

MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING  
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
JUNE 13, 2016 – 6:00PM

The Study Session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Massey at 6:00pm.

Council Members Present: Bridges, Bruce, Knol, Lerner, Massey and Rich

Council Members Absent: Steckloff

Others Present: City Manager Boyer, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Mekjian, Director Randle and City Attorney Joppich

**MEETING WITH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION**

Assistant City Manager Mekjian stated that several weeks ago City Council authorized funding for the accreditation of the Public Works Department through the APWA. He stated that the accreditation process is a culmination of 4 years of self-evaluation work on behalf of the Department.

He introduced the members present from the APWA.

Member Ann Daniels stated that she is delighted Farmington Hills is going through the accreditation process. She stated that staff had an opportunity this week to meet with the APWA team who was able to see projects within the City and get a feel for the community. She stated that the process includes a review of all practices to make sure that they meet accreditation standards. Ms. Daniels stated that they are proud of the program and she feels this type of accreditation will soon be expected of communities. There are currently 112 accredited agencies with Farmington Hills to hopefully be 113. She stated that this process also helps the Department by having a standard practice guide. She added that after the site visit, it takes approximately 2-3 weeks to get plaques made and she hopes to be back to make the final presentation to Farmington Hills. She thanked City Council for their support and commitment to excellence and thanked Mr. Mekjian for all of his efforts and work on the APWA.

Ms. Daniels reviewed the steps of the accreditation process at the request of Council that included reviewing the self-assessment and review of the 609 practices to determine which of those the Department provides and to provide for documentation on each, followed by a site visit with Public Works peers to review each practice identified and then a final report is submitted to the Accreditation Council. Ms. Daniels stated that the accreditation is good for a period of 4 years with a 2-year mid-term report required in order to make sure practices and standards are up to date.

Councilmember Bridges inquired if having the accreditation helps communities obtain grant funding. Ms. Daniels stated that she does not have any data on that but has heard that it is a major selling point for communities with regard to economic development.

Councilmember Bridges inquired if the City has pursued this accreditation before. City Manager Boyer stated that the City has not done so for DPW.

Mayor Massey thanked the APWA team for attending the meeting.

**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS REVIEW (Continued from May 23, 2016 Study Session)**

Mayor Massey stated that at the last study session meeting when this was reviewed Council skipped over the Children, Youth and Families Commission as Councilmember Steckloff who is the liaison to that Commission was absent. He suggested doing so again since Ms. Steckloff was absent this evening.

Mayor Massey stated that Council ended with discussion on the Committee to Increase Voter Participation.

City Clerk Smith stated that she does not view this Committee being combined with any other committee and would suggest at least limiting the meetings/scope to the activities already taking place.

Discussion was held on dissolving the Committee.

Councilmember Rich stated that she is not in favor of dissolving the Committee in an Election year.

Councilmember Lerner commented that attendance and participation is limited by the members and the work is already being accomplished by the City Clerk's Office.

Mayor Pro-Tem Knol added that she does not want to waste more staff time by having Committee and meetings if the work is already being done.

Mayor Massey added that part of the reason for going through this review process is to determine if there is still a need for each board/commission.

Councilmember Bridges asked that if the issue is with getting a quorum at meetings and member participation that this is reviewed consistently across the board for all boards/commissions.

Mayor Massey stated that his hope is to achieve some standardization across the board.

Councilmember Bridges inquired if using alternates for this committee may work to achieve a quorum and inquired how long this committee has been in existence. City Clerk Smith stated that the committee has been ongoing for a long time and when she came on as City Clerk there was already discussion about dissolving this committee. She met with the members and they were committed to keeping the committee going; but since that time it has still been a struggle to get a quorum at meetings and to have participation from members. She stated that the main activities of the Committee are already being handled by her office. She agrees that as a City Clerk she would hate to see this Committee dissolve, especially in a busy Election year, but confirmed that all of the activities would still be done by her and her staff.

Councilmember Lerner pointed out that there are many volunteer opportunities for people if they want to be involved and help with activities or events without having to form committees.

**Economic Development Corporation**

Mayor Massey felt that the mission statement for the EDC needs to be revised.

City Manager Boyer discussed the lack of funding left for EDC and the fact that many of the functions of this Corporation are now also being handled by Economic Development full-time staff.

Discussion was held on the possible dissolution of the EDC. It was mentioned how much John Anhut, Chair of the EDC, has done for the community and how active he still is with regard to economic development and trying to retain businesses.

Members of Council expressed the desire to be consistent across the board for those boards and commission that are inactive or for those where staff is already doing the work.

It was pointed out that Mr. Anhut is still very active in the community as are the members of the EDC.

Mayor Massey mentioned that the EDC was able to raise money and help stimulate businesses in the community and a lot of money went into various developments but that is not the case anymore. He questioned if the EDC is able to re-establish funding.

Attorney Joppich pointed out that dissolving a corporation is different than dissolving a board or commission. To dissolve the EDC it would take a 2/3 majority vote of the EDC Directors and then approval by City Council. He stated that the EDC has the authority to bond and generate revenue through grants, etc. He stated that this information is based upon a quick review of the statute and not representative of a full legal review.

The consensus of Council was to review the mission statement and look into the ability of the EDC to generate revenue. Council also asked for a history of how EDC funding was spent.

#### **Emergency Preparedness Commission**

Mayor Massey stated that this is a joint commission with 17 members, slightly higher than what Council had discussed as a standard going forward. He stated that the ordinance was changed recently to include alternate members and this has worked well and they have very high attendance at their meetings.

Mayor Massey explained that the Commission will be asking about the creation of a Citizens Emergency Response Team. He stated that he spoke with the City Managers of both communities and also the Mayor of Farmington and all have agreed to hear the presentation. He stated that other communities have similar response teams. He sees that one potential issue could be with making sure that you don't have citizens who are going beyond their authority; but it could be a positive thing with appropriate controls in place.

The consensus was to review reducing the number of members to standardize all boards/commissions.

Mayor Massey suggested if the number of members is reduced to maintain representation from both communities as well as the use of alternates and people with different skill sets.

#### **Employee Retirement Board**

Mayor Massey stated that this ordinance was recently updated in 2013. Council saw no immediate changes that were necessary for this Board.

Attorney Joppich stated that this Board is largely driven by statutes but he will review those for any potential updates or standardization as discussed with the other boards and commissions.

#### **Farmington Area Arts Commission**

Mayor Massey pointed out that this is another Commission where there is no ordinance or resolution adopted authorizing the formation of the Commission.

City Manager Boyer stated that the Arts Commission was formed prior to the City having a Department and staff. He added that staff now handles the funding and runs the programs with the assistance of the Commission members.

Councilmember Bruce commented that the members are very active and provide a lot of assistance and good ideas to staff. Council agreed.

The consensus was to create an ordinance outlining the responsibilities of the Arts Commission.

Mayor Massey reiterated adding the use of alternates where appropriate.

**Library Board of Trustees**

Mayor Massey pointed out that the Mayor and Council approve appointments to the Library Board but other than that have no oversight. It was suggested having a Council liaison to the Board and requiring an Oath of Office since they handle money and millage funding.

Councilmember Lerner questioned the provision in the by-laws that provided for lifetime membership as Library Trustee Emeritus after serving over 25 years.

Attorney Joppich explained that the Act calls for an appointed or elected Board and Farmington/Farmington Hills has decided to have an appointed Board. He stated that he would review the Act to address the concerns expressed and also look into the Emeritus status noted in the by-laws.

Mayor Massey suggested ending the review of the boards and commissions at this time to go into their regular meeting. He stated that review would continue at the next study session on the remaining boards and commissions.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk