

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL GOALS SESSION MEETING
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
JANUARY 28, 2017

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

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

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Boyer, City Clerk Smith, and Assistant City Manager Mekjian

MAYOR'S MISSION:

Mayor Massey stated that the focus of the goals session should be to set measurable, reasonable goals for specific things Council would like to do or provide to the community going forward.

YOUTH MEMBERS INVOLVEMENT:

Mayor Massey stated that this topic is with regard to including funding in the budget to take some of the Mayors Youth Council students to conferences or meetings such as the Michigan Municipal League Conference so that they can see how the Council and staff conducts business and interacts with colleagues.

City Manager Boyer stated that if Council is interested in having students attend MML, there is a student fee that is less than the normal fee and the city could budget an additional \$2,000 to allow a few students to attend.

Mayor Pro-Tem Steckloff stated that the MYC was originally created to allow kids to have a voice in the community. She commented that the focus has shifted more to service projects. She felt it was important for the students to see how the budget process works and government operates and would like to see the MYC shift their focus back to having a voice for students on government policy.

Discussion was held on what meetings or conferences they would attend and the number of students attending.

Councilmember Knol felt attendance at the MML Conference was fine, but that the students could also benefit from attending local meetings for free such as the Council budget sessions or sitting in with non-profits if they are doing a service project.

The consensus was to shift the MYC away from service projects and back to discussing government/policy changes from the youth standpoint; and include funding in the budget that would allow for 4-5 students who have proven themselves committed to the MYC to attend the annual MML Conference and Lansing Capitol Conference.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP:

City Manager Boyer stated that the City Council currently has membership with the following professional organizations: National League of Cities (NLC), Michigan Municipal League (MML),

Greater Area Chamber of Commerce, SEMCOG, 8 Mile Road Boulevard Association and Michigan Association of Mayors.

Councilmember Lerner noted that half of the expenditures in this area are spent on the National League of Cities (NLC) and questioned the benefits received by the city. He suggested perhaps taking a break from the organization for a year and revisiting the issue after that time.

Councilmember Bruce stated that he has gone back and forth on whether the city should continue its membership with NLC but he does feel it provides some benefits such as lobbying on behalf of cities and training opportunities. He stated that he had served on one of the steering committees and during the time that he and Mayor Massey were involved, they helped to create a resolution that is now policy. He agreed that it should not be viewed as a mechanism to meet with local legislators as Council can do that at any time.

Councilmember Rich commented that she has found the trainings provided, specifically for new council members, beneficial and that getting perspectives from other areas of the country on issues is also a benefit.

Councilmember Knol stated that she agreed with Councilmember Lerner and felt NLC was geared towards much larger cities and that some of the same trainings could probably be found with other local organizations for less money.

Mayor Pro-Tem Steckloff stated that she learned a lot going to NLC but felt she learned even more locally. She requested a compiled list of training opportunities for Council.

Councilmember Lerner agreed that much of the training is available locally. He suggested as a compromise keeping the membership, but eliminating the travel to the conference.

Councilmember Bridges believed that NLC gave Council and staff perspectives from across the country and while the budget is a factor, he feels Council has to also consider the benefit. He does not support dropping the membership or travel at this time and suggested evaluating the benefits going forward.

Mayor Massey commented that Farmington Hills has a lot of programs and is leading the way in many areas and stated that perhaps the city should demonstrate this and lead others cities and play a role in recrafting some of these memberships. He believes that Farmington Hills has that influence.

Councilmember Bruce agreed that Farmington Hills has a leadership role and can be part of the change and suggested that a member of Council consider running for a position on the NLC Board.

Following further discussion on all of the memberships, the consensus of Council was to maintain the current memberships for this year and for staff to bring the issue back for Council review with regard to the 8 Mile Road Boulevard and NLC memberships upon renewal.

RECYCLING PROGRAM

Mayor Pro-Tem Steckloff said she would like to find a way to get recycling for businesses and apartments. She added that fast food restaurants have a large stock of recyclable materials that could generate a good return rate. She stated that Farmington Hills is supposed to be a leader on sustainability and the environment and she would like to do more on this issue.

Mayor Massey agreed this was a great idea, but the issue is that businesses and apartments have their own independent contracts for waste pick up and recycling. He believes that all the city can do is to encourage and help facilitate recycling and lead by example.

Councilmember Bruce suggested including information in the FOCUS newsletter on location of recycling centers.

Mayor Massey also suggested getting the information out to businesses through the Chamber of Commerce.

Councilmember Rich stated that she would like to have more discussion on this issue at a study session meeting as to how the city can encourage and promote recycling.

Mayor Pro-Tem Steckloff stated that she would also like to see more recycling bins at local events such as the Founders Festival.

The consensus of Council was to continue to encourage and promote recycling for businesses and apartment complexes and use of bins that are already located at the schools or other areas throughout the city; and to have recycling bins at local events.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

F2HFit:

Councilmember Lerner stated that he maintained the domain F2HFit.com and has not renewed with the company who hosted the site, as he felt that perhaps it could be used by the city for the Community Health Commission.

Council determined that the domain should be maintained for future use by the Community Health Commission.

City Manager Boyer stated that he would notify the IT Department.

Deer Feeding:

Mayor Massey stated that the City has been responding to complaints about the number of deer in the community and working with the Department of Natural Resources about what can be done. The city conducted a city-wide survey and the surveys returned are saying that they do not want the city to shoot the deer. He feels the best way to address the issue and take action is to pursue an ordinance that would prohibit the feeding of deer. He added the only other options provided by the DNR was to shoot them or leave them be. Mayor Massey stated that this is a regional issue that he feels the DNR needs to address.

City Manager Boyer stated that the ban on deer feeding was a recommendation of the DNR and one that staff felt was a good idea. He added that they are meeting with the DNR next month to discuss this issue on a regional level and what cities can do to assist.

Councilmember Bruce disagreed that too many deer was a problem and felt this represented a healthy eco-system. He was fine with passing an ordinance to ban feeding of deer but felt that people also need to learn to co-exist with animals.

Mayor Pro-Tem Steckloff felt it was important to publicize this issue if an ordinance was passed and provide for easy access to staff to call if there is an issue.

Councilmember Lerner believed the deer to be an issue as they are eating all of the plants and vegetation in people's yards, which creates a problem regarding the aesthetics of the neighborhoods and he also feels that deer ticks are a concern.

Councilmember Bridged concurred with Dr. Bruce and stated he would support such an ordinance.

The consensus was to pursue an ordinance to ban deer feeding.

Mental Health:

Councilmember Rich stated that she is not clear what power the city has to do anything about addiction or mental health.

City Manager Boyer stated that opioids is a big issue and the City was one of the first communities to utilize narcan and they have saved many lives; but opioids are part of the bigger issue of mental health and the city doesn't have enough resources. The city is trying to work with the state and federal agencies to get more resources. He added that this is an issue that could be brought up at the National League of Cities as it is a national issue.

Councilmember Knol commented that it is not only the lack of resources but people choosing to leave treatment. She mentioned a Bill that has been introduced allowing people to petition another adult for treatment. She added that there is a task force at the state level discussing these issues. Locally, she suggested more enforcement at particular areas and establishments within the city.

Mayor Massey stated that the role of the city is not treatment but to rescue and help them to get into treatment programs and there are active groups getting that information out such as Farmington SAFE.

Dr. Rich inquired if this was a potential conversation for the schools. Mayor Massey stated that the Vice Principal of North Farmington High School serves on Farmington SAFE.

Councilmember Lerner added that for the last 3 years he has assisted the schools in hosting a Drugs 101 Class in the high schools that is funded through drug forfeiture money; and they are looking at a similar program this year.

Council determined that the as a city they should continue to get information out to the public and to support the programs, including as much Council participation as possible at events such as the Sobriety Court.

INTERNSHIPS/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mayor Massey questioned if the city could look into the number of internships available from the area schools to determine if they could be utilized for interns within the city.

City Manager Boyer stated that several departments utilize internships and the cost is built into their part-time employee budgets. He stated the some of the programs offer to pay portions of their salary. He added that he feels this is a great opportunity to expose students to potential job opportunities with municipalities and feels department should be encouraged to use interns. Staff can certainly continue to reach out to area schools for these opportunities.

Mayor Pro-Tem Steckloff mentioned a federal work study program where the federal government will pay intern salaries.

Councilmember Bridges inquired about eligibility for the interns. City Manager Boyer responded that eligibility would be based on their interest or field of study and that they are typically working toward a degree in a certain field.

The consensus was to continue to promote internships and expand upon that program for local government.

Mayor Massey suggested having the interns discuss their experience with Council at a study session meeting.

CITY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

City Manager Boyer stated that a management audit is required by City Charter and he noted that the last audit was conducted using a national survey through ICMA. Since this was a national survey, it contained standard questions which aided in providing benchmarks for communities, but also allowed for specific questions to be included by the community. He noted that the purpose of the audit was to determine how residents felt the city was doing at the time and what other things residents were looking for in a community.

The audit is due again and Mr. Boyer suggested using this same format through ICMA.

The consensus was to utilize the ICMA survey format that was utilized in 2011 to fulfill the required management audit.

Mr. Boyer indicated that the survey would start this summer and a full report would be provided to City Council once complete.

SUSTAINABILITY

Mayor Massey explained that the city conducted a 2020 visioning effort that included citizen committees who reviewed various aspects of the city and reported back to Council on what they felt should be goals going forward in those specific areas. This report has not been reviewed since that time.

The spreadsheet from the report was distributed to Council and City Manager Boyer explained that it was time to update the report. He stated that some goals have been accomplished and others may not be feasible going forward.

Councilmember Bruce suggested an annual review of this report to review which items have been accomplished or deemed that they are not feasible, until such time Council determines that the report is complete.

Councilmember Lerner suggested holding a study session to further review this report.

Councilmember Rich suggested that before the study session is held that Council is made aware of the items that have been done to date and those that staff feels are not feasible at this time.

The consensus was to have staff update the 2020 visioning report as outlined above and then set the issue for a study session with Council for further review.

PUBLIC FACILITIES – SHARED USES

Dog Park:

City Manager Boyer explained that the city dog park is located on school property being leased by the city, and the schools want the city to either buy the property or move and allow the schools to build on the property. He stated that the city does not want to move the dog park and it generates about \$15,000 in revenue for the city. He suggested approaching the schools with a long-term lease with an option to purchase. Mr. Boyer added that the city would have an appraisal done to determine fair market value for the property.

City Council concurred with pursuing a long-term lease with the schools at the existing location with an option to purchase property.

Harrison High School:

City Manager Boyer stated that Farmington Public Schools determined to close Harrison High School in 2019. The schools have indicated that they intend to utilize the top floor, moving their School Administration and Board of Education to that location from the building on Shiawassee. He stated that the city has been looking for space to expand the pool operations at the Costick Center and to host a theater and staff feels that bottom two floors at Harrison High School may be a viable option. He noted that a staff consultant would need to evaluate if this building could be used as a public use facility. Mr. Boyer indicated that the athletic fields, with the possible exception of the varsity baseball field, are proposed to remain.

Mayor Massey stated that staff needs to know if Council feels this is an option worth pursuing with the schools. He believes the city could re-purpose this building and provide some amenities that the city originally promised from the parks and recreation millage at a much smaller cost than building a new facility.

The consensus of Council was to continue conversations with schools regarding the option to lease a portion of the building to expand the uses and programs at the Costick Center.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mayor Massey commented that all of Council seemed to agree with a joint meeting with the Planning Commission. He added that the other suggestion was to hire a consultant to review various areas of the city for redevelopment that may include mixed uses, streetscapes, incentives, etc.

Councilmember Bridges commented that Orchard Lake Road may not be a viable walkable area and he feels it is important to apply these concepts for mixed uses where they will work.

Councilmember Knol agreed and stated that money should not be spent on areas to make them something they are not.

Council supported the concept of hiring a consultant (if not too expensive) to review areas of the city for redevelopment, which may include mixed-use, streetscapes, etc.

Councilmember Knol suggested reviewing incentives to make it easier for people to remodel or feasible to tear down and rebuild.

Councilmember Bridges stated that there is a need to utilize different strategies for different areas and added that he wants to see improvements along Orchard Lake Road but something that could work to spur redevelopment in that area.

ROAD FUNDING

Considerable discussion was held on the special assessment district (SAD) process and road funding options and Council agreed that the current SAD process was not working.

The City Council consensus was to hold a study session on future SAD's. Suggestions included a road funding millage (possibly postponed to 5 years or so out), Charter change to increase the city's contribution or have a contribution range based on the average value of the homes and engaging the community.

Mayor Massey suggested having the City Attorney and staff review the following for study session discussion:

City Attorney to outline options of what can and can't be done by the City

Work towards a change

If a millage question were put before the voters, how would that be handled and what amount would be needed - any change would require a change in the Charter

Options for dealing with the issue of inequity

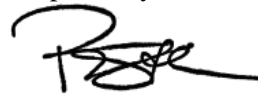
PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

The goals session meeting adjourned at 12:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk