



City Council Meeting
6:00 p.m., June 15, 2026
23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, MI 48335

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on June 15, 2026 at 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 6:04 PM by Mayor LaRussa.

1. Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Johnna Balk	Mayor Pro-Tem	Present	
Joe LaRussa	Mayor	Present	
Kevin Parkins	Councilmember	Present	
Steve Schneemann	Councilmember	Excused	
Maria Taylor	Councilmember	Present	

City Administration Present:

City Manager, David Murphy
Deputy City Clerk, Susan Alvey
Director of Finance/Treasurer Chris Weber
Director of Public Safety, Bob Houhanisin
DDA Director, Jessica Westendorf
Administrative Assistant Clerk's Office, Jazmin Briones-Guibord
City Attorney, Joellen Shortley
City Attorney, Beth Saarela

2. Approval of the Regular Agenda

Motion by Schneemann
Seconded by Taylor

Resolved, move to approve the regular agenda.

Motion carried unanimously 5-0

3. Public Comment

No public comment was heard.

4. Discussion E-Bikes

Director of Public Safety Bob Houhanisin introduced the discussion regarding electric bicycles and summarized the research conducted by staff and the City's legal counsel concerning current Michigan law. He explained the statutory definitions for Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 electric bicycles and noted that, under the Michigan Vehicle Code, traditional bicycles are permitted on sidewalks while electric bicycles are not. As a result, operation of an electric bicycle on a sidewalk currently constitutes a misdemeanor under state law. He further explained that municipalities cannot reduce the state-law misdemeanor to a civil infraction through local ordinance but may adopt regulations addressing additional operational restrictions consistent with state law.

Director Houhanisin presented several policy options for Council's consideration, including:

- Continuing to rely solely on enforcement of the Michigan Vehicle Code;
- Adopting a local ordinance regulating electric bicycle operation in specific areas, such as the downtown district or parks; or
- Taking no additional legislative action.

Councilmembers discussed balancing pedestrian safety with the desire to provide safe travel options for younger riders and recreational users. Several members shared personal observations of unsafe operation of electric bicycles on sidewalks and expressed concern regarding the speed and weight of electric bicycles in areas heavily used by pedestrians. Council generally agreed that the primary concern was rider behavior and pedestrian safety rather than electric bicycles themselves.

The discussion included whether electric bicycles should continue to be prohibited from sidewalks citywide, while allowing traditional bicycles to remain on sidewalks. Councilmembers noted that traditional bicycles have historically created relatively few conflicts, whereas electric bicycles present greater safety concerns due to their higher speeds and increased weight. Members also discussed the challenges of requiring younger riders to travel on major roadways such as Grand River Avenue and Farmington Road while recognizing the City's commitment to maintaining a walkable downtown environment.

Legal counsel Joellen Shortley discussed how other Michigan communities have approached regulation of electric bicycles, noting that the City of South Lyon had recently adopted an ordinance after extensive public discussion. She explained that while municipalities cannot alter provisions of the Michigan Vehicle Code, they may adopt ordinances addressing matters not specifically governed by state law, including regulations for parks, trails, reporting requirements, and other local safety concerns.

Council also discussed recommendations previously provided by the City's Pathways Committee, which supported prohibiting electric bicycles on sidewalks while continuing to allow traditional bicycles. Members considered whether additional restrictions should apply to park pathways and future trail systems, including the proposed Nine Line Trail,

recognizing that future ordinance language may be needed to address those facilities separately.

Following discussion, Council expressed general consensus supporting enforcement of existing state law prohibiting electric bicycles on sidewalks, coupled with a public education period before active enforcement. Council also directed staff to prepare a draft ordinance for future consideration addressing electric bicycle operation within City parks and park pathways, while leaving regulations governing traditional bicycles unchanged. No formal action was taken, as the discussion was intended to provide policy direction to staff.

5. Discussion GOVERNOR WARNER MANSION ADDITION PROJECT – GENERAL CONTRACTOR

City Manager David Murphy introduced the discussion regarding the selection of a construction manager/general contractor for the Governor Warner Mansion Addition Project prior to Council's consideration of the item during the regular meeting. He noted the discussion would provide Council an opportunity to better understand the recommendation and the evaluation process.

Councilmember Schneemann summarized the evaluation of the firms that submitted proposals. He explained the project involves a complex renovation and addition to a historic structure requiring experience with historic preservation, multiple construction trades, and renovation of occupied historic facilities. He stated the recommended firm demonstrated the experience and sophistication necessary to successfully manage the project, including assisting with anticipated design refinements resulting from public input.

Staff advised that references had been checked for the recommended firm and noted the construction manager would provide valuable cost estimating throughout the design refinement process before the project proceeds to bidding. Council discussed the estimated project budget, noting current estimates exceed available funding and additional funding sources may need to be identified once final construction costs are known. Staff explained that additional information would be available after subcontractor pricing is received and final estimates are completed.

Council members discussed the qualifications of the recommended construction manager, expressing confidence in staff's recommendation and acknowledging that the submitted proposal costs were relatively consistent among the firms, indicating the project scope had been clearly defined. No formal action was taken during the study session.

6. Other Business

City Manager David Murphy provided an update regarding proposed porch concerts within the City. He advised Council that the City Attorney had reviewed the matter and determined the events could proceed with appropriate planning. Staff are working with the event organizer to obtain additional information regarding event locations, vendors, equipment, and notification of neighboring property owners. Council briefly discussed the concept and acknowledged additional details would be presented at a future meeting if necessary.

7. Public Comment

During the second public comment period, resident Flynn Judge shared additional thoughts regarding electric bicycles. He suggested Council consider alternatives to a complete prohibition, including establishing speed limits for e-bikes on sidewalks, requiring riders to yield to pedestrians, and permitting operation on lower-volume neighborhood streets. He expressed concern that the unsafe actions of a small number of riders were negatively affecting responsible e-bike users.

A second resident, David Judge discussed the distinction between Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 electric bicycles and newer electric motorcycles or mopeds that may not clearly fall within existing statutory classifications. The speaker encouraged Council to consider these vehicles as part of any future ordinance and expressed support for establishing clear and consistent regulations.

8. Council Comment

Councilmember Parkins commented on the first Friday Night Concert of the season, noting concerns raised by several residents regarding pedestrian safety and vehicle traffic near the crosswalks. He suggested additional public safety presence during future events may improve pedestrian safety.

Mayor LaRussa reminded Council members to submit their City Manager performance evaluations by the end of the week. He also reminded Council of the upcoming Michigan Association of Mayors conference, which will be hosted in Farmington August 5–7, 2026, and encouraged Council members to attend the August 6 dinner. The Mayor concluded by providing Council with a preview of the Sister City ratification documents prepared for an upcoming meeting

8. Adjournment

Motion by Balk
Seconded by Taylor

Resolved, move to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously 5-0

Joe LaRussa, Mayor

Susan Alvey, Deputy City Clerk