

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL GOALS STUDY SESSION MEETING
COMMUNITY ROOM
JANUARY 21, 2023 – 9:00AM

The goals study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Barnett at 9:09am

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

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith and Assistant City Manager Valentine

REVIEW OF 2022 GOALS:

Consensus of Council:

- No longer budget for US Conference of Mayor
- Schedule full ALICE training for Council members
- Schedule a future study session on rental inspection program to discuss progress and invite Phil Neuman, Attorney for Apt. Association

Other requests/suggestions:

- Accelerate sidewalk replacement program
- Request Oakland County Road Commission to clean-up/repair 12 Mile/Orchard Lake Road medians
- Council to receive a map of crime stats for apartments
- Provide council a list of openings on boards/commissions so they can help recruit members
- Place a better directional map for the layout of The HAWK on the city website

In lieu of full gateway signage it was suggested by staff to consider enhanced landscaping and lighting with entry way signs off the ramps at I-696/Orchard Lake Road.

Staff suggested that the council consider an annual winter event rather than a having a winter light display at Heritage Park as there is no electrical to accommodate such a display.

DISCUSSION ON 2023 GOALS:

CANNABIS OUTREACH EFFORTS – NEXT STEPS

City Manager Mekjian stated that all of the informational meetings and any videos from those meetings and reports are on the city's website. He commented that there are several different licenses that the city can consider and that the timing might be good since the city is currently reviewing the city's master plan. He stated that city administration is looking for direction from council on next steps with regard to if the city wants to consider issuing licenses and if so, what types of licenses.

Council comments and suggestions:

- Council did not want to hold up the master plan process for this issue.
- Concerns were expressed with the number of lawsuits other communities have faced and fact that there is only revenue for the city from retail establishments, which is not that much and it seems the market is getting saturated with retail cannabis stores.

- It was suggested possibly considering in the future licenses for testing facilities and transportation/logistics.
- Prefer for city to focus on liquor license policies and bringing in new restaurants to the area.

Council consensus:

- Hold off on pursuing cannabis licenses; focus on liquor license ordinance and policy updates to help recruit and retain more restaurants. Bring the issue of cannabis back for discussion after the master plan is complete with a focus on testing facilities and transportation/logistics licensing rather than retail. It was mentioned there is the potential for a ballot referendum for dispensaries in the future if desired.

CITY COUNCIL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES - ALLOWING REMOTE ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL MEETINGS BY PRESENTERS/STAFF UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

City Manager Mekjian and Clerk Smith explained that they are asking Council to consider a change in their meeting procedures and guidelines to allow for remote attendance at study session meetings only by presenters and possibly staff in extenuating circumstances. This would make it easier for presenters who are out of town and save the city money for travel expenses.

Council comments and suggestions:

- Agreeable to allow for presenters out of town or extenuating circumstances but did not want this to become normal procedure.

Council consensus:

- Move forward with modifying the City Council meeting procedures to allow for remote attendance for presenters/staff only under certain circumstances, particularly out of town presenters; amended policy would be brought back to council for consideration,

ORDINANCE REVIEW IN LIGHT OF PROPOSED MASTER PLAN CHANGES

City Manager Mekjian explained that staff is interested in proposing as part of the master plan update a suggestion to create a new zoning classification for city-owned property. He explained that currently city-owned property is zoned whatever the underlying zoning was previously and that has caused some issues when trying to implement certain uses on sites.

Council consensus:

- Pursue another zoning classification for city-owned property,

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION – PARTICULARLY RESTAURANTS

Council comments and suggestions:

- The number one complaint some council members are hearing from residents is that there are not enough sit-down restaurants in the city and perhaps cleaning up the liquor license policy and ordinance that are coming to council in the future may help with this.
- Suggested the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) work with the City of Farmington and their Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to coordinate economic development resources and efforts.

It was noted that these efforts are already under way.

PARKING OF DELIVERY VANS/BOX TRUCKS BY BUSINESS OWNERS IN STRIP MALL PARKING LOTS

Council comments and suggestions:

- Suggested a review of the city's current ordinance and update to fit current practices and include specifications in ordinance.
- Concern with some businesses using the trucks with signs as billboards for the business.

Council consensus:

- Review of how other communities are handling parking of service trucks in strip malls and historical perspective of current ordinance and pursue ordinance changes to meet current practices with specifications and hold a future study session on potential ordinance changes.

DEVELOP STRATEGY FOR RESISTING CORPORATE OWNERSHIP OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Council comments and suggestions:

- Concern with Airbnb's in neighborhoods and people renting out their homes or pools for parties,

Council consensus

- Schedule a study session as soon as possible on renting out homes for parties, Airbnb, etc. so the city can get ordinances in place to address the issues before spring,

ONGOING COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES – SCHOOLS, STATE AND COUNTY, UTILITY COMPANIES

Council comments and suggestions:

- Feel there is a need for continued collaboration with schools, DTE, local legislators, etc.
- Concern that students have commented they feel disconnected from government.
- It was mentioned that the City used to hold a government day with students where they would shadow department heads and City Council and then hold a mock Council meeting.

Council consensus:

- Invite annually or biannually state legislators and other entities (schools, DTE, GFL, Spectrum, etc.) to speak at a council meeting or study session to continue collaborative efforts.

COLLECTION AND CATEGORIZATION OF RESIDENT COMPLAINTS

Council comments and suggestions:

- Monthly updates to Council on citizen complaints
- Review of social media by new Communications Director with regard to concerns/complaints and send important information to press for stories when needed.
- Have police review social media for safety issues.

Council consensus

- Monthly update from the City Manager's Office of citizen complaints in major categories and review of social media by appropriate staff for misinformation or safety concerns.

WEBSITE UPDATES

Council consensus

- Update website to include resources for residents on home page (mental health and service organizations); Council member Massey can provide all of the links for the city from SAFE.

DEI EFFORTS – NEXT STEPS

City Manager Mekjian mentioned that City Council was provided with a report on the city's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts and the new DEI Director will be starting with the city in early February, 2023. He noted that the city has completed Phase I of the DEI efforts with the consultant that was hired and Phase 2 includes creating a strategic plan for the DEI program, with which the new DEI Director will be able to assist.

UPDATE ON DEER POPULATION EFFORTS AND OPTIONS FOR INCLUDING COYOTE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FUNCTION/RELATIONSHIP WITH CITY

Assistant City Manager Valentine spoke of the regional efforts underway to deal with the deer population. He noted it is an ongoing process and as more discussions are held, staff may be back to Council with further recommendations to consider, which they hope to do within the next 6 months.

Council comments and suggestions:

- Suggested fencing off an area in Heritage Park to demonstrate the destruction the deer are causing to areas and why there is such concern over the deer population.
- A vaccine is available that prevents reproduction and it might be possible to vaccinate and tag the deer to track migration and reduce the population. It was suggested that students may be able to assist and there could be a possibility for a grant to help fund these efforts.

Assistant City Manager Valentine commented that the DNR is open to certain pilot programs. He also added that staff had already sectioned off an area in Heritage Park to demonstrate the destruction as was suggested.

Council consensus:

- Pursue Councilmember Massey's plan for deer population control through a vaccine and discuss this option with DNR and coalition; bring back for a study session to discuss data from Councilmember Massey and possible grant opportunities.

CHAMBER FUNCTION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH CITY

City Manager Mekjian and some members of council outlined the function of the chamber for others and how they work with local businesses.

Council comments and suggestions:

- Council and staff to attend more chamber events to improve networking with the community.

GRAND RIVER CORRIDOR AUTHORITY

The role of the Grand River CIA was discussed and it was mentioned that there is TIF funding being captures and grant opportunities through the CIA for businesses in that area.

Council consensus:

- Schedule a future study session on the Grand River CIA and discuss current plans and what has been done to date. It was also requested that the current CIA plan is shared with members of Council.

HIRING A SOCIAL WORKER

City Manager Mekjian outlined the many resources the city has currently and Mayor Barnett stated that the city has a social worker on staff.

Council consensus

- More promotion on how the city social worker assists residents and how other resources are used to assist residents
- Make sure those resources are on the home page of the city website for easy access by residents.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS OF STAFF OR COUNCIL:

- Staff review if mobile homes are part of rental inspection program
- Collaborate with West Bloomfield Township to make the area at Orchard Lake Road where the two cities border a gateway and potential direct bus line to downtown with a community hub.
- During the MP review process, staff will be focusing on the major corridors discussed by council.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The study session meeting adjourned at 12:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk