

MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION  
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
MARCH 16, 2015 – 6:00 PM

The Study Session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Brickner at 6:05pm.

Council Members Present: Brickner, Bridges, Bruce, Knol, Lerner, Massey and Steckloff

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Brock, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Boyer, Director Mekjian and Attorney Joppich

**DISCUSSION OF LOCAL ROAD REPAVING SAD PROCESS AND PROCEDURES:**

City Manager Brock stated that the SAD process and ways to improve that process has been a topic of discussion lately. The City is aware that the petitioning process can be divisive and many procedures were put in place many years ago and things have changed. He acknowledged the policy that Council has followed to approve a project if a majority of the residents are in favor, but reminded Council that this is only a policy and the Charter allows the Council to proceed with a project at their discretion.

Mr. Brock explained that staff has reviewed this issue and discussed using a standard such as the PASER rating to determine when a subdivision's roads should be improved. He reminded Council that they are not bound by any policy and that the Charter allows for this flexibility and staff believes that this is a good method to use. They are suggesting that Council take action on any roads that have a PASER rating of 2.75 or below.

Director of Public Services Mekjian discussed the road millage recently passed by voters and the process staff went through in using the PASER rating to assess the conditions of the roads, treatment methods and funding that would be required for maintenance.

Mark Saksewski, Traffic Engineer, explained that the PASER rating allows agencies to compare roads using the same standards. He stated that this standard was used to determine the road conditions when gathering information for the road millage and Orchard, Hiltz, McCormick consultants were used as an independent firm to verify the information.

Councilmember Lerner inquired how many paved miles of roads are at a PASER rating of 3 or below. Mr. Saksewski displayed a graph showing the percentage of roads at various PASER ratings. He noted that the average rating for road in Farmington Hills was a 4.

Discussion was held on how neighborhood roads are assessed and the cost of patching roadways versus repairing the entire street or subdivision and asphalt paving versus concrete.

In answer to Councilmember Bridges, Mr. Saksewski indicated that Independence Commons Subdivision had 3.5 miles of road that were rated 3 or below.

Councilmember Steckloff inquired about the time frame for repairing all of the roads in the City that have a PASER rating of 2.75 or below.

Mr. Mekjian responded that over 40 miles of road need reconstruction and that will take several years to complete and will depend on the funding available for the City contribution of 20% for each project.

Ms. Steckloff inquired if the budget includes those subdivisions that may still petition to have their roads improved.

City Engineer Cubera stated that the City has a good idea of what subdivisions are likely to come in with petitions since they first hold informational meetings with the subdivisions before it gets to that point.

Mr. Mekjian added that if the City Council approves moving forward with this proposed policy, the project will be part of a 5 or 6 year Capital Improvement Program plan and will have to meet certain criteria.

Discussion was held on available funding for the City's share of 20% of special assessment projects. Mr. Brock stated that he feels the City will have the necessary funding as there is possible state funding that will be made available and bonding options.

Councilmember Bruce stated that he likes the policy overall but expressed concern with maintaining the petitioning process. He feels if a subdivision petitions for improvements and their roads are rated higher than 2.75 on the PASER rating, then the City should not contribute the 20% and save that funding for the roads in most need of repair; or eliminate the petitioning process.

Attorney Joppich clarified that the Charter allows for the petitioning process so it could not be eliminated; however, how much funding the City contributes is at the discretion of City Council.

Mayor Pro-Tem Massey liked the proposed policy and felt that the petitioning process needs some clarification. He suggested prior notification to residents that their subdivision when their roads are at a PASER rating of 4 and encourage them to petition the residents and repair their roads earlier as it would be less expensive for the residents and the City. He added that it needs to be clear that the petitioning process is advisory only.

Discussion was held on the PASER rating and how that is determined through visual and technical considerations.

Councilmember Knol stated that she would agree with encouraging residents to fix their roads sooner rather than later due to the expense and it is being proactive. She preferred to maintain the 20% contribution by the City as she feels if the City did not contribute it could discourage residents from trying to fix the roads before they have to. She suggested that the petitioning process is changed so that residents are not allowed to change their vote after the deadline and to consider removing bank-owned properties from consideration. She suggested a true Yes or No vote from the residents. Councilmembers Steckloff and Bridges concurred with those suggested changes.

The consensus of City Council was as follows:

- Proceed with PASER Rating policy concept with 2.75 being the rating that would trigger Council action Subdivisions identified with 2.75 or less PASER Rating would be included as part of CIP Program
- Suggested incorporating 2<sup>nd</sup> threshold of PASER rating of 5 (as suggested by Eng. Saksewski) as pre-notification to subdivisions to encourage early repair/maintenance of the roads
- Address financing options - 10 or 15 years (Mayor suggested possibly basing this on cost of project)

- Maintain 20% contribution by City
- Enhance the petitioning process by addressing the following:
  - Vacant homes
  - 50% in favor in order to proceed
  - Allowing homes to add/remove their name or change “vote” after deadline
  - Allowing for yes/no vote
  - Review corner lots being assessed less than 1 unit
- Policy vs. Ordinance was discussed and the Mayor requested that the City Attorney provide the Council with pros/cons of a policy vs. an ordinance at the next study session meeting

Attorney Joppich clarified that the Charter allows for a petitioning process (not a vote) so that option cannot be eliminated; however, the petitions are advisory only and whether vacant homes/bank-owned properties are included or 50% in favor of the project is required to proceed, etc. is completely at the discretion of City Council.

Councilmember Lerner suggested that if the City is imposing road improvements upon a subdivision, it should be done at the lowest possible costs.

**DISCUSSION ON ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCE:**

Mayor Brickner mentioned that this issue has been discussed several times before at study sessions and at the last study session he had asked to receive a copy of the Ordinance that Southfield recently approved. Council was provided with a copy of that Ordinance, which was very similar to the draft ordinance the City had been reviewing.

He noted that at the last study session there was a suggestion to change the word “gender” to “sex” under Exceptions, Section L. and N of the Ordinance. He inquired if there were any objections to those proposed changes. Council voiced no objections.

Mayor Brickner also mentioned that there were some changes suggested with regard to Section A. under Exceptions, having to do with religion.

Councilmember Knol expressed concern with using the term “denomination” and how that is defined. Attorney Joppich agreed that the use of this term and its interpretation could be questioned. He suggested using the term “religion” so that it is broader in its definition.

Council had no objection to that change. The consensus of City Council was to schedule Consideration of the Introduction of the Ordinance, incorporating the suggested changes discussed this evening, before Council at their regular meeting of March 23, 2015.

Councilmember Lerner commented that he still feels Council should not be addressing this issue at the local level.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk