

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Thursday, July 10, 2008, in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m. by Mayor Knol.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Knol, McShane, Wiggins, Wright.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Buck (interviewed DDA candidate by phone).

CITY ADMINISTRATION: City Clerk Halberstadt, City Manager Pastue.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

07-08-117 MOTION by Wiggins, seconded by McShane, to approve the agenda as submitted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

BOARD AND COMMISSION INTERVIEWS

Council conducted an interview with Michele Jakacki for a position on the Downtown Development Authority Board.

Council concurred to meeting on July 18, 2008 at 7:30 a.m. to discuss candidates for various boards and commissions. City Manager Pastue will provide Council with a list of candidates interviewed and the position(s) they were applying for.

CONSIDERATION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE PETITION FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING PERTAINING TO STORM WATER MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS

City Manager Pastue advised the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is imposing new regulations regarding storm water management that would place an excessive financial burden on communities without demonstrated water quality benefit. He noted SEMCOG, an agency that normally supports effective storm water management, opposes these new regulations.

Discussion followed regarding the impact the new regulations will have on communities and resulting costs that cannot be absorbed. Discussion continued regarding actions communities are taking to effectively address storm water management.

Councilmember McShane asked if the MDEQ is imposing these new regulations because they are the only remedy or are there viable options available. She noted Americans at times can take shortcuts to address environmental issues without achieving long term results.

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Pastue responded the proposed resolution is an effort to negotiate with MDEQ to seek viable options that are less cost restrictive.

Knol stated a balance is needed and the MDEQ has chosen to apply costs that cannot be absorbed by communities.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Wright, Pastue confirmed the final decision is up to the MDEQ, however, the resolution ensures the City has exhausted its administrative remedy.

Wright questioned if it will cost even more if the City postpones the inevitable decision from the MDEQ.

RESOLUTION 07-08-118 Motion by Wright, seconded by McShane, to adopt a resolution to authorize petition for a contested case hearing pertaining to Storm Water Management regulations. [SEE ATTACHED RESOLUTION]. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was heard.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilmember McShane expressed concern over the number of ordinance violations throughout the City. She stated the City needs to be proactive in addressing these violations. She requested the City consider contracting out code enforcement to address this issue. She stated the City is at a critical point and action needs to be taken.

Mayor Knol concurred and cited a number of citizen complaints she has received.

City Manager Pastue discussed the procedure by which the City addresses code violations and noted for those owners not in compliance a court order may be necessary. He discussed the court system process and noted the City does not always receive an acceptable resolution.

Councilmember Wright cited a residential property that has been in disrepair for a long time. He questioned why the City has taken so long to address the problem. He discussed the importance of viable residential communities.

Pastue responded the District Court denied the City's right to take action on that particular property. He stated the next step in the process would likely be the Circuit Court.

Wright stated since the City has received no satisfaction from the courts on this property he would be happy to write an editorial concerning this issue in order to gain wider populace involvement.

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Pastue stated historically the City has attempted to work with property owners to resolve code violations, however, this is no longer true in many cases. He stated there has been a fundamental change in the City's approach to chronic violators.

McShane noted the high weeds in a number of residences and specifically the public right-of-way at Drakeshire Plaza. She stated the City needs to keep on top of these violations, noting the "buck stops here."

Wright suggested development of a top twenty list of violations and establish a monthly status report that would include a chronology of actions taken.

Pastue requested Council provide addresses where they see code violations. He stated it is likely many of them are already being addressed.

McShane asked what Council can do to provide assistance to Code Enforcement Officer Koncsol.

Pastue urged Council to call Director Gushman directly regarding code violations.

Knol suggested keeping a spreadsheet of code violations and have Officer Koncsol provide regular updates on their status.

Wiggins stated even though code violations on homes are addressed the homes may still appear unsightly.

Wright stated if judges are not supporting the City in addressing code violations then other tactics are necessary. He emphasized code enforcement issues must be elevated as a priority.

McShane stated residents and business owners need to be educated on ordinance standards.

Knol noted ordinance violators will meet code either through pressure from their neighbors or the City.

Wright remarked code violations beget more violations if they are not addressed in a timely manner. He suggested making code enforcement a standard agenda item for a period of time. He requested a timeline for each violation. He stated the deterioration of a business property is a disincentive for both tenants and customers.

Pastue advised if Council wants quicker response to code violations then additional help would be needed, particularly in the summer time. He noted with an increased response to violations more court appearances would be required and costs would increase.

McShane stated increased response to code violations would be well worth the cost.

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ADJOURNMENT

07-08-119 MOTION by Wright, seconded by Wiggins, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Valerie S. Knol, Mayor

Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

APPROVED: July 21, 2008