

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
NOVEMBER 12, 2018

The Study Session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Massey at 6:00pm.

Council Members Present: Bruce, Knol, Lerner, Massey, Rich and Steckloff

Council Members Absent: Bridges

Others Present: City Manager Boyer, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Mekjian, Directors Randle and Schnackel and City Attorney Joppich

PA 198 LEGISLATION AND STATE INCENTIVES

City Manager Boyer commented on the new PA 198 legislation in place for tax abatements and the city has several companies that may be seeking abatement in the future. Staff would like feedback from City Council on possible enhancements to the existing tax abatement policy.

Samantha Seimer, Economic Development Director, discussed the PA 198 legislation that allowed for tax abatements and the fact that under this legislation if a local municipality did not provide for tax abatement for a company then the State also could not provide abatement. She indicated that external taxing jurisdictions would be made aware of any requested tax abatement and has the opportunity to comment. Both Oakland County and the State are supportive of abatements. She noted that expansion projects often rely on incentives and the city wants to create higher paying jobs in the community and retain businesses. She is seeking direction from Council on whether they would consider abatements and if they desire to enhance the existing city policy.

Mayor Massey commented that he did not care for the fact that under this legislation local communities now have pressure from the State to approve tax abatements. He noted that the city's policy was approved in 2004 and in the past some businesses have left and the city was unable to capture the money still owed to it so one of the questions of staff was whether that policy should be reviewed for possible changes.

In response to Councilmember Bruce, Ms. Seimer reported that the jobs actually created by the companies that received abatement exceeded what was promised in most cases.

Discussion was held and it was agreed that Council should review the current policy and that any future requests for abatement would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Council would prefer any tax abatement to be less than the 12 years maximum allowed and would like considerations to include the investment made to the community and promise of corporate citizenship.

USE OF CITY-OWNED FACILITIES POLICY

City Attorney Steve Joppich explained that as some questions came about with the use of various facilities it was discovered that the city had different policies for different facilities and through discussions with staff it was suggested to incorporate all facilities into one policy. He reviewed the policy and format with City Council. In response to Councilmember Rich, he explained that this policy was not based on any other communities' policy and was unique to Farmington Hills and it would require action

of City Council since approval of the new policy would also repeal other policies previously approved by Council.

Councilmember Rich offered the following comments:

- Page 6, III.A. – inquired about the definition of “group” used in this section.
- Page 6, III.C. - inquired why a chaperone was required to be over 21 years of age rather than 18 and if one chaperone for 8 minors was sufficient.
- She requested that the document is revised to be gender neutral using the term “they” rather than “he” or “she”.
- Page 9, III.N. – City Sponsored event was not defined.
- Page 10, IV.M. – Animals were prohibited at facilities per the section; however, the city has a dog park and she felt that may need to be addressed
- She noted that if the City were not allowing use of the facilities on weekends this would affect State Representative Greig’s current coffee hours held at City Hall

Councilmember Knol inquired about signature gathering and where that was allowed. Attorney Joppich explained where that would be permitted and explained the differences in facilities/areas that are considered a traditional forum versus a limited public forum. He stated that he wanted to get feedback from Council at this study session and staff would hold another internal meeting to discuss any comments and to determine fees, etc. before bringing this back before Council for consideration.

Mayor Massey suggested that fees should come before Council as part of a department’s fee schedule and should not be included as part of the policy.

City Manager Boyer indicated that if a legislator wishes to use any room within City Hall they would contact the City Manager’s Office.

ELECTION DISCUSSION/PROCESS

City Clerk Smith distributed and reviewed a summary of the report provided by the Oakland County Bi-Partisan Ad Hoc Committee on Election Infrastructure due to the ballot shortages and related issues in the August 7, 2018 Primary Election.

She noted that the November Election went very smooth out at the precincts with very heavy turnouts in the morning and then a steady stream of voters reported throughout the day at most precincts. The voter turnout was over 65% compared to 50-54% in the last two midterm Elections.

Clerk Smith stated that the absent voter counting board and the process around the high speed scanner seemed very slow and although they had a meeting with the County on best practices and many clerks also met themselves to discuss issues and process, reporting for absent voter ballots was too slow. She mentioned that the Clerks who use the high speed scanners were again planning to meet to discuss the overall process and how that has changed, the ideal number of workers, etc. She is hoping that this meeting and planning process will benefit all of the clerks looking forward to the Presidential Election in 2020.

ADJOURNMENT:

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:22pm

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk