

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL REGULAR MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
JULY 15, 2021, 6:00 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Planning Commission Special Regular Meeting was called to order by Chair Stimson at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Brickner, Countegan, Orr, Mantey, Schwartz, Stimson, Trafelet, Turner, Varga

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present: City Planner Sec, City Attorney Schultz, Planning Consultant Arroyo,

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Schwartz, support by Turner, to approve the agenda as published.

MOTION carried unanimously by voice vote.

REGULAR MEETING

**A. AMENDMENT TO DEFINITION OF “FAMILY” CONTAINED IN ARTICLE 34-2.0
“DEFINITIONS” OF CHAPTER 34 “ZONING” OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES**

City Attorney Schultz, City Planner Sec, and Planning Consultant Arroyo led a discussion regarding the background, reason and need for an amendment to the definition of “family”, and what can be expected in a future draft ordinance for Planning Commission consideration.

B. MASTER PLAN UPDATE DISCUSSION

Utilizing a PowerPoint Presentation, Planning Consultant Arroyo led a discussion regarding the purpose and content of the City’s Master Plan, and outlined the process for review. The current Master Plan was completed in 2009 after 2-3 years of study, and was reviewed and reaffirmed by the Commission in 2017. Per Statute, the Master Plan should at a minimum be reviewed and possibly updated every 5 years, with an in-depth update at least once every 20 years. Because of changes related to technology, the pandemic, and world, national, and local trends, it was appropriate to consider doing an in-depth update now.

Master plans impact a community’s quality of life, foster a shared vision that the community supports, assists in protection of property rights, preserve neighborhood character, and encourages appropriate development.

A master plan review starts with what exists, moves to a vision for the future, and then focuses on developing a road map to reach that vision. Reaching the vision requires implementation, followed by ongoing review – is the plan working? The zoning ordinance is the implementation tool for the Master Plan. This has certain legal ramifications, as all decisions regarding development approvals and denials, for instance, need to show a direct reasonable correlation between the Master Plan, the Future Land Use Map, and the Zoning Ordinance.

The Master Plan is inspirational, reflecting pride in the community while setting the stage for positive change.

By statute, the Planning Commission adopts the Master Plan. The City Council can also adopt the Master Plan, thereby affirming its agreement. The City Council should be fully on board and aware of processes with any master plan update, starting with joint meetings at the beginning of the master plan update/visioning process.

Public input is critical, and should be obtained at the beginning of the update process, before ideas and language are fully formulated. Modern communication tools could be integrated into the public input process. Also, to encourage as much public input as possible, going to where the people are can make a difference, such as setting up tents and information stations at public events and gathering places.

Other items brought out in discussion included:

- Because the zoning ordinance is the Master Plan's implementation tool, the ordinance can make it difficult to clearly evaluate developments that come in reflecting current trends but which don't fit within ordinance standards.
- On the other hand, in many ways the zoning ordinance has worked very well, and the ordinance has been modified many times to reflect current trends.
- It is important to educate others regarding the history of the City, what vision led to the current Master Plan, and the process and willingness to change that vision when appropriate. It is also important to review what has worked in terms of city planning.
- One example of past planning having present impact is the number of ranch homes in the City, a direct result of very early visioning and planning. This has resulted in a large number of homes that fit the needs of an older demographic that seek single-story lifestyles.
- An 80/20 plan might help to conceptually identify and prioritize where the most time should be spent during Master Plan update and review. Areas of opportunity should be identified.
- The Commission as a team should bring its own clear vision to the common visioning table.
- The City of Farmington Hills has a synergistic relationship with the City of Farmington, especially the City of Farmington's downtown. This needs to be acknowledged under the "existing conditions" category, and discussed within the context of future development and connectivity in Farmington Hills.
- Funding for a Master Plan update needs to be authorized by City Council.

After further discussion, a consensus recommendation was made that additional meeting(s) should be held with City Council regarding the future vision for the City, in advance of, or as part of, the future vision portion(s) of the Master Plan.

C. LIVE STREAMING OF MEETINGS AND MAKING MEETING MATERIALS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC

The Commission discussed the Council's recommendation that Planning Commission meetings be live-streamed and meeting materials be made available to the public on the City's website. The Commission has no objection to this proposed change. A policy will be presented to the Commission at a future meeting for adoption.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES None

PUBLIC COMMENT None

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Countegan, support by Orr, to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Trafelet
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem