

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
JOINT MEETING
CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
APRIL 20, 2023
6:00 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Joint Meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission Special Meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro-Tem Bruce at 6:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS

City Council Members Present: Bruce, Boleware, Knol, Massey, Newlin

City Council Members Absent: Barnett, Bridges

Planning Commissioners present: Aspinall, Brickner, Mantey, Stimson, Trafelet,

Planning Commissioners Absent: Countegan, Grant, Varga, Ware

Others Present:

City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Valentine, City Attorney Joppich, City Planner Perdonik, Staff Planner Canty, Economic Development Director Brockway, Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult, Planning Consultants Bahm and Tangari

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By consensus.

NEW MASTER PLAN STUDY

- A. Review of Phases 1 and 2
- B. Public Engagement to Date
- C. Introduction to Economic Development Strategies and Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC)
- D. Special Study Areas Discussion

Planning Consultants Bohm and Tangari led a discussion that was guided by elements presented in the April 14, 2023 Giffels Webster memorandum *Master Plan: What's Been Accomplished and What's Next*, as well as a PowerPoint presentation *Master Plan: The Next 50, PROJECT CHECKPOINT*.

Bohm and Tangari reviewed the Master Plan Timeline, summarizing Phases 1 and 2, and moving into Phase 3 discussion:

Phase 1 (completed): Where the City stands at present, with information and analysis about demographics, housing, the natural environment, community facilities, existing land use, and local economics.

Phase 2 (completed): Providing opportunities for public input. Most common themes of survey responses included:

- The Need for Place to gather in provide identity.
- An All-Ages Community
- Strength in Diversity
- Importance of Location

Phase 3 (current focus): The Next 50 Years

- Meeting topics and opportunities for public engagement – seeking to include public engagement in many forums and using different response tools
- Special study areas
- Complete streets
- Housing
- Future Land Use Map
- Second Open House
- Online platform

Economic Development Strategy – Economic Development Director Brockway

- Utilize the City’s resources, including close relationships with organizations, affiliations, educational and trades institutions.
- Update to more progressive zoning, with the market and community in mind, and to guide toward trying new methods for success. Utilize form-based zoning.
- Respond to post pandemic needs and desires, including providing restaurant, entertainment, and nightlife zones.

Discussion:

- Residents and business owners should be given every opportunity to be part of the visioning process.
- Special study areas can utilize overlay zoning districts, although these have not had a lot of traction in the past. Consolidation of areas can help focus holistically on broader developmental goals. Areas discussed included:
 - Orchard Lake Road between 12 and 13 Mile Roads.
 - 14 Mile and Northwestern is a prime area for potential redevelopment including mixed use.
 - 12 Mile Road between Halsted to Middlebelt, containing office buildings with larger parking lots that are often empty.
 - Grand River/M-5/8 Mile Industrial area needs to be looked at boldly, seeking major transformation including the highway/road design in the area, and visioning how to mitigate the very small lot depths available for business and commercial uses on Grand River.
 - East end of the Oakland Community College site.
 - Retail plaza on Grand River (Target).
 - Northeast corner of Drake and Grand River.
- Research and participate in the Redevelopment Ready Community program through MEDC. It is important to make it easier to for developers to redevelop to the City’s vision. Acknowledge that greenfield development to the west can be less expensive to construct; find ways to compete with that development and make Farmington Hills attractive to developers.
 - Learn from the past. The 2009 Master Plan included overlay, mixed use zoning in the Grand River Corridor, which did not occur due to the lack of available tax increment revenue – the area did not attract developers and did not increase in value.
 - Mixed use development often emphasizes rentals, including apartments. Yet the City already has 37% rentals. The luxury apartments of the past have deteriorated; this pattern should not be repeated, and the owners of older rental properties must be held accountable. The City needs families and professionals who will put down roots and stay for many years. Still, the market for offering rentals to young professionals is strong.
- City officials and planners must be creative with their vision and what can be accomplished.
 - Plano TX was called out as an example of creative mixed use, with retail on first floor, office space on second floor, and residential on third floor.

- People want safe communities with great schools.
- The Master Plan can provide a vision and offer tools for the City to move forward, without getting into specific controversial uses. The Master Plan is a guide to implementation of the City's vision.

City Manager Mekjian commented that sessions at the recent MML Conference pointed out that young people who lived through COVID are hungry for an office setting; they have had enough of remote life. Also, for economic and social reasons, much of the future success of the City will rely on and be driven by density, in whatever end form that will eventually take.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COUNCILPERSON/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:11pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marisa Varga
Planning Commission Secretary
/cem