

MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING  
APRIL 12, 2021 – 6:00PM

The Study Session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was held electronically and called to order by Mayor Barnett at 6:05pm. Members were asked to state their name and location (city and state) as to where they were attending the electronic meeting.

Council Members Present: Vicki Barnett, Farmington Hills, Michigan  
Jackie Boleware, Farmington Hills, Michigan  
Michael Bridges, Farmington Hills, Michigan  
Valerie Knol, Farmington Hills, Michigan  
Ken Massey, Farmington Hills, Michigan  
Mary Newlin, Farmington Hills, Michigan  
Matt Strickfaden, Farmington Hills, Michigan

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith, Director Schnackel, Police Chief King, and City Attorney Joppich

**DISCUSSION ON A BUSINESS INCUBATOR AT THE FARMINGTON COMMUNITY CENTER (HAWK)**

Lew Cantor, Chairman of the Economic Development Corporation, and Michael Stumpf, Consultant from Place Dynamics, reported on Phase 1, the market feasibility study for a business incubator at the Farmington Hills Community Center (HAWK).

Mr. Stumpf stated that the research in Phase 1 was to identify market opportunities. He reviewed various industries that were most favorable in the area and commented on the strong indicator of co-working within the HAWK. He stated that the food sector was very strong and a commercial kitchen as an incubator tool is revenue producing; therefore, Council may wish to explore this as a secondary space so there are no conflicts at the HAWK.

Mr. Cantor indicated that he has already spoke to several businesses that would be interested in the business incubator space and the HAWK is unique in that it will be a space that provides childcare services and other activities synergistic with a business incubator. He added that the Director appointed would identify clients/users for the space and the city would provide for basic needs such as copiers, internet, etc., and the idea would be to graduate the businesses from the incubator to business space in the community.

Mayor Barnett stated that she is excited about the possibility of a business incubator but is confused at the direction. She shared her vision and questioned whether the city would provide needed equipment at no cost or rent out equipment and what type of equipment the city should be purchasing for the space.

Mr. Stumpf suggested starting with offering the basics and then letting the market dictate the clients and once the city has clients evaluate the needs for equipment. He added that the city should focus on businesses that are motivated to move into business space in the city and not those that are part-time or hobbyists.

Council further discussed the matter and wanted additional information including a better definition between the maker space and business incubator at the HAWK, the type of equipment needed, if the equipment be rented out, how and who will be responsible for obtaining clients, etc.

Mr. Cantor added that tonight's intent was only to review Phase 1, which was the market feasibility study, and he feels that is positive based on the research. Many of the other questions being asked would be part of Phase 2 that they can't yet answer until they have direction from Council to move forward.

There was a consensus from City Council to move forward with Phase 2 and as suggested by City Manager Mekjian to include funding in the budget; but Council wanted more information as requested.

Mayor Barnett asked that this matter come back before City council at another study session in June 2021, if possible.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk