

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER
JANUARY 12, 2026 – 7:30 PM**

The regular session of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 7:33PM.

Councilmembers Present: Aldred, Boleware, Bridges, Dwyer, Knol, Rich and Starkman

Councilmembers Absent: None

Others Present: Acting City Manager Mondora, City Clerk Lindahl; Directors Aranowski, Kettler-Schmult, Rushlow, Schnackel and Skrobola; Fire Chief Unruh; City Attorney Joppich

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by resident Steven Ludwig.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR SESSION MEETING AGENDA

MOTION by Bridges, support by Knol, to approve the agenda as published.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH TO MAYOR PRO TEM JACKIE BOLEWARE

City Clerk Lindahl administered the oath of office to Mayor Pro Tem Jackie Boleware.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS FROM CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS
PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE CITY'S FY 2024/2025 AUDIT RESULTS. CMR 1-26-01**

Dan Fantore, Chair of the Farmington Area Commission on Aging, stated that following the decision related to the engineering study of the Hawk Campus, commissioners have actively engaged with Costick Center users to gather feedback. He reported that residents age 50 and better have expressed concern regarding discussion of a potential two-story community center, emphasizing that seniors strongly prefer a single-story facility because it better supports accessibility, programming, and social interaction, and allows individuals to see and interact with friends while moving between activities, fostering a stronger sense of community. Mr. Fantore also addressed discussion of pursuing a commercial kitchen in the Hawk, noting that the Meals on Wheels program, in-house congregate dining, and Dine and Discover programs currently rely on an in-house kitchen model that is functioning effectively, and that locating a kitchen in a separate building presents logistical challenges that should be carefully evaluated. Costick Center users age 50 and better are well positioned to provide meaningful input in planning a future community center that meets their needs, and that the Farmington Area Commission on Aging stands ready to assist.

Michael Sweeney, Emergency Preparedness Commission, introduced Dr. Harrison Igwe, a member of the Emergency Preparedness Commission, noting that Dr. Igwe plans to begin making presentations in the future. Mr. Sweeney said that the Tip of the Month addressed seniors living at home, emphasizing the importance of personal preparedness for this demographic. He recommended that seniors purchase more than one week's extra groceries during routine shopping trips when weather conditions

are favorable. Having extra food on hand reduces the need to go out during hazardous weather conditions. Canned and jarred foods are helpful because they do not require refrigeration and remain usable during power outages. Mr. Sweeney emphasized the importance of planning ahead to avoid unnecessary travel during dangerous conditions and encouraged seniors to prepare in advance and stay safely at home.

Presentation and Acceptance of the City's FY 2024/2025 Audit Results

Finance Director Skrobola introduced Jamie Rivette, Audit Partner with Yeo and Yeo CPAs, the City's external auditor, for the annual presentation of the City's external audit results for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.

Ms. Rivette explained that the Michigan Department of Treasury requires the City to undergo an independent annual audit. Management is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and the auditor's role is to examine the information and issue an opinion.

Ms. Rivette reported that the City was issued an unmodified opinion, representing the highest level of assurance, with no material modifications required. She also noted that the City received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Reporting for the prior year's annual financial report.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Rivette presented the following highlights from the audit:

- Total revenues increased by approximately \$2 million from the prior year, primarily due to a roughly five percent increase in property tax revenue. Total expenditures and other financing uses increased by approximately \$4.4 million, primarily attributable to increases of approximately \$1.2 million in police department expenditures, approximately \$850,000 in parks and recreation expenditures, and increased transfers out to other City funds. All increases were within the budget approved by City Council.
- The general fund balance increased by approximately \$3 million, from approximately \$61.6 million to \$64.6 million. The combined general fund and public safety fund revenues totaled approximately \$97.6 million, with approximately 55% derived from property taxes and approximately 12% from state sources.
- Regarding state-shared revenue, although there has been gradual growth since 2001, revenues from 2022 through 2025 have remained relatively flat. State-shared revenue was approximately \$8.3 million in 2001, and it has taken approximately 20 years to return to that level.
- Combined general fund and public safety fund expenditures totaled approximately \$93.9 million, with approximately 44% related to public safety. This included approximately \$13.9 million in public safety millage expenditures and approximately \$27.1 million in general fund police and fire expenditures.
- Total fund balance was approximately \$64.6 million, with approximately \$58 million classified as unassigned, approximately \$1.8 million restricted for construction code fees, and the remainder categorized as assigned or non-spendable.
- Approximately \$24.3 million in capital outlay expenditures were added to capital assets and infrastructure during the fiscal year, primarily related to road improvements. The City continues to invest in maintaining and improving capital assets at levels exceeding related depreciation.
- The retiree health care fund was approximately 117% funded and the pension plan was approximately 71% funded. The City contributed approximately \$242,000 to the retiree health care

fund and approximately \$9.3 million to the pension plan. The City continues to make its actuarially determined annual contributions.

- As part of the audit, the firm evaluated the City's internal controls and reported that no material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, or material noncompliance were identified.
- Ms. Rivette reviewed the governance letter, which addressed significant accounting estimates, audit risk areas, and upcoming accounting standards.
- Ms. Rivette thanked the Finance Director and staff for their cooperation and professionalism.

CORRESPONDENCE

Councilmember Bridges referenced correspondence from Matt Strickfaden that had been provided to all Council members and the administration. Acting City Manager Mondora confirmed receipt of the correspondence and stated that it included a Freedom of Information Act request, which is being processed through the City Clerk's office.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Knol, support by Aldred, to approve consent agenda as published.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH AND STARKMAN
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

There were no consent agenda items for discussion.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Boleware announced that a public art reception will be held at City Hall on Friday from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, during which the public will have the opportunity to meet and mingle with artists whose works are hanging in City Hall. The public art program features 77 works by 66 artists from Farmington Hills, Farmington, and surrounding communities. Mayor Pro Tem Boleware also noted that registration for the Special Services summer camps will begin online on January 20. The camps fill quickly and interested families should register promptly.

Mayor Rich highlighted the following:

- Walk the Hawk will be on the third floor of the Hawk tomorrow night, from 7:00pm to 8:00pm.
- Fueling Farmington Hills Task Force (formerly Feeding Farmington Hills Task Force) filled a gap on December 19, at the end of the school winter break. The Task Force put together and distributed boxes of food for 66 families with school children, including 18 unhoused families.
- Regarding the beagles that are outdoors in a sheltered area, Oakland County Animal Control is monitoring the situation on a weekly basis. The City received an update today that the beagles are in good health with adequate access to food, water, shelter, and supplemental heat.

Councilmember Knol shared her perspective regarding the special meeting held on January 7. She was one of three Council members who voted against the City Manager's departure. She believes the City is well run, fiscally sound, and provides efficient and effective services due in part to the City Manager's professionalism, experience, and leadership. She believed the City Manager assembled a strong team of department heads and that the organization had been successfully advancing Council goals.

Councilmember Knol expressed disappointment with the scheduling of the originally proposed special meeting in December right before the holidays, as she believed a matter of this significance should have been scheduled further in advance. The process to hire a new City Manager may take several months and Councilmember Knol emphasized the importance of productive collaboration with the interim City Manager during the transition period. She suggested that Council consider prioritizing any new goals or projects requiring significant staff time in order to provide clear direction to the City Manager's office during the transition.

Councilmember Aldred agreed with Councilmember Knol's comments. To give context, he explained that under the City Charter, the City Manager serves as the City's chief executive officer, overseeing all department heads and administering City operations, while the City Council functions in a policy-setting role similar to a board. The City Manager position is critical to the effective functioning of the City. Councilmember Aldred stressed the importance of unity, civility, and assuming positive intent during the process, and emphasized that decisions should be focused on moving the City forward rather than personal politics and cautioned against potential future charter amendments related to the role or term of the Mayor.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE

- At the January 22nd Planning Commission meeting, department directors will provide presentations regarding the proposed five-year capital improvement plan. Anyone interested in learning about projects that are included in this planning-level document is encouraged to attend.
- Cut holiday trees can be placed curbside on regularly scheduled trash collection days during the month of January.

PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 12, 2014 INCLUDING SITE PLAN 60-7-2025 – CULVERS RESTAURANT. CMR 1-26-02

Introduction

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult introduced this request for an amendment to Planned Unit Development (PUD) 12-2014 for the Orchard 12 Shopping Center, located at the northwest corner of Orchard Lake Road and 12 Mile Road. The proposal involved development of a drive-through restaurant on a vacant portion of the existing parking lot.

Planning Consultant comments

Referencing the November 12, 2025 Giffels Webster review, Planning Consultant Tangari provided an overview of the proposal as well as ordinance considerations. The site was previously approved in 2014 for a retail building that was never constructed. The current proposal would replace that approved use with a drive-through restaurant. The property is zoned B-4, Planned General Business, and the request was before Council as a major amendment to the Planned Unit Development.

The proposal seeks relief from the required 120-foot front setback, proposing a setback of approximately 44.7 feet, which is closer to the roadway than the Comerica bank and Burger King to the east, both of which were set back about 60 feet.

The proposal also seeks relief to allow a fast-food drive-through restaurant, which is not typically permitted in the B-4 district, and to allow a stand-alone drive-through restaurant within an existing shopping center.

The reduced building setback also results in access drives and drive-through components being located within 60 feet of the public right-of-way, requiring additional relief from drive-through design standards. The order confirmation boards are proposed to be located on the south side of the building facing 12 Mile Road, with the pickup window on the east side. The Planning Commission did not affirm relief to allow ordering boards within the front yard.

Mr. Tangari reviewed the drive-through stacking configuration, explaining that five stacking spaces are shown prior to the second of two ordering boards, rather than prior to the first board as typically required. Beyond the ordering boards are spaces leading to a payment station, followed by six designated waiting spaces where customers would park and receive their food.

Regarding parking, the shopping center is evaluated collectively for parking purposes and requires 361 parking spaces under ordinance standards. The proposal would reduce the total number of spaces on site by 66, resulting in 362 spaces, which meets the minimum requirement. If the restaurant were evaluated as a standalone use, it would require 53 spaces, but shared parking applies in this case.

The parking and traffic studies were reviewed in coordination with the City's engineering department. Landscaping requirements for tree quantities were met, and the most recent plan revision added a required hedge along the front of the site. Additional screening may be appropriate if the ordering boards are permitted in the front yard.

Lighting plans still require revision to meet ordinance standards. While the proposal does not meet certain building material and window coverage requirements on the front façade, the Planning Commission exercised its waiver authority and indicated support for the proposed design.

Mr. Tangari summarized the ordinance relief requested as follows:

- Permission for a drive-through restaurant use in the B-4 zoning district.
- Permission for a fast-food restaurant in a stand-alone building within a shopping center.
- Relief from front yard setback requirements, including both the 120-foot and 60-foot standards.
- Relief from drive-through design standards requiring lanes and ordering boards to be located outside the front yard.

Board questions

In response to questions, Planning Consultant Tangari provided the following further information:

- The zoning was B-4. The same ordinance relief had been granted for the Starbucks on Orchard Lake Road, also a part of this PUD. However, prior approvals do not establish automatic precedent, and each Planned Unit Development amendment must independently meet ordinance standards and demonstrate sufficient benefit to the City in return for being granted ordinance relief.

- The nearby Burger King and Arby's properties are zoned B-3 and therefore are not subject to the same standards as the subject site.

Councilmember Aldred found it difficult to reconcile the parking study data with observed parking conditions at the site. Mr. Tangari stated noted that additional parking observation times could be conducted to provide further information.

Applicant presentation

Allen Eizember, Nowak & Fraus Engineers, and Ronald J. Sesí, applicant, were present on behalf of this proposed development.

Mr. Eizember made the following points:

- Regarding the concerns related to drive-through stacking, traffic, and parking, multiple design iterations were evaluated. The proposed configuration places the majority of stacking, payment, and waiting areas toward the rear of the site to minimize impacts near the roadway. A 30-inch hedge was proposed along the front of the site; the hedge height could be increased if additional screening of the menu boards was desired. Six existing trees along the frontage would remain and a pedestrian sidewalk connection to the public sidewalk would be constructed.
- 361 total parking spaces were required and 362 were proposed. While the site was tight, the restaurant was only expected to utilize approximately 35 spaces, including employee parking. In addition to the 18 on-site spaces, 25 adjacent spaces immediately west of the site would potentially be available for a shared parking agreement.
- The plan includes a cross-access easement to the adjacent Burger King property as recommended by the Planning Commission, allowing shared access should adjacent parcels be redeveloped. Fire access had been improved by widening a drive aisle from 12 feet to 14 feet while maintaining required stacking spaces. A maneuvering plan was provided for Fire Department review.
- Pedestrian access improvements were added, including sidewalks and an ADA-compliant ramp to serve parking spaces north of the building.
- Revised lighting plans were prepared to reduce light levels to zero at the property line.
- The tandem drive-through design utilizes two ordering boards and has been shown in Culver's operations to reduce queuing and service times. Average queuing time before ordering is reduced by approximately 23 seconds and total time from ordering to food delivery is reduced by approximately 33 seconds.

Councilmember Aldred asked for clarification regarding vehicle access to the drive-through stacking area. Mr. Eizember explained that due to the absence of an additional curb cut on 12 Mile Road, vehicles would enter the parking lot and circulate around the building to access the queuing lane. A small traffic island was added at the southwest corner of the site to discourage vehicles from stacking in front of the driveway in order to keep circulation lanes clear.

Councilmember Knol raised concerns regarding parking availability and asked whether the applicant had discussed a potential parking arrangement with the adjacent bank to the east. Mr. Sesí stated that no discussions had occurred, but he was willing to pursue such an arrangement if necessary. He said that employee parking demand is minimal, estimating three to five vehicles at most, as many employees are younger and rely on being driven to the location.

Councilmember Knol asked about the proposed hours of operation. Mr. Sesi stated that the restaurant would operate from 10:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Councilmember Knol remained concerned about the circulation and congestion at the 12 Mile Road entrance to the shopping center, near Scrambler's Restaurant. She described tight turning movements created by concrete medians and said that large vehicles and delivery trucks already experience difficulty navigating the area. Additional traffic associated with the proposed restaurant could exacerbate circulation challenges, particularly during peak periods and winter conditions.

Mr. Sesi said that he had just this evening conducted an on-site parking observation during peak dinner hours and observed available parking in the area discussed. Councilmember Knol pointed out that today was Monday when parking demand might be light, especially compared to when Craft Brew City has happy hour on Thursday and Friday nights, and the entire lot is parked. She reiterated that redistributing some parking demand east of the site could help alleviate congestion.

Mr. Eizember said that the applicant had recently received an updated traffic review and that further coordination with the City's engineering staff was ongoing.

Public Comment

The following individual submitted public comment prior to the meeting:

Randall Carron

Mayor Rich opened the meeting to public comment.

Randall Carron, co-owner of Scrambler's Restaurant, said that he and his daughter have operated the restaurant for approximately 15 years. While he was not opposed to development within the shopping center, he believed the proposed Culver's restaurant would significantly harm his business and could force its closure. The area proposed for redevelopment currently serves as parking heavily used by Scrambler's patrons, particularly during peak lunch and weekend hours, and parking demand often exceeds capacity. He noted that the applicant's most recent traffic and parking studies were not yet reviewed and that the proposal relies on multiple variances being granted. Access to and from 12 Mile Road is already difficult and additional traffic could cause backups onto the roadway. Alternative locations for the proposed restaurant exist elsewhere within the City. He asked Council to consider the potential impact on existing businesses.

In response to a question, Mr. Carron stated that his restaurant closes at 3:00pm. The primary parking and traffic impacts occur during lunch hours and on weekends.

Ellen Remar, Farmington Hills resident, said that she lived across the street from this proposed development. Traffic at the intersection of Orchard Lake Road and 12 Mile Road is consistently congested throughout the day. The additional traffic generated by the proposed restaurant would worsen conditions both within the shopping center and along surrounding roadways, particularly during peak hours. She urged Council to consider alternative locations for the restaurant and to consider traffic impacts beyond the immediate site.

Pea Gee, Farmington Hills taxpayer, stated that while she has no objection to Culver's as a restaurant, she questioned why additional fast-food uses continue to be concentrated in the same area when other

commercial sites within the City could better accommodate such development. The subject site is already overly congested, and the proposed Culvers would negatively impact existing businesses.

Ken Snodgrass, Farmington Hills resident, stated that prior to the reconstruction of Orchard Lake Road and 12 Mile Road, westbound traffic included three lanes, including a turnout lane, but now there are only two through lanes. The reduced roadway capacity, combined with a single curb cut serving the shopping center, already increased congestion. Adding a drive-through restaurant at this location would further exacerbate traffic issues already present in the area.

As no other public indicated they wished to speak, Mayor Rich closed public comment and brought the matter back to the Council.

Council deliberation

Councilmember Bridges offered a motion to approve this request, with conditions. Councilmember Starkman supported.

Councilmember Dwyer stated that he opposed the motion due to concerns regarding parking capacity, traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, inadequate drive-through stacking, and the number of variances requested. While he would welcome the restaurant in the City, he did not believe the proposed location was appropriate.

Councilmember Knol stated that while she would like to see a Culver's restaurant in Farmington Hills, she could not support the proposal at this location due to traffic circulation and parking concerns.

Councilmember Aldred stated that he could not support the proposal, noting that the requested variance to allow a drive-through at the location would not work given existing traffic conditions. He would vote against the motion, but would support locating the restaurant elsewhere in the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Boleware stated that although she supports family-friendly dining options such as Culver's, she could not support the proposal at this location due to existing traffic challenges, the difficulty of navigating the site, the single curb cut, and the number of variances requested. She did not believe the public benefit outweighed the requested deviations from ordinance standards.

Mayor Rich stated that she has heard positive reactions from residents about a potential Culver's restaurant, but significant concern regarding the proposed location. She noted that the traffic study had only recently been submitted. She remained conflicted due to unresolved traffic concerns.

Councilmember Bridges withdrew his motion to approve the application. Councilmember Starkman, the motion's second, also agreed to withdraw the motion, and the motion on the floor was withdrawn.

Council discussed postponing this application, and Mr. Sesí affirmed his desire to postpone, in order to allow him time to return with a more robust presentation that would address the concerns brought out in discussion this evening, particularly regarding parking.

Mayor Pro Tem Boleware said that stacking also remained an issue with her, as did the nonconforming setback, and the lighting. She asked if a drive through was absolutely necessary.

Mr. Sesi said that Culvers would not allow a location without a drive through. He also pointed out that Culvers was not a fast food restaurant, and 73% of their customers ate at tables inside the restaurant. Mayor Rich stated that additional information provided by the applicant regarding the operational characteristics of the restaurant would have been helpful earlier in the presentation and encouraged the applicant to provide more comprehensive information when returning to Council.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby postpones the application to amend PUD Plan 12, 2014, including Site Plan 60-7-2025, dated revised December 10, 2025, submitted by Ronald J. Sesi, until February 23, 2026.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, KNOL, RICH, AND STARKMAN

Nays: DWYER

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 6-1.

Mayor Rich called a recess at 9:06pm and reconvened the meeting at 9:16pm.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST TO RECONSIDER CITY COUNCIL'S MOTION TO DENY PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 2, 2024, INCLUDING SITE PLAN 56-8-2024, MULBERRY PARK AND THE TABERNACLE MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING, LOCATED ON 13 MILE ROAD, WEST OF MIDDLEBELT ROAD. (POSTPONED FROM 9-8-25). CMR 1-26-03

Introduction

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult explained that this item had previously been before City Council, most recently on September 8, 2025, and that tonight Council was considering a request to reconsider its prior denial of the Planned Unit Development and concurrent Site Plan. The revised PUD and Site Plan were resubmitted on September 27, 2025. The Planning Commission had previously qualified the property for a PUD in April 2024. Multiple iterations of the plan had been reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council, and this was the eighth time the item had been before Council.

City Attorney Joppich provided procedural clarification, stating that while the item had previously been subject to a public hearing, no new formal public hearing would be held this evening. Public comment would be accepted through blue slips in accordance with Council's rules of procedure.

Councilmember Bridges asked for clarification regarding who may make a motion to reconsider. City Attorney Joppich explained that Council had already voted at a prior meeting to reconsider the denial and that the matter was now before Council as if the original motion to deny had not yet been acted upon. Council was procedurally positioned at the point of deliberation on the original motion to deny and Council could vote again on that motion, withdraw it, amend it, or entertain a different motion.

Director Kettler-Schmult stated that the packet contained information identifying the original motion maker and seconder.

Planning Consultant Presentation

Referencing the December 9, 2025 Giffels Webster review, Planning Consultant Tangari said that his comments would focus on changes made to the plan since Council's prior review. He highlighted the following substantive changes:

- The project still consists of approximately 12 acres across seven parcels, divided between two components: the Tabernacle senior housing development on 6.06 acres and the Mulberry Park for-sale townhomes on 5.98 acres.
- The total number of units had been reduced from 63 to 59, with the number of buildings increasing from 16 to 17 due to redistribution of units into smaller buildings. The Mulberry Park component now includes 30 townhomes, reduced from 32, and the Tabernacle component includes 29 ranch units, reduced from 31.
- The total number of rooms was reduced from 221 to 207, which is below the density permitted under the comparable RC-1 zoning district. When evaluated separately, both the Tabernacle and Mulberry Park components fall below the RC-1 density standard.
- Additional changes included a reduction in the front setback from 67 feet to 62 feet and an increase in the rear setback to slightly over 100 feet, up from approximately 79 feet. The increased rear setback was intended to align with the Master Plan's guidance for Flex Residential density adjacent to existing neighborhoods.

Applicant presentation

Aaron Schafer, Steven Schafer, and Spencer Schafer were present on behalf of this request for reconsideration.

Aaron Schafer made the following points:

- The property consists of seven parcels totaling approximately 12.04 acres, located on the south side of 13 Mile Road, west of Middlebelt Road. Adjacent land uses included Baptist Manor to the west, the Westgate subdivision to the north, and the Holly Hill Farms subdivision to the south. The development team met with the new Holly Hill Farms board and reviewed the revised 59-unit plan with them.
- Schafer Development is seeking final approval of the Planned Unit Development. He summarized the revisions to the proposal:
 - The revised plan reduces density to 59 units, representing a 22.4% reduction from the original submittal, and is fully compliant with the Master Plan. Open space comprises 54.82% of the site excluding the stormwater basin and 60.73% including the basin, and includes a 100-foot buffer along the southern property line adjacent to Holly Hill Farms. All units along the southern edge are one-story ranch units, consistent with surrounding development.
 - The project is a multigenerational development providing a mix of age-restricted rental housing and for-sale housing. The original plan presented in January 2025 included 76 units, was reduced to 63 units in August 2025, and has now been further reduced to 59 units.
 - The Tabernacle portion of the project includes 29 one-story, age-restricted ranch units for residents age 55 and older, with building heights of approximately 16 feet, 7 inches. Mulberry Park includes 22 two-story townhouses with a height of approximately 26 feet, 7 inches, and eight one-story ranch duplexes located in the southeast portion of the site, with a height of approximately 18 feet, 10 inches. The eight duplex units are one-story in character and are located adjacent to the southern buffer.

If approved, Schafer Development intends to work with Pulte Group and Baptist Manor to ensure architectural consistency and design continuity across the entire development.

Mr. Schafer reviewed the Master Plan's Flex Residential designation, which states:

"The flex residential category is intended to acknowledge the challenging nature of redevelopment on the designated land and allow for a variety of approaches to future residential projects. Such approaches may include a clustering of detached or attached units, constructing units in a townhome, row house, or cottage court format, duplexes, triplexes, or quadplexes, in either side-by-side or stacked arrangements, with a height of one to three stories. In all cases, density beyond that permitted in the current zoning district should be tied to the provision of preserved open space, and especially natural buffers to adjacent, established neighborhoods."

Mr. Schafer said that the project meets and exceeds open space requirements and that the proposed density is significantly below the maximum permitted under the comparable RC-1 district. The project's density is approximately 25 percent lower than the RC-1 maximum when calculated by rooms.

Mr. Schafer emphasized the following components of this project:

- The project addresses identified community needs for missing middle housing and senior housing. 29 units are age-restricted rental homes designed for independent living with optional access to Baptist Manor services, eight ranch duplexes are for-sale units targeted toward active adults and empty nesters, and 22 townhomes are for-sale units intended for young professionals and families seeking maintenance-free housing. 63 % of the development is age-friendly housing aligned with the City's Master Plan goals.
- The revised plan includes removal of the first duplex along Detroit Baptist Drive to allow for a new connection to the existing signalized intersection, as requested by the City Engineering Department. Four older residential buildings fronting 13 Mile Road on the Baptist Manor campus would be removed to improve the streetscape and visibility. Baptist Manor intends to reinvest in the frontage and campus improvements. Approval of a previously qualified six-plex building on the western portion of the Baptist Manor campus, combined with removal of eight older units, represents nearly \$3 million in reinvestment.
- The proposed housing is market-rate attainable housing and not subsidized affordable housing.
- The project includes installation of a new sidewalk along 13 Mile Road, relocated approximately 40 feet south into the site, replacing an unsafe existing walkway. The project also includes more than 1,000 feet of new sidewalk with enhanced landscaping and improved pedestrian connectivity to Orchard Lake Road retail and dining areas, consistent with recommendations from the Orchard Lake corridor visioning study.

Mr. Schafer outlined benefits of this project as follows:

1. Plan features a consistent 100-foot setback to the nine Holly Hill Farms abutting properties.
2. Traffic and Access Enhancements
3. Walkability Enhancements
4. Visual Impact
5. Landscape and Public Art Enhancements
6. Stormwater management, which will benefit the Holly Hills neighborhood as well as the new development.
7. The PUD allows for a coordinated master stormwater system, something that does not exist today.

Mr. Schafer stated that the project reflects more than two years of collaboration with City staff, the Planning Commission, and the community and incorporates revisions made in response to public and Council input. The revised plan complies with the Flex Residential overlay standards adopted as part of the 2024 Master Plan, and aligns with City goals related to housing diversity, aging in place, and fiscal sustainability.

Mr. Schafer requested Council support for the project and requested limited flexibility to allow side yard setbacks between 20 and 25 feet in a specific location on the Mulberry Park portion of the site to preserve a mature Norway spruce tree. This adjustment would increase separation elsewhere and preserve the overall intent of the site design. The Tabernacle portion would maintain the full 25-foot side yard setbacks.

Ryan Galeski, Director of Operations for Baptist Manor, stated that Baptist Manor is a faith-based senior living community that has served Farmington Hills for more than 65 years and houses more than 700 senior residents on two campuses. Senior housing demand continues to increase as more than 11,000 baby boomers retire daily, and Baptist Manor currently has a three-year waitlist for its 42 condominium units. The proposed project would help address the shortage of senior housing in the City, while replacing abandoned homes and blighted conditions with new development.

Council Questions

In response to questions from Councilmember Starkman, Aaron and Spencer Schafer provided the following information:

- All tree removals, including landmark trees, are addressed through required replacement ratios and additional plantings are included in the landscape plan.
- A traffic study was completed by Fleis & VandenBrink, reviewed with City staff and consultants, and all outstanding comments have been addressed. The plan includes two points of ingress and egress and driveway alignment per City direction.
- Townhome price points are anticipated to start in the low to mid-\$400,000 range, duplexes slightly higher, and the Baptist Manor ranch units are expected to rent at approximately \$2,300 per month, subject to market conditions.

Public comment

The following individuals submitted public comments prior to the meeting:

Alice Lezotte

Aubrey & Janice Lee

Beverly Mihalko

Bill Lenerz

Brian Russell Harris Jr.

Charles Spiess

Christine Griswold

Courtney Gabbara Agrusa, Legal Representative for Lindsey Matych

Craig Kellman

Craig LaPointe

Eric Schmidt

John & Michele Nagoda

Joseph Sterbling

Lindsey Matych
Louise Liberman
Mais Moran
Mary Claire Krzewinski
Meital Yerushalmi
Mike Pucher
Neil O'Connell
Roger Matuz
Roman Golshteyn
Ron Breining
Sharon Havis
Steve Eddy
Wael Hamow
Wanda Whalen
Zach Adams

Mayor Rich opened the floor to public comment.

Wanda Whalen, Farmington Hills resident, opposed the project, stating that approval of the PUD would not improve public health, safety, or welfare. She spoke to longstanding property maintenance issues, flooding, traffic, loss of trees, stormwater runoff, environmental impacts, and zoning consistency. She urged Council to consider long-term impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and deny this request.

Mary Claire Krzewinski, Holly Hill Farms subdivision, spoke regarding pedestrian safety and traffic conditions in the Middlebelt Road and 13 Mile Road area. She said that traffic congestion, aggressive driving, and accidents have increased, making walking and crossing streets difficult and unsafe. She expressed concern that the proposed development would further contribute to congestion and negatively impact quality of life, particularly for pedestrians.

Roger Matuz, Holly Hill Farms, expressed concerns regarding stormwater management and flooding. He pointed out that the proposed stormwater basin would discharge into Pebble Creek, and could worsen conditions for homes in eastern Holly Hill Farms and areas along Middlebelt Road that already experience flooding. While the project claims to mitigate flooding in some areas, it could shift flooding problems to others. He was concerned that impacts to neighboring communities had not been adequately addressed.

Craig LaPointe, whose property backed up to the proposed development, stated that he already experiences flooding on his property, and flooding is his primary concern. He was skeptical that stormwater could be effectively redirected to the proposed retention basin without worsening existing conditions. He was also concerned about loss of privacy, property values, and the compatibility of the proposed development with the existing single-family residential character of the area.

Michelle Nagoda, Westgate, spoke in opposition to the proposed density. While the reduction to 59 units was an improvement, the density remained excessive given the surrounding low-density neighborhoods. She raised concerns regarding traffic access on 13 Mile Road, questioning whether entrances would be gated or continue to allow turning movements that contribute to congestion and safety issues. Residents were already experiencing significant delays exiting their subdivisions during

peak hours. Also, the property was originally zoned RA-1, making the proposed development inconsistent with long-standing zoning expectations.

Eric Schmidt, Farmington Hills resident, opposed the proposed development. He stated that the project would be detrimental due to flooding, traffic, and density concerns. He had moved into his home expecting the RA-1 zoning to remain, and would never have made the choice to purchase if he had known this development would be an option. He felt the proposal was represented a “bait and switch” from prior RA-1 zoning expectations. He urged Council to maintain its previous denial. and noted concerns about sidewalk maintenance along 13 Mile Road.

Lindsay Matych, Farmington Hills resident, spoke regarding the flex residential provisions of the Master Plan. Preservation of natural features is a core component of the flex residential concept and believed that the proposal failed to meet the one-third preservation requirement for properties adjacent to single-family neighborhoods. She argued that total open space is not equivalent to preserved open space and calculated that only approximately 14% of the site would be preserved, and without preservation the project cannot be justified. She argued that the proposal improperly used the PUD process to increase density and violate zoning ordinance standards, and would negatively impact neighborhood character, safety, property values, and stormwater conditions. She requested that the denial remain in effect.

Amy Broglin-Peterson, Westgate HOA board member, spoke against the proposal, stating that despite some density reduction, the fundamental concerns related to deforestation, stormwater runoff, traffic safety, and neighborhood compatibility remained unresolved. Based on current pricing, she questioned the claim that the proposed units constitute attainable housing. Council had previously denied the project for valid reasons, and she urged Council to uphold its prior decision.

Adele Letterman, Westgate Subdivision, stated that although the proposal had been reduced from 72 units to 59 units, the density remained excessive for the site. She believed that approving the development would be detrimental to surrounding neighborhoods, and she urged Council to consider the long-term impact on the city.

As no other members of the public indicated they wished to speak, Mayor Rich closed public comment and brought the matter back to Council for deliberation and action.

Council deliberation and action

Councilmember Aldred asked for clarification regarding engineering comments contained in the November 5 Engineering letter related to stormwater management. Director of Public Services Rushlow explained that the site currently drains from the northwest to the southeast and that the proposed development would capture stormwater into a detention basin on the east side of the property. The basin would discharge water at an agricultural release rate into the 13 Mile Road storm system and ultimately to Pebble Creek. He stated that additional detailed engineering analysis would be required at the construction plan stage to ensure the downstream system can accommodate the discharge and effective stormwater management would be required to meet the approval of the City Engineer as a condition of approval.

Councilmember Aldred asked for clarification regarding the flex residential Master Plan language related to preservation. Director Kettler-Schmult stated that the flex residential language in the Master Plan

serves as a guideline rather than an adopted ordinance standard and that historically, open space has included all green areas not occupied by structures, not solely untouched or pristine areas.

City Attorney Joppich advised Council on process. At the September 8, 2025 City Council meeting, Schafer Development had formally requested reconsideration of the August 11, 2025 City Council motion to deny PUD Plan 2, 2024 and concurrent Site Plan 56-8-2024. At the September 8 meeting, City Council passed a motion to reconsider denial of the proposed development at the January 12, 2026 City Council meeting. The August 11 motion to deny had been made by former Councilmember Bruce and supported by Councilmember Bridges, and referenced an outdated site plan. Attorney Joppich explained that Council could vote on the existing [August 11] motion, or vote down the existing motion in order to entertain a new motion reflecting the updated proposal.

Mayor Rich asked whether it would be appropriate to vote down the existing motion to deny in order to allow consideration of a new motion based on the revised plan materials. City Attorney Joppich confirmed that voting down the existing motion would allow Council to proceed with a new motion.

The August 11, 2025 motion read:

MOTION by Bruce, support by Bridges, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby denies the application for PUD 2, 2024, including Site Plan 56-8-2024, dated August 21, 2024, and September 4, 2024, respectively, as revised, submitted by Steven Schafer, because it does not meet all provisions set forth in Section 34-3.20 of the Zoning Ordinance and the proposed development will adversely affect the public health, welfare, and safety for the following reasons stated by Councilmember Bruce and the additional reasons stated below:

"First off I have no issues with the developer on this, so my comments are to the property owner not to the developers, they are just trying to do what any other developer would do in their position. I do have an issue with the current property owner, who has allowed these properties to deteriorate over many years. They have also used these properties as a dumping ground for old boats, cars, construction materials and garbage. Statements have been made that the owners have been unable to sell and market these properties, but that appears false on its face and even more so with the testimony I've heard here tonight. First off, if you are trying to market properties, you don't use them as dumping grounds, you clean them up and make them presentable. Second, I have asked for months as I've stated earlier that I need some sort of proof or evidence that present owners have attempted to sell these properties at a reasonable amount. Trying to package them up and sell them at 1 million dollars or three properties at a time is not selling them at a reasonable amount as far as I'm concerned. Up to this point, I have been given absolutely no evidence that these properties have been put up for sale or marketed at any point as reasonable RA-1 properties in terms of cost, value, whatever.

I have been working with development issues in this city for almost 30 years, and I know when we are being played by a proponent or property owner, as I have seen it many times in the past. It is not our job to ensure that any property owner is guaranteed the maximum return on their property, whether through a zoning variance or through a development such as a PUD. However, in this case I believe that the owners of this property are trying to cash in at the expense of the city and the residents that surround these properties and the proposed development. In my opinion, and from the evidence presented, I believe these properties and the homes on them have been allowed to rot, so that at some point they could be packaged and sold at a premium to a developer to maximize their return on

the sale of these properties. I believe that this is a scam, and that we are being played. I do not for a moment believe that these properties could not be sold and developed individually at the RA-1 level and I think they could be sold without difficulty. I have lived in this city for 40 years, and in my time as a resident, and a past realtor, and being on the ZBA and Council for almost 30 years, I have seen anything that is put up for sale, eventually sold in this City. Even during difficult market periods. I have always joked that could sell a cardboard box under a viaduct in this City, and I don't believe that is far from the truth. So, the underlying premise, that we must approve his PUD because these properties cannot be sold and developed as RA-1 homes, to be without any evidence or merit, and in fact the evidence is in opposite direction. The very basis of this project does not make sense or add up. The PUD approval is only a vehicle to send a lot of money to the property owner for years of bad behavior, which has done damage to the surrounding neighborhoods and to our City. Why in the world would we want to reward that behavior?

The people that bought their homes which surround these properties in the subdivisions north, east and south, did so in the belief that this area would remain RA-1. That is a very reasonable assumption, and it is one that underlies the stability of our neighborhoods and the value of the homes that people buy. If they cannot trust the zoning that has been in place for years which is consistent with their properties, then it damages the trust they have with the city and the process of how this city approaches development. In effect, it changes the rules in the middle of the game and pulls the rug out from under the residents. That is why we have received dozens and dozens of emails, letters, testimonies in person, from the people that live around this area. They don't want this development, as they correctly see that it is not consistent with the surrounding areas.

I have always said that bad development is worse than no development, as you cannot change bad development, and over time good development will come if we are patient. The RC equivalent development is too dense and will look completely out of place. It is basically a form of commercial development bleeding into residential. I have always fought to protect the residential character of our neighborhoods, because if not, then again you lose the trust of the people and you lower the property values of the homes in our neighborhoods. If we approve this development, it puts every other subdivision on notice that the zoning around them can be changed at any time on the whim of a property owner if they have the patience to let their property rot, to extract a development that will maximize a return on their investment, at the cost of everyone else.

Remember these seven homes only have seven curb cuts, and the amount of traffic that would come in and out of these seven single family homes is absolutely minimal. However, the traffic that will flow in and out of this dense development will be constant, and disruptive to the surrounding areas, and will add significantly to the already heavy traffic that traverses this route on a daily basis. Go eastbound in the mornings or westbound in the late afternoons, and you can see the lineup of traffic. I have to go through there almost every day.

One of the things that we are supposed to consider in a PUD is a public benefit. I hear this all the time from my fellow council members and rightly so, because when they look at the PUD they are as concerned as I am about the public benefit which makes the PUD worthwhile. Someone please point out a public benefit that counters all of the negatives I have already outlined. I don't see it, and I don't see it going forward. While the new master plan does propose that this area is a "flex residential," this has not really been completely defined or flushed out, nor does it require that we put in a development at this density level.

I am asking my fellow council members to seriously consider everything that has led up where we are with this proposed development. I have nothing against the design of this development, I think there are so many places or areas in the city that this would look great, but this is not the area. I love the Mercedes Benz Financial Headquarters building on Drake and 12 Mile, but it would not look good in this neighborhood. This is bad development, this is a misuse of the PUD process, as far as I'm concerned this is almost like spot zoning in my opinion and not appropriate."

And for the following additional reasons:

1. The increased density and traffic to the area would adversely affect the public and this area. The density would create a much higher level of traffic coming in and out of the development and the traffic and road are already almost overloaded many times during the day.
2. Runoff from the development.
3. It could damage property values from around the area because of the fact we are changing zoning next to RA-1 areas and it would make the properties less desirable in those areas.
4. The setback that is provided is not a sufficient benefit to meet the provisions of Section 34-3.20.

Yeas: NONE

Nays: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH, AND STARKMAN

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION FAILED 0-7.

Since there was no longer a motion on the table, Mayor Rich called for a new motion to be offered.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Starkman, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby denies the application for PUD 2, 2024 and Site Plan 56-8-2024, (revised plan submitted 10/27/25), based on the findings that the applicant has failed to satisfactorily establish that the proposed PUD will not adversely affect the public health, welfare, and safety, has not shown that the proposed development promotes the land use goals and objectives of the City, and has failed to satisfy the qualification and other requirements in Section 34-3.20 of the Zoning Ordinance for the following reasons:

1. The proposed plan density is too high and exceeds the density allowed within the current zoning district RA-1, Single Family Residential to an extent that causes the proposed use to be out of character and substantially inconsistent with the density in the existing single-family residential neighborhoods to the south and north and the single-family residential property to the east.
2. The proposed plan and density do not provide an adequate transition or buffer to the adjacent residential homes along the south property line or the single-family property to the east.
3. The applicant references the flex zoning concept in the Master Plan for Future Land Use, which was adopted but has not yet been implemented, and it may never be implemented by City Council; and if it were to be implemented in the future, the manner in which it is implemented relative to this particular property could deviate from the way it is described in the Master Plan

based on many factors and information that should be studied and evaluated at the time of any such implementation, making reliance on or reference to that flex zoning concept as a basis for a PUD zoning decision today premature and without adequate study, information or basis.

4. As indicated in the traffic study provided by the applicant, vehicle delays are expected to increase on the southbound Westgate Road approach by as much as 7 seconds/vehicle during the peak traffic hours adding delay where level of service is currently less than desired by the community.
5. The extensive requested deviations from the Zoning Ordinance regulations otherwise applicable to this property are not outweighed by the negative impact this proposed development will have on the character, aesthetics, and values of the adjacent single-family neighborhoods to the south and north, particularly the south, the single-family zoned property to the east, as well as the area in general, for all of the above reasons.
6. It has been shown that the property can be developed at a much lower density that would be a better transition, address the other concerns above, and be more in keeping with the Zoning Ordinance (in other words with less or lesser deviations), and the applicant has not demonstrated that doing so is not possible or feasible, despite the issue being raised by Councilmembers.

Motion discussion

- Councilmember Aldred noted the extensive revisions made by the applicant, including a reduction in density to 59 units, expanded open space, an increased buffer to 100 feet, and design changes intended to mitigate neighborhood impacts. These changes included enlarging the central pocket park, rearranging the layout of the buildings, and locating single-story buildings along the southern edge of the site. While the decision remained difficult, he indicated that, if the revised plan includes dense landscaping within the southern buffer zone and incorporates efforts to preserve the very large coniferous tree and as many landmark trees as possible, the development could provide a community benefit.
- Councilmember Knol acknowledged the revisions but reiterated that the density remained too high for her to support.
- Councilmember Dwyer said he had supported this project from the beginning. There had been a total of 10 meetings, seven before the City Council, three before the Planning Commission. The proposed PUD promotes the land use goals and objectives of the City, and he believed that all issues and concerns have been addressed by the developers, such as traffic, density, drainage issues, open space, setback, trees, and landscaping.
- Councilmember Starkman noted that while the applicant had made efforts to address Council's prior requests, he remained unconvinced that the project was appropriate in its current form. He acknowledged and appreciated the developer's intent to build in Farmington Hills and to provide housing options for residents age 55 and older, which is an important need. He explained that, from a housing policy perspective, he generally aligns more closely with an "IMBY" approach, supporting housing development when it serves the broader community interest. However, this does not mean supporting projects that may negatively impact existing neighborhoods. He noted that through walking the site and engaging directly with residents, he had gained a better understanding of their attachment to their homes and neighborhoods and believed their concerns were legitimate and well-founded, including concerns regarding yard and basement flooding. He further expressed concern about the use of the "flex residential" designation in the Master Plan, stating that its current interpretation could create opportunities to circumvent existing zoning standards, even if

that is not the applicant's intent. He stressed the need for Council to be cautious about how this concept is applied and the precedent it may set. He also observed that, despite the applicant's assertion that members of the Holly Hill Farms board supported the project, the overwhelming majority of public feedback received by Council was from residents opposed to the development. Councilmember Starkman also noted testimony regarding housing affordability. While acknowledging the distinction between "attainable" and "affordable" housing, he expressed concern that the project did not meaningfully address the City's affordable housing needs. He believed that City Council should prioritize affordable housing and economic development in areas of the City where such investment is most needed. In the present instance, based on the cumulative concerns raised and in consideration of his constituents, he could not support the project moving forward.

- Mayor Rich stated that she has consistently supported the project through multiple iterations and that her position has not changed. She had multiple discussions with staff in order to understand the proposed stormwater flow and detention basin design, she expressed confidence in the explanations and assurances provided by City staff. Based on that trust and consistent with her prior votes, she indicated that she would vote against the motion to deny the project.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: BRIDGES, KNOL, AND STARKMAN
Nays: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, DWYER, AND RICH
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION FAILED 3-4.

Councilmember Aldred asked for a brief recess while he drafted a motion to approve. Mayor Rich called a recess at 10:44pm and reconvened the meeting at 10:51pm.

MOTION by Aldred, support by Dwyer, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves PUD 2, 2024 and Site Plan 56-8-2024, (revised plan submitted 10/27/25), based on the findings that the proposed PUD promotes the land use goals and objectives of the City, satisfies the qualification and other requirements in Section 34-3.20 of the Zoning Ordinance, and will not adversely affect the public health, welfare, and safety and, for the following reasons:

1. The Master Plan for Future Land Use 2025 has designated this area for Flex Residential.
 - (a) Density: The proposed site plan with 59 units meets the criteria for the density of RC-1, multi-family, referenced in the Master Plan for Future Land Use.
 - (b) Open Space and Setback: The modified site plan meets the criteria of "A third or more of the site preserved with open space and setbacks of 100' or more are preserved" based on the plans preserving 57% of the site in open space and providing a setback of over 100' from the southern property line;
2. Diverse Housing: The Master Plan for Future Land Use identifies the need for diverse housing. This proposal provides housing diversity and opportunity for multiple generations to live within the same development;
3. Traffic Access and Enhancements will not significantly diminish the traffic level of service in the

area, as evidenced by traffic study provided by the applicant;

4. Compatibility with adjacent residents: The proposed plan transitions the style of homes with one-story homes proposed adjacent to the south property line near existing homes and provides an appropriate and compatible transition from the existing Metropolitan Detroit Baptist Manor use to the west;
5. Bring about redevelopment of sites where orderly transition of use is determined to be desired: Again referencing the findings in #1 and #4 and also noting that the proposed plan proposes an orderly transition of residential uses to a mixed residential development that is desired within the community;
6. Public Benefits provided: Public Art installation, pocket parks, preserved green areas, diverse housing, traffic enhancements, and enhanced walkways are provided;
7. The provision of trees and landscaping beyond minimum requirements: The proposal indicates a high standard of landscaping with a proposed three foot high screen wall, plantings within the pocket parks and trees along 13 Mile;
8. The setback between buildings will be adjusted as necessary to maximize the preservation of trees.

Further resolve that the application for PUD 2, 2024, including Site Plan 56-8-2024, dated received October 27, 2025, submitted by Steven Schafer, are approved, subject to the following conditions:

1. All outstanding issues identified in Giffels Webster's December 9, 2025, review shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner;
2. All outstanding issues identified in the City Engineer's November 5, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer; and
3. All outstanding issues identified in the Fire Marshal's October 30, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.

And further resolve that the City Attorney prepare the appropriate PUD agreement stipulating the final PUD approval conditions and authorizing the identified zoning deviations for City Council consideration and final approval.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, DWYER, AND RICH

Nays: BRIDGES, KNOL, AND STARKMAN

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION PASSED 4-3.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF COUNCIL LIAISON APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

Mayor Rich asked that the appointment for the SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) delegate and alternate be pulled, as SEMCOG is not a Board or Commission.

Public comment

Pea Gee, Farmington Hills taxpayer, said that the Mayor informed her shortly before the meeting that she would not be reappointed to a committee that has not met during her membership on the committee. She was not concerned about the non-reappointment itself but objected to how the matter was handled, and suggested that the Mayor's campaign representations were inconsistent with her actions in office.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby confirms the Mayor's recommendation to appoint the following Council Liaisons to various Boards and Commissions, with the removal of the two appointments to SEMCOG:

Council Liaisons for Boards & Commissions

Mayor Theresa Rich	Board of Review, Economic Development Corporation, Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority
Mayor Pro Tem Jackie Boleware	Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, Committee to Increase Voter Participation, Farmington Area Arts Commission
Valerie Knol	Beautification Commission, Historical Commission, Historic District Commission
Michael Bridges	Economic Development Corporation, Farmington Area Commission on Aging
William Dwyer	Commission on Children, Youth & Families, Retirement Board
Jon Aldred	Emergency Preparedness Commission, Innovation, Energy, and Environmental Sustainability
Charlie Starkman	Commission on Community Health, Parks and Recreation Commission

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

Public comment

Pea Gee, Farmington Hills taxpayer, urged Council to proceed more deliberately and ensure that appointment processes for boards and commissions are followed correctly. She expressed concern that some residents who apply are not appointed or engaged, while others serve on multiple committees, and questioned whether appointments are being made equitably. She encouraged the Council to broaden participation by appointing residents who wish to serve and to avoid concentrating appointments among a limited group.

Mayor Rich disclosed that her husband had served on the Zoning Board of Appeals for 17 years and was up for reappointment this evening. Attorney Joppich suggested that his appointment be acted on separately so that Mayor Rich could abstain from the vote.

MOTION by Knol, support by Boleware, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby confirms the Mayor's recommendation to appoint and reappoint the following individuals to various Boards and Commissions, with the amendment to remove the appointment of Brian Rich to the Zoning Board of Appeals:

Farmington Area Beautification Commission

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Kathie Brown	3 years	February 1, 2029

Board of Review

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Paul Wolfert	3 years	February 1, 2029

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Tom Wilkinson	3 years	February 1, 2029
George Curran III	3 years	February 1, 2029

Building Appeals Board

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
John Trafelet	3 years	February 1, 2029
John Goshorn	3 years	February 1, 2029

Farmington Area Commission on Aging

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Dr. Marian Schute	3 years	February 1, 2029
Mary Buchan	3 years	February 1, 2029

Commission on Children, Youth & Families

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Alisa Valden	3 years	February 1, 2029
Marie Sarnacki	3 years	February 1, 2029

Committee to Increase Voter Participation

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Laureen Thornhill	3 years	February 1, 2029

Emergency Preparedness Commission

John Schertel	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
Michael Sweeney	3 years	February 1, 2029
Mark Forshee	3 years	February 1, 2029

Farmington Area Arts Commission

Lesa Ferencz	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
Celeste McDermott	3 years	February 1, 2029
Jeffrey Dutka	3 years	February 1, 2029

Farmington Community Library Board of Trustees

Ernie McClellan, Jr.	Length of Term: 4 years	Term ending: February 1, 2030
----------------------	-----------------------------------	---

Fire Board of Appeals

John Trafelet	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
John Goshorn	3 years	February 1, 2029

Historic District Commission

Marleen Tulas	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
---------------	-----------------------------------	---

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Board

John Goshorn	Length of Term: 2 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Tracy Clark	2 years	February 1, 2028
Samuel Ramsey III	2 years	February 1, 2028

International Property Maintenance Board

John Trafelet	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
John Goshorn	3 years	February 1, 2029

Innovation, Energy & Environmental Sustainability Commission

Bernard Hooper	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
----------------	-----------------------------------	---

Parks and Recreation Commission

Steve Stimson	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
Larry Winkleman	3 years	February 1, 2029

Planning Commission

Dale Countegan	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
----------------	-----------------------------------	---

Water Advisory Council

Kathryn DiCea	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
---------------	-----------------------------------	---

Additionally, I would like to recommend the following appointments:

Farmington Area Commission on Aging

LaShawn Clark	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
---------------	-----------------------------------	---

LaShawn will fill the vacancy left by Julie McCowan who resigned Jan. 2026.

Economic Development Corporation

David Jappaya	Length of Term: 6 years	Term ending: February 1, 2032
---------------	-----------------------------------	---

David will fill the vacancy left by Scott Elliott who resigned Jan. 2026.

Emergency Preparedness Commission

Brian Tyler	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
-------------	-----------------------------------	---

Brian will be moved from the regular member seat to the Alternate, replacing Kayla Dixon.

Kayla Dixon	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
-------------	-----------------------------------	---

Kayla will be moved from the Alternate seat to the regular member seat left by Brian Tyler.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

MOTION by Bridges, support by Dwyer, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby confirms the Mayor's recommendation to reappoint the following individual to the Zoning Board of Appeals:

Zoning Board of Appeals

Brian Rich	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
------------	-----------------------------------	---

MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0-1. (Rich abstained)

CONSENT AGENDA

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF PURCHASE OF JOHN DEERE GATOR XUV 845M WITH CAB AND PLOW TO DEERE & COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$34,542.43. CMR 1-26-04

MOTION by Knol, support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to issue a purchase order in the amount of \$34,542.43 for John Deere Gator XUV w/cab and plow, to Deere & Company and to take delivery of the equipment via Revels Turf & Tractor as an authorized dealer.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH, AND STARKMAN
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT FOR AMBULANCE BILLING SERVICES TO EMS|MC FOR A FOUR YEAR PERIOD WITH OPTIONAL RENEWALS. CMR 1-26-05

MOTION by Knol, support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to sign an agreement with EMS|MC for Ambulance Billing Services for a four (4) year period with the option to renew for up to two (2) additional three (3) year periods under the same terms and conditions through mutual consent.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH, AND STARKMAN
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION OF THE AMERICA250MI HISTORY GRANT APPLICATION. CMR 1-26-06

MOTION by Knol, support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves that the City of Farmington Hills submit an application to the America250MI History Program to obtain a grant for moving and updating the Historical Commission history exhibits to the Spicer House; and

FURTHER RESOLVES that Special Services through City Council approval will match funds for the America250MI History Grant in the amount of \$3,750.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH, AND STARKMAN
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF A REQUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 10.01A OF THE CITY CHARTER FOR A SWIM INSTRUCTOR/LIFEGUARD. CMR 1-26-07

MOTION by Knol, support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves an employment request per Section 10.01A of the City Charter for Aaren Laws, as a Swim Instructor/Lifeguard, who is related to an employee of the City, Arielle Laws, who is a Lifeguard for Special Services.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH, AND STARKMAN
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2025.

MOTION by Knol support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the City Council study session minutes of December 8, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH AND STARKMAN
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2025.

MOTION by Knol support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the regular session minutes of December 8, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, DWYER, KNOL, RICH AND STARKMAN
Nays: NONE
Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eric Schmidt, Farmington Hills resident, expressed concern about recent controversies and perceived governance issues, including allegations of nepotism and political decision-making, which he felt were causing reputational harm to the City. He thanked several councilmembers for their votes and deliberation, while emphasizing his disappointment with decisions affecting residential neighborhoods.

He noted that growing civic frustration has prompted increased community engagement and communication among residents. He encouraged the Council to consider how its actions affect public trust and pledged to remain involved and informed on local issues.

Pea Gee, Farmington Hills taxpayer, commented on the management of public participation at recent meetings, stating that she felt she was singled out for a rebuke during a televised session. She also described difficulties accessing the building during public meetings. Additionally, she disputed public statements linking the former City Manager's role as a hunter to the approval of a regional deer management study, clarifying that the deer management effort was a multi-city initiative. She questioned the use of closed session discussions related to the City Manager's recent resignation and requested greater transparency and clarity for the public.

Referencing earlier comments regarding beagles being left outdoors, Eileen Rahmoeller spoke in support of adopting a local ordinance addressing the treatment and care of pets, particularly dogs left outdoors in extreme weather conditions. Reliance on individual judgment is insufficient when animals are left unattended for extended periods and/or overnight. She referenced other communities including Eastpointe with established pet welfare ordinances and suggested similar time and shelter restrictions be instituted in Farmington Hills. She urged Council to consider formal regulations to better protect pets and hold owners accountable.

Ryan Fluetsch, Farmington Hills resident, addressed the recent resignation of City Manager Mekjian and expressed concern that Council had not publicly acknowledged his 16 years of service to the City. He noted that, consistent with past precedent in a council-manager form of government, departing city managers have been formally recognized by Council through proclamations or public statements. He cited Mr. Mekjian's tenure, leadership roles, and service during significant periods for the City, including the COVID-19 pandemic. He urged Council to formally acknowledge and honor Mr. Mekjian's service as a matter of tradition, transparency, and civic respect.

Adam Chaczyk, Sterling Heights, described the circumstances surrounding the death of his brother, a longtime Farmington Hills resident who was in hospice care and wished to die at home, but was transported by emergency services following a welfare call. He explained that the absence of readily available hospice or end-of-life documentation led to actions that were inconsistent with his brother's wishes, and that obtaining information afterward from the City required a FOIA request. He advised residents with loved ones in hospice to ensure advance directives and related documentation are formally accessible to first responders. He also encouraged the City to consider discussing procedures or information-sharing practices related to hospice and end-of-life situations to help prevent similar outcomes in the future.

Jennifer Potts, Southgate MI, urged the City to consider adopting an ordinance regulating dogs being left outdoors during extreme cold weather. She cited veterinary and animal welfare sources describing the risks of hypothermia and frostbite, and noted that most dogs cannot safely tolerate prolonged exposure to freezing temperatures. She referenced existing municipal ordinances in Michigan, including Eastpointe, that regulate or prohibit outdoor confinement or tethering of dogs. She requested that Farmington Hills consider adopting and enforcing a similar ordinance to better protect animals during severe winter conditions.

Kristine Wolfe, Livonia MI, expressed support for adopting a proactive animal welfare ordinance similar to Eastpointe's, noting that recent actions regarding the beagles were reactive rather than preventative. She referenced the City's stated values of a caring environment and intergenerational responsibility, stating that an ordinance protecting animals would align with those principles. She encouraged Council to view animal care as a stewardship responsibility and to consider the welfare of dogs left outdoors for extended periods.

Glenn Whitelaw, Farmington Hills resident, spoke in support of constructing the new senior center on the Costick Center site. He noted that public meetings and hearings were held to gather senior input and seniors who participated overwhelmingly favored rebuilding the center at the existing site. He expressed confusion and concern regarding a recent proposal to consider only the Hawk site as a replacement location, as he had not heard senior support or justification for that option. He emphasized that relocation to the Hawk site is viewed unfavorably by seniors he has spoken with.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

The City Attorney's report was received.

ADJOURNMENT

The regular session of City Council meeting adjourned at 11:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk