

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER
NOVEMBER 11, 2024 – 7:30 PM

The regular session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 7:31PM.

Council Members Present: Aldred, Boleware, Bridges, Bruce, Dwyer, Knol and Rich

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, Assistant City Manager Mondora, City Clerk Lindahl, Director Rushlow, Fire Chief Unruh, and City Attorney Joppich

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Members of the Mayor’s Youth Council led the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR SESSION MEETING AGENDA

MOTION by Bridges, support by Aldred, to approve the agenda as published.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MAYOR’S YOUTH COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION OF OATH

Noting that the Mayor’s Youth Council is an advisory Council that makes recommendations to the Cities of Farmington Hills and Farmington concerning the needs and concerns of youth and the community, Mayor Rich acknowledged that the Mayor of the City of Farmington, Joe LaRussa, was also in attendance.

The Youth Council members present this evening introduced themselves and were administered the Oath of Office by Clerk Lindahl.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER 11, 2024 AS VETERANS DAY

The following proclamation was read by Councilmember Bruce and received by Curtis Daniel, who served as a Fire Protection Specialist with the U.S. Air Force from 1971-1975, responsible for fire craft rescues.

More recently, Curtis is an active member of the Costick Center, where he has been a member of the Cycling for Active Adults club for 12 years and has participated in the Senior Aquatics Arthritis Exercise class for 11 years. Curtis also gives back to the Costick community by volunteering his time. For 11 years, he has served as a volunteer driver for the Home Delivered Meals program and, for nine years, has been a City of Farmington Hills driver for the Senior Transportation program.

This proclamation is presented to Curtis Daniel in honor of his service to his country and to his community.

**PROCLAMATION
Veterans Day
Nov. 11, 2024**

- WHEREAS,** throughout the course of history, courageous men and women have taken up arms to secure, defend and maintain the core principles upon which our nation's freedoms depend; and,
- WHEREAS,** since our nation's founding, more than 41 million men and women have stepped forward to serve their country during times of peace and times of war and conflict; and,
- WHEREAS,** the veterans who served in the military have protected the American way of life and have dedicated themselves to achieving lasting peace throughout the world; and,
- WHEREAS,** the spirit of freedom remains strong with over 1.3 million men and women currently on active duty and more than 800 thousand in the reserve forces, with many in harm's way fighting overseas; and,
- WHEREAS,** as a nation, we are eternally grateful for the noble sacrifices made by our veterans, and we honor and respect them for their service.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Theresa Rich, Mayor of the City of Farmington Hills, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby recognize our esteemed veterans in acknowledgment of **Veterans Day 2024**, and urge all residents to pause and reflect, this November and throughout the year, on the sacrifices of those who have served their country.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER 13, 2024 AS WORLD KINDNESS DAY

The following proclamation was read by Councilmember Dwyer and accepted by Tammy Luty, member of the Commission on Children, Youth, and Families.

**PROCLAMATION
World Kindness Day
Nov. 13, 2024**

- WHEREAS,** the City of Farmington Hills recognizes the value of acts of kindness that are performed without prompting or reason and how these acts can positively impact the person giving kindness, the person receiving kindness, and those witnessing; and,
- WHEREAS,** acts of kindness can be performed by any person regardless of age, background, education, gender, religion, or abilities for the unselfish purpose of spreading goodwill; and,
- WHEREAS,** kind individuals create a more caring community and help to perpetuate genuine acts of kindness in Farmington Hills and beyond; and,

WHEREAS, the Farmington/Farmington Hills Commission on Children, Youth and Families seeks to encourage a kind and supportive environment where children, youth, and families are happy, healthy, educated, safe, and have the opportunity to reach their full potential; and,

WHEREAS, members of the Commission on Children, Youth and Families inspire kindness and mental health awareness through their Kindness Rock Garden in Heritage Park, an interactive community art installation of rocks painted with uplifting messages for anyone to take when they need encouragement.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Theresa Rich, Mayor of the City of Farmington Hills, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby proclaim **Nov. 13, 2024**, to be “**World Kindness Day**” and urge all members of the community to share acts of kindness, caring and compassion in the community, not just on Nov. 13, but every day of the year.

Ms. Luty offered remarks regarding the Kindness Rock Garden, established in October 2022 by the Commission, and located behind the Spicer House.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS FROM CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS

There were no announcements or presentations.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence received.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Boleware, support by Knol, to approve the consent agenda as read by Mayor Pro Tem Bridges.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, BRUCE, DWYER, KNOL AND RICH

Nays: NONE

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

There were no items removed for discussion.

COUNCIL MEMBERS’ COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Council Member Aldred and Mayor Rich offered comments regarding the Veterans Day luncheon held earlier today at the Costick Center. The event was meaningful and well organized.
- Council Member Aldred highlighted the Farmington SAFE (Suicide Awareness for Everyone) community conversation event First Responder Trauma and Substance Use Awareness, Wednesday, November 13, 6pm, Council Chambers, and online.
- Mayor Rich reminded everyone there is a “Walk the Hawk with Council” event at noon tomorrow.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE

City Manager Mekjian provided the following update:

- Thanked Special Services for the excellent Veterans Luncheon held earlier today.
- Yard waste collection will end the week of December 9.
- Holiday lighting event will be 6:30pm Tuesday, December 3rd, at City Hall. Santa Claus will be on a fire engine, and there will be cookies and cocoa.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FROM EVENTS-O-RAMA LLC FOR THE TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF A 2024 CLASS C LICENSE WITH VARIOUS PERMITS AND 3 BARS LOCATED AT 23666 ORCHARD LAKE ROAD.

Background

Referencing her 11/11/24 memorandum, City Clerk Lindahl presented the request from Events-O-Rama LLC for the transfer of ownership of a 2024 Class C license at 23666 Orchard Lake Road.

- The City has received notification from the Michigan Liquor Control Commission and a request from Rajesh Gupta, representing Events-O-Rama LLC for local approval of the above referenced request.
- The request is for the transfer of ownership of a 2024 Class C license with Sunday Sales Permit (PM), Dance-Entertainment Permit, and 3 bars from Farmington Hills Investment Inc. (Farmington Manor), with the addition of a Sunday Sales Permit (AM) and a Catering Permit. This license is being used at its existing location with new ownership.
- The applicant has submitted an application along with their policy regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages, pursuant to Michigan Liquor Control Commission Rules. The application is included with this report.
- An agreement for return of the license to the City of Farmington Hills if the business ceases to operate has been submitted with their application.
- The application packet was routed to all departments for review. The transfer of ownership of the existing liquor license and permits received a denial from the Police Department, pending the applicant presenting the situation to City Council for a waiver. No objections were received from any other departments.
- Approval requires a Council waiver and five affirmative votes.

Presentation by Applicant and his Legal Counsel:

Mr. Rajesh Gupta deferred to his attorney, Mr. Peter Manni, for the presentation.

Mr. Manni focused on the following key points:

- Mr. Gupta's Background:
 - Extensive experience in the restaurant and banquet hall industry since 1990.
 - Managed and opened multiple restaurants and banquet halls across the U.S., including Ohio and Louisiana.
- Business Preparations:
 - Mr. Gupta has received a conditional license from the Michigan Liquor Control Commission.
 - Secured all required inspections, financial reviews, and a food license from the County Health Department.
- Criminal History Context:
 - A conviction stemmed from a 2010 incident where a business check issued by Mr. Gupta's

restaurant was returned for insufficient funds.

- After leaving the U.S. due to family emergencies and being unable to return due to immigration issues, Mr. Gupta was unable to resolve the case until 2022.
- In 2022 the matter was resolved with full restitution, a guilty plea to a lesser misdemeanor charge, and no jail time served.
- Character Defense:
 - Mr. Manni emphasized Mr. Gupta's transparency with the police department during their investigation.
 - Highlighted his family-oriented nature and extensive business experience.
- November 11, 2024 Letter from Sanjay K. Ghatt, Mr. Gupta's Attorney in 2010 in the State of Ohio: A letter was received this morning from Sanjay Ghatt which laid out in detail the factual history and timeline of the 2010 Ohio case. Mr. Manni read the entire letter from Mr. Ghatt, which included the following statements:

"On May 20, 2010, Mr. Gupta and I appeared for the arraignment, and he entered a plea of Not Guilty to the charges. The case was in the process of being resolved, when Mr. Gupta had to go to India to attend to his ailing mother. He was unable to return due to an immigration issue. As a result, in February, 2011, upon Mr. Gupta's failure to attend Court, a capias was issued.

"In December, 2022, Mr. Gupta made arrangements to return to the United States. Subsequently, I worked with the prosecutor and the Court for Mr. Gupta to pay the restitution in the amount of the check and resolve the pending case."

Mr. Ghatt's letter provided the follow summary:

"In your decision making, I request that you consider the following:

- *Mr. Gupta pled guilty to a misdemeanor charge;*
- *At no point did he serve any time in jail, be it in the Municipal Court case or relating to the subsequent filing in the Court of Common Pleas;*
- *He was ordered to pay the restitution in the amount of the check in question, which he did prior to the hearing of December 21, 2022;*
- *He was not ordered to pay any fines or court costs; and*
- *The case was closed in toto at sentencing."*
- Mr. Manni also referenced the October 15, 2024 Police communication (Interoffice Correspondence) from Captain Brian Moore to Chief Jeff King acknowledging Mr. Gupta's honesty during their inquiry.

The Police Department correspondence concluded: *"Gupta was honest and forthright about this conviction with Sergeant Hernandez. Farmington Hills ordinance does prohibit issuing a liquor license to an applicant convicted of a crime of dishonesty or false statement. In this case Gupta issued a check knowing he had insufficient funds in the bank. Twelve years later he took responsibility for his actions and handled the matter in court."*

Additional Comments from Applicant:

Mr. Gupta elaborated on the circumstances surrounding his absence from the U.S. and the delayed resolution of the 2010 bounced check:

- He had become a U.S. Citizen prior to these events.

- He traveled to India in July 2010 due to his father's critical illness and 90-day ICU stay, traveling back and forth for business reasons during this time.
- Because of visa restrictions to visit India, being a U.S. citizen, he was in the U.S. when his father died and he could not return to India for the funeral. At that time, he made a decision to close his business and went to India to take care of his family, including his mother and brothers. His mother passed in 2012. He himself became very ill during this time.
- After taking care of family matters, Mr. Gupta returned to the U.S. in 2022 and immediately resolved the legal matter.
- Mr. Gupta described this period as a significant personal and financial downturn for his family.

Council Member Questions and Concerns

- Council Member Bruce raised concerns regarding:
 - The 12-year delay in addressing the bounced check and the lack of attempts to resolve the debt during that time.
 - The absence of penalty payments or adjustments for inflation when restitution was made. In Bruce's opinion, the business owner who received the bad check had never been made whole because he was paid back in 2010 dollars, not 2022 dollars.
 - The perceived lack of proactive responsibility during the 12-year period troubled Bruce.

In response, Mr. Gupta said that he paid what he was asked to pay during the settlement. He detailed some of the financial hardships and personal struggles faced during the period, as his family in the U.S. (wife and children) lost their principal breadwinner and his wife became very ill in 2016 with an autoimmune diagnosis. She had to leave her job and is now on disability.

Mr. Gupta acknowledged his failure to make even small partial payments or other gestures but attributed this to extreme personal and financial difficulties. He emphasized his intention to resolve the matter as soon as he returned to the U.S.

In response to questions from Bruce, Mr. Gupta said he was purchasing the Farmington Manor with the help of a friend, who is helping him acquire the assets of the business through a loan.

- Council Member Bruce expressed concern about the lack of effort to demonstrate responsibility for the unpaid debt over a 12-year period. Based on his experience, even small, consistent payments can show good faith and acknowledgment of a financial obligation. Bruce also highlighted that repaying the original 2010 amount in 2022 dollars without adjustments for inflation or penalties did not fully compensate the impacted business owner, raising questions about the applicant's commitment to addressing the matter responsibly. Even from the other side of the world, money can be transferred at a moment's notice. Mr. Gupta had committed a crime in 2010, and for 12 years not even the smallest restitution was made.

In response, Mr. Gupta said this was the first thing he took care of when he returned to the U.S.

- Council Member Dwyer, drawing from his long experience as a former police chief, including 23 years in Farmington Hills, and which also included reviewing and approving or denying hundreds of requests for Class C licenses, supported approving the liquor license:
 - Cited Mr. Gupta's cooperation and honesty during the police investigation.
 - Acknowledged concern about Mr. Gupta being able to make a living.

- Acknowledged mitigating factors, including Mr. Gupta's challenging circumstances and the relatively minor nature of the offense.
- Based on several factors and the investigation itself by the Police Department and how Mr. Gupta cooperated, including being honest and forthright with the investigator, he recommended approval for the requested license.

- Mayor Pro Tem Bridges asked Mr. Gupta if he was aware of the debt when he left for India.

Mr. Gupta admitted partial awareness of the debt but cited time pressures and personal challenges as reasons for the delay in addressing it.

Mayor Pro Tem Bridges inquired if the City Clerk had knowledge of similar past cases involving applicants with similar background issues.

City Clerk Lindahl stated there were no records during her tenure as Clerk of similar cases proceeding to council approval. She noted that some applicants had withdrawn their requests when informed of issues uncovered in background checks.

- Council Member Knol expressed support for granting the license:
 - Mr. Gupta had admitted his mistake. He has been very forthright this evening. The event was a long time ago, Mr. Gupta had not served jail time, and as soon as he came back from India he took care of this situation.
 - Highlighted the fact that everyone makes mistakes and hopes for some grace, especially after restitution has been made.

Council Member Knol shifted focus to the condition of the Farmington Manor property:

- Raised concerns about neglected landscaping and its impact on the business's image.
- Urged Mr. Gupta to prioritize improvements, including cleaning up weeds and enhancing the property's curb appeal, even if he has to do the work himself.
- Cited the "broken window theory," emphasizing how poorly maintained properties affect surrounding businesses.

Mr. Gupta assured Council that the landscaping and building facade were included as improvements in the purchase contract.

- Council Member Aldred sought clarification on conflicting timelines payments regarding Mr. Gupta's knowledge of the warrant:
 - Cited discrepancies between the police department's report and a letter submitted by Mr. Gupta's attorney regarding what Mr. Gupta knew about the warrant against him. Per the police report, Mr. Gupta was fully aware before he left the country but had no funds to make the victim whole. Per Attorney Manni's letter, Mr. Gupta was not aware of the warrant before he left.

Mr. Manni acknowledged the inconsistencies, explaining they arose from limited access to historical records and reliance on court dockets and imperfect memory. This was why he read the Ohio attorney's letter, which they had only received this morning, and which was factual and relied on the client/case records that were kept at the time. Mr. Manni confirmed that Mr. Gupta was aware of the warrant when he left for India, prioritizing family emergencies in India

over addressing the legal matter. Mr. Manni apologized for inconsistencies and affirmed that they were trying to be fully transparent.

- Mayor Rich raised concerns about the ordinance language, which states that no such license "shall" be issued to individuals with certain criminal histories, noting that "shall" indicates a mandatory prohibition.

City Attorney Joppich confirmed that Mayor Rich was reading the ordinance correctly. However, Council has the authority to grant waivers of ordinance requirements. This discretion should be exercised cautiously and only under exceptional circumstances to avoid setting precedents.

- Waivers should be granted rarely and require a high bar of justification.
- Approving this waiver could create expectations for similarly situated applicants. Because of this, Attorney Joppich emphasized the importance of carefully exploring all the issues. Was this particular situation contemplated by the ordinance, or does the situation go beyond what was contemplated? If a waiver is granted, Council needs to be able to look back at this request and understand why they made the decision that they did. The record should be complete, including all related documents including the letter from the Ohio attorney discussed by Mr. Manni tonight.

- Council Member Boleware asked if approving the waiver in this case would obligate Council to approve all similar waivers in the future.

City Attorney Joppich explained that while each case must be evaluated on its specific merits, granting a waiver could create an expectation for consistency in a similar case.

- Mayor Pro Tem Bridges questioned the alignment of the timeline provided by the applicant's attorney with other documentation.

City Attorney Joppich acknowledged some discrepancies, which had been clarified by additional materials provided by the applicant's attorney this evening. Attorney Joppich deferred credibility judgments to Council, but also acknowledged that the corrections to the record had been made voluntarily by the applicant.

- Mayor Pro Tem Bridges proposed tabling the decision to allow time for a thorough review of the new documentation, to ensure it aligns with the applicant's testimony and submitted materials.
 - Emphasized the importance of precedent-setting and the need for careful deliberation.
 - Suggested postponing the decision to the next council meeting on November 25th.
 - Acknowledged that postponement could disadvantage the applicant but argued that due diligence outweighed this concern.

Motion to Postpone

MOTION by Bridges, support by Boleware, to postpone this item to the November 25, 2024 meeting.

Council Member Knol pointed out that tabling this item to the next meeting would disadvantage Mr. Gupta as Council will be one member short on November 25, when 5 affirmative votes are needed, and tabling to November 25 could also negatively impact the terms of the property

purchase.

The Mayor called the question, which failed by voice vote.

- Council Member Dwyer sought clarification regarding the ordinance's prohibition on issuing licenses to individuals convicted of crimes involving dishonesty or false statements.

City Attorney Joppich explained that the ordinance applies regardless of whether the conviction is classified as a misdemeanor or punishable by less than one year if the crime is one of dishonesty. Issuing a check with insufficient funds qualifies as this type of crime.

- Council Member Dwyer noted that it was unusual for the police department to defer a decision on a waiver to City Council. Reflecting on his 23 years of experience with the police department in Farmington Hills, he stated that he had never encountered a case where the department asked Council to consider a waiver instead of making a clear recommendation.

Council Member Dwyer suggested that this might indicate the police department sees this case as a "gray area," leaving the decision to Council. He speculated that the department's hesitation to recommend outright denial reflects uncertainty about how the case should be resolved. Dwyer emphasized that this approach deviates from the norm, as the police department typically provides a definitive recommendation in 99.9% of cases. He indicated he was ready to make a motion.

Motion and Final Discussion

MOTION by Dwyer, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby adopts the resolution for APPROVAL to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission for the request from Events-O-Rama LLC to transfer ownership of a 2024 Class C license with permits and 3 Bars; from Farmington Hills Investment Inc., located at 23666 Orchard Lake Road; and includes the waiver of Ordinance provision Section 4-45 (7).

Motion discussion:

Council Member Bruce opposed the motion. He reiterated concerns about Mr. Gupta's handling of the debt, stating that only the "minimum necessary" was done after 12 years. He emphasized the importance of holding applicants to higher standards, especially when granting a valuable resource like a Class C liquor license. He raised concerns about setting a precedent for future waivers and the lack of historical examples of such cases. In his 20 years on Council no one convicted of a crime had come in for a waiver in order to have get a Class C liquor license, and he did not think one should be granted for someone who had done the bare minimum restitution.

Council Member Knol emphasized Mr. Gupta's sincere apology and extensive experience in the banquet and restaurant industry. She pointed out the critical need for a banquet facility to have a liquor license, and the potential positive impact on the Orchard Lake area if the facility were revitalized.

Council Member Aldred suggested taking a brief recess to give council members time to read the letter from Mr. Gupta's Ohio attorney, especially as that letter addressed discrepancies in the timeline and inconsistencies in documentation provided in the packets.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Boleware, to take a 10-minute recess to allow council members to review the newly provided documentation in order to make an informed decision.

Motion passed by voice vote.

The meeting recessed at 8:40pm and reconvened at 8:50pm.

Mayor Rich noted that there was a motion on the floor, to approve the license and grant a waiver of Section 4-45.7, which restricts licenses based on criminal history.

Council Member Aldred highlighted the facts submitted in the letter from Mr. Gupta's lawyer, explaining that the case began in 2010 when Mr. Gupta entered a plea of not guilty but had to leave for India to care of his ailing mother.

Mr. Manni pointed out that the Michigan Liquor Control Commission had reviewed the applicant's application including the criminal history and approved the transfer of the liquor license. Mr. Manni emphasized transparency and willingness to provide additional documentation.

Council Member Aldred asked City Attorney Joppich if the waiver required further clarification for the record.

City Attorney Joppich confirmed that Council's detailed discussions and thorough questioning sufficiently supported the decision. He recommended creating a comprehensive set of minutes to ensure a clear record of the council's decision-making process.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL AND RICH
Nays: BRUCE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 6-1.

CONSIDERATION OF APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

MOTION by Knol, support by Boleware, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby confirms the Mayor's recommendation to appoint the following individuals to various City Boards and Commissions:

Beautification Commission

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Paul Aren	Expired Term	February 1, 2028

Paul will fill the regular vacancy left by Carol Kurth who resigned January 2024.

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Kailee Sosnowski	Expired Term	February 1, 2028

Kailee will fill the regular vacancy left by Jennifer Chinn who resigned December 2023.

Emergency Preparedness Commission

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Sean Thomas	Unexpired Term	February 1, 2025

Sean was appointed as an alternate member in December 2023, he will now fill the regular vacancy left by Dan Wecker who resigned November 2024.

Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Rudy Patros	Unexpired Term	February 1, 2028

Rudy will fill the regular vacancy.

Commission on Community Health

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Sylvia White	Unexpired Term	February 1, 2027

Sylvia will fill the regular vacancy left by Daniel Konja who resigned June 2024.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF AWARD OF BID FOR PURCHASE OF FIRE DEPARTMENT DAY CHAIRS TO FIRE STATION FURNITURE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,154.29. CMR 11-24-111

MOTION by Boleware, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to issue a purchase order to Fire Station Furniture in the amount of \$20,154.29 for the purchase of 21 heavy duty day chairs.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, BRUCE, DWYER, KNOL AND RICH
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF AWARD OF BID FOR PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF DUMP BODIES AND WINTER MAINTENANCE ACCESSORIES ON TWO NEW DUMP TRUCK CHASSIS AND FOUR NEW PICK-UP TRUCKS TO TRUCK & TRAILER SPECIALTIES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$277,256. CMR 11-24-112

MOTION by Boleware, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to issue a purchase order with Truck & Trailer Specialties in the amount of \$277,256.00 for the purchase and installation of dump bodies and winter maintenance accessories on two (2) new dump truck chassis and four (4) new pick-up trucks.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, BRUCE, DWYER, KNOL AND RICH
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF AWARD OF BID FOR COSTICK CENTER DOOR B AND LONGACRE HOUSE PORCH AWNING PROJECTS TO MICHIGAN TENT & AWNING INC. IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$12,845.05. CMR 11-24-113

MOTION by Boleware, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to award the bid for Costick Center and Longacre Awning Projects to Michigan Tent & Awning Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$12,845.05.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, BRUCE, DWYER, KNOL AND RICH
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 28, 2024.

MOTION by Boleware, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the city council special study session meeting minutes of October 28, 2024.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, BRUCE, DWYER, KNOL AND RICH
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 28, 2024.

MOTION by Boleware, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approve the city council regular meeting minutes of October 28, 2024.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, BRUCE, DWYER, KNOL AND RICH
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Rich reviewed the process and rules relative to public comment.

- Dan McRoberts, Greencastle Road and HOA president for his subdivision which is located near 12 Mile Road between Inkster and Middlebelt, raised the issue that planned construction on 12 Mile Road will require the removal of the subdivision's entrance sign. The Oakland County Road Commission indicated it would not relocate the sign, only remove it. Attempts to contact the city's engineering department for assistance yielded no response, despite follow-ups. The HOA lacks funds to manage the removal, storage, and reinstallation of the sign independently.

City Manager Mekjian acknowledged the issue and committed to investigating the matter. He will review the sign's location in relation to City and County jurisdiction and will reach out to the County if that is the responsible party.

- Valdor Haglund, Dorchester Drive, Farmington Glen Subdivision, described concerns about the lack of communication regarding the fiber optic installation by SIFI Networks in his neighborhood. Residents were surprised by the work, which included flags, markings, and digging, with no prior notice. Attempts to inquire about the work revealed that door hangers or notices were either not distributed or inconsistently provided.

City Manager Mekjian acknowledged similar complaints from other neighborhoods about SIFI's poor communication practices. He confirmed that SIFI is required to distribute door hangers and place signage in affected areas, but compliance has been inconsistent. The City has pushed for better communication from SIFI and has increased its own efforts to inform residents via the city website.

Council Member Knol expressed frustration relative to the ongoing communication failures by SIFI Networks, despite repeated discussions between the City Manager and the company. She emphasized the need for the City to take direct responsibility for improving communication, including utilizing the City's communications department to create mailings or newsletters that provide hard-copy information to residents. Relying on the City's website was not enough.

Council will invite SIFI representatives to a future council meeting to address issues directly.

- Angie Smith, Farmington Public School Board Member, commended Council and the Police Department for their swift response and support in addressing racist text messages targeting high school students following the recent election. She expressed gratitude to Police Chief Jeff King and Detective Clark for their proactive efforts in handling recent incidents of anti-Semitic and racist behavior.
- PG, resident, commented on the study session discussion held prior to tonight's regular meeting regarding potential replacement of the Farmington-Farmington Hills Multicultural, Multiracial Community Council. She thanked Council Member Dwyer for his remarks during the study session, and suggested renaming "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" (DEI) initiatives to focus on "Greater Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity," arguing that inclusion should take precedence over diversity.

- Preston Marston, eighth grade, advocated for expanding creative opportunities for youth at the Farmington Hills Library, including introducing screenplay and film contests in addition to existing writing competitions.

ADJOURNMENT

The regular session of City Council meeting adjourned at 9:19PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk