

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER
JANUARY 13, 2025 – 7:30 PM

The regular session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 7:32PM.

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

Council Members Absent: None

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Corewell Health Farmington Hills President Derk Pronger and members of his team.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR SESSION MEETING AGENDA

MOTION by Knol, support by Bridges, to approve the agenda as amended moving item 8 up to after item 2.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH TO MAYOR PRO TEM BILL DWYER

Clerk Lindahl administered the oath of office to Mayor Pro Tem Bill Dwyer.

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

MOTION by Boleware, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby confirms the Mayor’s recommendation to appoint the following individuals to various City Boards and Commissions:

Farmington Area Beautification Commission

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Dr. Robert Levine	3 years	February 1, 2028
Joann Rowland	3 years	February 1, 2028
Alex Clar	3 years	February 1, 2028

Board of Review

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Thomas Downs	3 years	February 1, 2028
Andrew Exline	3 years	February 1, 2028

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority

Kurt Brauer	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
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Building Appeals Board

Frank Reid	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
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Commission on Aging

Daniel Fantore	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Tiffany Tuttle	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Commission on Children, Youth & Families

Bria Lewis	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Tammy Luty	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Sharon Snodgrass	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Commission on Community Health

Molly David	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
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Committee to Increase Voter Participation

Rose Christoph	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Marjorie Whittemore	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Karen Bartos	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Emergency Preparedness Commission

Keith Ciaramitaro	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Sean Thomas	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Farmington Area Arts Commission

Nora Mason	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Cindy Carleton	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Lindsay Janoch	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Don Fritz	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Farmington Community Library Board of Trustees

Renee Murphy	Length of Term: 4 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
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Fire Board of Appeals

Frank Reid	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
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Farmington Hills Historical Commission

Earl Baxtresser	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
John Willyard	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority

Bill Smith	Length of Term: 4 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029
Jasdeep Mann	Length of Term: 4 years	Term ending: February 1, 2029

Historic District Commission

James Paulson	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Ken Klemmer	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Steve Olson	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Board

Dara Gaucher	Length of Term: 2 years	Term ending: February 1, 2027
Brande Smith	Length of Term: 2 years	Term ending: February 1, 2027

International Property Maintenance Board

Frank Reid	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
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Parks and Recreation Commission

Stacey Diefenbach	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Sydney Rushing	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Dave Prueter	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Planning Commission

Joseph Mantey	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Danielle Ware	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Taranji Grant	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Water Advisory Council

Tammy Gushard	Length of Term: 2 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028
Joseph Del Morone	Length of Term: 3 years	Term ending: February 1, 2028

Zoning Board of Appeals

Length of Term:	Term ending:
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Asim Khan	3 years	February 1, 2028
Dan Irvin	3 years	February 1, 2028

Emergency Preparedness Commission

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Brian Tyler	3 years	February 1, 2028

Brian will fill the expired vacancy left by Tim Siegrist who resigned in Nov. 2024.

Parks & Recreation Commission

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Matthew Stephens	3 years	February 1, 2028

Matthew will fill the expired vacancy left by Larry Hutchinson who resigned in Jan. 2024.

Zachary Lee	3 years	February 1, 2028
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Zachary will fill the expired vacancy left by Steve Linville who resigned in Sept. 2024.

Zoning Board of Appeals

	Length of Term:	Term ending:
Satya Injeti	3 years	February 1, 2028

Satya will fill the expired Alternate vacancy left by Emily Collins.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS FROM CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS

There were no announcements or presentations.

PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE CITY'S FY 2023/2024 AUDIT RESULTS

Finance Director Skrobola introduced Jamie Rivette, Audit Partner, Yeo & Yeo CPAs, who presented the City's FY2023/2024 audit results.

The audit was conducted as required by the State of Michigan Department of Treasury.

- Farmington Hills received an unmodified opinion, representing the highest level of assurance.
- The City received the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its June 30, 2023, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

General Fund Revenue and Expenditures (2023-2024):

- Revenue increased by \$1 million due to higher property tax values.
- Expenditures rose by \$4 million, primarily in Parks and Recreation, Police, and subscription agreements (e.g., Axon Agreement for \$1 million).
- Fund balance increased by \$5.3 million, ending at \$61.6 million.

General Fund and Public Safety Fund Revenue:

- Combined total: \$95.1 million.
- 66% of revenue derived from property taxes and state sources.

Expenditures by Category:

- 43% of general and public safety fund expenditures (\$38.3 million) go towards public safety.
- Public safety millage provides \$12.7 million.
- General fund provides \$25.6 million.

Capital Investments:

- \$28.1 million spent on infrastructure and assets, predominantly for roads.
- Cumulative spending on capital assets exceeded depreciation, reflecting ongoing commitment to maintaining infrastructure.

Contributions:

Retirement and healthcare contributions were made as required, totaling \$7.37 million.

- Retiree healthcare: \$269,000.
- Pension: \$7.1 million.

Internal Controls and Compliance:

- No material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, or compliance issues identified.
- Federal audit focused on coronavirus state and local fiscal recovery funds, with no findings or weaknesses reported.

Governance Letter:

Council was encouraged to review the governance letter for additional insights.

CORRESPONDENCE

Council Member Bridges received correspondence from a resident regarding operational issues (furnace not working for several months) at Wood Creek Apartments. The correspondence has been passed to the City Manager.

Mayor Rich acknowledged the significant amount of correspondence received regarding the public hearings before Council this evening; the correspondence will be further acknowledged during the discussion on those items.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Bruce, support by Knol to approve the consent agenda items as read by Mayor Pro Tem Dwyer.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

There were no items removed for discussion.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Member Aldred pointed out that the police vehicle purchased under the consent agenda was funded through federal grant money.

Council Member Bridges commended the City Manager, the administration, and Finance Director Skrobola for their excellent fiscal management. The unmodified opinion from the auditors reflected the City's strong financial stability and sound approach to fiscal operations.

Council Member Boleware acknowledged the public hearings on the evening's agenda and recognized that Council's decisions may have both supporters and detractors. Noting the inherent difficulty of such choices, she emphasized that any decisions Council made would be in the best interest of the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Dwyer shared that he first came to the City in 1985, serving as Police Chief for 23 years before moving on to Warren. He is looking forward to serving as the City's Mayor Pro Tem for the upcoming year.

Mayor Rich acknowledged the "Walk the Hawk" event the previous Tuesday and announced another scheduled for February 11. The March event would be rescheduled to March 3. Winter "Walk the Hawk" events take place indoors on the third floor of the Hawk to provide a warm and comfortable environment. She encouraged residents to utilize the third floor of the Hawk as an excellent indoor walking space during the winter months.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE

Winter Maintenance Policy

- The City's snow plowing policy requires snowfall of four inches or more, as measured by the Department of Public Works (DPW), before plowing begins in residential neighborhoods.
- Residents experiencing icy or slippery intersections may contact the City Manager's office to request salting services.
- The DPW and Police Department continuously monitor road conditions to ensure public safety.

Mayor Rich noted that during winter snow events roads are pre-treated with beet juice brine to improve safety, reduce costs, and minimize corrosion.

PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 1, 2015, COREWELL HEALTH CAMPUS SIGN CHANGE, LOCATED AT 28050 GRAND RIVER AVENUE. CMR 1-25-01

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult introduced this public hearing item. The application to amend PUD 1, 2015 proposes to replace the existing 10'-8"-tall, 7'-wide freestanding sign at the boulevard entrance to the Corewell campus from Grand River Avenue with a new 12'-tall, 6'-wide freestanding sign in the same location. A PUD amendment is necessary in this case because the signage allowance for the campus is addressed within the existing PUD agreement, which does not currently permit a 12'-tall freestanding sign.

The applicant has had two meetings before the Planning Commission on this item, October 17, 2024 and November 21, 2024. The Planning Commission at their last meeting recommended approval of this PUD amendment to City Council.

Planning Consultant Jill Bahm, Giffels Webster, provided background on the PUD amendment process. In the case of this Planned Unit Development, the original agreement stated that any change to it had to come back before the Planning Commission for a public hearing, as well as to Council for additional approvals.

Applicant presentation

Claire McCready, Senior Project Manager, SignWorks of Michigan, Inc., was present on behalf of this request to amend PUD 1, 2015. Ann Frass, SignWorks owner, was also present, as was Derk Pronger, President, Corewell Health Farmington Hills.

- The monument sign was proposed to be 12 feet tall and 6 feet wide (72 square feet). This would replace the existing 10-foot, 8-inch-tall, 7 foot wide monument sign. The reduced width will improve traffic visibility. The top four feet of the sign will display critical information, including the hospital name and directions to the emergency room.
- The wall sign replaces the current "Beaumont" sign with "Corewell Health Farmington Hills Hospital."

Public Comment

Pea Gee, resident, expressed support for the proposed signage changes.

MOTION by Bruce, support by Bridges, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the amendment to Planned Unit Development 1, 2015, dated September 19, 2024 submitted by Signworks of Michigan, Inc., for the Corewell Health Campus sign change, located at 28050 Grand River Avenue.

And further resolves 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, BRIDGES, BRUCE, DWYER, KNOL, AND RICH

Nays: NONE

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF 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. CMR 1-25-02

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult explained that this application proposes a two-part development under separate names across seven (7) parcels on the south side of Thirteen Mile Road, just west of Middlebelt Road: Mulberry Park (approximately 5.98 acres) and The Tabernacle (approximately 6.06 acres). Mulberry Park is proposed to consist of nine (9) buildings with forty (40) units of attached, two (2)-story townhouses. The Tabernacle is proposed to be age-restricted and consist of nine (9) buildings with thirty-six (36) units of attached, one (1)-story ranches.

The applicant has had three meetings before Planning Commission as is the standard process for a Planned Unit Development:

- April 18, 2024 – Planning Commission qualified PUD (7-0)
- October 17, 2024 – Planning Commission set for public hearing (8-0)
- November 21, 2024 – Planning Commission public hearing/recommendation to City Council (5-0)

The next step in the process is this evening for the public hearing before Council after hearing from the applicant, City consultants and the public.

Consultant comments

Referencing her January 6, 2025 review memorandum, Planning Consultant Bahm (Giffels Webster) provided the following information:

- The property is currently zoned RA-1 (single-family, large-lot residential).
- The proposed development includes relief from RA-1 zoning standards to allow higher density consistent with RC-1 zoning. Properties to the north, south and east are zoned RA-1; the project to the west (Baptist Manor) is zoned RC-1.
- During the qualification hearing (April 18, 2024) the Planning Commission found that of the eight standards that they could look at for the planned unit development eligibility, four were applicable to this project, primarily due to the preservation of open space and natural features. While there are significant number of trees that will be removed, there are many trees that are going to be added on the site.
- During the recent Master Plan update that acknowledged the need for housing within the community, the Planning Commission kept this area as a special planning area with the classification of Flex Residential, to allow for a different kind of housing type than single family residential detached.
- While most dimensional standards of the RA-1 zoning district are met, ordinance relief is being sought for:
 - a. Permit attached units at RC-1 density.
 - b. Permit 45 replacement trees not to be planted and 40 to be planted off site. (485 trees required to be replaced; 400 trees will be planted on-site, 40 trees replaced off-site, and waiver requested for 45 trees not replaced.)

Council questions and discussion

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

- Confirmed that the surrounding properties are primarily RA-1, except for Baptist Manor to the west.
- Public benefits offered as a balance to the requested zoning relief include preservation of open space, tree preservation, and alignment with the Master Plan, particularly the call for additional housing in the City, noting that this project is proposing lower density than some of the projects the City had seen in the past. The review letter lists the four items the Planning Commission considered under their qualification, including the provision of open space, and the redevelopment of sites where an orderly change of use is determined to be desirable.
- Regarding impact to the existing neighborhoods, this project minimizes impact by offering an entrance and exit only to 13 Mile Road, so that no traffic will be using existing neighborhood roads. The significant greenbelt between this project and its neighbors is beyond minimum requirements.

Applicant presentation

Aaron Schafer presented on behalf of this application for PUD approval. Steve Schafer and Spencer Schafer were also present, as were representatives from Baptist Manor and M/I Homes.

Mr. Schafer addressed the following:

- Schafer Development is under contract with Moby Investments for the 12.04 acres just west of Baptist Manor. Schafer Development is also working in conjunction with Baptist Manor to help them entitle their project and get through the approval process. The Tabernacle is the Baptist Manor portion of the project and will be age-restricted to those 55 or older. Mulberry Park is a conventional 2-story townhome development that is aimed toward younger or first-time home buyers.
- Flex Residential Zoning enables creative redevelopment of less desirable single-family lots along the 13 Mile corridor, including the clustering of townhome or attached ranch units consistent with the proposed site plan. One of the main objectives of the flex residential designation is the clustering of units to preserve substantial open space and tree rows.
- If the property were developed under the current RA-1 zoning, a home could be located as close as 35 feet from the shared southern property line. The proposed plan nearly doubles that setback to approximately 65-74 feet.
- The southern and eastern property lines contain some of the most significant tree rows, and the development has been intentionally clustered to preserve as many of these large trees as possible.
- A wildlife corridor area is a hallmark of this development, traversing eastward to the River Rouge tributary.
- The plan meets all the suggestions made by the Fire and Engineering departments, including aligning the single access boulevard entrance with Westgate Road. The drive aisles were expanded to 27' feet wide. The ring road serves both developments with widened drive aisles for improved circulation. No stub street is proposed to the east due to topographical challenges there.
- The proposed plan has evolved from the high density project previously proposed by the Chaldean Community Foundation to what is being presented today. The current proposal provides much needed multi-generational housing, providing the community at large with "missing middle" housing, catering to the needs of couples and young families who are looking to build and establish roots and enroll their children into the Farmington Hills School District, as well as seniors seeking maintenance and commitment free housing where they can age in place.
- The 76 units on 12.04 acres has a total density of roughly 6.3 units to the acre.
- Renderings showed the proposed one-story ranches for the Tabernacle, and the proposed townhomes for Mulberry Park. The two portions of this PUD will have a complementary appearance in terms of materials and colors.
- The landscape plan was designed based on feedback received from numerous site walks with residents and HOA meetings. Schafer Development continues to meet with neighbors and will be submitting a revised landscape plan to provide additional evergreens as requested by the neighbors.
- The ordinance requires that 485 trees be replaced. Over 400 trees will be planted on site, and existing trees along the southern and eastern property line, and part of the northern property line will be preserved. Of the 85 trees remaining, Schafer Development has offered to plant a significant number (approximately 45 trees) off site, on neighbor's properties.
- About 167 or 45% of the existing trees to be removed are low quality (box elders, crab apples, cottonwoods, etc.).

- Residents have been concerned about construction noise. Schafer Development is anticipating 4-5 months to do all earthwork, construction of basins, and underground utilities, and 18-24 month lead time before homes can be listed for sale and be ready for move-in.
- Schafer Development has walked neighboring residents' rear yards and knows drainage is an issue there – currently the water flows south and east. The proposed development will be designed to alleviate those issues, directing water to make its way into the basin at an agricultural rate, and from there move to 13 mile and eventually into the River Rouge tributary.
- In response to questions received from the Mayor's office this morning, Mr. Schafer said that they anticipate the value of the development to be \$27M - \$28M. Approximately 200 new residents will be added. The Tabernacle units will rent at \$2000+. The Townhomes will start in the \$400K range.
- Taxable values will be in the \$620K range for the entire development per year. The City receives approximately 30% of the total taxes.
- The Tabernacle will be for active adults 55 or older, who will not put additional burdens on the Fire Department or Public Services beyond that of any residential community.

Council discussion and clarifications

Council Member Aldred raised concerns about the traffic study presented during the November 21 Planning Commission review, noting that the projected level of service for the Westgate intersection would degrade from a C to an F by 2028 due to the proposed development, with significantly increased wait times for residents.

Aaron Schafer explained that they had worked extensively with fire and engineering departments to mitigate traffic impacts, including widening the boulevard and providing additional right-of-way for future 13 Mile Road improvements.

Public Hearing

Mayor Rich opened the Public Hearing by first noting that comments in opposition to the project had been received from Adele Letterman, Beverly Mihalko, Charles Spiess, Craig LaPointe, David and Wanda Whalen, Doug Graham, Douglas and Mamie Roberson, Dr. Sharon Lee Havis, Duane Pitcher, Elena Mityaeva and Tim Pike, Emilio Ramirez of Holly Hill Farms Subdivision, Farida Attar, Guido and Eileen Campagna, H. Nelhans, Harold Howard, J. Meissner, Joe and Kathy Sterbling, John P. Nagoda, Kim and Jeriel Heard, Larry Rosenstock, Lindsey Matych, Mais Moran, Mark Sanders, Michele Nagoda, Nicole Carroll, Patricia Labrecque, Paul Shultz, Renee and Gari Chaffin, Roger Matuz, Roman Golshteyn, Ron Breining, Rory McHarg, Teresa Petersen, Ursula Kizy, Valerie Watson, and Dr. Meital Yerushalmi.

Public comment was offered in person by:

- Emilio Ramirez/Holly Hills Farms Subdivision noted that Schafer Development had communicated well with the HOA. The 9-10 residents of Holly Hill Farms that will be directly affected by this development are concerned about loss of privacy, potential drainage problems, construction noise, possible decreases in property value, strain on the power grid, loss of wildlife habitat, removal of over 400 trees (including 57 landmark trees), and increased traffic and congestion on 13 Mile Road.
- Julie Skene, Holly Hills Farms, suggested that all homes be single-story across the back of the development, and all multi-story homes be placed further forward. She was concerned about the affordability of the homes for senior citizens, and the traffic issues that will be caused by the entryway being directly opposite Westgate subdivision's entryway. Could a traffic light be installed?
- Amy Broglin-Peterson, Westgate subdivision, was concerned about traffic.

- Michael Menlo, WoodCreek subdivision, asked for “flare lanes” and a traffic light at Westbrook if this development went forward. He was concerned about construction wear and tear on the roads.
- John Nagoda, Westgate subdivision, asked Council to deny this PUD request. The lots were zoned RA-1 for a reason, and this project provides little or no benefits to the existing community. He was concerned about tree removal, traffic safety, density, and the additional burden placed on city staff and resources.
- Adele Letterman, Westgate subdivision, opposed the density of the project. Westgate lots were $\frac{3}{4}$ acre.
- Mark Sanders, Westgate HOA president, commended the Schafers for being open with the HOA. However, the HOA thought this proposal was too big a change and too dense relative to the neighboring developments.
- Louise Lieberman, Westgate subdivision, was concerned about traffic, density, and loss of animal habitat.
- Mark Pucher, Westgate subdivision, was concerned about traffic and density of the proposed development. He requested a traffic light at the Westgate entrance.
- Debbie Isner, Woodbrook, said her property backed up to the proposed Mulberry Park development. She acknowledged the Flex Residential designation, and said it was vital to capture the tree conservation area into perpetuity. Schafer Development had met with her and made changes based on her comments.
- Lindsey Matych, Holly Hill Farms, lived directly adjacent to the project. She opposed the proposal due to the tree removal, density, impact on drainage, traffic, wildlife, loss of privacy for existing residents, and marketability. The increase in density is not tied to deep buffering from the neighborhood to the south and does not bring change that is desirable for the neighboring communities.
- Eric Schmidt said that they had recently purchased their home in the Northwest corner of Holly Hill Farms because of the location and the zoning in the area. Had they known this development could potentially be built, they would have chosen a different home in a different location. While he appreciated the Schafers coming to his home and talking to him, Mr. Schmidt believed the proposed development is not compatible with the existing neighborhood. He was concerned about traffic and the fact the intersection at Westgate Road will go down to an F.
- Angie Smith thanked the Schafers for being very transparent. She was concerned about the intersection at Westgate Road, as the situation there was already dangerous.
- Robin White, Farmington Hills resident, supported the expansion of the Baptist Manor, as long as 13 Mile Road was widened first. There needed to be a traffic light at Westgate Road.

Council questions and discussion

Council Member Knol raised several concerns and questions for the developer regarding the proposed project, focusing on compatibility, density, and privacy.

- **Compatibility Concerns:** Knol highlighted the disparity between the proposed two-story townhouses in Mulberry Park and the neighboring Holly Hill Farms, which consists of lower mid-century modern homes, many of them tri-levels. Despite the proposed buffer, the two-story structures would be visible, especially given the time it will take for newly planted trees to mature.
- **Density Issues:** While the proposal includes a similar number of units as neighboring developments, such as Westgate and Cove Creek, those developments feature larger lots and lower density. Council Member Knol compared the project to the recently approved Villas at Pebble Creek, which has 75

condos spread over 30 acres and consists of one and 1.5-story units catering to families and older residents looking for options without stairs.

- **Potential Modifications:** Council Member Knol suggested reducing the density of the Mulberry Park section by converting the two-story townhouses near Holly Hill Farms into one-story condos. This adjustment could address privacy concerns and reduce the total room count, aligning it more closely with RC-1 standards.

Council Member Knol said that she could not support the project in its current form. She invited the developer to consider reducing the density and incorporating more one-story units, particularly along the border with Holly Hill Farms.

In response, Mr. Schafer noted that when combined, the developments fall seven units below the RC-1 unit cap for the site. He emphasized the trees that would be planted and the outreach to neighbors regarding landscaping. Mr. Schafer acknowledged density concerns but emphasized that the property's location along 13 Mile and evolving housing trends favor clustered, lower-maintenance housing, as reflected in the City's master plan since 2009. He highlighted the significant density reductions from previous proposals while balancing economic feasibility with community feedback and striving to provide attainable housing options.

Spencer Schafer emphasized efforts to ensure compatibility by transitioning to two-story buildings for half the development, aligning more closely with neighboring ranches and colonials. The proposed setbacks far exceed PUD and RA-1 requirements, providing additional buffer space. While the proposal differs from current zoning, it does align with the master plan's allowance for one- to three-story units.

Council Member Bruce asked the planning consultant to clarify the primary purpose of a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Planning Consultant Bahm explained that a PUD allows projects that do not align with existing zoning standards to move forward, particularly when no other zoning category adequately accommodates the proposed development.

Council Member Bruce expressed concerns about the proposed PUD, questioning its appropriateness for the subject RA-1-zoned properties. He emphasized that the PUD process is typically used for problematic properties that cannot otherwise be developed, but in this case, he has seen no evidence that the lots could not be sold and developed as RA-1. The proposal's high density disrupts the residential character of the neighborhood and unfairly alters expectations for nearby residents who purchased properties assuming the current zoning would remain unchanged.

Council Member Bruce highlighted the importance of maintaining low-density zoning to protect neighborhood integrity and argued that development should not prioritize maximizing a property owner's financial return at the expense of the community. While the development is visually appealing, it would be better suited to a different location. Concerns about increased traffic and congestion were real, as the proposed development would add 200 residents to the area.

In conclusion, Council Member Bruce stated that sometimes no development is better than bad development, and that while he appreciates the developer's efforts and the development is beautiful, he does not see sufficient community benefit from the PUD at this location and cannot support the

proposal in its current form. He reiterated his commitment to ensuring developments align with zoning standards and protect the long-term character of the city.

Council Member Aldred acknowledged that the Master Plan designates the area as Flex Residential, providing for greater development flexibility, but emphasized that this designation does not equate to RC-1 density. The proposed density at 6.3 units per acre exceeds what is appropriate for the site and does not align with the intent of flex residential zoning.

Council Member Aldred outlined three key objectives for the development: minimal impact on the neighboring properties, acceptable traffic levels with safe conditions, and a high-quality housing product. He stated that the proposal falls short on the first two points, citing insufficient setbacks, limited open space, and significant traffic concerns, including a projected F grade for level of service at the boulevard entrance. While he commended the housing designs as high quality and visually appealing, he criticized the lack of walkability and sidewalks within the development, which he attributed to the high density. Council Member Aldred noted that developments like Cove Creek, with a density of 3.1 units per acre, are more compatible with the area and should serve as a benchmark for flex residential zoning.

In response, Aaron Schafer emphasized the development team's readiness to work collaboratively and explore creative adjustments to the plan to address the issues raised.

Council Member Bridges discussed the PUD process and its application to the proposed development. He clarified with Planning Consultant Bahm that the process is guided by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, but cities have discretion over the specific criteria outlined in their ordinances. Council Member Bridges noted that the Planning Commission is considering reviewing the ordinance to ensure it aligns with current land development needs and remains applicable to the city's context as a nearly fully developed community.

Council Member Bridges was opposed to this development project, citing concerns about density and compatibility with the area's character. He emphasized that Farmington Hills residents value open space and large lots and move here for those characteristics, and the proposal's higher density disrupts the established neighborhood dynamic. While commending the developer for thoroughly addressing resident concerns and presenting a comprehensive review, Council Member Bridges maintained that the proposed development is out of character for the area and does not align with the expectations of the surrounding community.

In response, Aaron Schafer noted the scarcity of open land in Farmington Hills and emphasized that the Planned Unit Development (PUD) mechanism is one of the few tools available to creatively address housing needs. He highlighted the importance of providing housing options for the "missing middle" as well as empty nesters and the aging population in the city. At the same time, Mr. Schafer acknowledged the Council's concerns about density and traffic.

Council Member Boleware agreed with concerns raised by fellow council members. She praised the overall design of the project, particularly the Tabernacle portion. However, she expressed significant concerns about the density of the Mulberry portion and its impact on traffic. Council Member Boleware supported the concept of a multi-generational development combining housing for older adults and

younger families but the traffic challenges in the area, especially during peak hours, make the proposed density problematic. She noted that the Tabernacle's age-restricted residents are less likely to add to traffic during busy times, but the Mulberry portion, with younger families, would increase the traffic congestion.

Council Member Boleware commended the effort to replace 400 removed trees and distribute additional trees throughout the site. Unfortunately, density and traffic concerns particularly at the Westgate/Mulberry intersection remain primary issues and she encouraged the developer to consider reducing the number of units in the Mulberry portion. Council Member Boleware complimented the project's design and facade.

Request for postponement

Spencer Schafer addressed concerns about traffic, explaining that the development team was working with Julie Kroll at Fleis & Vandenbrink. The alignment of the proposed boulevard entrance with Westgate had been requested by the City's engineering department, changing the current three-way intersection into a four-way. The development team wants to maintain the intersection's level of service at a D rating or better and is open to revisiting potential solutions, including the possibility of adding a second entrance. Mr. Schafer expressed a willingness to refine the proposal based on Council feedback and requested that the item be tabled to allow time for revisions.

Mayor Rich thanked the Schafers for their community engagement, including attending the recent "Walk the Hawk" event and discussing the proposed development with residents. However, Mayor Rich acknowledged significant concerns raised by both residents and Council members.

Mayor Rich was also concerned about walkability, along with the absence of placemaking. She suggested incorporating public art in the proposal, noting the Council's ongoing discussions about implementing a public art ordinance. She was concerned about affordability, as the proposed \$2,500 monthly cost of the Tabernacle rentals is more than many residents can pay, especially seniors living on fixed incomes. Traffic impacts and the deteriorating state of existing structures on the property remain pressing issues.

Acknowledging the developer's request to table, and after discussion regarding scheduling, the following motion was offered:

MOTION by Boleware, support by Dwyer, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the postponement of the public hearing and consideration of 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, to March 3, 2025.

MOTION CARRIED 6-1 (Bruce opposed).

At 10:00pm Mayor Rich called a short break and reconvened the meeting at 10:14pm.

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT 1, 2024, INCLUDING SITE PLAN 54-7-2024, SHEETZ WITH CARRYOUT/DRIVE-THROUGH RESTAURANT, LOCATED AT 27815 AND 28025 MIDDLEBELT ROAD. CMR 1-25-03

Planning and Community Development Director Kettler-Schmult explained that this application proposes a gasoline service station (twelve fueling positions) with a carryout/drive-through restaurant on an approximately 3.83-acre site comprised of three parcels at the northwest intersection of Twelve Mile and Middlebelt Roads.

The Planning Commission has had three hearings:

- June 20, 2024 – Planning Commission qualified PUD (8-0)
- September 19, 2024 – Planning Commission set for public hearing (9-0)
- November 21, 2024 – Planning Commission public hearing/recommendation to City Council (4-1)

Tonight's public hearing has been notified and publicly noticed, and published in the newspaper as is required. Council has received minutes from the previous meetings and a summary from the Planning Consultants. However, the Department did recently receive a request for postponement.

It is staff's recommendation that the public hearing be held, and it would be at the Council's discretion whether they want to take action on the item this evening.

Mayor Rich indicated that the public hearing would be held this evening. Due to the late hour, Council consensus was not to hear the Planning Consultant's recap of the report that is in the packets.

Applicant presentation

Alex Siwicki, 39300 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, was present on behalf of this application for PUD approval. Applicant's Counsel Pat Lennon, Honigman LLP, 39400 Woodward Avenue, Bloomfield Hills, was also present.

Mr. Lennon said that a formal request to postpone had been submitted. The applicant is considering enhancements to the submitted plan.

Mayor Rich indicated the public hearing would proceed, as it had been noticed and people were present to speak. After the public hearing discussion could take place regarding the request to postpone.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Siwicki provided the following information:

Description of proposal

- Sheetz was founded in 1952 in Altoona, Pennsylvania and is still a family-owned business with over 760 locations. Sheetz locations feature a 24/7 made-to-order kitchen, specialty coffee, and convenience store items. Locations include indoor and outdoor seating, drive-through service with touch-screen ordering (no squawk box), and free Wi-Fi, catering to various customer needs.
- The present application is for a planned unit development covering 3.83 acres at the northwest corner of 12 Mile and Middlebelt Roads. The proposal includes a 6,139 square foot combined restaurant, convenience store, and gas station. There will be 6 fuel pumps with 12 fueling positions, drive-through restaurant service, and enhanced architectural features including full brick and stone exteriors.
- The project represents an \$8.5 million construction investment utilizing local contractors and engineering firms. Upon completion, 30-35 local jobs will be created with top-of-class benefits, including tuition reimbursement.

Community benefits resulting from the project include

- Increased tax assessments for the city.
- Community engagement through donations to food banks, schools, and Special Olympics.
- Enhanced buffering with additional evergreen trees, a six-foot vinyl fence, and pedestrian access improvements.

Community outreach and site enhancements

Sheetz has engaged “tirelessly” with the surrounding community. As a result of community feedback, the site plan has been changed to include:

- Additional evergreen buffering provides year-round privacy for the neighbors.
- A six-foot vinyl fence along western and northern property lines.
- Sidewalk replacement along the property lines.
- Reduced parking spaces compared to what exists today, a drive-through bypass lane, and adjusted lighting per Planning Commission requests.

Zoning Compliance for the 3 uses on the property

- Fast Food/Carryout Use: Zoning standards met.
- Fueling Station Use: Meets zoning ordinance criteria.
- Drive-Through Restaurant Use: Meets criteria for setbacks, stacking space, and meets the spirit of the ordinance relative to buffering from residential areas.

Site plan enhancements above and beyond ordinance requirements

- Setbacks: Increased setbacks from current dimensions:
 - East: 50% increase (from 84 to 126 feet).
 - South: 38% increase.
 - West: 17% increase.
 - North: 33% increase.
- Open Space: The plan represents a reduction of 75 parking spaces and 16,000 square feet of pavement over what exists, increasing open space significantly.
- Buffering and Landscaping: The plan offers enhanced landscaping, additional evergreen trees, and a six-foot decorative knee wall. Additional parcels to the north have been purchased to provide greater buffering to residential areas.

In summary, the plan permanently preserves open space, provides a use compatible with the surrounding commercial and residential areas, and maintains additional buffer zones for adjacent residential neighborhoods. The project aligns with the Master Plan, which designates the southern portion of the site as commercial. The development will revitalize a deteriorating site to promote orderly change.

The project does not seek dimensional variances and stays within all setback requirements. Very few waivers have been requested, emphasizing compliance and quality.

Mr. Siwicki concluded his presentation, reminding the Commission that the request this evening is for the City to either approve or postpone action on the proposed PUD and site plan.

Applicant's Counsel Pat Lennon provided his legal analysis of the case for approval. The applicant contends that the application satisfies all the PUD approval criteria, as affirmed by the Planning Commission. If approved the project would yield tremendous community benefits to the area and further the public health, safety and welfare of the City. The proposed use would bring the property into greater conformity with the Master Plan. The PUD would transform a vacant and deteriorating property into a new state-of-the art Sheetz café and fueling station. There is no other practical or viable use of the property as currently zoned. The argument for approving the PUD is very strong, both as a practical matter and as a legal matter.

Public Hearing

Mayor Rich opened the Public Hearing by first noting that comments in opposition to the project had been received from B. Schwartz, Baldwin, Bob Schwartz, Carl and Susan Sekely, Clarence Norfleet, Dana Wilmot, the Desai Family, Elena Mityaeva and Tim Pike, Emilio Ramirez/Holly Hill Farms Association, Farida and Kasim Ali, Glenda McGuire, Jamilah Thomas, Joann Thompson, Kathleen Hayes-Parvin, Lorraine Kapsa, Mark Sanders/Westgate Subdivision, Michael Lee, Patricia Labrecque, Paul Shultz, Richard Bzovi, Rob and Patty Love, Robert Kelly, Robert Young, Sherry Griffin, Tim Parvin, and Toni Bradford.

Comments received in support of the project had been received from Kathy Kustron and Raymond and Shelly Zink.

Comments received in opposition to postponement were received from Carl Sekely, Michael Lee, and Tim Parvin.

The following people offered public comment:

- Shelley Stamand, Farmington Hills resident, opposed this development. There are 8 gas stations in the square mile surrounding this location, and another one is not needed. The best use for the property will be residential development. The proposed Sheetz would be better located on or near an expressway.
- Nasim Kazmikka, owner of Saroki's located inside the Shell Gas Station at 12 Mile and Orchard Lake, said that when they first opened the Shell station was open 24 hours. The owner decided to close at night due to the crime that brought to the area. There were numerous gas stations in the area who offered all the amenities Sheetz was going to offer. The local gas stations also supported the community whenever asked. Sheetz was a good Fortune 500 company, but did not belong in the middle of a neighborhood.
- Thomas Brunner, Balmoral Way, felt this was the wrong project at the wrong time, especially as 696 is going to be closing for an extended period of time, and 12 Mile Road will be taking on additional traffic. This will not be just a neighborhood-only destination. The development is too big for this neighborhood.
- Laura Gervasi, Farmington Hills resident, pointed out that the applicant had not addressed lighting, which was a big concern of the Planning Commission. Regarding community outreach, Ms. Gervasi lives next door to this proposed development, but no one has reached out to her. The Sheetz concept is a nice concept, but this very quiet neighborhood is the wrong place for it.
- Joe Nouné also lived in the complex next door to this development, and he agreed with comments already made. He opposed this development at this location.

- Carl Sekely, President of the HOA for Reserve at Woodcreek, supported comments already made. Sheetz does not fit with the character of the neighborhood and will likely result in the other gas stations at that corner going out of business, leaving vacant land that is hard to develop, in other words solving nothing. Also, no one had reached out to him as President of his HOA. He asked Council not to postpone, but to vote on this proposal this evening.
- Mary Ann Valade, Colony Park Drive, commended the Sheetz presentation. However, as others had said, this development did not belong in this location, and there was no need for another gas station at this corner. She was also curious as to who Sheetz would hire for the positions at this location.
- Chuck Firment, Forestbrook Drive, agreed with Council Member Bruce: no development is better than bad development. Sheetz has a good product, but it does not belong at this location.
- Allan Whittemore, President of Forestbrook -Pebblecreek HOA and speaking on behalf of the HOA, opposed the proposed Sheetz at this neighborhood location. There would be little demand in the neighborhood for the nighttime restaurant availability, and without neighborhood support or trucker clientele, the location might fail.
- Michele Reid Harris, South Harwich, said they had moved to the WoodCreek subdivision because it was so quiet. She was concerned about noise, lights and traffic congestion emanating from a Sheetz at this location. She asked Council to deny approval of this request.
- Brian Ventura, WoodCreek subdivision, was opposed to this PUD request. A PUD is supposed to create a better environment for the people who live in the area, but a Sheetz gas station will harm the quiet environment people are used to.
- Lee Blizman, Farmington Hills resident, opposed this PUD request. She emphasized the requirement that a PUD must improve public health, safety, and welfare without overburdening local services. She highlighted the repeated mentions of the need for a traffic study during Planning Commission discussions and correspondence from the city engineer, noting that approval of the site plan should not proceed without a thorough review of traffic impacts. Ms. Blizman also noted that should Council approve this proposal, it needed to set aside the promised open space into perpetuity, regardless of which business might locate there in the future.
- Bruce Roberts, Forest Brook Drive, was concerned about the implications of 40 parking spots at a facility that is open 24 hours, opening the property to inappropriate night-time uses. This PUD was not solving an existing problem, nor was it providing a benefit to the residential community, as people who had purchased their homes based on the neighborhood character had not foreseen such a business going in at this corner.
- Chandra Koganti, Millbrook, asked that Council make a decision this evening and not postpone action on this PUD request. He opposed this development on behalf of the next generation and the future of Farmington Hills.
- Johnene Koganti, Millbrook, said she was not speaking against Sheetz, but she was opposed to a Sheetz facility being constructed at this location. She was concerned about traffic, and about the people drawn to this location in the middle of the night. Those customers would not represent captured traffic but would be destination traffic. Regarding traffic, she noted the number of parents who must drive their children to nearby schools, including Mercy High School, the STEAM Academy which had 700 students with no bussing, and other nearby schools in the area.
- Michael Yandora, Moran Street, supported Sheetz developing at this location. Sheetz stores were amazing, and the company had a great time-tested business model. It was wrong to stifle competition. There were legitimate reasons to have a 24/7 operation, which could be helpful to people coming home from late shifts or needing supplies in the middle of the night.

- Frank Asmar, local developer, said he had built the Crestwood Meadows condominiums that were next door to this proposed project. He did not think the proposed project was compatible in this area. Rather it belonged on major thoroughfares such as Telegraph, Woodward, or M-59.
- Dion DeGennaro spoke on behalf of his mother who lives directly across the street from the proposed development. He supported comments already made. He noted the Planning Commission's approval was based on the applicant making changes to the lighting and the drive-through. Sheetz relies on its bright lighting for safety during its overnight hours, but that same lighting will negatively impact the neighborhoods. He asked Council not to delay their decision, and to deny approval of this PUD.
- Amy Broglin-Peterson, Westgate subdivision, was familiar with Sheetz and knew it to be an excellent business. However, it did not belong in this neighborhood setting. Noting that she taught business at Michigan State University business school, Mr. Broglin-Peterson said she viewed Sheetz' attempts in the area as taking a predatory position, and she did not support approving this request.
- Michael Menlo, WoodCreek subdivision, said he had been to a number of Sheetz locations and could attest they are clean and well run. However, he did not support a Sheetz facility at this location.
- Angie Smith brought up a variety of concerns, including the alcohol sales, the 24 hour operation, and the additional traffic. She strongly supported finding another restaurant – and not a gas station – for this location.
- David Bager representing the 64 homes in the Franklin Forest and Fairway HOA, wanted to go on record supporting the comments made this evening. This is the wrong development for this location. He urged Council not to table action, but to vote on the matter tonight.
- Kathleen Hayes-Parvin, Sylvan Lane, reviewed the history of development in this area, including at one time the application to have a big box store going into the same southeast corner of that intersection. The City denied approval, and the L-shaped strip mall that is successfully located there is the result. Community members who were speaking this evening were trying to keep the integrity of their neighborhoods.
- Tim Parvin spoke on behalf of the Heatherwood Condos on Sylvan Lane. They opposed this development, which would negatively impact their homes 1/8 of a mile away. The Sheetz operating model belonged at a freeway exchange. Referencing the new ordinance that addressed new auto repair shops, car washes and gas stations, he asked Council to vote tonight and not postpone.
- Margaret Keyes-Howard, President of the Enclave of Heatherwood, Sylvan Circle, noted that their Board of Directors unanimously opposed a Sheetz station coming to their neighborhood. The proposed development was incompatible with the neighborhood.
- Joan Theresa Gebhart, Pine Knolls Condominium Association, opposed the proposed development. The proposed Sheetz store and pumps would not enhance the physical environment or the daily living circumstances of the neighborhood residents. She suggested soliciting citizen input on the future development of the subject site.
- Anne Logan, Vice President of the HOA at Pine Knolls, was opposed to the proposed development. She asked about the long-term ecological impact of putting a gas station at that corner.
- Sam Dorcheu, Pine Knolls, and an architect by profession, echoed comments made by Ms. Logan and others.
- Dennis Latner, Farmington Hills resident, referenced reports of serious crime at Sheetz locations throughout their service area. Mr. Latner opposed this requested development. He quoted from Sheetz' testimony before a Congressional committee [January 18, 2024] and asked Council to deny this request as the proposed development was not compatible with the neighborhood.

- Hank Murawski, President of the WoodCreek Civic Association, representing the 300+ residents bounded by 12-Mile, 13-Mile, Middlebelt, and almost all the way to Inkster, opposed this request. He asked a series of rhetorical questions regarding the development, ending with the question: what benefits does the PUD provide to the surrounding neighborhoods and the City? The new shrubbery, the sidewalk, the fence along Middlebelt, are not benefits, but rather are attributes and characteristics of the development. This was not an appropriate location for a Sheetz gas station.
- Craig Roshak, WoodCreek subdivision, opposed this PUD request. This was not about Sheetz as a company but was about what is appropriate for the existing neighborhood. He asked Council to deny this request.
- Trevor Duke, a commercial real estate professional, emphasized the challenges developers face in gaining approval for projects, especially when opposition from residents can create an "echo chamber" of dissent. He highlighted the negative consequences of repeatedly rejecting projects, warning that continued denials could result in blight, lower property values, and a reputation of a city unfriendly to new businesses. He pointed out examples of growth in neighboring municipalities and advocated for a balanced approach that maintains high standards while encouraging development. He shared support from young families in his neighborhood who favor the Sheetz proposal and urged the City and residents to embrace opportunities for responsible growth, warning that rejecting capable developers risks losing out on beneficial projects, leaving properties to decay or face less desirable uses in the future.
- Paula Turza, Woodcreek, opposed the proposed Sheetz development at this location and agreed with comments previously made.
- Ron Evans, Timbercrest subdivision, opposed approval the Sheetz development at this location for reasons already stated. He wondered if the Planning Commission had access to any kind of study or data regarding putting a Sheetz in this kind of neighborhood location.
- Clarence Norfleet, Timbercrest subdivision, opposed approval of the Sheetz development at this location for reasons already stated.
- Joseph Williams opposed approval of the Sheetz development at this location, and asked Council to deny the request.
- Joan Williams emphasized that the comments opposing this proposal were not aimed at Sheetz as a company. The opposition was to this kind of business at this location, which she also opposed. She asked Council to deny this request.
- Pea Gee, Farmington Hills resident, opposed this request for a PUD for a Sheetz development at this location.
- George Senawi, Orion Court, said this development would face his front door. He would lose privacy, and was very concerned about how the added traffic would affect his children's safety.
- Jeff Goodman, Woodcreek subdivision, expressed his support for the proposed Sheetz development, emphasizing its potential benefits for the area. He highlighted Sheetz's modern design, expanded offerings beyond fuel, and potential to enhance convenience for residents, particularly during late-night hours when other options are unavailable. He shared the value of a 24-hour establishment, such as the need for late-night food or over-the-counter medicine during family emergencies and noted that Sheetz's well-lit design and proximity to law enforcement would contribute to safety and deter crime.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Dwyer thanked the residents for coming out tonight. This was an important issue for residents and for Council, and he indicated he would be voting to deny this proposal.

Council Member Bruce expressed appreciation for the Sheetz proposal and acknowledged the company's success. However, he was opposed to the project as being too big and incompatible with the quiet residential character of the area. In terms of this development providing a service the City needs, Council was working to address the oversaturation of gas stations in the area; another gas station was not needed. Additionally, the large scale and 24-hour operation of the project felt more akin to a truck stop. He emphasized that the corner already has two gas stations, which are sufficient. Council Member Bruce also raised the concerns about the potential for Sheetz to outcompete existing businesses, leaving vacant gas station properties behind, which situation would not benefit the City. Nevertheless, he hoped Sheetz could find a more suitable location in Farmington Hills.

Council Member Bruce did not support tabling this proposal, as he would not be able to approve revised plans in any form as they would still include a gas station at this location.

Noting that the applicant had the right to respond to public comment, Mayor Rich acknowledged Mr. Siwicki and the Sheetz development team.

Mr. Siwicki thanked everyone for speaking this evening. He emphasized their request for a postponement to finalize site plan adjustments and incorporate additional enhancements based on what they had heard.

Mr. Siwicki highlighted safety features, noting Sheetz' well-regarded security systems, collaboration with law enforcement, and longstanding reputation for safe and attractive facilities. Sheetz does not attract crime but does deal with crime as it occurs.

Regarding traffic, Mr. Siwicki explained that convenience stores primarily capture existing traffic rather than generate new trips, and their Traffic Impact Study supports this assertion.

Mr. Siwicki defended the need for and right of competition in the gas station market, asserting that Sheetz offers unique benefits such as high-quality architecture, significant green space enhancements, reduced impervious area, and pedestrian improvements. He reiterated the project's \$8.5 million investment, increased tax revenue, and community contributions like weekly food bank donations and Special Olympics support.

Mr. Siwicki again asked for a postponement.

Applicant Counsel Lennon underscored that the project meets all PUD criteria as determined by the Planning Commission and noted that the current zoning allows for multifamily development, which could have a greater impact on traffic and setbacks than the proposed Sheetz facility. He urged Council to consider the property's potential use and the risks of leaving it undeveloped. He expressed confidence that their revised proposal will address concerns and deliver significant community benefits.

City Attorney Joppich clarified that the Planning Commission made a recommendation to City Council and made preliminary findings as part of that recommendation. However, City Council will make the

decision to approve or not approve the project. There are many criteria in the ordinance that talk about discretion of the City Council, the use of the property, the benefits and other matters in terms of the intent of the PUD process, including compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, as found in the intent and purpose sections of the ordinance. The Planning Commission has moved this application forward, but Council is not bound by the Planning Commission's recommendation.

Council Member Bridges thanked the Sheetz team for their interest in Farmington Hills but emphasized that the proposed development at 12 Mile and Middlebelt is incompatible with the area. He acknowledged the Planning Commission's recommendation for approval but highlighted that the Council's role involves reviewing the Commission's findings alongside extensive public input, which overwhelmingly opposed the project.

Council Member Bridges underscored the importance of maintaining the character of Farmington Hills neighborhoods, a priority he has upheld during his 16 years on the Council. He concluded that the residential nature of the surrounding area and the existing zoning make the proposed location unsuitable for Sheetz, while reiterating the City's openness to considering Sheetz at a more appropriate site.

Council Member Knol thanked the residents and Sheetz representatives for their time and engagement, acknowledging the importance of community involvement in local government. While recognizing Sheetz as a reputable business, Knol believed the intensity of the project is incompatible with the surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods.

Council Member Knol emphasized that a 24-hour operation of this scale would be better suited to a commercial district near an expressway or major thoroughfare rather than a residential or neighborhood business area.

Regarding the conversation about competition – something she supported – Council Member Knol raised concerns about the challenges of redeveloping gas station properties due to potential underground contamination from the fuel tanks. Failed gas stations often remain abandoned and difficult to repurpose.

Council Member Knol concluded by advocating for denying the proposal tonight to save residents and Sheetz further time and effort, as the core elements of the business model—24-hour operation and gas station use—are incompatible with the site.

Council Member Boleware thanked the residents and Sheetz representatives for their time tonight. While acknowledging Sheetz' successful business model, Council Member Boleware expressed concerns about the lack of clear community benefits that the project would provide under the PUD process. Specifically, she highlighted the existing saturation of gas stations in Farmington Hills— more than 30 — and questioned the added value of introducing another gas station at this location.

Council Member Boleware emphasized the residential nature of the area, pointing out that traffic along 12 Mile Road is minimal at night and that a 24-hour, brightly lit operation would not align with the neighborhood's character or needs. She noted the nearby presence of established businesses like Farmhouse Coffee and Bella Vita, which already meet the community's needs for refreshments and light

meals, further reducing the unique value Sheetz might bring to the area. She also agreed with concerns already stated regarding the potential for creating new abandoned gas station sites.

Council Member Boleware supported an immediate vote, stating that her position would not change even with further enhancements to the proposal as long as it remained a gas station. She suggested that Sheetz explore other potential locations, such as Grand River and Middle Belt, where their operation might be more compatible.

Council Member Aldred thanked Sheetz for their interest in coming to Farmington Hills. However, he agreed with his fellow council members in comments already made. He noted there are 41 gas stations in Farmington and Farmington Hills, twice the density of neighboring communities, which is why Council has recently changed the ordinance regarding where new gas stations can be located in the City. Having a new gas station at the proposed site did not bring value to the City.

Mayor Rich said that her father had owned a 24-7 gas station in Benton Harbor, and she appreciated there was a time and place for those businesses. In her opinion and for reasons already stated, 12 Mile and Middlebelt was not such a place. She did not believe postponing the decision would make a difference.

MOTION by Bruce, support by Aldred, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby resolves that the applications for PUD Plan 1, 2024, including Site Plan 54-7-2024, both dated July 17, 2024, submitted by SkilkenGold Real Estate Development, are denied, because they do 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:

1. It is not compatible with the area at all.
2. It is too dense of an operation.
3. The light, the noise, and other issues discussed are a negative effect on the area.
4. There is not a public benefit.
5. Council has discussed limiting the number of new gas stations.
6. It will have an adverse effect on the neighborhoods in the area.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE FARMINGTON HILLS CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 2, "ADMINISTRATION," ARTICLE IV, "BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COUNCILS," TO ADD DIVISION 12, "INNOVATION, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION," TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT TO SAID COMMISSION AND ITS AUTHORITY, PURPOSES, DUTIES AND MEMBERSHIP. CMR 1-25-04

MOTION by Aldred, support by Boleware, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the INTRODUCTION of an Ordinance amending Chapter 2 of the code of the City Of Farmington Hills, "Administration," Article IV, "Boards, Commissions, And Councils," to add Division 12, "Innovation, Energy, And Environmental Sustainability Commission," to provide for the establishment of said commission and its authority, purposes, duties, and membership.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF THE REVISED BUDGET STUDY SESSION MEETING DATES OF MAY 13 AND MAY 14, 2025.

MOTION by Bruce, Support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the revised budget study session meeting dates of May 13 and May 14, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF RESCHEDULING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MARCH 10, 2025 TO MARCH 3, 2025.

MOTION by Bruce, Support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby reschedules the regular City Council meeting of March 10, 2025 to March 3, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF AWARD OF BID FOR SIGN SHOP LATEX PRINTER, PLOTTER AND LAMINATOR TO GRIMCO, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$35,804.56. CMR 1-25-05

MOTION by Bruce, Support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to issue a purchase order to Grimco, Inc. of Whitmore Lake, Michigan in the amount of \$35,804.56 for the purchase and installation of a replacement sign shop printer, plotter and laminator located at the Division of Public Works.

Roll Call Vote:

Yeas: ALDRED, BOLEWARE, BRIDGES, BRUCE, DWYER, KNOL, AND RICH
Nays: NONE

Absent: NONE
Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF PURCHASE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RECRUITING POLICE VEHICLE TO LUNGHAMER FORD FOR ONE (1) 2025 FORD MUSTANG IN THE AMOUNT OF \$57,756.00, AND TO UTILIZE EXISTING SUPPLIERS TO EQUIP THE VEHICLE WITH NECESSARY EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT, GRAPHICS, COMPUTER AND RADIO IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$37,244.00. CMR 1-25-06

MOTION by Bruce, Support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to issue purchase order(s) as follows:

- 1) To Lunghamer Ford for one (1) 2025 Ford Mustang in the amount of \$57,756.00.
- 2) To utilize existing suppliers to equip this vehicle with necessary emergency equipment, graphics, computer and radio, not to exceed \$37,244.00.
- 3) The total cost of this project will equal that of the grant amount, \$95,000.00.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF AUTHORIZATION OF AGREEMENT WITH CIVICPLUS FOR TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS IN THE ESTIMATED ANNUAL AMOUNT OF \$20,000. CMR 1-25-07

MOTION by Bruce, Support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to issue a purchase order to CivicPlus for the purpose of providing technology solutions in the estimated annual amount of \$20,000.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF EXTENSION OF BID FOR AS NEEDED FACILITIES ELECTRICAL AND INTERIOR LIGHTING UPGRADES TO GRAYBAR FOR THE DURATION OF THE CONTRACT, WITH POSSIBLE EXTENSIONS. CMR 1-25-08

MOTION by Bruce, Support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to approve all budgeted purchase orders for electrical and interior lighting renovations, data communication and security, hardware and services with Graybar for the

duration of the contract with possible extensions until January 31, 2029, under the same terms and conditions through mutual consent between the City and Graybar.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF EMERGENCY REPAIR OF KITCHEN SANITARY LINE AT COSTICK CENTER WITH GUARDIAN PLUMBING IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$68,648.99. CMR 1-25-09

MOTION by Bruce, Support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby authorizes the City Manager to issue payment to Guardian Plumbing, for the emergency repairs of the broken sanitary line and grease trap issue at the Costick Center, in the grand total amount of \$68,648.99.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF EXTENSION OF AGREEMENT FOR THE 2025 SPRING/SUMMER CITYWIDE PLANTING PROGRAM WITH CRIMBOLI NURSERY INC. CMR 1-25-10

MOTION by Bruce, Support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approves the extension of the agreement with Crimboli Nursery Inc., for the 2025 Spring/Summer Citywide Planting Program; and

FURTHER RESOLVES the authorization of the City Manager and City Clerk to prepare and execute the extension of the agreement on behalf of the City of Farmington Hills and issue a purchase order for the same.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2024.

MOTION by Bruce, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approve the city council regular meeting minutes of December 9, 2024.

Roll Call Vote:

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

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2024.

MOTION by Bruce, support by Knol, that the City Council of Farmington Hills hereby approve the city council study meeting minutes of December 9, 2024.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Nays: NONE

Absent: NONE

Abstentions: NONE

MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Attorney report was received by Council.

ADJOURNMENT

The regular session of City Council adjourned at 12:54AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk