

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL - COMMUNITY ROOM
DECEMBER 12, 2022 – 6:00PM

The study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Barnett at 6:00pm

Council Members Present: Barnett, Bridges, Bruce, Knol, Massey and Newlin

Council Members Absent: Boleware

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Valentine, Directors Brockway, Mondora and Winn and City Attorney Joppich

DISCUSSION ON OPTION TO ADD RESIDENTIAL TRASH CARTS TO REFUSE CONTRACT

Karen Mondora, Director of Public Services, introduced Mike Csapo, General Manager of Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County (RRRASOC) and Sam Caramagno, Director of Municipal Affairs for Green For Life (GFL). She explained that when the refuse service contract was issued, it contained an option for the city to offer trash carts to residents and GFL is here to discuss that option with Council. Currently, the city only has recycling carts that were provided to residents.

Mike Csapo explained that the city's contract allows for the option of using trash carts with homeowners allowed to set out extra bags or containers of trash if needed. He noted that exercising this option in the first year of the contract would extend the current contract by one year or exercising the option in the 2nd or 3rd year would trigger a 2 or 3 year extension. This allows for the amortization of the cost of the carts over a 5-year period. He noted that this option was not immediately suggested so that GFL could prove its service to the community.

Discussion was held on how additional trash bins would be picked up, how cardboard boxes are handled with the increase of home deliveries and if this more automated pick up with the new carts eliminates jobs.

It was explained that the driver could do a combination of automated and manual pick up as needed and that more education is required with regard to what can and cannot be recycled. As far as jobs, the new trucks and automated process would be filling jobs that are now difficult to fill and if anyone's job were eliminated there were many other areas for that person to fill in and nobody would be let go or out of a job because of this new automated process.

Mayor Barnett asked for information on disposing of medical wastes be placed on the city's website.

Mr. Csapo went on to discuss proposed costs to the residents for adding trash carts and stated that they are recommending the 95 gallon black cars with black lids to be rolled out to all residents with the option, if the city wanted, to downsize to the 65 gallon cart. He added that while the contract calls for 180 days of advance notice to GFL, he is asking that due to supply chain constraints with regard to the trucks that the city have a target day of July 1, 2024 if Council approves moving in this direction in the next couple months.

It was suggested that there is some education and dissemination of information on how to get rid of the old bins.

The consensus of Council was to bring information back to a regular meeting for consideration of exercising the option for the trash carts as outlined by Mr. Csapo this evening with a target roll out date of July 1, 2024.

Mr. Csapo added that he is willing to speak to homeowners associations or other groups in order to help provide information and answer questions on the new carts if approved by City Council.

Mayor Barnett asked about composting sites. Mr. Csapo responded that they hope to begin those conversations very soon. There are some pilot programs currently and they are waiting on information from those pilot communities and then could discuss further with Council having a few experimental composting sites in Farmington Hills.

Mr. Csapo mentioned that as part of their commitment to look at multi-family recycling, they discovered in speaking with people at the drop off recycling locations that Farmington Hills multi-family residents represented the largest percentage of the families at the drop off sites and 99% of those asked said they would be willing to pay for on-site recycling.

City Manager Mekjian stated that staff would bring the necessary resolution before Council in January or February to exercise the option of using the trash carts.

ALDEN DEVELOPMENT GROUP COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION DISTRICT REQUEST

Tia Brockway, Director of Economic Development, explained that on January 24, 2022, City Council approved the PUD plan for The Emerson and due to costs involved with various improvements associated with the project, the development group is requesting the establishment of a Commercial Rehabilitation District. This issue was last discussed by Council at their study session meeting on October 24, 2022 and the public hearing period was established at the regular meeting.

Ryan Higuchi, PM Environmental Project Consultant, outlined the proposed development consisting of 620 new residences in two separate buildings with a projected timeline and completion of approximately two years. He noted that the Commercial Rehabilitation District (CRD) was the first step in putting the property in eligibility for a tax abatement under PA 210, which would be a ten year abatement from approval. The reason for the request relates to the costs involved with the proposed offsite improvements associated with the project as well as material costs increasing by approximately 25 percent. He added that the establishment of the district does not obligate the city to grant the abatement but once established, Alden Development Group would be applying for the Certificate of Tax Exemption probably next year.

Council inquired if this abatement had the same requirements as other tax abatement that had been provided in the city.

Attorney Joppich explained that City Council adopted the PA 210 policy and one of the requirements is an agreement with the city that can include language about breach of that agreement. He stated that more detail would be provided at the time they make application and that is considered by Council.

Mr. Higuchi commented that the proposed infrastructure improvements will also make the surrounding properties more desirable.

Mayor Barnett clarified that before Council this evening on the regular agenda is a resolution to create the Commercial Rehabilitation District and then Alden Development would be able to apply for a tax exemption certificate. She inquired when the 10 year abatement period would start and when the additional taxes would be passed on to the renters.

Director Brockway clarified that Council can approve an abatement for up to 10 years but it does not have to be for that period of time.

Mr. Higuchi stated that the application and approvals must be submitted to the State Tax Commission by October 31st so the abatement would start January 2024.

Tom Herbst, CFO of Alden Development Group, added that there is not expectation of rate increases at year 11 as they assume a 3% increase per year so that cost is already absorbed. In response to Council, he added that they hope to break ground next summer.

Mr. Higuchi added that if Council approves the creation of the district this evening, the County is notified and they have 28 days to object, but that is not anticipated as they are already aware of the project and intent to create the district.

ADJOURNMENT:

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:06pm

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk