

MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING  
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER  
SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 – 6:00PM

The special meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Barnett at 6:08pm.

Council Members Present: Barnett, Boleware, Bridges, Bruce, Massey and Newlin

Council Members Absent: Knol

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Valentine and City Attorney Joppich

**DISCUSSION ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION READINESS ASSESSMENT**

Joe Valentine, Assistant City Manager, explained that the city embarked on a journey about a year ago that included a multi-phased approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts and hired Life’s Journey Training and Consulting as a consultant to assist with these efforts.

Darlene King, Life’s Journey Training and Consulting, explained the multi-phase process that the city is taking with regard to its DEI efforts that included a data analysis, readiness assessment, focus groups and creating a 3-year strategic plan. She briefly reviewed the data analysis and discussed the readiness assessment survey that was focused around 6 key factors and included 6 pre-determined questions chosen by the DEI Council that is made up of city employees.

Ms. King confirmed that the answers received by her company from the readiness assessment survey were private and respondents were not asked to provide their name as they wanted participants to feel comfortable in providing honest answers. She also confirmed that the assessment does provide an accurate report of how the employees view their work environment and the response percentage rates would be discussed as she goes through the data.

During the recap of the data analysis, Ms. King reported the loss of several minorities since the beginning of this journey including its only minority leader. When asked the reason for the loss of employees, Ms. King stated that this reflects the culture of Farmington Hills and whether the city is ready and prepared to embrace diversity from a workplace perspective.

Discussion was held on the loss of the minority employees and potential reasons for employees leaving their place of work that may have also included better opportunities and not necessarily the culture although others felt that employees would not be looking for other opportunities or leave if they were happy in their jobs and expressed concern with no progress being made in hiring minorities over the years.

Ms. King mentioned that the full readiness assessment report that council members have to review is 47 pages but reviewed a summary of that report with council.

Considerable discussion was held on the data used and including statistics from questions where respondents answered “I don’t know” or skipped a question. Ms. King explained that those people responded to the survey so all of their data was used and could not be discounted for any question; therefore, the “I don’t know” answers and skipped questions were included in the data statistics. Not all members of

Council agreed with the statistics provided and others agreed with Ms. King that the “I don’t know” answers are also a concern if the city is not doing what it should to convey that information to employees.

Ms. King confirmed that 75% favorable data is the national best practice standards when it come to DEI and that this same data analysis and assessment is used by her company with any organization that they serve.

Council requested to be sent the actual survey that was sent out to employees as they felt it would be helpful in better understanding the data and how people answered those questions.

Mayor Barnett felt that the assessment showed the city is not doing enough and not providing enough cross-training and engagement on DEI with employees. She wants staff to feel that if they have an idea or suggestion that they can come forward with it and it will be taken seriously. The council knows that the employee base does not reflect the community and that is the goal.

Ms. King spoke about the next steps that included meeting with the DEI Council and creating focus groups, a two-day training with leadership has been scheduled and then developing a 3-year strategy plan. She anticipated the focus group discussions and final report would be completed by early December and that early next year the city could begin working on the strategic plan.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Amanda Grenanco, member of the DEI Council, stated that she is a 20-year employee with the city and inquired of Council what the end goal or the target percentage is in their view.

Council responses included:

- To have the best educated, trained and efficient employees that reflect the community
- For employees to feel included and their thoughts valued
- Eventually a 35-40% minority work force that includes all minorities
- An increase in the numbers provided in the report showing that employees feel valued and that they have a good work environment
- The demographics of the city change faster than city employees and to think the city can mirror that seems far reaching
- For potential employees to know that the city would hire any person that is qualified for the job
- Support from the leadership in DEI efforts
- Safe, welcoming environment for employees
- Employees to be treated fairly and equitably based on their skills
- Progression in number of minority hirings

Sam Koeppe, member of the DEI Council, commented that now that the data has been gathered, the DEI Council can reach out to the community and others to show what maybe the data doesn’t show and to help with fundraising towards programming and other DEI efforts. Sam spoke about the importance of being comfortable at work and allowing to be your authentic self.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION by Bridges, support by Massey, to adjourn the special meeting at 8:40pm.

MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk