

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER
DECEMBER 11, 2023 – 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 (arrived at 6:12pm), and Rich

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, Interim City Clerk Lindahl, Assistant City Manager Mondora, Directors Kettler-Schmult and Skrobola, Police Chief King, and City Attorney Joppich

ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS – NOISE AND LOADING/UNLOADING TRUCKS

Charmaine Kettler-Schmult, Director of Planning and Community Development, stated that a corporate office in Farmington Hills brought to City’s attention that there were two sections of the city code that deal with noise and the loading and unloading of trucks in commercial districts adjacent to residential districts. Staff has been working with the city attorney's office and found that the older section of the code, Section 18-165, which was enacted in 1981, duplicates what is in the newer portion of the code and is proposed to be repealed so as to defer noise regulation to the more modern noise standards of Section 17-101. She added that Section 17-101 was enacted in 2004, to address maximum permitted noise levels in various zoning districts at specified times of the day.

Director Kettler-Schmult explained that the old section of the code did not allow for loading or unloading of vehicles adjacent to residential districts within 500 feet from 8:00 PM. until 7:00 AM, and the repeal would limit the sound between 7:00 PM and 7:00 AM. but allow for the loading and unloading of vehicles within that time as long as they are kept within the sound limitations that are preserved in Chapter 17. She added that the amendment would now allow for loading and unloading on Sundays and carry over the section of 18 that references noise from a running engine of a truck or trailer that is stopped from that sort of activity for more than 20 minutes.

Discussion was held on Section 18-165(d), unnecessary noise by persons, and how that would be addressed in other portions of the code. Staff explained that would be subject to the decibel level in Section 17.

(Councilmember Knol arrived at 6:12pm)

Council expressed concerns over the idling of trucks, not loading or unloading, in commercial areas close to residential areas for extended periods of time and questioned if the proposed amendment would address that.

In response to Council, Steve Joppich, City Attorney, stated that this ordinance focuses on trucks specifically loading and unloading, however, the amendment will address the Sunday issue and restrict the time trucks are allowed to wait idling to 20 minutes and if the engine is running for more than 20 minutes, and audible on adjacent residential property, they are in violation of the ordinance. He added that under the noise restriction portion of the code, the city may have an enforcement ability on vehicles

idling, not for the purpose of loading or unloading, for extended periods depending on the decibel levels, whether it can be heard across the property line on residential property, and the time frame that is involved.

Council questioned the need for enforcement on trucks blocking ingress lanes and driveways, restricting public access to businesses while loading and unloading.

Director Kettler-Schmult explained that most commercial sites have designated loading and unloading areas and if they are not utilizing that area, the city can notify them that they need to incorporate that into their plans of operations and if it continues to be an issue, they may be subject to a violation, however, staff would need to be notified and see it happening.

Council had questions regarding how decibel levels are measured and if inspectors or officers carry measuring tools and how noise violations are enforced.

Director Kettler-Schmult indicated that if the city is notified of a concern, code enforcement inspectors will inquire about the time of day, duration of the issue and will then go out utilizing a sound meter to observe what is heard at the property boundary and in the event it is off hours and a recurring issue overtime may be authorize for the inspectors to go out and measure during that time.

Police Chief King explained that officers do not carry sound meters and typically by the time they arrive, the trucks are packing up to leave. He noted that the officers will submit a report for follow up, but try to work with the business informing them that they need to implement safeguards to ensure that the delivery trucks are operating according to the city ordinance.

Attorney Joppich clarified that the loading and unloading aspect of the ordinance does not require sound measurement; if the officer can hear the truck at the property line of a residential property, and it has been running more than 20 minutes and there is a witness that can testify to that, the officer will be in good shape to enforce this new section of the ordinance.

The consensus of Council was to move forward with the ordinance amendments.

POLICE DEPARTMENT AXON PROJECT PRESENTATION

Police Chief King thanked Council for fitting this item in to a study session and noted that they are under a time constraint with it being the end of the year. He explained that law enforcement sees rapid advancement of technology in modern policing that covers a variety of areas, and they have difficulty meeting those advances, whether it be with body cameras, tasers, redaction software, computers, technology and vehicles. He added that there is an increasing dependency on subscription-based services, and they have identified an opportunity to advance the departments capability and resources in technology, take advantage of cost savings, consolidate multiple services and technologies into one vendor sole source provider to make the department more effective and efficient.

A video was presented to Council from Axon, highlighting the benefits of their multiple service package for both the police department and the community they serve.

Staff discussed the technologies and services that Axon can provide to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the agency, safety of the officers and community and to reduce liability:

- Safer and more effective tasers

- Adding to the LPR network
- Record after the fact services
- Automatic BWC activation with weapon deployment to combat officer activation failures
- GPS location and remote access to command or dispatch center
- Increase services such as evidence processing, warrant submissions, investigative review, and supervisor review and investigations
- Sympathetic activation
- AI assisted video and document redaction, auditing, and transcription services
- Streaming capability to monitor officers involved in pursuits, active restraint or attacks on officers and provide officers with assisted medical response

Chief King informed Council of his concerns with the performance of the conglomerate of vendors and service providers the department currently has, as well as the state and functionality of their current equipment. He added that Axon's services are supported by the city's IT department, collective bargaining units and the Oakland County Prosecutors office.

Staff discussed the projected annual expenditures over five years both staying with what the department has now and bundling services with Axon. It was noted that with Axon as a sole source provider and their 2023 contract pricing, the savings would be \$823,000 over the course of the five-year contract and the department has the capability in the current fiscal year budget to satisfy the initial cost.

Council inquired about options for the annual funding moving forward, if the city was financially able to handle the additional costs and the risk of having to competitively bid on these services separately.

Staff discussed funding options noting that the city was in good financial shape to fund the additional \$243,000 annually and if this project were to be broke up and bid in various pieces there is the potential of paying a lot more.

Council questioned the urgency to approve this now and why it was not presented in the budget last year. Chief King explained that last year they were still in contract with Watchguard and hopeful to work through the issues they were experiencing. He added that some of the technology and bundling was not yet available at that time, and Axon is trying to push this as quickly as possible before the 2023 contract pricing expires.

Discussion was held on the volume of Freedom of Information requests the police department receives, time it takes for staff to process the requests, turnover rate of the staff reviewing FOIA requests, and how the AI software would save a tremendous amount of time and cut down or possibly eliminate the overtime hours for those reviewing video footage.

Further discussion was held on the urgency to have a letter of commitment or contract signed by the end of the year to avoid increase in costs. Staff explained that they would attempt to contact Axon to see if they would accept a verbal commitment with a contract to follow.

The consensus was to put the contract on the agenda for the first meeting in January subject to review by the City Attorney and City Manager.

ADJOURNMENT

APPROVED 1/8/2024

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, Interim City Clerk