

MEETING MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 4, 2024
FARMINGTON HILLS
GRAND RIVER CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY
JON GRANT COMMUNITY CENTER
29260 GRAND RIVER AVENUE
FARMINGTON HILLS, MI 48336

CALLED TO ORDER BY: MAYOR THERESA RICH AT 8:04 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: RICH, SMITH, PRICE, NEWLIN, MANN

MEMBERS ABSENT: ALKHAFAJI

OTHERS PRESENT: Gary Mekjian, City Manager, Tom Skrobola, Finance Director, Cristia Brockway, Economic Development Director, John Trafelet, Planning Commission Chair

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Price, supported by Newlin to approve the agenda as submitted.
Unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Price, supported by Newlin to approve the March 7, 2024, meeting minutes as submitted.
Unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF OFFICERS

Motion by Smith, supported by Mann to approve the election of officers.

Mary Newlin volunteered to be the Corridor Improvement Authority Chair.
Jerry Price volunteered to be the Corridor Improvement Authority Vice-Chair.
Theresa Rich volunteered to be the Corridor Improvement Authority Secretary.

Unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF THE 2024/2025 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY BUDGET.

Motion by Mann, supported by Rich to approve the 2024/2025 budget as submitted.
Unanimously approved.

Finance Director, Tom Skrobola, summarized the budget and described the Tax Increment Finance provided within the district boundaries. He shared that there has been an increase over the years and described a couple new line items within the spreadsheet.

BUSINESS:

Cristia Brockway, Economic Development Director shared a brief presentation regarding the new line item within the budget. This line item was proposed for new potential projects within the corridor such as an updated corridor study as well as a future streetscape plan.

Thirty (30) years ago a Grand River Avenue Corridor Study was conducted which provided improvements insight needed along the corridor. These included public service, planning, and promotional improvements which a majority have been either completed or partially accomplished. Some

lagging strategies from that study had left certain areas of progress incomplete such as a streetscape plan, design standards, a “special corridor study”, the establishment of focal points within the corridor, and more. Mrs. Brockway proposed an updated study to be conducted to both finalize those former goals and assess the corridor’s conditions based on today’s commercial/infrastructure/corporate standards, market gaps, and current business needs for growth. A new corridor study would provide a great benefit to the City, Authority, property owners, and real estate representatives to digest the existing conditions ripe for new investment, growing businesses, as well as future tenants.

Following that proposal, Mrs. Brockway brought up the consideration of a streetscape plan to be designed for the Grand River Corridor. The Corridor Study could assist the CIA in areas in which need public improvement that could be applied as a part of the streetscape plan and design. The initial focus for a streetscape is a design that specifically pays attention to City and other public right of way areas. This would include the median, streetlights, and crosswalks.

Gary Mekjian, City Manager, shared that the City applied for the Reconnecting Communities Grant and continue to pursue other funding sources to improve the Grand River/M-5/Freedom Road interchange. The City was not awarded the grant, however, the information submitted could be reused for similar efforts in the near future.

Jas Mann asked if the Corridor Improvement Authority has enough funds to conduct a corridor study. Mrs. Brockway believes that \$60,000 would be appropriate to budget seeing that a new study can go off the existing one done 30 years ago and that the study would only be done within the district boundaries. \$100,000 could be set aside for a streetscape plan.

Chairwoman Mary Newlin presented her concerns regarding a corridor study and asked what the benefits would be. Mr. Mekjian and Mrs. Brockway described that the study would significantly help provide a direction on where redevelopment is possible. Combined with the Master Plan Update, Non-motorized Plan, and the current direction of the Market, it would provide an identifiable course of action to pursue redevelopment and property investment. Mrs. Newlin described her concern about the trash littered along Grand River. Mr. Mekjian described that MDOT is responsible for the road cleanup, but the City will respond to concerns when submitted. Mrs. Brockway reminded the board of the 2024 February meeting discussion which regarded Jon Grant being used as a hub during a cleanup effort. This is being pursued.

Vice-Chairman, Jerry Price, shared that a study and regular authority efforts can be practiced. Mr. Price provided insight that a corporate entity would find a study be beneficial and provide clear data on how businesses can invest.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Mrs. Brockway went over the possible events that could be held within the Corridor with Jon Grant as the main event space. Speaking to existing resources and business owners would provide an opportunity to promote Jon Grant and the rest of the corridor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Mann, supported by Rich to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 a.m.

Minutes drafted by: Cristia Brockway