

MINUTES
FARMINGTON HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
October 8, 2025 @ 6:30 P.M.
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD, FARMINGTON HILLS MI 48336
WEBSITE: WWW.FHGOV.COM : PHONE (248)871-2540

1. Meeting called to order by Chair Klemmer at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: John Trafelet, Steve Olson, Marleen Tulas, Ken Klemmer, and Emily Howard

Members Absent: Alec Thomson, Jim Paulson

Others Present: Diane Mulville-Friel (Planning & Community Development Department); Valerie Knol (City Council Liaison), Ellen Schnackel (Director of Special Services), Chris Ward (Oakland County Parks), Carol Egbo (Oakland County Parks), and Ismet Vata (Owner of Hoyt House – 36668 Howard)

3. Approval of Agenda

Tulas motion to approve agenda. Olson asked that agenda be modified to move item 4.B.iii to item 4.B.i to accommodate Mr. Ismet Vata who was present to discuss item 4.B.i. Amended motion supported by Trafelet.
Motion carried 5-0.

4. New Business

- A. Interlocal Agreement between Oakland County and the City of Farmington Hills for Heritage Park

Ellen Schnackel, Director of Special Services, provided an overview of the Interlocal Agreement currently being drafted between the City and Oakland County for Heritage Park. Heritage Park is an outstanding 200+ acre park with over 4.5 miles of hiking trails and is home to the Spicer House, Nature Center/Day Camp Building, Stables Art Studios, Amphitheater, Heritage & History Center, Barn, Caretaker House, Longacre House, Splash Pad and Riley Archery Range. It also includes picnic shelters, playgrounds, a sled hill, sand volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, and grills.

She stated that in 2024, Heritage Park received well over 750,000 visitors and with almost 60% of those visitors being from outside the City. Recognizing that the park is a regional asset, Oakland County seeks to expand its resources and help with

funding. The annual expense to operate/manage the site was \$1,831,849 and program revenue, from the Nature Center, Archery Range and Shelter Rentals, was \$439,859.

Farmington Hills and Oakland County officials first met in the Fall of 2023 to discuss partnering on programs and/or parks. In the Fall of 2024, Oakland County passed an increased Parks Millage and conversations between the County and the City accelerated. This led to the concept of an Interlocal Agreement to create Heritage Oaks Park.

A summary of the initial terms is as follows:

- 30-year renewable agreement.
- \$4 million payment to the City after a six-month planning and transition period (ending March 31, 2026).
- The Park Action Plan is to be developed during the transition period, in coordination with both County and City staff. The Action Plan includes: Community Engagement, Existing Conditions Analysis, Strategic Plan, Capital Improvements Plan, and a Parks Operations and Maintenance Plan (POMP).

She explained that there are many benefits for the community by improved capital investments in the park with both upfront and ongoing financial funding. It will also increase our service level for our residents and guests. In addition, the upfront investment would allow the City to divert funding to other capital and ongoing Department of Special Services programs, facilities, services and/or debt.

Chris Ward explained that Oakland County Parks is especially excited about future programming that would focus on both natural and historical aspects of the park. He introduced Carol Egbo and said that she is a passionate historian. Egbo spoke briefly of her commitment to incorporating historical programming into the Heritage Oaks Park and that she had attended the Historical Commission meeting the night before and spoke with them about the plans to move the museum to the Spicer House. Ward explained that Oakland County Parks has entered into several similar relationships with the Cities of Oak Park, Southfield, Pontiac, and Madison Heights.

HDC Commissioner's comments were positive, and Ken Klemmer asked if they would have a chance to review the plan before Council approves. Schnackel said that the Agreement has been drafted and was reviewed by City Council at the August 2025 meeting and the Plan would not be drafted until March of 2026.

B. Quarterly Review of Certificate of Appropriateness Issued by Delegated Authority

Mulville-Friel explained that per Ordinance Sec. 15-37, the HDC may delegate the issuance of certificates of appropriateness for specified minor classes of work to its

staff and that the HDC shall review the certificates of appropriateness issued by the delegate on at least a quarterly basis to determine whether or not the delegated responsibilities should be continued. The following three (3) certificates of appropriateness for specified minor classes of work have been issued for 2025:

i. C of A 25-3A

Site: HD #: 207 – NEHEMIAH HOYT HOUSE

Location: 36668 HOWARD

Applicant: Ismet Vata

Owner: Ismet Vata

Proposal: Install new shingle roof (IKO Cambridge Architectural Shingles), color “Dual Grey”.

ii. C of A 25-1A

Site: HD #: 504 – KIRBY WHITE HOUSE

Location: 24200 FARMINGTON ROAD

Applicant: Wayne Elliott

Owner: Wayne Elliott

Proposal: Installing a generator in side yard behind the fence behind the house.

iii. C of A 25-2A

Site: HD #: 17 – ORVILLE BOTSFORD HOUSE

Location: 24105 LOCUST ST

Applicant: Chris Newman

Owner: Chris Newman

Proposal: Minor like-for-like repairs to roof soffit and siding damaged from a recent fire.

Commissioner’s had no objection to staff continuing to issue certificates of appropriateness for specified minor classes of work.

Mulville-Friel introduced Ismet Vata, owner of the NEHEMIAH HOYT HOUSE, who was asked to attend the meeting and explain to the HDC what other improvements, beyond replacing the roof shingles, he wanted to make to the historic structure. The HDC explained that they do not review or act upon interior arrangements or use of the structure, unless interior work will cause visible change to the exterior of the resource. The HDC reinforced that Vata would need to submit a formal application for HDC review for additions to the structure and changes to siding and windows, etc. The next scheduled HDC meeting is November 12, 2025, and a complete application must be received by the Planning Office no later than October 29, 2025, if he wished to be added to that agenda.

Mulville-Friel reinforced Mr. Vata that the application should include:

- 1) A written proposal of the action for which commission approval is sought with an explanation of the reason for the requested action; and
- 2) Plans and drawings sufficient to clearly illustrate the proposed actions and depicting the structure in question and its relation to adjacent structures.
 - Site Plans drawn to scale and/or survey drawn by a registered surveyor.
 - Photographs of the property or structure and its relation to adjacent structures.
 - Building or structure elevations (depicting existing conditions and proposed changes).

She reiterated that an HDC application must be submitted to the City Planning Department before obtaining a building permit and that a permit shall not be issued and proposed work shall not proceed until the Commission has acted on the application by issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness or a Notice To Proceed.

Olson expressed that he was available to assist with reviewing the application materials compiled for submission to ascertain whether there is enough detail for Commissioners to decide.

5. Old Business

A. HDC Letter Re: Oaklands Subdivision Paving Project

The Commisison requested that the letter regarding the HDC stance on the Oaklands Subdivision Paving Project be printed on City letterhead and sent to the Engineering Department.

6. Points of Interest/Updates

B. Cemetery Monument Restoration Project Update

Olson and Trafelet relayed that Public Works Department was advocating that David Carter's invoices be paid for hours worked rather than per tombstone. Olson said that the Boy Scouts would be straightening the tombstones in the Spring when the ground was softer. Trafelet said that approximately 30 markers in the Utley Cemetery still needed to be repaired.

C. Sidewalk Replacement - HD # 2 - John Garfield House

The historic homeowners, John and Nancy Willyard (35810 W 13 Mile), have requested that the HDC authorize/request that the City replace the sidewalk with regular cement instead of the stamped pavers along this section of roadway. Mulville-Friel will consult Engineering to determine when the sidewalks are to be replaced, and the material planned to replace them.

7. Public Comment

None

8. Commissioner Comments

- Howard relayed that she was working on an article that highlighted the Cemetery Restoration work.
- Tulas reported that she was having a difficulty identifying bat houses to possibly install at the cemeteries.

9. Approval of Minutes – August 9, 2025

Motion by Tulas to approve minutes with minor corrections to grammar and spelling.
Motion supported by Olson.

Motion carried 5-0.

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Trafelet, supported by Howard.
Motion carried 5-0.

Adjournment at 8:18 pm

Submitted by Diane Mulville-Friel (10/27/2025)