

MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER  
MARCH 3, 2025 – 7:30 PM

The regular session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 7:30PM.

Council Members Present: Aldred, Bridges, Boleware, 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, and Sullen-Winn, and City Attorney Joppich

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Lincoln of Scout Troup 179.

**APPROVAL OF REGULAR SESSION MEETING AGENDA**

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

**PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING TOM NEGOSHIAN**

The following proclamation was read by Council Member Bridges and accepted by Tom Negoshian:

**PROCLAMATION  
Recognizing Tom Negoshian  
March 3, 2025**

- WHEREAS,** Tom Negoshian has dedicated an extraordinary 43 years to coaching in Farmington Public Schools, leading not only boys’ basketball, but also coaching girls’ basketball, track and field, and football; and,
- WHEREAS,** he served as a teacher in Farmington Public Schools for 37 years, bringing the same dedication to the classroom that he did to the court and field; and,
- WHEREAS,** during his 55-year coaching career, working with athletes from junior high to the collegiate level, Coach Negoshian has impacted well over 1,000 students, instilling in them the values of discipline, teamwork and perseverance; and,
- WHEREAS,** beyond his coaching duties, his unwavering commitment to youth development and community engagement has positively impacted students and families in our city, including through founding programs such as "Athletes Against Drugs" in Farmington Public Schools; and,

**WHEREAS,** in recognition of his outstanding contributions to high school basketball and the broader community, Coach Negoshian was recently inducted into the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan Hall of Fame; and,

**WHEREAS,** Coach Negoshian's wife Kathy has continued to support his passion through more than 50 years of marriage, and his sons, Ryan and Todd, carry on their father's legacy, following in his footsteps as varsity coaches.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, Theresa Rich, Mayor of the City of Farmington Hills, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby honor **Tom Negoshian** for the profound impact he has had on the Farmington Hills community and beyond and thank him for his lifelong commitment to shaping youth and strengthening our community.

**PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING MARCH 2025 AS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

The following proclamation was read by Council Member Knol and accepted by Directors Aranowski, Kettler-Schmult and Sullen-Winn:

**PROCLAMATION  
Women's History Month  
March 2025**

**WHEREAS,** throughout history, extraordinary women of every race, class, ethnicity and socioeconomic background have made significant contributions to our nation in countless ways, both recorded and unrecorded; and,

**WHEREAS,** through leadership, ingenuity and hard work, generations of women have made significant contributions in science, medicine, technology, business, politics, entrepreneurship, arts and culture, and the military; and,

**WHEREAS,** women worked to secure their own rights of suffrage and equal opportunity, and played vital roles in the abolitionist, emancipation, civil rights and industrial labor movements, as they worked to create a more just and fair society for all; and,

**WHEREAS,** women play critical economic, cultural, and social roles in our society and constitute a significant portion of the labor force working both inside and outside the home; and,

**WHEREAS,** as we venture into the future, gender will be no obstacle to what women can accomplish as they open new doors, embrace innovative ideas, and continue to create a profound and positive impact on our society and community.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that I, Theresa Rich, Mayor of the City of Farmington Hills, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby proclaim March 2025 as **Women's History Month** in Farmington Hills, and call upon our citizens, public and private institutions, businesses and schools to celebrate the history and achievements of the countless women who have helped to promote a more equitable society and have created possibilities for generations of women to come.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS FROM CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS**  
**PRESENTATION OF HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION 2024 ANNUAL REPORT. CMR 3-25-31**

Historic District Commissioner and Recording Secretary Alec Thompson presented the 2024 Historic District Commission Annual Report.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Boleware, to accept the Historic District Commission 2024 Annual Report.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

**PRESENTATION BY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER ANGIE SMITH IN HONOR OF NATIONAL READING MONTH**

School Board Member Angie Smith presented books to each Council Member and thanked Council Members for participating in National Reading Month by reading with students in the Farmington Public Schools.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Council Member Knol received correspondence regarding chicken coops and forwarded it to the City Manager. She requested a review and comparison of related ordinances in municipalities similar to Farmington Hills in western Oakland County.

Mayor Rich received correspondence regarding offerings for the neurodivergent community and forwarded it to the City Manager, in order to have discussion about making sure Farmington Hills is a totally inclusive community.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

MOTION by Bridges, support by Aldred, to approve consent agenda items 7 through 8.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: NONE

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

MOTION by Knol, support by Bruce, to approve consent agenda items 9 through 10.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0-1.

**CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

There were no consent agenda items for discussion.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Council Member Aldred highlighted the City's extensive summer camp offerings, noting that Farmington Hills hosted 277 summer camps last year, with 91% of families saying they would recommend a Farmington Hills summer camp to a friend. These programs are revenue-generating, with 28% of the revenue coming from outside the City. He encouraged residents to enroll their children, as registration began in January and spots fill quickly. Council Member Aldred also mentioned upcoming hiring events on March 11 and March 17 for seasonal positions related to summer camps and other City programs. He commended the Special Services Department for its role in making recreation a defining feature of Farmington Hills and encouraged continued investment in these programs.

Mayor Rich wished Ramadan Mubarak for those who are observing Ramadan.

Mayor Rich also mentioned:

- "Walk the Hawk" event tomorrow at noon on the third floor of The Hawk, for those who might want to share a point of view regarding the City.
- Greater Farmington Chamber of Commerce State of the City event will be held April 1, 7:00pm, at The Hawk, with a business expo from 4:30pm-6:30pm the same day. The event is free, and presenters will be Chancellor of Oakland Community College, Superintendent of Schools, Mayor of the City of Farmington, and Mayor Rich.

**CITY MANAGER UPDATE**

City Manager Mekjian highlighted the following:

- Yard waste pickup resumes the first full week in April, starting April 7.
- As mentioned, there are upcoming hiring events on March 11 and March 17, both starting at 5pm. There are over 200 seasonal position opportunities at the Special Services and Public Services departments.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 2, 2024 INCLUDING SITE PLAN 56-8-2024, MULBERRY PARK AND THE TABERNACLE MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING, LOCATED ON 13 MILE ROAD, WEST OF MIDDLEBELT ROAD. CMR 3-25-32**

**Staff Comments and Planning Consultant Review**

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult introduced this agenda item, noting that this request for approval of Planned Unit Development 2, 2024 including Site Plan 56-8-2024, was before City Council on January 13, when it was postponed to tonight's hearing.

Council Member Bridges asked that tonight's discussion include staff responses to the suggestions and comments made by Council at the January meeting.

Council Member Bruce asked for a brief summary of enforcement actions on the properties being discussed, especially as the existing homes on the properties had apparently been allowed to rot over time. Director Kettler-Schmult said she would gather that information and forward it to Council.

Referencing his February 25, 2025 memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari, Giffels Webster, provided an overview of the revisions made to the site plan since it was last presented to the Council. Key changes included a reduction in unit count, modifications to setbacks, adjustments to circulation and access points, and revisions to tree removal and replacement plans.

#### Unit Count Adjustments:

- The total number of units for the entire project was reduced from 76 to 69.
- The development remains divided into two sections: the Tabernacle (Baptist Manor) side and the Mulberry Park side.
- The number of two-story townhome units for sale in Mulberry Park decreased from 40 to 36.
- The number of 55-plus ranch units on the Tabernacle side decreased from 36 to 33.
- Based on ordinance calculations that factor in room counts, the project now includes 243 rooms, down from 268, aligning with the density requirements of the RC-1 district.

#### Setback Modifications:

- The stormwater ponds were consolidated into a single pond on the far east side of the project.
- The front setback for both the Tabernacle and Mulberry Park sections was adjusted to 67 feet for both, previously 62 and 82 feet, respectively.
- The rear setback, adjacent to the neighborhood behind the development, increased to 83 feet for Tabernacle and 85 feet for Mulberry Park, from the previous 60 and 76 feet.
- The east side setback, where an occupied neighboring home is located, increased from 45 feet to 165 feet.
- The setback to the west, abutting Baptist Manor, was reduced from 37 feet to 10.79 feet.
- Buildings along the east property line that previously had walkouts were removed, with the stormwater pond occupying this space.

#### Circulation and Access Changes:

- One access point along 13 Mile Road was removed.
- The boulevard previously planned across the street from the Westgate entrance on 13 Mile was eliminated, making the width of that access point consistent with the Westgate entrance.
- A direct connection between this development and Baptist Manor was incorporated, allowing movement between the two sites without requiring access to 13 Mile Road.
- Additional sidewalks were added throughout the project, including along 13 Mile, connecting to interior pathways leading to two new small park areas with seating.

#### Public Art and Landscaping:

- The applicant's narrative mentioned a designated space for public art along the 13 Mile frontage, though its specific location was unclear and would likely be addressed in their presentation.
- Minor changes were made to tree removal plans due to the site reconfiguration, reducing the tree replacement shortfall to 19, down from previous estimates. 59 trees will be planted as replacement trees, with some of those trees being planted on the Baptist Manor site.

**Presentation by applicant**

Aaron and Steven Schafer, Schafer Development, were present on behalf of this application. Jacob Geiger, Traffic Engineer, Fleis & VandenBrink, was also present.

Aaron Schafer presented the revised site plan for the proposed Mulberry Park and The Tabernacle Multi-Family Housing project. Several modifications were made in response to feedback from City Council and residents during prior meetings in January and February.

**Community Engagement:**

- Since first contracting the property in early 2024, the development team has engaged in multiple discussions with local homeowner associations, including the Westgate HOA Board, Holly Hill Farms HOA Board, and additional meetings after the February 10th study session. The revised plans incorporate nearly all comments from previous Council discussions.

**Changes from Previous Site Plan:**

- The earlier plan had 76 units (36 at The Tabernacle, 40 at Mulberry Park). The revised plan reduces this to 69 units (33 at The Tabernacle, 36 at Mulberry Park).
- Density has decreased from 6.3 to 5.5 units per acre, with an associated reduction in total room count. The revised plan remains significantly below the RC-1 zoning maximum.
- The room yield per acre has been adjusted from a previous range of 20 to 22 to a new range of 18 to 19.5, keeping it below the RC-1 limit of 276 total rooms.
- This reduction translates to 25 to 35 fewer bedrooms, decreasing bedroom density by approximately 9-14%.

**Comparative Density Analysis:**

- The revised site plan maintains a lower room yield per acre than neighboring developments along 13 Mile Road, demonstrating a gradual decrease in density from Orchard Lake to Middlebelt Road. For reference, the room yield per acre is:
  - Glen Oaks: 21 rooms/acre
  - Revised PUD Plan: 18-19.5 rooms/acre
  - Cove Creek: 17 rooms/acre

**Site Plan Modifications and Enhancements:**

- **Traffic and Access Improvements:**
  - The project team met with the Mayor's Office and Traffic and Engineering departments in January, where alignment with Westgate Drive was strongly recommended to avoid left turn conflicts due to the hill near Westgate.
  - The development's primary entrance has been relocated to align with Detroit Baptist Drive's signalized intersection.
  - The secondary entrance is directly across the street from Westgate Drive, designed to meet International Fire Code requirements and Engineering and Traffic recommendations.
  - The project reduces the number of curb cuts on 13 Mile from five to one.

**Stormwater Management and Open Space Enhancements:**

- The revised plan consolidates stormwater retention into one basin, eliminating the western basin on The Tabernacle property.
- Stormwater currently flows south and east, impacting neighboring properties. The development will redirect all stormwater runoff, including roof drains, into the expanded eastern stormwater basin.

- Rear yard swales and stormwater catch basins along the roadway will route water to the eastern basin before releasing it at an agricultural rate into the 13 Mile storm system.
- Limited grading and clearing will be performed in the southernmost areas to preserve legacy trees while addressing existing drainage concerns.
- More communal and recreational space has been incorporated.
- The revised site plan incorporates sidewalks on both sides of the internal roadways to improve pedestrian accessibility. A direct pedestrian connection south of the primary entrance will allow access to Baptist Manor's campus via two routes: the 13 Mile frontage sidewalk and the internal sidewalk along the new drive.
- Two placemaking and amenity spaces have been designated in the central corridor and southeast quadrant of the property.
- The project will include a public art installation along the 13 Mile frontage, with final placement to be determined in coordination with engineering staff.

Increased Buffering and Setbacks:

- The rear yard setback to Holly Hill Farms has increased from the required 35 feet to 83-86 feet, providing an additional 48-51 feet beyond zoning requirements.
- Southernmost building configurations were modified to include only three- and four-unit buildings to reduce visual impact on adjacent properties.

Baptist Manor Adjustments:

- Baptist Manor has agreed to remove a duplex along 13 Mile Road to facilitate the new primary entrance.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding the removal of four aging duplexes along the shared western property line, with the possibility of replacing them with two four-plex units. The overall density of Baptist Manor would remain unchanged.

Landscaping and Tree Preservation:

- The revised clustered development plan reduces the deficient tree calculation from 85 to 59 trees, preserving 26 additional legacy trees.
- Extensive landscaping will be installed along the 13 Mile frontage, with Baptist Manor planting additional trees to compensate for any deficiencies.
- Over one-third mile of new landscaping will extend from Baptist Manor through the Tabernacle to Mulberry Park.

Housing Market Considerations:

- The proposed townhomes at Mulberry Park will start at approximately \$400,000, which is lower than recently built single-family homes in Farmington Hills, which range from \$500,000 to over \$700,000.
- Comparable townhouse developments in the region show higher price points (Gramercy Ridge is starting at \$700,000 or more), indicating strong demand for attached housing and also pointing out the need for more moderate priced housing to support younger home buyers.
- The Rose Senior Living Development has rental rates starting at \$4,300 per month. In contrast, Baptist Manor Ranch units will start in the low-to-mid \$2,000 range, offering a more affordable alternative with similar amenities. Residents of The Tabernacle will have access to Baptist Manor's services, including housekeeping, laundry, and additional care as needed.

Summary of Public Benefits and Amenities:

- A central gathering space and public art installation are planned along the 13 Mile frontage.
- A fitness trail and meandering pathway will replace the previously planned western basin.

- A native landscape garden, butterfly corridor, and benches will be incorporated to enhance ecological stability.
- An additional park area south of the eastern basin will provide scenic seating with views of the tree preservation buffer.
- A three-foot landscape wall will be installed along select areas for privacy, particularly for Holly Hill residents and future community members.

Alignment with the City's Master Plan:

- The development addresses the need for "missing middle" housing, catering to young professionals, first-time homebuyers, and seniors seeking a maintenance-free lifestyle.
- The City's master plan highlights a growing demand for senior housing as the baby boomer demographic continues to age.
- The special planning area designation for this property encourages creative higher-density residential development.
- The proposal includes setbacks of 83 to 86 feet to buffer the new development from existing single-family neighborhoods.
- The master plan allows for a mix of detached and attached housing styles, which is reflected in the project's combination of ranch and two-story units.

**Public Hearing**

Mayor Rich explained the process for public comment and opened the Public Hearing.

Mayor Rich read a list of individuals who would like to go on record as being opposed to this PUD/site plan request: Beverly Mihalko, Joanne Zechar, Joe and Kathy Sterbling, Lindsey Matych, Michele Nagoda, Amy Broglin-Peterson, Charles Spiess, John Nagoda, Mark Sanders, Patricia Labrecque, Paul Shultz, Roger Matuz, Brant Kessel, Douglas and Mamie Roberson.

Sam Rabah, Westgate, was concerned about traffic on 13 Mile Road near Westgate. While deceleration lanes exist for residential streets between Farmington Road and Haggerty Road, there are none between Westgate and Orchard Lake, creating hazardous conditions. Mr. Rabah described frequent incidents where vehicles following too closely attempt to pass him in the left-turn lane as he slows down to enter his subdivision, including one occasion where he had to reverse to avoid a head-on collision. He urged Council to consider installing a deceleration lane to improve safety and prevent future accidents.

Michael Pucher, Westgate, supported the request for deceleration lanes. He also expressed concerns about the density of the proposed development, noting that the Robertson project at 12 Mile and Inkster has 75 units on 30 acres, while the 13 Mile proposal seeks to place 69 units on 15 acres. Mr. Pucher emphasized the unique character of the Westgate neighborhood, with its custom homes and distinctive landscaping, and questioned how the new development might impact property values. Lastly, he requested action on longstanding blight issues in the area, noting that they have persisted for years.

Wanda Whalen, Woodbrook Street, was strongly opposed to the proposed Planned Unit Development. While she is not against new construction, she objected to this development at this location. She emphasized concerns about the impact on longtime residents, many of whom have lived in the area for decades, and believed the development would alter the character of the neighborhood. She also cited existing traffic congestion on the two-lane roadway, and voiced skepticism about developers' promises, urging the City to prioritize the interests of current residents over large-scale development.

Michele Nagoda, Richmond Hill, noted that with the ongoing closure of I-696, local roads such as 12 Mile and 13 Mile will experience increased congestion, which will be further exacerbated by construction. She questioned the adequacy of parking for community gatherings and expressed concerns that the development's density is far greater than what is typical in the area. She urged the City to consider a more moderate increase in housing rather than the proposed 69 units.

John P. Nagoda, Westgate subdivision, reiterated his opposition to the proposed development, citing concerns over density and safety. He emphasized that while the developers' projections account for unit numbers, the real impact will be the increased traffic flow and congestion caused by residents and their vehicles. He highlighted past safety issues, particularly after the removal of deceleration lanes about 20 years ago. He expressed skepticism regarding developer commitments, referencing a long-unfulfilled promise for a brick wall along Northwestern Highway relative to development there, which wall remains unbuilt after 30 years.

Amy Broglin-Peterson, Northbrook Street, urged Council to reject the revised proposal, stating that it fails to address key concerns raised in previous meetings, including density, traffic safety, affordability, and compatibility with the surrounding area. She questioned why the subject properties have been allowed to deteriorate into blight, despite city ordinances designed to prevent such conditions. She alleged that the property owner has deliberately neglected the area, citing violations such as standing cesspools, in-ground oil tanks, and unsecured structures. She asked the City to enforce its ordinances and facilitate the sale of the properties rather than approving high-density development.

Adele Letterman, Westgate subdivision, expressed continued opposition to the proposed development, stating that even with the reduction from 76 to 69 units, the density remains too high for the area. She recounted previous discussions with the developers, during which she was told that further reductions would make the project unprofitable. Ms. Letterman urged Council to prioritize the long-term well-being of Farmington Hills and its neighborhoods over financial considerations.

Louise Lieberman, Southbrook, reiterated concerns that the proposed development is too dense. Previous community feedback overwhelmingly opposed increased density in the area. She added her name, along with Arlene Spicer and Adele Letterman, to those formally opposing the project. Ms. Lieberman also pointed out that online public comments did not support zoning changes to allow higher density development.

Julie Skene, Highmeadow, voiced support for previous public comments and reiterated concerns about the proposed development's density and traffic impact. She objected to having two-story structures backing up to Holly Hill Farms and suggested that single-story units should be placed along the perimeter, with townhomes centralized within the development. While she acknowledged the revisions made to the proposal, she urged the developers to further address the height of buildings near existing single-family homes.

Laviv Matutuca, Richmond Hill, expressed agreement with previous public comments and raised concerns about the impact of the proposed development on the character and safety of the Westgate subdivision. The neighborhood is a quiet, well-connected community, and he worries that increased foot

traffic from the new development may lead to security concerns. Additionally, he questioned why the City is considering a proposal that does not conform to existing RA-1 zoning regulations.

Lindsey Matych, Holly Hill Farms, opposed the proposed development, arguing that it exceeds reasonable density for the area and contradicts zoning regulations. She contended that the developers' comparison chart contained inaccurate figures, particularly regarding Cove Creek, and that the proposed density is more than double that of comparable projects. Ms. Matych also raised concerns about significant tree removal, loss of open space, and the project's failure to provide adequate buffers between existing neighborhoods. She asserted that the proposal does not align with the city's master plan, prioritizing density over community benefits, and urged Council to reject the project.

John Good, Polo Club Drive, acknowledged the value of increasing residential density along major thoroughfares like 12 Mile and 13 Mile but emphasized the need for thoughtful design that respects existing neighborhoods. He highlighted the architectural significance of Holly Hill Farms and the custom-designed large lots in Westgate, suggesting that adjustments be made to reduce the density and lower the height of buildings along the southern boundary of the proposed project. He encouraged the City to pursue growth while ensuring that new developments are thoughtfully integrated into their surroundings.

Eric Schmidt, Holly Hill Farms, reiterated his strong opposition to the proposed development, citing concerns over excessive density and inadequate green space. The minor adjustments made to the plan do not align with the character of the area. Density should be reduced to levels comparable to Cove Creek. Mr. Schmidt also criticized the poor maintenance of the subject property, pointing out abandoned vehicles and debris visible from 13 Mile Road, which reflected a pattern of neglect. He questioned the developers' claims of ongoing engagement with residents, stating that no one he spoke with had been contacted by the developer, which raised doubts about their transparency. He urged the Council to reject the proposal.

Mayor Rich closed the Public Hearing and brought the matter back to City Council.

### **Traffic Study Discussion**

Council Member Bridges inquired about the traffic study results and how they were analyzed. Director of Public Services Rushlow explained that the city does not conduct its own traffic study, but reviews analyses submitted by the applicant's traffic engineer. The city received the latest traffic impact analysis on February 21, after business hours, and completed a review within a week. Due to timing constraints, the report was not included in Council's packet but was emailed to council members earlier today.

Public Services Director Rushlow noted differences between the latest traffic study and the previous one, particularly regarding traffic conditions at Westgate Drive and 13 Mile Road. He stated that additional questions remained regarding the methodology and findings.

- The study indicated that existing traffic conditions at Westgate Drive were already rated at a Level of Service (LOS) E, with projections showing a decline to LOS F upon project completion.
- The primary improvements sought by the City included connecting the site to the existing traffic signal and ensuring a second egress aligned with Westgate Drive to reduce turning conflicts.
- While these measures improved traffic flow, the study still projected increased delays at the intersection.

- The analysis did not include the impact of a potential deceleration lane for Westgate Drive, as that improvement falls outside the development site.

Council Member Aldred expressed concern that the traffic study was not available for thorough review before the meeting, emphasizing that traffic impact is a significant issue relative to this proposed development. He questioned why the new study showed a shift from an expected LOS C-to-F deterioration to an LOS E-to-F deterioration at the Westgate intersection.

Mr. Geiger, the applicant's traffic consultant, explained that the difference resulted from changes in evaluation methodology. The updated study assessed the intersection as a four-leg rather than a three-leg intersection, following Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) guidelines. This methodological adjustment, rather than project modifications, accounted for the shift in projected impact.

Aaron Schafer requested that Council consider tabling the matter in order to give the Schafers time to speak with their traffic engineer and city staff to evaluate constructing a deceleration lane along Westgate Drive, as requested by several speakers.

Mayor Rich asked the applicant if they would consider funding a deceleration lane if the City's traffic engineer determined it to be warranted. Steven Schafer acknowledged the request and indicated willingness to collaborate on this matter. He noted that traffic reports showed no recorded accidents in the last four years at the intersection. He affirmed a willingness to eliminate or relocate the access point to Westgate, pending approval from city staff and emergency services. A potential alternative included installing a breakaway gate for emergency access only. Steven Schafer emphasized that the revised plan integrates new units along Baptist Manor, providing a direct and improved entry to the development, reducing reliance on the Westgate access

Council Member Boleware noted that the study found morning congestion at LOS E and evening congestion at LOS F, with part of the delay stemming from the timing of the traffic signal at Detroit Baptist Manor, which has a 110-second cycle length. Mr. Geiger confirmed that the signal's timing contributed to delays but also explained that adjusting that signal would affect the coordination of all traffic signals along 13 Mile Road.

Mr. Geiger noted that the proposed development would increase traffic delay at Westgate Drive by approximately seven seconds per vehicle, which was not considered a significant change. Vehicle queuing at Westgate was projected to increase by one foot, with the number of queued cars (2) remaining the same.

Council Member Aldred asked if prohibiting left turns from the development onto 13 Mile Road would improve safety. Mr. Geiger acknowledged that restricting movements generally enhances safety but also pointed out that the connection to the signalized intersection at Baptist Manor would naturally encourage most residents to exit via that route.

Council Member Dwyer was confident that the city's traffic division is capable of managing any potential traffic concerns. He emphasized that the development would not generate the kind of congestion seen in large employment centers and was unlikely to cause significant disruptions.

Araon Schafer reiterated their request to table the matter for further analysis of the deceleration lanes and additional review of traffic impacts.

Director Rushlow stated that the City had reviewed the updated study and found no major discrepancies. The primary question related to whether the queuing observations were based on field data or modeling, and it was confirmed that both were used. As stated, the study projected a minor delay increase of approximately seven seconds per vehicle at Westgate Drive, which was deemed insignificant.

Director Rushlow said there were no significant outstanding issues with the applicant's traffic study, and the City found the conclusions to be reasonable. Regarding the possibility of adding a deceleration lane, Director Rushlow explained that a separate analysis would be required to determine if such a lane would be appropriate, given the three-lane road configuration.

### **Impact on Neighboring Properties**

Council Member Knol inquired about changes to the site plan, particularly the relocation of Unit 5 and the resulting increase in green space and stormwater detention. She asked how the overall square footage of the development had changed between the original and revised plans. Aaron Schafer said he could provide this information to Council.

Council Member Knol expressed concerns about the placement of two-story buildings near Holly Hill, stating that the larger setback was beneficial but did not mitigate the visual impact in winter months when tree foliage is reduced. She suggested continuing the one-story ranch units along the perimeter to minimize this effect. Steven Schafer responded that some Holly Hill homes are tri-levels or two-story structures, and the proposed design aligns with existing development patterns. However, he was open to modifying the proposal by increasing the number of ranch units.

Council Member Knol reiterated concerns regarding the impact of density on adjacent neighborhoods, particularly Holly Hill. She advocated for reducing density further by incorporating more single-story units, which she believed would be less intrusive for neighboring residents. Council Member Knol also suggested that a shift toward condominiums rather than townhouses could be more compatible with market demand, noting that many residents in the area seek single level living arrangements for downsizing. Such a change could maintain profitability while preserving green space and reducing environmental impacts.

Council Member Bruce emphasized that the proposed development would significantly alter the RA-1 zoning character of the area, effectively transitioning it to an RC-3 density. He strongly opposed the plan, stating that zoning changes should not be made in a way that disrupts neighborhood stability. He expressed concerns that the existing properties had been intentionally neglected to facilitate higher-density development and maintained that the site could still be developed within RA-1 parameters.

Council Member Aldred appreciated the substantial changes made in the site plan. He agreed that the density should be reduced further, to match the density of Cove Creek. He also supported ranch homes at the south of the property. He thought the proposal was close to approval.

Council Member Boleware highlighted the importance of multi-generational housing. She noted that the project could provide attainable and affordable housing, which is in high demand in Farmington Hills and

the surrounding areas. She acknowledged concerns about density but emphasized the value of offering housing options for young families looking to purchase their first home, as well as for seniors seeking downsized living arrangements. She supported the project's overall concept but stated that reducing density and incorporating acceleration and deceleration lanes for safety would be preferable.

Steven Schafer indicated willingness to reduce density to levels comparable with the Cove Creek development and to work with staff on the safest access points.

Mayor Rich echoed support for the project's overall concept, commending the applicant for implementing substantial changes based on previous feedback. She noted that the proposed development could encourage multi-generational living. Mayor Rich also pointed out the project's walkability and its proximity to amenities. She supported postponing the matter to allow for further refinements.

After further discussion and in collaboration with the applicant, Council agreed to postpone further discussion and until the first meeting in May.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Boleware, to postpone consideration of Planned Unit Development 2, 2024 including Site Plan 56-8-2024, Mulberry Park and The Tabernacle Multi-Family Housing, located on 13 Mile Road, west of Middlebelt Road to May 12, 2025.

MOTION CARRIED 6-1 (Bruce opposed).

Mayor Rich called a short recess at 10:00pm and reconvened the meeting at 10:10pm.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 2, 2021, INCLUDING REVISED SITE PLAN 59-5-2022, VILLAS AT PEBBLE CREEK (SARAH FISHER), LOCATED AT 27400 TWELVE MILE ROAD. CMR 3-25-33**

Planning and Community Development Director Kettler Schmult introduced this request to amend Planned Unit Development 2, 2021, including revised site plan 59-5-2022, for the Villas at Pebble Creek (Sarah Fisher). The primary modification is the removal of the northern driveway access point, which has been converted into open space. The project now features a single boulevard entrance off Inkster Road, with a gated emergency access point on Twelve Mile Road.

Tim Loughrin of Robertson Homes provided an overview of the amendment, emphasizing that the layout of the site remains largely unchanged except for the removed access point. He noted that the adjustment was made following discussions with city staff and that the traffic study addressed concerns related to the access change.

Council Member Aldred inquired about potential uses for the new open space. Mr. Loughrin responded that the area would primarily feature plantings as a buffer for adjacent homes. A sidewalk connection may be challenging due to grade differences.

Mayor Rich asked how preserving the chapel on site would be a benefit to the greater community. Mr. Loughrin explained that maintaining the chapel, which will be prominent from the road, as well as the

historic gates and signage, preserves the history of the Sarah Fisher orphanage. It will serve as an amenity for residents, featuring a kitchen, card area, and restrooms.

Mayor Rich also asked about the inclusion of an art park and adult play equipment. Mr. Loughrin stated that his team was open to incorporating such features in the PUD agreement and would explore options based on the council's feedback.

MOTION by Bruce, support by Bridges, to approve the amendment to the Planned Unit Development 2, 2021, including Revised Site Plan 59-5-2022, Villas at Pebble Creek (Sarah Fisher), located at 27400 Twelve Mile Road, CMR 3-25-33.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Attorney prepare the appropriate PUD agreement stipulating the final PUD approval conditions and authorizing the identified zoning deviations for City Council consideration and final approval.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

##### **RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF USE OF CITY FACILITIES POLICY AMENDMENTS.**

MOTION by Bridges, support by Aldred, to approve the amendments to the Use of City Facilities Policy.

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 PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY'S BRANDING GUIDELINES TO DESTINATION BY DESIGN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$70,000. CMR 3-25-34**

MOTION by Bridges, support by Aldred, to authorize the City Manager to issue a purchase order to Destination by Design for \$70,000 for the City's Branding Guidelines.

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 FEBRUARY 24, 2025.**

MOTION by Knol, support by Bruce, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the City Council study session meeting minutes of February 24, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0-1.

**RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2025.**

MOTION by Knol, support by Bruce, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the City Council regular session meeting minutes of February 24, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0-1.

**ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

There were no additions to the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Lawrence Kohl, Ramble Hills subdivision, expressed concern over the increasing deer population, stating that the animals are causing significant property damage and reducing property values. Deer are consuming plants, damaging trees, and making landscaping efforts futile. He urged Council to take action to address the issue.

In response, Mayor Rich noted that a study session dedicated to discussing the urban deer herd issue is scheduled for March 24 at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Pea Gee, Farmington Hills resident, thanked Council Member Bruce for his consistent stance and commitment to addressing community concerns. She noted the City Manager made an excellent choice with the newly appointed Police Chief. She shared her admiration for the *Craft with a Cop* event held at The Hawk in December, where officers engaged with children in arts and crafts.

**CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

City Attorney Report was received by council.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The regular session of City Council meeting adjourned at 10:32PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk