

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL GOALS STUDY SESSION
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
JANUARY 12, 2019

The special goals study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Massey at 10:08am.

Council Members Present: Bridges, Bruce, Knol, Lerner, Massey, Rich and Steckloff

Council Members Absent: None

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

MAYOR'S OPENING COMMENTS

Mayor Massey welcomed City Council, staff and the public to the goals session meeting explaining that the intent of the meeting is to work on potential goals for the coming year and to provide staff with information that they may need for budget purposes.

EDC PRESENTATION – 3rd FLOOR HARRISON HIGH SCHOOL

Mayor Massey explained that plans have been drawn for the first and second floors of the Harrison High School building that was purchased by the City for renovating into a community center. Discussions have taken place with the schools and staff about how the third floor would be utilized and the schools determined that they would not need to utilize the third floor. He added that two public forums have been scheduled in order to obtain public input regarding potential uses for the building and he approached the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) about a possible business innovation center to help organically grown companies. Mayor Massey stated that there are unique resources on the third floor of that building that could be utilized for this purpose. He introduced Samantha Seimer, Economic Development Coordinator, EDC Chair John Anhut and EDC member Lew Cantor who were present this evening to discuss the proposed use.

Lew Cantor, EDC member, made a presentation for consideration of utilizing a portion of the third floor of the building as a Laboratory/Technology Business Incubator. He made note of the unique equipment and resources already on site, including eight laboratories, a separate entrance for the third floor and space for flexibility of use. He stated that they are not only committing to a laboratory incubator but would like to start slow beginning with a feasibility study to make sure that there is a need in this area.

Mr. Cantor stated that the EDC feels this would benefit the community as graduate companies mentor others and they tend to stay within a 5 mile radius, it could help build the commercial and residential tax base and fits within the forward-thinking attitude of Farmington Hills and concept of a connected city. He added that the EDC has access to resources and possible grant funding that could assist such a program.

Mr. Cantor indicated that, at this time, the EDC is seeking a consensus amongst Council for them to work with staff on a feasibility study and creation of a business plan.

Mark Brucki, Executive Director of Corporate and Community Partnerships, Lawrence Technological University, stated that his company is known for helping small manufacturers and innovators and that this type of program would be filling an unmet need in Michigan. He was approached by the EDC members

as there are a lot of synergies with the proposed space and concept and what he does. He feels a study would provide better feedback but he is excited about the possibility of another economic development corridor for the region.

City Manager Boyer asked the EDC members to reach out to the Special Services staff as they also had some ideas in mind for the third floor and public input was also being considered.

Councilmember Lerner expressed the desire for a more comprehensive plan that included the entire third floor and the cost involved to the City.

Overall, City Council favored the concept and staff moving forward with a feasibility study. Some suggestions of Council included: partnering with a University and/or the local school district and allowing student use, consider including home-based businesses that are ready to expand, including the Library as a resource for new businesses and encouraging conversation with Automation Alley.

City Manager Boyer stated that as part of the budget, staff will include funding for the study, which is reviewed and approved by City Council.

MEDICAL AND RECREATION MARIJUANA

It was determined that discussion would be postponed on this item until the regular study session meeting of Council on January 14, 2019, when the City Attorney would be providing further information and discussing the topic.

CAPITAL OVERLAY DISTRICT – ORCHARD LAKE ROAD and ABANDONED BUILDINGS

City Manager Boyer explained that this topic was discussed at length a while back but at that time it was unknown what the roadway in that area would look like so discussions were put on hold. Now that the city knows what the roadway will look like he has directed staff to have the Planning Commission move forward on this issue and bring a recommendation back to City Council.

Councilmember Steckloff stated that she requested this topic as well as abandoned buildings, particularly Sam's Club, and curious if the Planning Department was also looking into that issue.

City Manager Boyer stated that there has been some interest expressed in the Sam's Club building and the lease is up in a couple of years so he does not anticipate the building standing vacant too long. He noted that the city is starting to see the vacant buildings fill up. Ms. Seimer confirmed that there are very few vacant buildings in the city.

FIREWORKS ORDINANCE

City Manager Boyer stated that there has been a change in State law that tightened the time frame for fireworks from a minimum of 30 days to 12 days and questioned if City Council was interested in amending their local ordinance to mirror state law.

The consensus of City Council was for staff to bring forth an amendment to the fireworks ordinance to follow state law.

TEXTING AND DRIVING ORDINANCE

Mayor Massey mentioned that Troy adopted a similar ordinance and it was felt that perhaps this would provide the Police Department with another tool to protect the community.

Councilmember Rich suggested including texting while crossing the street.

Discussion was held on the enforceability and the fact that a Police Officer could already pull a driver over for texting and driving.

The consensus was to have the City Attorney draft an ordinance for review by City Council and obtain input during review from Police Chief Nebus.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING UPDATE

Councilmember Rich commented on the forums held regarding human trafficking and wanted the City to look at what else they could do as a community to raise awareness. She suggested stickers in jail cells, washrooms and businesses as an outreach program for communication on this topic and to possibly recognize businesses who participate.

It was suggested and agreed that this could be a great project for the Children, Youth and Family Commission. As liaison to the commission, Councilmember Steckloff agreed to bring this before the members at a future meeting. It was also suggested that there could be some synergy with the Oakland County Health Department or Oakland County Commissioner's Crime Prevention Advisory Board.

DOG PARK AT NORTH END OF THE CITY

Councilmember Steckloff inquired if there was a possibility for a small dog park on the north side of Pioneer Park.

City Manager Boyer stated that this was not city property and that was actually commons area owned by the neighboring subdivision. He also noted that the other parks on the north side of the city are heavily used already for other purposes.

Councilmember Steckloff indicated that most of the people she was hearing from were from that neighboring subdivision so she would approach the association about the concept of utilizing their commons area for that purpose.

PROGRAMMING

City Manager Boyer stated that the question came up as to why there was not city-sponsored programming on Sundays. He stated that he spoke to staff and they do have programming on both Saturdays and Sundays now so he was not sure if it was regarding a specific program but that he would have staff keep that in mind for future scheduling.

Councilmember Knol stated that it was most likely regarding the Players Theatre but they often have to schedule around the Player's Barn and the artists' schedules.

It was suggested that perhaps the city could provide more publicity for those programs offered on Sundays.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Anhut, EDC Chair, stated that it is a privilege to Chair the EDC and he thanked Council for their support.

Mayor Massey thanked Mr. Anhut for his dedication and hard work.

Mayor Massey, speaking as a member of the public, stated that branding was brought up at a past goals session and he suggested having items such as license plates or frames, etc. with the city logo or theme such as *Tradition and Progress* for Farmington Hills.

City Manager Boyer stated that these could be great items to have at the concession shop in the new Community Center and a perfect opportunity for branding the city.

Councilmember Lerner commented that he feels the city needs to discuss the internet and other cable providers and that the Broadband Task Force recommendation should also be a part of this discussion.

Mayor Pro-Tem Bridges inquired what a subdivision would do about a lack of residential lighting.

Mayor Massey suggested having them put that on a future Homeowner's Association meeting agenda.

City Manager Boyer stated that if the Association agrees to move forward, it would be a special assessment and staff would work with them.

ADJOURNMENT

The study session meeting adjourned at 11:40am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Smith', written over a horizontal line.

Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk