

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
JUNE 24, 2024 – 6:00PM

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

Council Members Present: Aldred, Boleware, Bridges, Bruce, Dwyer, Knol, and Rich

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Lindahl, Assistant City Manager Mondora, Director Brown, Fire Chief King, and City Attorney Joppich and Fleury

CLOSED SESSION

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO A CLOSED SESSION TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS ATTORNEY CLIENT WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY UNDER SECTION 8(1)(H) OF THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT AND SETTLEMENT STRATEGY IN CONNECTION WITH PENDING LITIGATION UNDER SECTION 8(1)(E) OF THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT AND RELATING TO THE CASE OF REID V CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS, ET AL. (U.S. DISTRICT COURT E. D. CASE NO. 2:23-CV-10164). (NOTE: COUNCIL WILL RETURN TO OPEN SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CLOSED SESSION).

MOTION by Knol, support by Boleware, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves entering into a closed session to consider and discuss attorney client written communications from the City Attorney under Section 8(1)(h) of the Open Meetings Act and settlement strategy in connection with pending litigation under Section 8(1)(e) of the Open Meetings Act and relating to the case of *Reid v City of Farmington Hills, et al.* (U.S. District Court E. D. Case No. 2:23-cv-10164).

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, BRUCE, DWYER, KNOL AND RICH

Nays: NONE

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Council entered into open session immediately following the closed session at 6:29pm.

STUDY SESSION

DEER MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation entitled *City Council Study Session Deer Management Update June 24, 2024*, Bryan Farmer, Deputy Director of Special Services, discussed with Council the state of the urban deer herd in Farmington Hills and throughout Southeast Michigan.

Deputy Director Farmer focused on the following:

- Provided a history of urban deer management in Farmington Hills, beginning in 2014. Farmington Hills has led a regional approach vs. a city approach to this situation, and Deputy Director Farmer is currently Chair of the Southeast Michigan Urban Deer Coalition and mParks Archery Focus Area.
- Farmington Hills residents have concerns about:
 - Too many deer
 - Landscape destruction and blight
 - Ticks/lyme disease
 - Personal and pet safety
- In 2021 an aerial deer count showed 1,598 deer in Farmington Hills and Southfield.
- In 2017, City Council enacted an ordinance prohibiting deer feeding
- Oakland County had the most deer/vehicle crashes in Michigan in 2020 (1,855 deer/vehicle reported crashes; very likely undercounted)
- Urban deer have high reproductivity, with high survival rates, and small home ranges.
- Problem needs to be defined other than “too many deer.” For example, deer/vehicle collisions, deer browse, agricultural/horticultural losses. Goals, objectives, and actions need to be developed accordingly.
- Regulatory recommendations are being made to the Natural Resource Commission on regulatory and non-regulatory recommendations.
- In August the DNR wants to begin addressing non-regulatory items.
- DNR and the State are no longer leaving cities to deal with this on their own.
- Management options are taking different forms from hunting, to non-lethal actions, sharp-shooting, trapping (relocation not allowed in Michigan), reintroduce predators, contraception, sterilization. Some options are very expensive, and noneffective. This is not an easy fix.
- The public can be very vocal, on both sides. Announced deer culls bring much opposition.
- Gave examples of efforts throughout the State.
- The current Michigan Deer Management Plan is not successful. The goal is to develop a regional long-term deer management plan that works.
- Deputy Director Farmer, on behalf of the Southeast Michigan Urban Deer Coalition, has proposed that the NRC and DNR support a statewide urban deer management plan that provides the necessary information and action steps so that city leaders can vote for or against enacting a deer management plan for their community.
- In conclusion, the deer population is growing. Ecosystem is being impacted. The goal is to get the statewide urban deer management plan updated and then determine some of the funding sources to be able to do that.

Council discussion:

- Deer culls are controversial, and cause public outcry. Some neighborhoods are permitted by the DNR to do secret culls.
- Not all nearby cities are attending the Southeast Michigan Urban Deer Coalition meetings. Every city is aware of the situation.
- The key question is how the deer situation is impacting Farmington Hills residents. Only quantitative data will support deer management including culls.
- People who don't think there is a deer problem should not be making decisions for people who have a serious deer problem. Whether a person has deer in their backyard or not, they are being impacted by the growth of the urban deer herd.

2024 CITY COUNCIL GOALS UPDATE AND PROGRESS

City Manager Mekjian provided a mid-year update on goals progress:

- Cannabis – holding off until completion of Master Plan.
- Final Master Plan to be presented to the Planning Commission for final acceptance.
- Urban deer – just discussed
- Multi-Cultural Multi-Racial Commission – Council discussed on June 10. Further information will be brought to Council.
- DTE and CLEMIS will be invited to CC study session.
- Trying to encourage communication between schools and City Administration.
- Developing a list of issues/concerns to discuss with the City of Farmington.
- Incorporating AI into the City website and website improvements. Need direction from City Council as to where they want to go with this.
- Electronic signs at City Hall, Founders Park and Heritage Park have been installed. New sign going in at the Hawk.
- Still working on contract language relative to Hawk deficit reduction plan.
- Providing City Council more time prior to Council meetings on topics of higher importance.
- Review of ordinance allowing dogs in city parks - underway.
- Reviewing potential funding of public art.
- 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Rd landscaping improvements and aesthetic improvements – Road Commission has got two federal-aid projects in 2025 and 2026. One is for Orchard Lake Rd and one is for 12 Mile Rd. City is enforcing against blight etc. at gas stations, and shrubbery and landscaping in the area.
- Windborne study is complete, with follow up action as money is available to do so (i.e., data analyst). Recommendations are being reviewed, with some already implemented.
- Zoning ordinance update starting with the Planning Commission in July. Joint meeting with Planning Commission will be scheduled.
- Emergency Management discussion and review occurred at the May 13 meeting.
- Departments to offer ride-along for Councilmembers.
- Money for a lobbyist was discussed during budget discussions; this was not part of goal setting. The money won't be spent unless it is necessary.
- Options for Costick Center and more activities at City Parks – ongoing.

ADJOURNMENT

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk