

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

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, Rich and Steckloff

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Boyer, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Mekjian, Directors Gardiner and Mondora and City Attorney Joppich

DISCUSSION ON HALSTED ROAD FLOODING & PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Director of Public Service Karen Mondora explained that the City often has to close Halsted Road due to flooding across the road in that area. She stated that mitigating the current condition has been a priority and tonight they have some recommendations. If there is consensus from City Council this evening, staff would move forward with detailed project plans. She introduced Dave Potter and Brian McKissen from Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber to present the proposed mitigation plan.

Dave Potter, Senior Project Manager discussed the location of the culvert in question and presented Council with the floodplain impacts in the area. He stated that they studied the storm water run-off in the area and discovered areas within the Country Ridge Subdivision where the culvert was plugged with gravel and it was suggested that those areas are cleaned out. Mr. Potter discussed the historical flooding impacts and rainfall trends and the effect on the road noting that the road is closed due to flooding approximately 50 days per year on average. He stated that the road is sinking in this area due to being built in a floodplain.

Mr. Potter outlined that the recommended solution that included a bridge over the culvert. He discussed design criteria and costs associated with a 10-year/50-year and 100-year design as well as estimated road closures with each design. He stated that they are recommending the 10-year design as it is keeping in line with common design criteria, would lower the frequency of road closures, there would be manageable/tolerable road impact and it provides for optimal cost versus benefit.

Mr. Potter explained that they have applied for a 10 year permit and were granted the permit. They did this now as this process can take up to 6-9 months. He suggested having conversations with the Country Ridge Subdivision to clean out the culverts within their subdivision. Tonight staff is seeking direction from Council on which design they prefer. He explained that if they are agreeable to the recommended 10 year design, soil borings could be ordered and they could start the design immediately.

City Manager Boyer, in response to Councilmember Bruce, stated that the project was included in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget. He added that this has been an ongoing issue and the City felt some pressure when many of the other roads were under construction and this road was closed due to flooding.

Councilmember Bruce stated that he liked the idea and look of the project, but felt that this was a luxury right now and that this was a low impact area. He suggested if the road is closed in the future that there is

more signage at Halsted and Drake Roads so that people are aware of the closure earlier and do not have to turn around.

Councilmember Bridges inquired if the Country Ridge Subdivision repairs were important and mentioned that staff had discussed bonding for future drainage projects.

Mr. Potter responded that cleaning out the culverts was important to minimize the impact of flooding in this area.

City Manager Boyer stated that the city would typically bond for larger amounts so if there were multiple projects, they would consider bonding; but this is a stand-alone project at this time.

Councilmember Bridges commented that this has been a long time problem and that it is an eyesore when the road has to be closed.

Assistant City Manager Mekjian commented that the road will keep settling in this area if nothing is done.

Director Mondora added that communication with Country Ridge Subdivision has been positive and she feels they will do their part.

City Manager Boyer stated that there are also costs associated with closing the road each time and the current maintenance of the road.

Discussion was held on other potential options. Mr. Potter mentioned that those ideas have been considered and offered reasons for the proposed recommendation. He added that any option would have a cost.

It was the consensus of City Council to have staff move forward with the 10 year design option.

UPDATE ON ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

Director of Planning and Community Development Ed Gardiner updated City Council on a few zoning text amendments and code amendments that staff was working on, some of which had already come to City Council at previous study sessions.

The amendments included:

- Wireless communication amendments including the placement of distributed antennae systems (DAS) within the public right-of-way.
- Amendments to sign regulations in the zoning ordinance to clarify the regulations that signs shall not flutter or move, what constitutes an unlawful motor vehicle sign and the permitted number of sign at are a maximum of 2 square feet in area, 32 inches tall, and setback a minimum of 35 feet from any right-of-way or property line, is one per 25 feet of frontage
- Transferring the One-Family Dwelling design standards from Chapter 21 of the City Code to Chapter 34, Zoning, which would eliminate the One-Family Construction Review Board previously discussed by City Council.
- Liquor Licenses at Gasoline Stations

Director Gardiner explained that the Liquor Control Commission (LCC) has made some changes to their policies and the city has received many requests for the sale of alcohol at gasoline stations. The City currently has a zoning ordinance in place that would not allow for this, with the exception of a few

stations that were grandfathered in at the time the ordinance was adopted. He noted that the city has informed the gasoline stations that they are unable to sell alcohol per this ordinance and an attorney for one of the stations has contacted the city challenging the ordinance.

Attorney Joppich confirmed that there have been many regulation amendments to allow for the sale of alcohol at gas stations, which has opened the door for the stations to obtain liquor licenses at the state level. The question now is whether the city can exclude gas stations from selling alcohol as they are currently doing or permit the sale of alcohol with some regulations. He added that there is also the question if there is a need to continue to regulate these sales. Attorney Joppich stated that the Planning Commission will review this issue and potential ordinance amendments and his office will provide legal advice to both the Planning Commission and City Council. Ultimately this issue will come to City Council with a recommendation of the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Knol stated that she did not have an issue with the sale of alcohol at gas stations; however, if the city was going to allow for it with some regulations, she suggested using that as an opportunity to have the businesses clean and enhance their landscaping, if possible. Councilmember Bruce concurred.

Councilmember Lerner commented that the LCC is already issuing these licenses without requiring any input from the city.

DISCUSSION ON THE REQUEST FOR MODIFICATION TO CONSENT JUDGMENT AND AMENDMENT FOR 28219 WESTBROOK CT.

Director Gardiner explained that in 2005 plans were submitted to build a house at 28219 Westbrook Court that required variances and the matter went before the Zoning Board of Appeals and was denied. The matter went to litigation and City Council approved a consent judgment in 2006 allowing for a specific house to be built on the property. The project never commenced, he is guessing due to the downturn in the economy, and now the new purchaser wants to build a smaller home on the property. Mr. Gardiner stated that this change would require an amendment to the current consent judgment. The purchaser spoke with the homeowners association and has their approval and has confirmed that they are not in violation of any bylaws. If Council determines to allow for the amendment to move forward, the amended consent judgment would be brought before City Council at a regular meeting.

Discussion was held on the size of the proposed home and existing homes in that neighborhood.

The consensus was to have staff bring the amended consent judgment to City Council for consideration at a regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk