

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER
FEBRUARY 10, 2025 – 7:30 PM

The regular session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 7:34PM.

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; Directors Aranowski, Kettler-Schmult, Rushlow, Schnackel and Skrobola and City Attorney Morita

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Avery Hill.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR SESSION MEETING AGENDA

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 6, 2025 AS OPTIMIST DAY

The following proclamation was read by Council Member Dwyer, a 40 year member of the Optimist Club, and accepted by the President of the Optimist Club of Farmington and Farmington Hills, Don Munter. Council Member Bruce is also a member of the Optimist Club.

**PROCLAMATION
In Recognition of Optimist Day
Feb. 6, 2025**

WHEREAS, Optimist International is a worldwide organization of people committed to optimism and self-development for the improvement of youth and community; and,

WHEREAS, Optimist Day is recognized and celebrated annually on the first Thursday of February to recognize local Optimist organizations, celebrate their contributions to the community and encourage citizens to do something that brings out optimism in themselves or others; and,

WHEREAS, the Optimist Club of Farmington & Farmington Hills has been a vital part of the community for more than 40 years; and,

WHEREAS, this voluntary organization of civic-minded men and women is dedicated to community service, making a difference in the lives of others and working with young people to help them reach their potential to make their dreams come true; and,

WHEREAS, the membership of the Optimist Club of Farmington & Farmington Hills is composed of individuals from business, industry, government, and other professions, who use their talent and skills to contribute to the community in which they and their families draw daily benefits; and,

WHEREAS, there are 2,500 Optimist Clubs in Optimist International, with more than 70,000 members worldwide who are contributing to their respective communities and encouraging a greater exchange of ideas between young people and adults.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Theresa Rich, Mayor of the City of Farmington Hills, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby recognize the **Optimist Club of Farmington & Farmington Hills** and call upon our citizens, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools to thank the local Optimist Club and honor this vital organization that is committed to the improvement of youth and community.

Don Munter, President of the Optimist Club of Farmington and Farmington Hills, made comments about the local Optimist Club, which has 50 members, and whose mission is to serve children. The Optimist Club is the largest organization in the world that is strictly devoted to improving the lives of children.

PROCLAMATION HONORING AVERY HILL, MISS MICHIGAN COLLEGIATE AMERICA 2025

The following proclamation was read by Council Member Bridges and accepted by Avery Hill:

**PROCLAMATION
Recognizing Avery Hill
Miss Michigan Collegiate America 2025
Feb. 10, 2025**

WHEREAS, the Miss Collegiate America Pageant provides personal and professional opportunities for women enrolled in a university, trade school or continuing education program, allowing them to compete in a pageant with high moral values, grow leadership skills, earn scholarships and more; and,

WHEREAS, Avery Hill, a long-time resident of the City of Farmington Hills, was crowned Miss Michigan Collegiate America 2025 at the state pageant in Dearborn, Michigan, in January 2025, bringing pride to the Farmington Hills community; and,

WHEREAS, Avery, an alumna of Farmington Public Schools and a first-year student in the Culinary Arts program at Schoolcraft College, has demonstrated exceptional dedication to her education and community; and,

WHEREAS, Avery plans to use her platform to advocate for greater awareness of B.R.A.V.E. – Building Respect and Values for Everyone – the official national platform and anti-bullying campaign of the Miss Jr. High, High School and Collegiate America Organization, which promotes building respect and

values through presentations to school-aged children and their parents to create awareness and promote a bully-free and safe environment; and,

WHEREAS, Avery exemplifies courage and resilience by working to raise awareness for Tourette syndrome, a nervous system condition with which she was diagnosed during her freshman year of high school; and,

WHEREAS, Avery will represent the Farmington Hills community in Little Rock, Arkansas, when she competes in the national Miss Collegiate America Pageant.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Theresa Rich, Mayor of the City of Farmington Hills, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby honor Avery Hill for embodying the joy, optimism and resilience that are characteristic of the Farmington Hills community, and wish her luck at the national Miss Collegiate America Pageant and in all her future endeavors.

Ms. Hills thanked Council for the proclamation and thanked the City of Farmington Hills for their support.

PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2025 AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The following proclamation was read by Council Member Aldred and accepted by Teresa and Darwin Walker:

**PROCLAMATION
Black History Month
February 2025**

WHEREAS, the City of Farmington Hills takes pride in recognizing February 2025 as Black History Month, celebrating the many notable contributions that African Americans have made to our community, our country and our world; and,

WHEREAS, we applaud the vast cultural, economic, political, and social contributions made by people of African ancestry who helped build this great nation and we honor their valuable contributions to professional fields, including education, law, government, science, business, sports and the arts, and their brave service in the United States Armed Forces; and,

WHEREAS, we embrace the multicultural diversity of people of color in Farmington Hills, and express gratitude for how their influence enriches the history and culture of our City to unite and sustain us as a community; and,

WHEREAS, we uplift our African American community leaders, business owners and professionals, and promote the Black community as part of the rich tapestry of our whole inclusive Farmington Hills community; and,

WHEREAS, we join others in recognizing and rooting out systemic racism, health and wealth disparities, and other inequities in our community so that all Black people and other people of color feel welcomed, valued and celebrated.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Theresa Rich, Mayor of the City of Farmington Hills, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby proclaim February 2025 as **Black History Month** in Farmington Hills and call upon our citizens, public and private institutions, businesses and schools to honor the history and achievements of Black Americans, and reflect upon efforts needed to create a world that is more just, equitable and prosperous for all people.

The resolution was accepted by Theresa and Darwin Walker, local residents and business owners of The Eleven11 Event Studio at the Merchants Marketplace Shopping Center at 12 Mile and Middlebelt. Mayor Rich said that shortly after joining the local business landscape, the Walkers became active with the Education Foundation for Farmington Public Schools. Their contributions as both business owners and residents are exemplary. Mr. Walker expressed gratitude to the Mayor and City Council for the opportunity to accept the Proclamation. He acknowledged the significance of Black History Month and the sacrifices made by those who paved the way for their opportunities. He emphasized their commitment to setting a positive example, not only as a Black-owned business but as a model of good business practice within the City. Ms. Walker welcomed residents to visit the Eleven11 Event Studio.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS FROM CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS

REPORT FROM THE FARMINGTON AREA COMMISSION ON AGING

Referencing the January 28, 2024 memorandum, *Results of Listening Sessions on the Future of the Costick Center*, Commission on Aging members Dr. Katherine Marshall and Julieene Villani highlighted the following points:

- The Listening Sessions were requested by residents participating in activities at the Costick Center.
- The sessions only involved the Commission on Aging. City Council was not part of the sessions.
- There were over 200 attendees at two listening sessions on December 3.
- 83% of attendees used the Costick Center more than three times a week, with some participants structuring their lives around their Costick Center participation.
- Participants were opposed to the Costick Center being eliminated and moved to The Hawk. Concerns included the traffic in the 12 Mile and Orchard Lake area, lack of parking at The Hawk, and young children running through the handicapped parking spaces. Some participants felt that the pool at The Hawk was too small and would not facilitate the exercise classes that are held at the Costick Center. They also felt that activities were more expensive at The Hawk.
- Participants also raised concerns about the Costick Center, including that the gym needed to be bigger, and that more space was needed for programs.
- Meals on Wheels used the Costick Center to prepare meals five days a week. The Costick Center needed a bigger kitchen, but The Hawk would not be able to provide food prep.
- The Costick Center needed bigger and better locker rooms, with changing chairs for older people.
- Participants stressed the importance of exercise and community for seniors.

Dr. Marshall asked Council members to come to the Costick Center and experience it. She stressed the importance of making thoughtful, informed decisions that affected the many senior residents of the City. While the seniors themselves recognized the challenges of the Costick Center, The Hawk is not an option that will meet the needs of this population.

Council Member Bridges, liaison to the Commission on Aging, stated that Council is fully aware of the community's concerns, and the data from the recent listening sessions will be valuable in informing Council's decisions. He acknowledged the growing senior population in Farmington Hills. Many seniors prefer to remain in the Farmington Hills community rather than relocate.

Council Member Bridges emphasized that the Council faces a decision that must balance fiscal responsibility with the critical priority of enhancing the quality of life for seniors.

Council Member Bruce said he had been going to the Costick Center for 40 years and knows the facility is deteriorating beyond the point where maintenance and repairs can be cost-effective. He also understands The Hawk facility is not ideal, and speaking as one person on Council, he believes the best course of action is to finance a new senior facility through a 20-year bond, in order to construct a senior center that will last for 50-70 years.

Council Member Boleware spoke of her participation in water aerobics at the Costick Center.

Mayor Rich thanked the Commission on Aging and noted that she was at the Costick Center at least once a month for lunch and participation in activities there.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence received.

CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Bruce requested clarification on Item 18, which concerned the approval of \$57,000 for developing a mission, vision, and values statement. City Manager Mekjian explained that one of Council's goals from the previous year was to establish a comprehensive set of guiding principles for both the City Council and the entire organization. This process involves creating a mission statement, vision, values, and organizational goals, ensuring they are integrated across all departments. Simultaneously, a strategic plan will be developed from the ground up, enabling each department to align with the City's overarching objectives.

Council Member Bruce also requested clarification on Item 21, which concerned the approval of a contract for Audio and Visual Theatre Technology Services, to provide services for music productions at The Hawk Mainstage and Blackbox Theatre. City Manager Mekjian explained that because of the loss of staff for these part-time positions, the positions will be filled by a contractor until the positions – currently posted on the city's HR website – can once again be filled.

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

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 noted that the Citizens Police Academy will start on April 1. The Academy is a free, weekly, 10-week program from the Police Department that teaches different aspects of law enforcement.
- Council Member Aldred expressed optimism for a long-term solution to challenges at the Costick Center that meet the needs of seniors in the community.
- Council Member Boleware read the following statement:

“This is very personal to me. Over the past few weeks, I've been asked several questions about my stance on DEI. As a member of this Council, and African and Native American by descent, I welcome and embrace the philosophy behind DEI.

In this city, with over 82,000 residents who speak more than 60 languages – it is the most diverse city in Oakland County – I respect the diversity of those who live here and also those who work here and play here. I recognize that many times we're faced with something we don't understand or embrace, and it can be uncomfortable, but if we want to be the best city, we need policies and programs that are not only consistent with state and federal anti-discrimination laws, but we need those policies and programs that foster an environment where everyone has the opportunity to succeed, especially in the most diverse city in Oakland County, and that foundation is DEI.

DEI stands for diversity, and that includes gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, age, culture, class, religion, and opinion. Equity, which is the “E” part of DEI, is a concept of fairness and justice. Inclusion. The “I” is where we all feel that our voices are heard.

It's an organizational framework. It's systematic and well thought out that seeks to promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people. It's been going on for years under different names, but what DEI is not, it's not a code word for Black people.

In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor reported that Black folks benefited the least from DEI initiatives. The number one recipient of DEI initiatives, according to the Department of Labor, are white women, followed by ethnic minorities, and that's Latinos and Hispanics, Asian Americans, individuals with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQ+, and then last place are African Americans.

Now, you can't hire a person based on race to meet a diversity goal. That's illegal, but you can make an effort to increase diversity in the workplace through hiring initiatives and sending messages that the workplace should be fair and open to everyone. For example, when recruiting, you could cast a wide net to give a more diverse pool of applicants or provide a more diverse pool of contractors, but such applicants must be qualified for the positions, and a contractor must meet all the bid

requirements and be cost competitive. It does not mean hiring an underqualified person for a job just because they're a person of color. Everyone has to meet their job qualifications.

Now, most folks believe that DEI initiatives are a good thing. According to the Pew Research Center, which is a nonpartisan, non-advocacy think tank that informs the public about issues, attitudes, and trends shaping the world, on May 17, 2023 the Pew Center issued a report that states the majority of Americans, 53%, support DEI.

There is value in DEI. I checked with several of my HR friends, who are directors here in Michigan, including some from Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Visteon, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield. I ran by them a couple of initiatives, and I asked them, did they consider these DEI initiatives? And they all said yes. Some of these things include ramps and sidewalk curb cuts so that people in wheelchairs can traverse the city and its sidewalks. Subtitles and captions for the hearing impaired or the visual impaired. Changing tables in men's restrooms so they can change their baby's diapers. Breastfeeding pumping stations and accommodations for those women who go back to work early and want to continue breastfeeding their child. Floating paid holidays, pay equity and transparency. Parental leave, time and pay. Coming back to a job after childbirth. Not having to accept workplace harassment. Work accommodations for a variety of disabilities. Flexible work arrangements. Size inclusive chairs and beds and medical facilities. Belt extenders on planes. Various food options. I appreciate that as a vegetarian and sometimes vegan. Wellness programs and incentives. More relaxed and inclusive dress codes. Rooms to pray and meditate at work and other public places. Large print materials for those who have visual problems. Multiple religious options at hospitals. Public transit accommodations.

So, what is DEI about? It's about who's in the room, who's trying to get in the room but can't, and whoever's in the room that they are heard.

Now for that business owner here in Farmington Hills who reached out to me to let me know that they're closing their business after five years of success because they feel they're being targeted in the current climate. I want you to know, business owner, that all residents and business owners should feel safe in this city, and I'll do whatever I can to ensure your safety. And to Emily who reached out to me via email, I will do everything within my authority to assure that my constituents are protected and treated fairly. Now to every Farmington Hills resident, whether you're white, black, brown, whether you practice Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism, or if you face physical or mental challenges or gender intimidation or harassment, it is my promise and my commitment to ensure that everyone feels welcome, protected, and heard.

That I promise."

- Council Member Bridges agreed with Council Member Boleware's excellent comments on DEI.
- Council Member Bruce announced that starting March 1 at 10:00am, he would be hosting "Brews with Bruce" coffee hours at Panera Bread at 12 Mile and Halsted for residents to stop by and talk about city issues.
- Mayor Rich announced that the monthly "Walk the Hawk" event will be held tomorrow, February 11, on the third floor at The Hawk. The March date had been changed to March 3.

- Mayor Rich announced that the 2nd Annual Farmington Hills free “I Do Still” vow renewal event will be held at Longacre House at 2:30pm on February 14. Registration by February 12 is required.
- Mayor Rich congratulated Farmington Hill resident Nomi Joyrich who was recognized as a Democracy Warrior.
- Mayor Rich recognized that Farmington Hills native Samantha Lalonde would be participating in the 53rd Iditarod.
- Mayor Rich reported on a special joint study meeting with the City of Farmington and the Farmington School District. Recommendations included sending students to legislative conferences to interact with other leaders; this will be part of the budget conversation, specifically to potentially use the fees charged for the Mayor to perform local weddings to fund such an initiative.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE

City Manager Mekjian announced the completion of the city-wide zoning Master Plan. Additional focus was being placed on specific corridors within the city, particularly the 12 Mile Road Corridor and the Orchard Lake Road Corridor. Residents are asked to provide comments and input regarding the corridors by completing a short survey on the City’s website. A study for the Grand River Corridor will be completed in the not-too-distant future.

In anticipation of upcoming winter storms, City Manager Mekjian reminded residents that the Public Services Department focuses on clearing snow on major city-owned roads first. The winter maintenance plan states that the City will only clear snow on neighborhood streets if there is 4” or more of snow after clearing snow on the major roads. If there is more than 4” of snow, the City’s goal is to clear neighborhood streets within 48 hours. Residents are asked to remove vehicles from neighborhood streets in anticipation of snow removal. There was currently no planned delay in rubbish pickup. Residents were asked not to push snow into the road. The Public Services website had a plowing progress map.

The recruitment team for a new police chief interviewed the top five candidates. The City Manager, the Assistant City Manager, and the HR Director will interview the top two candidates and make a recommendation to Council. Section 502 granted the City Manager authority to appoint department directors, subject to Council approval. The administrative team is committed to a thorough and transparent recruitment process to ensure that the best candidate for the community is selected. Concerns or questions about the process are welcome.

PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 2, 2021, INCLUDING REVISED SITE PLAN 59-5-2022, LOCATED AT 27400 TWELVE MILE ROAD. CMR 2-25-11

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult introduced the application to amend Planned Unit Development 2, 2021, including Revised Site Plan 59-5-2022. The development has transitioned from a 100 bed skilled nursing facility and townhouses to 75 detached unit condominiums. On December 19, 2024, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the amendment by a 7-0 vote.

Planning Consultant Bahm, Giffels Webster, referenced her November 13, 2024 report and made the following points:

- The original PUD called for a 100-bed skilled nursing facility and 51 ranch homes on the northern portion of the site.
- The amended PUD calls for 75 detached ranch homes and four individual lots on 12 Mile Road.
- The site and the property to the north are zoned RA-1B.
- The site is about 35 acres, with about 11.5 acres being preserved as natural features preservation.
- The four lot splits on 12 Mile Road meet the required lot area but are less than the 140-ft required lot width at 111-ft.
- There is a historic chapel on site.
- This is a challenging site to develop, due to its topography and water flow/drainage issues, making the site a good candidate for a PUD.

Requested zoning deviations include:

- Construction of site-built one-family detached dwelling units at the requested density of 75 units, or a density of 4.4 units per acre. Standards under the RA-1B district are 1.7 units per acre.
- 30' exterior side yard setback along Cheswick Drive.
- No installation of western buffer plantings.
- 111' lot width where 140' is required.

Council Member Bridges noted that previous developer Optalis had found the water table issues on the site very difficult to overcome. He stressed the importance of water table issues being addressed.

Tim Loughrin, Robertson Brothers Homes, 6905 Telegraph Rd, explained that they had acquired Optalis' interest in the property, making them the sole developer. The property was still owned by Evangelical Homes.

Mr. Loughrin reviewed the prior approved PUD plans for this site; this would be the second major amendment to the PUD plan. There had been a number of starts and stops to this project, some related to former partner Optalis and some related to infrastructure, including a new lift station on 12 Mile Rd being built by the city.

Mr. Loughrin highlighted the following:

- The cornerstone of the amendment was the existing chapel building. The developer proposed saving the chapel and developing it as an amenity. The chapel would be a community gathering area and a focal point for the community at the boulevard entrance off of Inkster Rd. The chapel plans had received HDC (Historic District Commission) approval.
- The proposed condominiums were ~2,000sf, with two designs that were actually quite similar. The single-level design with first floor master bedrooms was successful in other communities and was lacking in Farmington Hills.
- There would be green screening along Inkster Road. The developer had also coordinated screening with neighborhood representatives.
- The developer did not propose connecting to Cheswick, but instead proposed planting 10 trees up to 12' high in the right-of-way on Cheswick to replace trees that over time have died. The applicants were requesting that planting trees along Cheswick could be considered "in lieu of" some of the trees that will not be planted along the western buffer.

- The existing buildings are in disrepair. Demolition is planned for this year, with some materials to be retained and reused for signage, as well as retaining the gates and fencing at the corner of 12 Mile and Inkster as a memorial that reflected the historic use as an orphanage.
- The chapel garden will be a gathering area with art and a rain garden.
- The plan accommodates the City's new Sarah Fisher lift station along 12 Mile Road.
- The site is 39% open space with a lot of natural open space and untouched trees.
- A representative from Hickory Oaks subdivision had submitted a letter of support.

In response to questions, Mr. Loughrin said that:

- There would not be an issue meeting 50' turning radius requirements for fire safety equipment.
- There will be a closed emergency vehicle access road with access to the four lots on 12 Mile Road as well as the future lift station. They will work with the Fire Department to make sure the design meets standards.
- Robertson Homes has worked with Hickory Oaks subdivision, whose representative agreed that the existing landscaping already provided a western buffer, and there was no reason to plant more trees there. They were planting more trees than required along Inkster, and again, would plant trees along Cheswick in lieu of planting trees along the western buffer.
- One design plan was 1,850sf and the other design plan was 2,000sf. The designs were both two bedroom, 2 1/2 bathroom, with a den. Some homes could include upper bedrooms in a 1-1/2 story Cape Cod feature; these would be ~2100sf. Prices would start in the mid to high \$500K range, although they were likely to close for significantly more than that, given the choices for various options. The development was age targeted to seniors and would not include a pool or playground.

Mr. Loughrin added the following information:

- The currently tax exempt site when developed would generate over a million dollars in taxes.
- The only age demographic growing in Southeast Michigan, including Farmington Hills, is in the 65+ age range. This demographic generates less traffic per unit than younger residents.
- Robertson Homes worked with the HDC to save as many historical elements as possible on the site, especially spotlighting the chapel with surrounding gardens and which is in the center of the community.
- Public benefits included:
 - Almost 40% of the site left as permanent dedicated open space
 - Reuse of historic elements
 - Donation of land for City sanitary lift station
 - Thoughtful community gathering space
 - Embrace of natural environment
 - Appropriate transition to adjacent single-family residents
 - Providing a high-quality housing product that is in demand in Farmington Hills
- A homeowner's association will maintain landscaping and provide building maintenance.
- The developer was continuing to work with City engineering staff to address concerns.
 - Engineering had asked that the boulevard entrance be eliminated. However, the proposed boulevard made a unique contribution to the community and the Planning Commission agreed.
 - Engineering had asked that the emergency access to the future lift station be eliminated. However, this access provides secondary access in case of emergency for both the homes and the lift station, for which they were donating the land.

- They will meet the 50' turning radius and will also reduce the length of the stub road by adding a longer driveway for unit 71.
- They would like to keep Unit 68 as designed, noting that the condominiums were not aligned like single-family homes and Unit 68 as designed and landscaped will be attractive to buyers.
- Engineering staff suggested providing a shared marginal access along 12 Mile. This however will reduce the useable front yard. Robertson Brothers was suggesting a T-turnaround for each of those lots instead of a common access road. Oakland County would have to sign off on this design.
- The plan proposed to allow rear yard storm water runoff to go directly into the storm water facilities instead of installing rear yard catch basins. This would allow for more trees and landscaping in the rear yards.
- Since the proposal was reviewed by the Planning Commission, DTE had identified an ITC power pole where the northern driveway was supposed to be. The estimated cost for moving the pole was \$400K-\$600K. While adding a median was possible, there was risk in having a power pole located in a median. Because the emergency access to the south met the requirement for a second access, the developer proposed eliminating the northern driveway. This would reduce conflicts with Cheswick and would eliminate the risk of someone running into the pole. The green landscape screen along Inkster would be uninterrupted in this area. There was a chance that Robertson Homes would eventually return with a request to add another home at that location. A traffic study completed since this issue arose showed there was no traffic issue with having a single access point; the traffic study had been sent to Engineering today.

Council Member Knol observed that over time she had been aware of and worked with different proposals on this site due to her role as liaison to the HDC. The site had been undeveloped for a long time, even though there had been numerous proposals brought forward but none had come to fruition because the site was extremely difficult to redevelop due to its challenging topography. There was a need for a new lift station, as the site contained wetlands. The site was also a historic district, and rehabbing any historic buildings added significant additional cost. Tonight's proposal was excellent, the amendment would reduce density, and the homes would fill a need in the community.

Mayor Rich opened the public hearing. Seeing that no members of the public indicated that they wished to speak, Mayor Rich brought the matter back to Council.

Council Member Knol made the following points:

- Boulevards were more beautiful and safer than simple two-way traffic and provided additional access.
- The proposed design for Unit 68 made sense in a condominium development.
- A T-shaped driveway would be better than backing out onto 12 Mile and was a better option than a shared access road which would require more concrete.
- She would support a storm water plan that reduced changes to the grade and reduced the need for retaining walls.
- She opposed placing a power pole in a median, and supported eliminating the northern driveway, noting that a single lane of the boulevard could provide access points in an emergency, and that the emergency access road by the lift station provided another entrance.

Council Member Bruce said he also like the plan.

- He supported the amended PUD.
- He supported eliminating the northern driveway and cited his own past experience living in a larger condominium development with families, with a single boulevard entrance. There had never been an issue with entering and exiting that site.
- He supported the proposed designs for Unit 68 and Unit 71.

Council Member Bridges said he supported the plan, subject to resolving outstanding issues. He said a project should not be approved because it had been undeveloped for several years, and said it had to be the right plan. The developers' presentation was good and moved in the right direction. If issues could be resolved relative to accessing the site, he would support this plan moving forward.

Council Member Aldred echoed support regarding eliminating the northern driveway, and thought the result would be more attractive and would not be unsafe. He shared frustrations about PUDs that were not built. He asked the developer to describe the chapel in terms of being an amenity.

Mr. Loughrin said the chapel would have a community gathering area good for such things as playing cards and would have a small kitchen and bathrooms.

In response to a further question from Council Member Aldred, Mr. Loughrin said that the developer had not engaged with Southfield regarding the condition of Inkster Road.

Council Member Boleware asked if the boulevard entrance could be widened if the northern entrance was eliminated. Mr. Loughrin said that widening the boulevard could be a consideration and he would discuss that option with his engineering team. The downside would be a reduction of landscaping in the area.

Council Member Boleware was concerned about the 4 lots accessing 12 Mile Road, which was a very very busy road. Mr. Loughrin said that a traffic study had been conducted for the entire project including access to 12 Mile. They would work with staff and the Road Commission regarding access for those lots. Again, the Road Commission would have to agree with the four separate entrances before they could move forward with that option.

Mayor Pro Tem Dwyer expressed concern about eliminating the northern driveway. He raised the possibility of relocating the driveway, based on further review by engineering and public safety, and possibly the Planning Commission.

In response to questions from Mayor Rich, Mr. Loughrin added the following:

- Public art would definitely be provided. Details would be included in final engineering.
- The developer would consider the addition of public exercise and recreation equipment, and/or outside adult play equipment.

In response to questions from City Manager Mekjian, Mr. Loughrin stated:

- The housing product was a smaller version of a product they had built in Bloomfield at the old Hickory Grove elementary school.

- They would not apply for permits, including an Act 98 sewer permit from the State, until further along in final engineering. Hopefully the lift station will be far enough along that it will be taken into consideration by the State.

City Manager Mekjian stated that the revised traffic study had just been received earlier today, and staff had not yet had the opportunity to review it. He acknowledged the long-standing vacancy of the property and emphasized the collective desire to see it developed. He commended Mr. Loughrin for his patience and collaboration with the City and staff.

Regarding project timeline, City Manager Mekjian noted that other steps remain in the process, including resolving permit issues, approving the Planned Unit Development (PUD) plan, and negotiating the PUD agreement. Allowing time for staff to review the new traffic study will not significantly impact the timeline of the project.

Addressing the site layout, City Manager Mekjian stated that discussions have focused on either removing the northern drive or relocating it further to the north. Staff's recommendation is to include an additional public access point rather than relying solely on an emergency access road as a second access.

While the boulevard is a notable and aesthetically pleasing entrance feature, engineering concerns stem from geometric considerations. The outbound boulevard lane aligns with the opposing driveway, whereas the inbound lane does not. There are other changes that the developer would like to evaluate with staff and that will take some time.

City Manager Mekjian suggested that Council's options are to approve the plan as presented this evening, deny it as presented this evening, or postpone action to a date certain allowing the developer to come back with the modifications being discussed. He again pointed out the significant lead time involved with this project; tonight's decision was not time sensitive.

Commissioner Knol asked Mr. Loughrin how a postponement would impact the developer.

Mr. Loughrin said they had no interest in a postponement. They wanted to move forward. He suggested an approval with conditions to be worked through with staff.

In response to questions from Council Member Bruce, City Attorney Morita advised that approving the project with numerous conditions could lead to even further delays. She recommended postponing the item to a date certain to allow time for staff to review the engineering details and ensure the proposed plan accurately reflects what is being approved. The current plan differs from what the applicant intends, particularly regarding the potential closure of the northern entrance, which is not shown on the submitted drawings. She emphasized the importance of having the correct documents before the Council to avoid confusion for both staff and the City Attorney's Office. As the City Manager outlined, the Council's options are to approve, deny, or postpone the item.

Planning and Community Director Kettler-Schmult added that most of the issues discussed this evening were within the purview of public services and engineering review and were not within planning zoning code regulations. She clarified that in this instance, per the original applicant's request, the site plan and

PUD were being reviewed concurrently; this was not a two-step process, and the site plan would not go back to Planning Commission for further review before Council made its decision.

Director of Public Services Rushlow said that the traffic study had not yet been opened. He suggested that postponing to the March 3 City Council meeting would give staff time to review the new study and work through details with Mr. Loughrin.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Dwyer, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby resolves that the application to amend PUD Plan 2, 2021, including Revised Site Plan 59-5-2022, dated October 17, 2024, and November 4, 2024, respectively, submitted by Robertson Brothers Homes, is postponed to a date certain of March 3, 2025.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL TO INCREASE THE CITY MANAGER'S PURCHASE APPROVAL THRESHOLD TO \$24,999 AND REQUIRE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR PURCHASES OF \$25,000 OR MORE. CMR 2-25-12

Director of Central Services Aranowski explained that on February 28, 2000, City Council authorized the increase of sealed bids from \$3,000 to \$10,000. This process authorized City Council to approve all purchases over \$10,000. At the January 13, 2025 study session, Council discussed the need to reassess the purchasing approval threshold to align with the current operational needs, inflationary factors, and efficiency in procurement processes. Based on this discussion, Purchasing proposes adjusting the approval threshold while maintaining the current sealed bid requirement. The City Manager will approve purchases up to \$24,999. The City Council will approve purchases over \$25,000.

The proposed adjustment better reflects current economic conditions and streamlines operations by reducing the number of routine purchases requiring additional approval. This will allow the City Manager to address procurement needs more promptly without compromising accountability or transparency. Included in the packet are updated purchasing policies, along with additional municipalities and their thresholds, as requested from the study session.

In response to questions, Director Aranowski said that any item over \$10,000 would still go out for bids. Following the bidding process, the City Manager could approve a purchase order for any item under \$25,000.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Boleware, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the proposed request to increase the City Manager's purchase approval threshold up to \$24,999 and require City Council approval for purchases of \$25,000 or more.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

MOTION by Knol, support by Aldred, 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:
Erika Johnson	3 years	February 1, 2028

Farmington Area Commission on Aging

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Christina Mui	3 years	February 1, 2028

Commission on Community Health

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Erika Blaskay	3 years	February 1, 2028

Emergency Preparedness Commission

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Kayla Dixon	3 years	February 1, 2028

Water Systems Advisory Council

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Debby Brauer	3 years	February 1, 2028
Katrina Kennedy	3 years	February 1, 2028

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE ENACTMENT OF ORDINANCE C-1-2025 TO AMEND THE FARMINGTON HILLS CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 2, "ADMINISTRATION," ARTICLE IV, "BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COUNCILS," TO ADD DIVISION 12, "INNOVATION, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION," TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SAID COMMISSION AND ITS AUTHORITY, PURPOSES, DUTIES AND MEMBERSHIP; AND SUMMARY FOR PUBLICATION. CMR 2-25-13

MOTION by Aldred, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the ENACTMENT of Ordinance C-1-2025 to amend Chapter 2 of the Code of the City of Farmington Hills, "Administration," Article IV, "Boards, Commissions, And Councils," to add Division 12, "Innovation, Energy, And Environmental Sustainability Commission," to provide for the establishment of said commission and its authority, purposes, duties, and membership; and approval of summary for publication.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF PROPOSED INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN OAKLAND COUNTY AND THE CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS FOR MICHIGAN INDIGENT DEFENSE COUNCIL STANDARD 7 REVIEW AND QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS. CMR 2-25-14

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to execute the proposed interlocal agreement between Oakland County and the City of Farmington Hills for Michigan Indigent Defense Council Standard 7 Review and Qualification Requirements.

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 AMENDMENT TO THE EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE CITY CLERK.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby recommends approval of the first amendment to the Employment Agreement for the City Clerk, Carly Lindahl, in follow-up to the closed session employee review of January 13, 2025.

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 RENEWAL OF LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH OAKLAND COUNTY FOR EARLY VOTING AT THE COSTICK ACTIVITIES CENTER.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the renewal of the required license agreement with the Board of County Election Commissioners for Oakland County for use of the Costick Activities Center as an early voting site.

Roll Call Vote:

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 A REQUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 10.01A OF THE CITY CHARTER FOR TWO LIFEGUARDS. CMR 2-25-15 AND CMR 2-25-16

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves an employment request per Section 10.01A of the City Charter for Maryam Bacha as a Lifeguard, who is related to employees of the City, Amina Bacha and Samira Bacha, who are Lifeguards for Special Services.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: NONE

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves an employment request per Section 10.01A of the City Charter for Ranya Bacha as a Lifeguard, who is related to employees of the City, Amina Bacha and Samira Bacha, who are Lifeguards for Special Services.

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 A REQUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 10.01A OF THE CITY CHARTER FOR A HAWK'S NEST LEADER. CMR 2-25-17

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves an employment request per Section 10.01A of the City Charter for Sandra Abbott as a Hawk's Nest Leader, who is related to Shannon Gale, who works in Assessing at City Hall.

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 A REQUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 10.01A OF THE CITY CHARTER FOR AN ARCHERY INSTRUCTOR. CMR 2-25-18

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves an employment request per Section 10.01A of the City Charter for Dianna Rose as an Archery Instructor, who is related to employees of the City, Dave Rose and Matthew Rose, who are Archery Instructors for Special Services.

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 A REQUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 10.01A OF THE CITY CHARTER FOR A BUILDING ASSISTANT. CMR 2-25-19

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves an employment request per Section 10.01A of the City Charter for Sean Lee as a Building Assistant, who is related to an employee of the City, Mildred Lee, a Building Maintenance Worker in the Special Services Department.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SECOND QUARTER FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND QUARTERLY INVESTMENT REPORTS.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves an employment request per Section 10.01A of the City Charter for Sean Lee as a Building Assistant, who is related to an employee of the City, Mildred Lee, a Building Maintenance Worker in the Special Services Department.

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 CONSULTING SERVICES FOR MISSION, VISION & VALUES STATEMENT FOR STRATEGIC PLAN TO RAFTELIS FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$57,225.00. CMR 2-25-20

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to issue a purchase order to Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. of Cincinnati, OH. in the amount of \$57,225.00 for Consulting Services for Mission, Vision & Values Statement for Strategic Plan.

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 GOLF CLUBHOUSE TABLES AND CHAIRS TO CONSERV FLAG COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$34,253.90. CMR 2-25-21

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to issue a purchase order with ConServ Flag Company for the purchase of tables and chairs for the Farmington Hills Golf Clubhouse in the amount of \$34,253.90.

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 CONTRACT FOR THE KENDALLWOOD SUBDIVISIONS #2 & #4 WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT PROJECT TO BIDIGARE CONTRACTORS INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,483,835.00. CMR 2-25-22

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the Kendallwood Subdivisions #2 and #4 Water Main Replacement Project be awarded to the lowest competent bidder, Bidigare Contractors Inc. of Plymouth Township, Michigan, in the amount of \$5,483,835.00, and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, the City Manager and the City Clerk be authorized to execute the contract on behalf of the City.

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 AUDIO AND VISUAL THEATRE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES TO PRO AUDIO AND LIGHTING IN THE ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF \$20,000 FOR A SIX (6) MONTH PERIOD WITH THE OPTIONAL APPROVED RENEWALS. CMR 2-25-23

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to award the bid for Audio and Visual Theatre Technology Services to Pro Audio and Lighting of Warren, MI for an estimated amount of \$20,000 for a six (6) month period with the option to renew, up to four (4), six (6) month terms upon mutual consent of the City and vendor.

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 GOALS STUDY SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2025.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approve the city council study session meeting minutes of January 11, 2025.

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 JANUARY 13, 2025.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approve the study session minutes of January 13, 2025.

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 JANUARY 13, 2025.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approve the regular session meeting minutes of January 13, 2025.

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 SPECIAL JOINT STUDY SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 27, 2025.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approve the special joint study session meeting minutes of January 27, 2025.

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

Pamela Santo expressed concerns regarding expanding the Tawheed Center along Moran Street. The 30,000sf expansion involves demolishing the home next to hers. Her property was 350 feet deep, and along that 350 feet will be vehicle parking. Her home is 16' from the property line. There are already traffic backups from the Tawheed Center. Ms. Santo also presented a letter to the Planning Department from her doctor regarding how her asthma will be affected by this proposed change. She said she been threatened on her property.

Mayor Rich asked Assistant City Manager Mondora to follow up with Ms. Santo regarding any threats she had received.

Lisa Goldstein, Farmington Hills resident, said that she and Lynda Pawloski met with Mayor Rich at the November Walk the Hawk event and raised the issue of signature gathering for petitions in Farmington Hills. Signature gathering was allowed in many locations in 2018 and 2020 but was not allowed on any

city property in 2022 and was very limited at Heritage Park. She felt this limited political free speech and residents' ability to participate in the political process. She asked that the City's signature gathering policy be broadened and gave Troy and Livonia as examples of cities with broader policies.

Lynda Pawloski, Farmington Hills resident, reiterated comments made by Lisa Goldstein. She raised concerns about designated signing areas and hoped that the issue would not become unnecessarily complicated. She used Livonia's policy as an example of a simple effective plan.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Attorney report was received by Council.

ADJOURNMENT

The regular session of City Council adjourned at 10:01PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk