

**MEETING MINUTES  
CITY COUNCIL GOALS SESSION MEETING  
JANUARY 25, 2014 – 9:00 AM  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM**

The City Council goals session meeting was called to order by Mayor Brickner at 9:25 a.m.

Council Members Present:       Brickner, Bruce, Knol, Lerner, Massey and Steckloff

Council Members Absent:       Bridges

Others Present:                 City Manager Brock, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Boyer  
and Assistant to the City Manager Geinzer.

**MATRIX OF 2020 VISION PRIORITIES:**

Assistant to the City Manager Geinzer explained that staff put into a matrix the 2020 vision priorities that came out of the 2020 Vision Committee meetings and that were identified by City Council as top priorities. Staff then listed projects under each priority showing their status to date.

Councilmember Massey asked for clarification on the matrix as to what “identified” means and the term “community” versus “city”. Mr. Geinzer explained that the term “identified” was used with projects that may have been identified as something the city should work toward and possibly some research has taken place, but no progress has been made to date. He noted that in the matrix the words “community” and “city” were used interchangeably to mean the City of Farmington Hills or surrounding area.

City Manager Brock suggested clarifying this in the matrix and having the term “community” mean a broader area that may include Farmington as well and the term “city” to mean just the City of Farmington Hills.

Councilmember Steckloff inquired if there was a commonality between the 2020 Vision Committee participants and if possibly an age group may not have been represented. Mr. Geinzer responded that the participants represented a good cross section between volunteers including age, experience in the related topic and those who were simply interested in the process.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed the matrix by section with City Council, and Council had the following comments:

- Expressed the desire to move forward on improving the city website with a more modern look and potential to include a section that is dedicated to businesses; something that works well with both desktop and mobile devices
- Need to determine who is responsible for maintaining the path along I-275 prior to any city connection to that path
- Branding of the City through the website, etc.
- Prioritize attracting millennials to the City– although it was noted that there is also a need to continue to attract all age groups
- Suggested that the 2020 plan is used to prepare a 2030 plan since many of the projects would most likely occur further down the road.
- Suggested an annual study session with COHA to review city priorities

City Manager Brock would communicate with COHA regarding an annual joint meeting date.

**MEDICAL MARIJUANA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:**

Mayor Brickner stated that several cities have attempted to ban marijuana use and the Court of Appeals has ruled against this. He stated that the City has been waiting for the Supreme Court to make a decision before moving forward. He also mentioned that there is legislation proposed that would allow for dispensaries.

Councilmember Lerner commented that the City has been extending its moratorium with regard to land use issues, and he wondered what the goal was regarding this issue.

It was the consensus that the City should wait for more information with regard to the court decision and future legislation.

**SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT FOR LIQUOR LICENSES:**

Mayor Brickner explained that the Liquor Control Commission has decided that they would make all of the decisions regarding the transfer of liquor licenses; and he asked staff to look into the possibility of associating a liquor license with a special land use permit in order to give more control back to the city.

Councilmember Knol stated that she was not sure how this would help and thought it would make it more difficult for businesses to obtain a liquor license.

Councilmember Lerner inquired if an ordinance change would be coming to Council in the future. Mayor Brickner responded that this would be the plan in order for the city to continue to have a say in this process.

Councilmember Massey also felt that this would make it more difficult for businesses by creating an additional step in the process.

City Manager Brock commented that the City requires a liquor license to be in conjunction with a restaurant operation so he believes the City may not have a say if someone wanted to come in and operate a bar operation.

Councilmember Massey felt that this was worth some discussion as he has heard from younger people that there are no clubs or places to dance; and if the city is looking at rezoning areas and identifying uses that this issue should be part of that discussion. He added that he is not convinced that there is a need for a special use permit.

It was the consensus of City Council to schedule this issue for a future study session.

**CITY WEBSITE AND LINKS:**

Councilmember Lerner stated that he realizes the city does not want to be responsible for 3<sup>rd</sup> party links, but he suggested a separate site similar to FHReady such as FHBusiness for commercial real estate listings and a site that is business-friendly to create a one-stop shopping area for businesses. He noted that there are two companies that he is aware of that provide this service; one being LoopLink.

City Manager Brock commented that much of this can be done through the Oakland County website now and the city was trying not to duplicate efforts; but would look into this further if Council desired. He stated that it is difficult to manage and verify legitimate businesses and staff does not feel this is a good idea.

Councilmember Bruce expressed concern with the perception that the city is endorsing certain businesses. He feels that the city does what it can to be business-friendly, but should not be promoting specific businesses.

Assistant City Manager Boyer stated that the city already links to the Oakland County website and Chamber website, but not to specific business websites.

Discussion was held on reviewing current links or postings to videos, etc. Mr. Boyer indicated that staff is reviewing this now to make sure that links do not direct anyone general sites such as YouTube that you can't control and links people only to a specific video or information from the City.

Mr. Geinzer also stated that staff is considering eliminating the Video on Demand and move towards imbedding links to only our videos on the website in order to utilize equipment upgrades and view those in high definition.

The consensus of Council was to maintain the links as they are now, but to move forward with updating the look of the website.

**HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE:**

Mayor Brickner commented that MML has been requesting communities to pass such a resolution or ordinance and several have done so. He noted that some of this information has always been a part of the city's hiring process, but the city does not have a Human Rights Resolution or Ordinance.

In answer to Councilmember Lerner, Councilmember Knol responded that the State Act covers most of the topics outlined in the sample ordinance provided with the exception of HIV and physical, mental or sexual orientation.

Councilmember Bruce stated that he is in favor of this as he is against any type of discrimination and this would further show that the city is open to everyone. He would be in favor of further discussing this at a study session.

Councilmember Massey commented that if the Council discusses this further, he would suggest changing the language regarding "HIV" to "Health Status".

Councilmember Knol commented that she did not feel this was an issue in the City and that the City was already inclusive of everyone.

Councilmember Lerner stated that he feels the sample ordinance is too far reaching and that he would prefer to review an ordinance that includes only what the Federal and State Laws do not cover.

Mayor Brickner commented that he does not feel it would hurt to include some of the other language already covered by Federal or State law.

The consensus of Council was to schedule this item for a future study session.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS REGARDING COMPLETE STREETS-BIKE PATH ROUTES/MAPS:**

Councilmember Lerner commented that the issue of bike paths was first discussed in 2005. He stated that the City needs hundreds of miles of sidewalks and bike paths to make this concept work and there is no money.

Assistant City Manager Boyer stated that staff has reviewed what the City currently has and can be done to connect in certain areas.

Mayor Brickner stated that at the last goals session, discussion was held on creating and identifying certain "routes" such as Historic Homes, shopping district, bike routes and walking routes.

Mr. Boyer stated that some of these routes have been identified, but there were also hazards in some areas so staff was hesitant to identify those areas as a designated route that would be promoted by the City.

Discussion was held on the bike path along Northwestern Highway and the potential for that being turned into a third lane in that area.

Councilmember Steckloff suggested that the City put in 10-foot wide sidewalks where it can to prepare for the future.

City Manager Brock stated that the City already does this but part of the issue is funding. He added that serious cyclists want to ride in the street and he feels the City has more recreational cyclists.

Councilmember Knol commented that she is more concerned with the recreational cyclists and their safety.

Councilmember Massey suggested that this is a good issue to discuss with COHA to encourage in the neighborhoods.

City Manager Brock stated that with the widening of 10 Mile Road, the city is reviewing pedestrian-friendly elements such as street parking.

**MASTER PLAN TO INCLUDE DEMOGRAPHIC, AGE OUTREACH/CREATING AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY:**

Councilmember Massey suggested looking at designations and being recognized for what the City is doing to help brand Farmington Hills.

City Manager Brock stated that he believed Councilmember Bridges was suggesting that some of this is infused into the Master Plan and that the Master Plan include more of a vision with human aspects rather than only land use.

Mr. Geinzer stated that the Corridor Improvement Authority discusses these types of issues and creating a vision plan for an area to include the types of businesses, amenities, etc. He added that the City of Farmington adopted the CIA into their Master Plan, but the Farmington Hills Planning Commission was uncertain about doing this. He feels the Master Plan plays a huge role in how the community re-develops.

Mr. Geinzer commented that the City needs to do more to create a vision so that developers can see the potential for a site.

Councilmember Knol suggested as an alternative keeping the Master Plan as is, but having flexible design guidelines for particular areas.

Mr. Geinzer stated that this is possible but will come down to how comfortable the Planning Commission is with some of these suggestions.

Further discussion was held on how these items could be included as part of the Master Plan.

City Manager Brock feels this is the quintessential goal, and the City needs to be open to alternate options that will encourage re-development.

Councilmember Massey commented that in reviewing the demographics and trends, it seems the City is static with regard to age, and it seems the City is doing what it needs as far as programming to keep the aging population in Farmington Hills.

Councilmember Lerner commented that with regard to the Promoting Active Community (PAC) Awards, it appears that every category where the City fell short was with regard to streets, sidewalks and parking.

Mr. Brock stated that the City needs to address the Grand River and Orchard Lake Road Corridors to make these areas pedestrian-friendly.

Mr. Lerner inquired about providing more money toward sidewalks. Mr. Brock responded that he could if that was the direction of City Council. He feels the City has made a significant investment towards sidewalks and bike paths between addressing bus routes and requests made.

**IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG ADULTS AGES 25-40 THROUGH PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AND ARTS COMMISSION:**

Councilmember Steckloff commented on implementing programs that would generate interest by young adults. She felt that after attending several events in the community, she feels there are a lot of options and young adults participating and that the programs seem to be growing each year.

Mr. Geinzer stated that the City is reviewing more activities to target this age group, such as the upcoming Afterglow Party at Longacre House following the Earth Day event.

Mr. Boyer stated that if any of Council has new ideas to please pass those on to staff.

Councilmember Lerner stated that he had heard that the Children, Youth and Families Commission is too large of group to get things accomplished and suggested breaking the Commission into more productive groups to help them be more effective.

**MIXED USE v. OVERLAY DEVELOPMENT:**

Mayor Brickner commented that the Planning Commission has stopped reviewing the mixed use development. He feels that the City should develop ordinances for both the mixed use and overlay development and apply them as needed.

Discussion was held on the mixed use v. overlay. Mayor Brickner explained that mixed use would have set the zoning of the area with certain standards where the overlay development would allow for multiple uses on one piece of property.

Mr. Geinzer pointed out that there was some concern with the mixed use development in that it would create many non-conforming buildings.

The consensus was that City Council would like to move forward on this issue. A joint study session with the Planning Commission was suggested.

City Manager Brock stated that he would draft a memo to City Council outlining mixed use v. overlay development and what it would mean to move forward with either or both of these types of development and then staff could answer any questions or concerns of Council. If that was sufficient, he would request a joint study session meeting with the Planning Commission.

**PERFORMANCE ARTS CENTER – POSSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS:**

Councilmember Steckloff commented that she was at the Wayne State Campus on 12 Mile Road and noticed that their auditorium is very large but in poor shape; and she heard that they are thinking of renovating. She suggested a possible partnership with Wayne State University to develop the auditorium as a performance arts center.

City Manager Brock stated that if the City has an opportunity to discuss this with them and Councilmember Steckloff could be that connection for the City, staff would be happy to do so as they have been unable to communicate with them in the past.

Councilmember Lerner commented that OCC also has a lot of land and suggested a joint venture between OCC, Wayne State and the City. He feels it was worth following up on and that there could be potentially for EVIP funding.

Mayor Brickner stated that he thought the City once discussed a performance arts center at the Costick Center. Mr. Boyer stated that it comes down to funding. He added that these types of centers do not pay for themselves, so there would have to be ongoing funding.

Councilmember Massey liked the idea of a joint venture with the schools.

Councilmembers Steckloff and Lerner indicated that they would work together on this suggestion and make contact with the schools.

**PARTNER BENEFITS:**

Councilmember Steckloff inquired if the State of Michigan recognizes a marriage if two people were legally married in another State.

Mayor Brickner stated that Michigan does not recognize that as a legal marriage.

Discussion was held legal marriages. It was also mentioned that there are differences in how hospital consent forms may be viewed versus benefits, etc.

City Manager Brock stated that once the State determines this issue perhaps the City could revisit it.

Mayor Brickner commented that he would be in favor of City employees being able to pay for their partner to be a part of the city plan; but not have the City pay for those costs. He added that the State does not recognize benefits for people who are living together and have not legally wed.

Mayor Pro-Tem Bruce stated that while feels it is awful to discriminate against gay marriages, he is concerned with offering benefits as a legal issue; and he feels that trumps the City's ability to provide for benefits without a lot of intrusion into people's personal lives.

The consensus was to wait on this issue until that State makes some determinations.

**INFORMATION FLOW TO CITY COUNCIL:**

City Manager Brock stated that one of the members of Council did not receive some of the communication he had sent out and heard the information through the newspaper. He has fixed that issue, but encouraged all of Council to sign up for Nixle communications as well.

Mr. Brock stated that he typically sends out an e-mail to provide Council information on timely topics so that they are aware in case they get calls or other e-mails. Council concurred that this method of communication was fine.

Councilmember Steckloff suggested copying City Council on all press releases.

Discussion was held on copying all of Council on information requested by another Councilmember. It was determined that this would be handled at the discretion of the City Manager and when he copied all of Council on an issue, he would provide more background information as well as note who was requesting the information.

**HOUSING:**

Councilmember Knol commented that much of this was talked about along with the other topics; but as a goal for Council, she feels that maintaining housing and neighborhoods are key issues. She commented that Farmington Hills is becoming an older community and there is a need to maintain quality housing stock and provide for a larger variety of homes to keep Farmington Hills as a desirable place to live for all, including the senior community. She suggested monitoring foreclosures and being business-friendly when it comes to building permits.

Councilmember Massey saw this goal as keeping up on the physical aspects of the community and agreed this was important.

Mayor Pro-Tem Bruce stated that the City needs to make sure it has a strong zoning department with enough code enforcement officers to do their job and a strong rental ordinance. He feels that rentals are the first thing to diminish the appearance of neighborhoods.

Councilmember Knol stated that she had mixed feelings regarding a rental inspection ordinance in the past, but since has seen what these rentals are doing to the neighborhoods; and she would be willing to revisit this issue.

Councilmember Lerner expressed concern with legal notification requirements and commented that he is not sure that a rental inspection ordinance would make that big of a difference.

Discussion was held regarding the current zoning ordinance and staffing. Mr. Brock commented that he feels the City is being very cooperative with permitting and that the Zoning Department is adequately staffed. He agreed that the aesthetics are often difficult issues to address.

It was the consensus of City Council to revisit the Rental Inspection Ordinance at a future study session.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:**

Mayor Brickner commented that City Council used to receive weekly legislative updates and inquired if this was something Council would like to still receive.

City Manager Brock commented that they stopped providing written updates and were forwarding much of the information electronically.

All of Council indicated that they were receiving the Michigan Municipal League updates electronically already and that if City Manager Brock felt that other information should be passed on they are fine with that coming to them electronically.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:15pm

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk