

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Monday, January 24, 2005, 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 7:05 p.m. by Mayor Campbell.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Bush, Campbell, Knol, McShane, Mitchell.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

CITY ADMINISTRATION: Clerk/Treasurer Cantrell, City Manager Pastue.

Mayor Campbell requested that City Manager Pastue lead the discussion on the review of Council's 2004 goals.

REVIEW OF 2004 GOALS

Objective 1A. *Continue to maintain and improve public facilities and infrastructure and plan for development and financing of future facilities and infrastructure to accommodate changing needs, including specifically the update of the City's Recreation Plan and the Water Reliability Study.*

Pastue cited the completion of the City's Recreation Plan and noted that the Director of Public Services and City Planner continue to work on the Water Capital Improvements Plan.

Pastue stated in 2005 the language would remain the same except for the removal of reference to the Recreation Plan and that planning issues would be addressed in later goals.

Objective 1B. *Continue to actively pursue public policy issue (i.e., right-of-way Control) related to infrastructure components not under City control, such as, public utilities and telecommunication technologies.*

Pastue stated that there is little activity required by the City related to right-of-way issues and technology infrastructure. He stated much of the activity took place with the Metro Act two years ago.

Councilmember McShane asked if the crosswalk at Starbucks is related to this goal. Pastue responded that it is a right-of-way issue and could be placed under this objective.

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Councilmember Knol suggested putting lights in the pavers on either side of the crosswalk, similar to what has been done in other communities.

McShane noted the need to assign action strategies and the development of deadlines, dates and benchmarks. She suggested greater involvement from Council. Pastue agreed that benchmarks and timelines are important.

Objective 1C. *Conduct a parking-needs assessment to determine adequacy of existing parking, to anticipate future needs, and to identify potential strategies for meeting those future needs.*

Pastue stated that a parking analysis was conducted as part of the Downtown Master Plan indicating a surplus of parking south of Grand River.

He stated that in 2005 the objective could be modified to reflect that the City will continue to monitor current parking adequacy, evaluate future parking needs and develop financial strategies for meeting those needs.

Knol cited City of Plymouth's zoning ordinance as an example of an ordinance that is less restrictive than Farmington's in that it is based more on use rather than square footage.

Pastue discussed parking standards and agreed that Farmington's ordinance is restrictive and should be reviewed with regard to the downtown area.

Responding to a question, Pastue stated the objective would be changed to include a work plan to determine long term parking needs in the downtown. Responding to an additional question, Pastue stated that the Economic Restructuring Committee has already done some of the work in gathering background information.

Objective 1D. *Develop a work plan including analysis and recommendations to address several related issues regarding continuing preservation and improvement of the Governor Warner Mansion's collection, buildings, and facilities, including:*

- *Refining and rethinking the purpose of the facility;*
- *Clarifying current costs of operation;*
- *Increasing public awareness and use of the facility;*
- *Securing additional external funding for the facility; and*
- *Improving reporting use and financing to City Council.*

Pastue stated that Council needs to reach a consensus on how the Mansion should function in the future. He stated that Mansion Director Horvath has several ideas on how the grounds can be better utilized.

Councilmembers McShane and Bush expressed concern regarding operation and funding for the Mansion.

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Councilmember Mitchell expressed support for McShane if she would like to chair a committee to explore opportunities for funding. McShane responded that she would take a leading role, but stressed the importance of involving others in the community.

Knol suggested establishing, with the support of Museum Director Horvath, a Co-Director position that would be responsible for fundraising and development of events appropriate for the Mansion.

McShane recommended setting a special Council meeting to develop an action plan concerning the Mansion.

Knol expressed the need to establish a framework within which the Co-Directors would function.

Discussion continued regarding fundraising and the framework going forward.

Pastue emphasized the need for Council to reach a consensus going forward. He stated that the primary costs of the Mansion are building and ground maintenance. He stated the need to define the purpose of the facility.

Responding to a question, Pastue stated that no major improvements are planned other than the replacement of railing.

Mayor Campbell suggested a review of the Mansion by staff or a building inspector to determine future maintenance costs.

Knol suggested soliciting input from the community regarding their view of the Mansion. She cited an effort in Huntington Woods to seek input from residents to determine the community's priorities. McShane noted that a survey was sent out to residents in the past. Pastue suggested a focus group approach might be effective. Mitchell suggested scheduling and advertising a date for a focus group.

OBJECTIVE 1E. *Consider the feasibility, cost and likely payback of hiring or contracting out for the services of a grant writer to more effectively pursue external funding sources to support facilities and infrastructure improvements.*

Pastue discussed possible grant opportunities and suggested staff could write parks and recreation type grants.

Discussion followed regarding a grant application for a proposed switchback staircase in Shiawassee Park and stabilization of the Rouge River bank.

OBJECTIVE 1F. *Continue efforts to enhance utilization of the Civic Theatre by:*

- *Supporting the newly appointed Civic Theatre Committee;*
- *Continue to identify additional uses, new marketing promotions, and new users/patrons;*

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- *Developing and presenting new events/programs during the year; and*
- *Generating revenue for additional equipment and to upgrade facilities.*

Pastue cited a number of programs implemented by the Committee over the last year. He noted that the "Super Saturday" program has done very well. He stated that the Committee is developing marketing strategies to attract patrons and developing new events for 2005. He noted the \$600 per month income from the pre-film ads.

Knol stated that the Committee recently met for a goal-setting session. She noted that some of the event ideas for the coming year include: a multi-cultural music night tied into the Heritage Festival, a comedy night and a New Year's Eve non-alcoholic festival night.

Bush asked about a final report on the Funny Film Festival. Knol responded that a breakdown of revenue and expenses is available. She stated that the Festival committee continues discussion regarding a future event.

OBJECTIVE 2A. *Monitor the physical condition of properties throughout the community and encourage appropriate development or redevelopment.*

Pastue stated that older commercial areas with out-of-town owners represent where most of the code enforcement effort is spent. He further stated that the City needs to continue to encourage redevelopment.

McShane cited the importance of enforcing city ordinances. She noted that ordinance violations are let go during the weekends.

OBJECTIVE 2B. *Continue to support implementation of the Master Plan and continued vigorous code and zoning enforcement in conformance with the new Zoning Code.*

Pastue stated that landscaping standards are regularly reviewed as part of all site plan approvals. He further stated that the code enforcement officer continues to cite commercial property owners to replace their landscaping.

OBJECTIVE 2C. *Continue ongoing dialogue with commercial property owners, managers and tenants in the community to maintain open lines of communication and to anticipate potential needs.*

Pastue stated that he has met with many of the commercial property owners in the City.

Knol stated that the City should assist, where possible, in the redevelopment of the Frank's Nursery property to ensure it does not become an eyesore.

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Responding to a question, Pastue stated that he is receiving positive responses from property owners in addressing property maintenance issues.

OBJECTIVE 2D. *Conduct an annual tour of the City to review the effectiveness of maintenance and enforcement activities.*

Pastue stated that he considers the annual tour beneficial and suggested that it remain as an objective.

Bush suggested touring the City twice a year in the Spring and Fall. Discussion followed regarding pursuit of a proposed street vacation.

Council concurred to conduct semi-annual tours of the City as part of established special meetings.

OBJECTIVE 2E. *Continue to address environmental improvements related issues, including reforestation/tree replanting programs, brownfield reclamation, Rouge River cleanup, ash borer and West Nile problems, etc.*

Pastue indicated that Flagstar Bank is the most notable result of a Brownfield Redevelopment Plan. He stated that a grant was received for Rouge River bank restoration in Shiawassee Park. He noted that Ash tree removal in the right-of-way is almost completed. He stated that Council may want to discuss removal of Ash trees from private property. He further noted that the City received a grant from Oakland County to place briquettes in catch basins to kill mosquito larvae as part of the West Nile Program.

Discussion followed regarding the River Rouge cleanup and what has been historically done. Mayor Campbell stated that Council relies on the Director of Public Services to determine if there is a need for an organized cleanup of the river. McShane recommended planning a cleanup event as a goal.

Mitchell suggested that Farmington re-instate the annual "Trout Derby".

OBJECTIVE 2F. *Continue to support aesthetic enhancements, such as community beautification efforts and public art programs (i.e. art in the park).*

Pastue recommended keeping the same beautification program as in previous years.

McShane expressed interest in re-establishing a Beautification Committee in the future.

OBJECTIVE 2G. *Monitor and participate as appropriate efforts related to the Farmington Community Foundation and Farmington/Farmington Hills Cultural Arts Master Plan.*

Pastue recommended continuing with the same objectives for 2005.

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OBJECTIVE 3A. *Support completion of the Historical Commission's project to create a database of all historic buildings in the City and investigate the adoption of a Historic Preservation Ordinance to further protect the Historical character and charm of the community.*

Pastue indicated that the Historic Commission has already created the database and the plaques for Historic Homes. He stated that the objective should be revised to incorporate the study to be completed by the Historic District Committee over the next year.

OBJECTIVE 3B. *Develop a work plan for business development, recruitment and retention, incorporating to the extent appropriate a role for elected officials in collaboration with Farmington Hills and other partners.*

Pastue indicated that the work plan was not initiated in 2004 and that Council may want to discuss working with the Chamber, Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Farmington Hills regarding some of the objectives.

McShane suggested a strong partnership with the Chamber and the Farmington Hills Economic Development Committee and that involvement of the DDA and business owners would go a long way in achieving this objective.

Bush stated that "developing partnerships" is what local government is all about.

McShane suggested quarterly meetings to brainstorm and develop an action plan.

OBJECTIVE 3C. *Support Downtown Development Authority programs and activities including analysis and recommendation regarding:*

- *Participation in Oakland County Main Street Program;*
- *Annual updates of the DDA's three-year Action Plan;*
- *Preparation of a DDA Capital Improvements Plan to reflect the recommendations in the DDA Master Plan;*
- *Consideration of revision of the enabling ordinance as well as expansion of the boundaries of the DDA;*
- *Preparation of a marketing plan for enhanced use of existing and proposed public properties (i.e. Civic Theatre, Marketplace Pavilion, etc.) and;*
- *Improve status reporting to Council.*

Pastue advised that the DDA Board will participate in a retreat on February 5, 2005 after which some of their goals will be incorporated with that of the Council's. He indicated that DDA Director Morgan is due to give an update to Council.

McShane suggested that Pastue review this goal with the DDA Board at the retreat.

Mitchell encouraged Pastue to also express the City's views and concerns at the retreat.

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OBJECTIVE 3D. *Support efforts to promote appropriate redevelopment, renovation and retention programs in all commercial areas.*

Pastue stated that the City has had numerous redevelopment projects over this past year. He noted that the Planning Commission developed a Commercial Redevelopment Overlay District to provide developers with greater flexibility and encourage redevelopment of older commercial areas. He stated that he would like to keep the momentum going for the coming year.

OBJECTIVE 4A. *Utilize a variety of means to improve information sharing about community issues to insure that residents can understand and address policy issues, including:*

- *Improvements to the City's website;*
- *Possible creation of a dial-in phone number and/or weblink to provide up-to-date information on the agenda of all meetings;*
- *Consideration of televising council sessions;*
- *Expansion of the newsletter and the calendar; and*
- *Improved media coverage of issues and actions.*

Pastue stated that minor changes have been made to the existing website over the last year; adding minutes and code. He noted that the City changed from a semi-annual newsletter to a modified quarterly update as a budget cutting measure. He further noted that Council had elected not to televise meetings.

McShane indicated interest in adding more cable programming and the formation of a cable committee.

Pastue noted that some of the current programming should be updated.

Bush expressed concern regarding the budget restraints placed on programming.

Mitchell suggested more involvement from the DDA in programming and noted that options for programming are unlimited as long as SWOCC staff is not involved. He stated that if trained volunteers are available studio time could be arranged.

OBJECTIVE 4B. *Explore alternatives to increase communication and information sharing with the City between staff and council members and between Council and Boards and Commissions that provide guidance to decision-making.*

Pastue stated that the City continues to maintain the same level of communication with Council, Department Heads and Boards and Commissions.

Knol requested that the City Manager provide detailed updates on a regular basis.

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McShane requested quarterly reports from various Boards and Commissions. She asked about the process for addressing Board and Commission members who have missed several meetings. She noted some issues with recent Planning Commission decisions; and noted the need for more training and increased communication to the Boards and Commissions.

Knol noted that residents have complained that committee openings are not always publicized well.

Discussion followed regarding Board and Commission attendance that is overall very good; recruitment process; and term limits.

Mitchell noted that vacancies on Boards and Commissions occur infrequently and he expressed concern that there is a public perception to the contrary. Responding to a question, he stated that he does not believe there is a need for term limits except possibly for the DDA Board. He further stated that with term limits the City would lose the history and expertise that many members provide.

Knol stated that consideration of term limits should include discussion regarding the length of term; noting some terms should be longer. She noted the need to train the "younger generation." Discussion followed regarding the merit of term limits.

Bush recommended including the discussion of term limits at a future meeting.

OBJECTIVE 4C. *Continue the Beautification Awards Program sponsored by the Commission on the Environment.*

Pastue recommended maintaining this objective except for the reference to Commission on the Environment.

OBJECTIVE 4D. *Develop a Community Awards Program to recognize the work of individuals and organizations that demonstrate special achievement in the community.*

Council concurred to retain this goal. Discussion followed regarding recognition of Main Street Committee members.

McShane suggested establishing a planning calendar for Council.

DISCUSSION – ZONING ORDINANCE

Council concurred to delay discussion of the Zoning Ordinance until a future meeting. Pastue discussed a future training program that would include the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals; suggesting that the first part of the program would address design standards and the second part would address the "Big Foot" issue. Council concurred to plan a Monday night session sometime in February or March.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEE ISSUES

DDA ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Council concurred to delay discussion until a future meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF VACANCY TO DDA BOARD

Pastue confirmed that the opening on the DDA Board is an undesignated position. Bush recommended that a retail merchant fill the opening. Knol stated that she would like to see diversity including gender on the Board.

Mitchell noted that it is the responsibility of the City Council to recruit for the DDA Board position.

Pastue recommended that Council plan to interview candidates during a special meeting on February 21, 2005. He concurred to send a letter to local businesses informing them of the opening.

Mayor Campbell recommended a February 15th deadline for receiving applications. Council concurred to include the DDA Board in the interview process.

SWOCC PUBLIC ACCESS PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

No discussion took place.

REVIEW OF COURTHOUSE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Council concurred to delay discussion until a future meeting. Pastue stated that the approval of a proposal is scheduled for the February 21st meeting. Mayor Campbell noted the importance of establishing a start date on the project. Discussion followed regarding the process for reviewing proposals.

WEBSITE UPDATE

Pastue stated that the Website Request for Proposal is almost complete; date for issuance will be established by the next meeting.

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Pastue provided copies of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to Council. He noted that a public hearing for the Plan is scheduled in February during the Planning Commission meeting. He stated that the Plan would be presented to Council at the February 21st meeting.

McShane recommended sending a letter of appreciation to the committee members.

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Pastue confirmed that the Plan requires Council approval. Responding to a question, he stated that official notification of the Plan and a scheduled Public Hearing was published. He further noted that an article regarding the Plan was in the local newspaper.

Council suggested a review of the Plan at a Council meeting.

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS

Pastue stated that a public meeting would be held to present the Downtown Improvement project.

LETTER TO DWSD

Pastue provided Council with a draft letter to the Detroit Water and Sewer Department concerning the proposed increase in water rates.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Arnold T. Campbell, Mayor

Patsy K. Cantrell, City Clerk/Treasurer

Susan K. Halberstadt, Recording Secretary

APPROVED: FEBRUARY 21, 2005

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