

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
December 12, 2016

Chairperson Crutcher called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, on Monday, December 12, 2016.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chiara, Crutcher, Gronbach, Kmetzo, Majoros, Waun

Absent: Buyers

A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Christiansen, Building Inspector Koncsol, Executive Director Knowles, City Manager Murphy

Heather Seyfarth, Marguerite Novak, OHM

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Christiansen requested to add an item to the Agenda with respect to the calendar for the 2017-2018 Capital Improvement Process.

MOTION by Gronbach, seconded by Chiara, to amend the Agenda to include the calendar for the 2017-2018 Capital Improvement Process.

Motion carried, all ayes.

MOTION by Chiara, seconded by Majoros, to approve the Agenda as amended.

Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes of Regular Meeting – November 14, 2016

MOTION by Gronbach, seconded by Chiara, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried, all ayes.

DRAFT DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN PRESENTATION BY OHM ADVISORS

Chairperson Crutcher introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated this item is a presentation of the Draft Downtown Master Plan by OHM Advisors which is before the Planning Commission for discussion and review. He indicated the Downtown Master Plan was last updated in 2004 and that City administration and OHM, along with the DDA and the Downtown Master Plan Update Steering Committee, have prepared a draft and that Annette Knowles, Executive Director, and Heather Seyfarth and Marguerite Novak from OHM will be making the presentation.

Director Knowles came to the podium and named and thanked each one of the members on the Downtown Master Plan Update Steering Committee. She then introduced and turned the presentation over to Heather Seyfarth from OHM.

Seyfarth started the presentation by saying that OHM had worked diligently to develop a plan that will serve the community. She indicated that the question was posed through a survey "What if Farmington were ...", and that they had received numerous responses from their query. She said their task was to take the answers and shape it into a useful plan by building on the momentum that is already present in the community to attract high quality developers and engage stakeholders to form public and private partnerships in the downtown.

She stated in looking at national trends, aging is the number one factor as one in every five persons will be 65 and older so senior housing would be of high importance located close to amenities and easy to take care of.

She said they looked at how technology can be integrated into the City to make it more efficient, and in addressing mobility within the City that parking conditions would most likely change and that references to parking structures and how to make them adaptable for other uses if not needed anymore was looked at.

She indicated there was extensive stakeholder engagement and a survey that was put together had gotten over 450 responses which were detailed in the appendix of the plan. Focus groups were held with stakeholders, business owners and property owners in the downtown.

She stated they also looked at public projects that could be done to advance a strong sense of place in trying to develop a plan with goals and objectives and strategies and how and where they would be implemented.

She indicated the plan looked at ways to improve access and pathways, implement car and bike parking, improve and enhance pedestrian safety and experience with a more vibrant downtown with streetscaping and a road diet for Grand River.

She stated they looked at incorporating charging stations at key locations and using kiosks to display current events and happenings in the Downtown and integrate public art throughout the Downtown with the use of murals covering up blank walls and other movable art and sculptures as well as integrating activity spaces with movable chairs into the Downtown's areas of interest.

She said that the use of conceptual designs for marketing purposes for potential public and private investors identifying different uses for the downtown could be utilized as a tool to show developers and entice interest in the Downtown.

She identified the areas where mixed use could be put in place with housing on top and retail at the lower level and she cited statistics from a market study that was done which showed that Farmington would be able to absorb higher end apartment rentals with 1 to 200 units projected initially and 400 to 600 units projected over the next six years.

She indicated there is a link to the revised version of the entire plan on the website.

Chairperson Crutcher thanked her and opened the floor up for questions from the Commissioners.

Gronbach inquired if there had been any specific recommendation as far as where they would put parking structures and Seyfarth responded that three locations were proposed and there is a study going on which may modify those proposed locations and plans.

Chiara asked to identify the three locations.

Executive Director Knowles stated they are the combination of the City parking lot and the Library parking lot and that the DDA Board has authorized funds to study that location. The second one is combining the area behind the Village Shoe Inn down to Los Tres Amigos and the last one being the combination of all municipal and Kimco owned parking behind Fresh Thyme and that the Walker parking consultants have been provided a copy of the draft and are evaluating them as part of the parking study that is ongoing.

Director Christiansen detailed the mechanism of a Downtown Master Plan Update and the planning tools utilized in the process which focuses on the City's future in terms of its vitality and continued stability and redevelopment and future economic vitality. He stated the City is at a point now to incorporate all of the findings from all of the different tools and

plans and studies and have them formally reviewed and make them a part of the Downtown Master Plan Update. He thanked the Steering Committee for their hard work and stated this step in the process was to bring it to the Planning Commission for informational purposes only and that it will come back as a completed document in the future for acceptance and adoption and then moved forward to the City Council for their consideration and acceptance.

Christiansen went on to say that the planning process is not a perfect one and how important it is to share ideas and visions and address issues and concerns and come up with a focus for the particular area in question. He stated the Steering Committee was very diligent in reaching out to people as a whole with an extensive survey that was posted online and made available to everyone to weigh in on their vision thereby allowing the City to have a road map to identify what is valuable and viable and how important for the downtown it is that once it's completed to make it a part of the overall Master Plan.

Kmetzo inquired who the main shareholders were that were mentioned in the presentation and Seyfarth stated they were generally the public, residents, business owners and property owners in the downtown. Kmetzo then asked if any input had been received from business owners or property owners that had left the downtown and Seyfarth responded in the negative but that that might provide some valuable information.

Majoros stated that there was a lot of hard work put into this project and it was very informative and then asked Christiansen how this information would be utilized to either prioritize projects or otherwise implement them.

Christiansen responded that there are a lot of moving parts to the comprehensive planning process and that as a professional planner one of the hats that is worn is a focus on the implementation of plans that involves strategy and is dependent in part on the market and the economy.

He described the process and stated the City can help by working with property owners and provide incentives. He cited the 2013 Vision Plan and the four focus areas in that plan that are all in redevelopment because the property owners were all engaged in the process. He indicated there was a strong working relationship with the business community, stakeholders interested in the Downtown, the Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce and Farmington Public Schools when it came to the redevelopment of some of the school properties, meetings were held, there were various boards and commissions involved and ending with review by the Planning Commission and forwarding it for final review by the City Council.

Majoros commended the work being done in the community and Christiansen stated that significant capital investment, whatever shape or form it takes, that without planning and vision for it, will never be realized.

Crutcher thanked everyone for the presentation.

2017 SCHEDULE OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS

MOTION by Chiara, seconded by Majoros, to approve the 2017 Schedule of Planning Commission Meetings.

Motion carried, all ayes.

2017-2018 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS COMMITTEE

Chairperson Crutcher introduced this item and turned it over to staff.

Director Christiansen stated when the annual budget is put together it involves the identification of capital expenditures for big ticket items such as facilities, equipment, and infrastructure and is laid out in a program so there is accountancy and a funding source available. He indicated the State of Michigan has changed some of the statutes that apply to capital improvements and that a Master Plan adopted by a municipality is now required to include a six year capital improvement program. He said the City staff has met and they have given direction to assemble an ad hoc committee to discuss the Capital Improvement Program and do the background work in the development of a draft document to be brought before the City Council for their budget discussions that start in April. He indicated that a member of the Planning Commission is being asked to sit on this ad hoc committee in a monthly meeting and help develop that draft document.

MOTION by Chiara, supported by Kmetzo, to appoint Steve Majoros to the Capital Improvement Process Committee.

Motion carried, all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Chiara inquired about the old Radio Shack property on Grand River and Koncsol indicated there are several possibilities being looked at for the property.

Christiansen indicated there had been violations on the property which resulted in court action.

STAFF COMMENTS

None heard

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Majoros, seconded by Gronbach, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary