not immediately utilized
- Re-imagining communities to make them more appealing to millennials and Gen Z
- Would like to be known as a green community with the lowest carbon footprint

City Manager Mekjian stated that he was hoping for a Council consensus this evening for staff to start the procurement process for a visioning consultant to work with the city. This evening staff heard great ideas from both the Council and Planning Commission but as part of the visioning process the city will also need public input.

For future meetings it was suggested a subcommittee made up of a few members from both City Council and the Planning Commission should be formed to streamline the process.

Both Council and Planning Commission members preferred to use the city's current Planning Consultant, Rod Arroyo, for the visioning process as well as the Master Plan process.

Mr. Arroyo explained that the process of updating the Master Plan needs to start now so he would not want to put that on hold. He added that the visioning process could run parallel but he would not be able to do both at the same time.

Director Gardiner mentioned that in the presentation shown by Mr. Arroyo, he outlined the option for a hybrid Master Plan process that would include visioning but to a lesser extent and inquired if Mr. Arroyo would be able to provide those services for the city.

Mr. Arroyo responded that he could do a more robust land-use visioning as part of the Master Plan process.

Mayor Barnett suggested that discussions on a more robust visioning plan include the formation of a subcommittee and possibly cross-connections with the City of Farmington.

It was determined that the subcommittee should be comprised of 3 members from both Council and the Planning Commission.

The consensus was for Mr. Arroyo to report back to City Council by mid-October, 2021 with the following:

- List of items that the Planning Commission has already done or attempted to do such as the electric vehicle ordinance, overlay districts, corridor changes, etc.
- Report on state, county or federal funding that may be available for future development
- Report on the subcommittee members
- An outline and timeline of events for future meetings/discussions

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barnett adjourned the special joint meeting at 8:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk