

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
April 15, 2015 – Regular Meeting**

The Economic Development Corporation of the City of Farmington Hills held its Regular Meeting on Wednesday, April 15, 2015, in the Community Room at City Hall. Chairman Anhut called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

Members present: Anhut, Brock, Elliott, Marcellino and Sarafa

Members absent: Gatewood, Hartsock, Jacknow and Johnson

Also present: Khalfani Stephens, Farmington Hills Director of Economic Development

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Chair Anhut suggested adding Oakland County Commissioner Marcia Gershenson to the Agenda.**

**MOTION by Brock, support by Elliott, to approve the agenda as amended.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION by Brock, support by Sarafa, to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 18, 2015 as published.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chair Anhut deferred his time to the speakers and introduced former Farmington Hills Police Chief and current Oakland County Commissioner William Dwyer (District 14), along with Oakland County Commissioner Marcia Gershenson (District 13).

Some of the major points covered by Commissioner Dwyer were included in a handout provided at the meeting and included the following:

**ECONOMY**

- The Oakland County business community has added a net total of nearly 80,000 new jobs since 2009. Commissioner Gershenson indicated that Oakland County is trying to work with communities to help them fill vacant spots in their business areas, including giving micro loans to small businesses when warranted to help them with start-up costs.
- Oakland County continues to retain its AAA bond rating after 17 years.
- Oakland County is moving strongly in the right direction. Foreclosures in 2014 returned to 2002 levels of 1,900. (2012 Foreclosures – 5,100.....2013 – 2,800). Gershenson added that the Oakland

County Treasurer’s office continues to reach out to both families and communities trying to help reduce foreclosures.

- Property values are trending upward and expected to increase 6% as they did in 2014 and the same is projected for 2015 and 2016.
- The County has met County Executive Patterson’s pledge to reduce energy consumption 15% by 2015, saving taxpayers more than \$4.7 million (i.e. replacing high pressure sodium lights with energy efficient LED lighting).
- Commissioner Gershenson stated that the County is doing more with branding . . . i. e., Medical Main Street, commercial real estate, and local services and grants . . . merging sectors by bringing in business from other sectors like China, etc. Oakland County Commissioner Janet Jackson (District 21) has been working with various communities in the County to help in any way it can. Currently, the County is working in a pilot program with Farmington Hills using new County guidelines for Tax Increment Financing on a Corridor improvement project that is going well; so, the County is thinking of using Farmington Hills as a model for how the new guidelines work so other communities might benefit.

#### **INDUSTRY**

- The major new initiative involved information technology – Oakland County’s 2<sup>nd</sup> largest and fastest growing Emerging Section. About 20 IT companies from Pontiac, Royal Oak, Southfield and Ferndale have banded together to create an IT focus group called “Oak Tech Connect,” which will be modeled after Medical Main Street and Automation Alley hoping the strength of the IT industry in Oakland County will continue to attract additional IT companies to the region.

#### **PERSONAL INCOME/HOUSEHOLD:**

- Oakland County is first in per capita income in Michigan . . . for 2013, the latest year for which data is available from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, was \$57,035 – the highest of any county in Michigan.

#### **HEALTH**

- Oakland County Health Division launched a countywide survey this week to gather residents’ views on key issues that affect health and wellness. The survey, which is part of the Energizing Connections for Healthier Oakland (ECHO) initiative, will help public health professionals prioritize and respond to health concerns in Oakland County. Brock agreed to disseminate the survey, but Commissioner Dwyer indicated it could be completed online at [www.oakgov.com/health](http://www.oakgov.com/health). Commissioner Gershenson added that there has been some recent controversy regarding the need for children to be immunized with resistance from some parents who don’t feel government should mandate vaccines (this controversy does not involve parents who choose not to vaccinate their children for religious reasons). The County is providing information sessions for parents questioning the use of the vaccines in hopes that they will have a better understanding of the need for these immunizations and have their children (who must accompany them to these sessions) immunized after the session is completed.
- Oakland County Health Division has a variety of programs and services that support healthy lifestyles by promoting and encouraging healthy behaviors, improving infant health, increasing accessibility of health services; ensuring a safe and clean environment; preparing for emergencies and reducing the threat and preventing the spread of disease.

- The report is the only tool of its kind that measures the overall health of the nation's more than 3,100 counties. Oakland County came in ninth overall for health factors, which is measured with four key categories, including health behavior, access to and quality of clinical care, social and economic factors and physical environment.

## **ROADS**

- The Oakland County Board of Commissioners is looking into the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to investigate potential cost savings and quality improvement measures for road repair and construction. SEMCOG reports that 30% of Oakland County roads are in poor condition and nearly 23% of bridges are in a deficient state. With the long existing traffic congestion issues and severely deteriorated roads, it limits economic growth and the ability to attract new investment. There are advancements in road building technology and materials that may provide an opportunity to improve the quality and durability of road improvements and repairs. With the investment in new technologies and improved materials, it may provide the most cost effective solution to road deterioration in the long term. Commissioner Gershenson reiterated that these new techniques will be looked at in total for cost and longevity.

Commissioner Dwyer gave information on a new Committee that he and Commissioner Gershenson are forming to better inform residents about Gun Violence and its effects. He indicated that greater resources are needed to curb the violence, promote mental health awareness, greater law enforcement, and the involvement of school superintendents to ensure safe schools. Commissioner Gershenson indicated that “not all schools are created equal...some have great security (measures) and others have none.” Commissioner Dwyer indicated that Governor Snyder has allocated \$500,000 in grants to help schools increase security.

Commissioner Dwyer said that the Sandy Hook tragedy has prompted greater awareness of the need for school security and that State and Federal Legislation is needed for requirements that all schools have security measures for entry/exit. There is a need to promote public awareness campaigns re high risk factors, PSAs regarding mental health issues are needed...Diana Lewis did 3 PSAs recently, including one showing signs of mental illness and the danger of some video games that promote violence. Both Commissioner Dwyer and Gershenson gave high credits to Dave Tietmeyer of the City's Video Division who did a “great job” in putting those PSAs together.

Commissioner Dwyer also indicated the County was promoting the use of gun safety locks and would be giving out free locks at a County event on June 5, 2015.

Commissioner Dwyer commented that County Executive, L. Brooks Patterson, in his State of the County address, announced there was a “huge surplus” in the road budget and would be giving back approximately \$8 to individual taxpayers (based on a \$200,000 home).

Chair Anhut thanked the Commissioners for being at the meeting and sharing the handout and additional information.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chair Anhut mentioned three items of interest:

1. The Farmington Observer Editor, Joanne Maliszewski, has been re-assigned to the Plymouth/Canton Observer, after doing a fine job while she served the Farmington/Farmington Hills community. City Manager Brock said the newly assigned Editor is Nathan Mueller; and that Mr. Mueller had already attended his first City Council Meeting.
2. Jean's Hardware on 12 Mile Road closed its doors after providing decades of service to the Farmington Hills community.
3. Chair Anhut reminded everyone again about the **Georgetown Project**. City Manager Brock explained that the contest is sponsored by Georgetown University with a \$5 million dollar prize to the community that shows the greatest amount of energy savings over the course of approximately the next two years. No final date has been set for submitting the information. An application has been submitted for the project, and information is available to residents at City Hall, online and various places for energy saving ideas that could apply to both residential, retail and commercial entities. Holland is the only other Michigan community to apply thus far.

Chair Anhut asked the County Commissioners if they could promote the Georgetown Project, and encouraged the EDC members to outreach to any homeowners groups or organizations they are involved with to disseminate information to help achieve the goal of winning this award.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

**MOTION by Sarafa, support by Brock, to accept the financial report for March, 2015, as published.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Anhut announced that the next EDC meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2015.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Anhut adjourned the meeting at 9 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, City Manager Steve Brock  
Secretary, Economic Development Corporation