

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
August 20, 2007

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Monday, August 20, 2007, 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 6:30 p.m. by Mayor McShane.

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

CITY ADMINISTRATION: City Clerk Halberstadt, City Manager Pastue, Assistant City Manager Richards, Attorney Schultz (arrived 7:25 p.m.).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

08-07-140 MOTION by Knol, seconded by Wiggins, to approve the agenda as presented.

PLANNING COMMISSION INTERVIEW

Planning Commission – Kristen Kuiken

Council interviewed Kristen Kuiken for a position on the Planning Commission.

DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Councilmember Buck presented a power point presentation from North Star Destination Strategies, Inc. regarding the development of a community BrandPrint.

Buck described the bidding process, noting seven bids were received and four were given the opportunity to present their proposals. He stated there was significant census from the Branding Committee to contract with North Star. He further stated that North Star is exactly what the Committee was seeking in developing a brand identity for Farmington. City Manager Pastue stated that the other proposals did not have the depth of knowledge and experience in branding as North Star.

Mayor McShane opened the floor to questions and comments from Council.

Councilmember Wiggins questioned whether there were local firms proposing branding techniques similar to the North Star. Buck noted a possible resource located in Chicago. Wiggins stated he would ideally like to see a few more proposals for comparison.

SPECIAL MEETING -2-
August 20, 2007

Councilmember Buck discussed the references checked in regard to North Star. Population numbers weren't available for many of the references. He noted the Dublin, Ohio reference stated they received a number of marketing proposals, but North Star was the only company offering image branding.

City Manager Vince Pastue stated North Star has established a niche in image branding with very little competition.

Councilmember Wright expressed concern that the follow-up review indicated in North Star's proposal is not included in the original fee. Buck felt those costs were included. Wright then expressed concern regarding external forces that will influence the implementation of the total package from North Star. He expressed the need for an outside firm to brand Farmington's image, but cautioned the City may not like the feedback North Star will provide. He stated to be attractive and competitive a City must move out of its comfort zone.

Councilmember Knol expressed concern over the additional costs involved in implementing the plan. She recommended forecasting the cost in the budget to ensure the plan succeeds. Buck responded it would be difficult to predict the cost of implementing the brandprint because it will be included in many of the publications that currently exist such as the newsletter, website, etc.

Knol shared a recent conversation with a developer who commented that a parking structure and land consolidation would be projects that best serve a small city. She stated the developer felt it was difficult to brand a small community unless the city had a unique or special attraction to draw people to visit.

Councilmember Knol reviewed the City of Plymouth's success using North Star. She discussed her conversation with the Plymouth DDA Director and learned of pros & cons regarding North Star. She stated the DDA Director indicated they used a company, New Moon, to complete what North Star had started. The Plymouth DDA Director commented that "Branding is what you are, not what you wish you could be". The DDA Director stated they were ready for branding because they had a product to brand. The DDA Director further stated that although they continued to work with North Star they weren't happy with the way North Star adjusted their approach to fit a small city.

Knol stated Plymouth believed money would be better spent on product and preferred a local company, DMI, that was better suited to meet their needs. She commented this may be another option for Farmington to consider. She continued to list her concerns regarding other projects that need to be completed before implementation of a branding process.

Councilmember Buck felt a conference with developers would help alleviate concern regarding questions that remain unanswered. He agreed with the concerns expressed by Councilmember Knol regarding Plymouth's unhappiness with North Star. He noted that New Moon was very complimentary of North Star and in fact completed some of North Star's plan for Plymouth. He hoped Council would continue to focus on the City's

SPECIAL MEETING -3-
August 20, 2007

future direction and concentrate on creating more energy in the community. He feels the Branding Committee's support of North Star should carry some weight with Council.

Mayor McShane asked regarding background references of North Star staff. Pastue responded their resumes were included in the proposal. She stated her concerns regarding North Star's view of Farmington. Buck explained that North Star's job is to come back to Council with a program that promotes energy and creates positive attention toward Farmington. He explained Council will choose from three marketing themes to develop a central program for the City of Farmington.

Mayor Mcshane asked regarding the responsibility for implementing and tracking the branding recommendations and will it include the entire City?" She agreed with Councilmember Knol's concerns over cost. She asked how branding will be incorporated into City goals and moves the City forward.

Pastue advised when the recommendations are received the procedure for implementation will be developed and costs will be incorporated into the budget using the City's many resources.

Mayor McShane stated she was impressed and comfortable with the presentation but was concerned with the cost. She stated she would like to provide the community information regarding the scope of the program and why it is needed. She shared her concern for expediency in raising the community's consciousness and thanked everyone for all their hard work.

Pastue postponed discussion regarding Agenda Item No. 5, Proposed Outdoor Burning Code Changes, to the regular meeting agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Greg Cowley, resident, business owner, and President of the DDA, thanked everyone for all the hard work expended regarding the branding process. He commented how North Star branding is money well spent. He reminded the Council about being realistic when deciding how to market Farmington's image. He felt North Star's scientific approach to branding Farmington is helpful in that statistical validation is a big element that should not be ignored. He liked that North Star had proven methodology and supported references. In his eyes, the need for a unified vision for Farmington is essential. He shared comments heard regarding Farmington. He noted Joan Primo, who had completed the retail analysis for Farmington, indicated Farmington is a retail center trying to become a downtown. He stated this isn't the image Farmington wants. He further noted Dan Burden had commented that Farmington is not Main Street U.S.A. due to the four line highway running through downtown Farmington. He felt the City needed to key in on a slogan and that the DDA would support the increase in cost to

SPECIAL MEETING -4-
August 20, 2007

contract with North Star for a brand program. He challenged Council to support North Star's proposal.

Scott Freeman, resident and DDA Director, commented on public's inability to distinguish between the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. He stated this is where the City of Farmington's identity comes into play. He further stated Farmington needs to stand out from our neighboring communities.

Hank Borgman, resident, expressed concern regarding Dan Burden's opinion that traffic circles are safe. He stated as a pedestrian the walkability of Farmington would be best served by leaving the roads the way they are.

Dave Cornwell, business owner, and DDA Board member, stated that Farmington has a perception problem. He noted a recent prospective business owner commented that Farmington was a dead zone. He further noted other that indicated perception problems with the City. He felt the DDA would support the North Star proposal. He felt Farmington had a stellar panel researching branding companies and their choice of North Star was due to North Star's understanding of what Farmington is looking for.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilmember Knol stated her concern that Farmington wasn't ready to be branded. She's not sure if Farmington has a product that is ready to sell. Knol felt branding is about who you are, it's not about what you want or wish to be. She feels there is a lot of work still to be done in Farmington before the City is ready to brand. She is in favor of raising awareness through promotion, marketing, and advertising. Knol complimented the committee on a fine job, but expressed concern regarding Farmington's readiness for a branding program.

Councilmember Wiggins advised the City should keep an open mind regarding the study and be ready to hear both positive and negative feedback.

Mayor McShane asked regarding the next step if there is negative commentary from the study.

Councilmember Wiggins commented that Farmington needs an outside source to define Farmington as it currently is and provide a process of how to get where it needs to be.

Councilmember Wright commented "Farmington is what it is" and fits a demographic within a broader community. He stated knowing what you are can be the first step in pulling everyone together toward one single direction. He feels Farmington should enter into this study only if they are willing to hear the findings with an open mind and be willing to change perception as a result of the study. Wright stated that a clear definition of Farmington will bring people to our City who are of similar mind. He would like to see everyone agree on what Farmington is and get on the same page.

SPECIAL MEETING -5-
August 20, 2007

Councilmember Buck shared the concerns regarding branding and the perceptions regarding Farmington. He believes the study will come back with positive themes showing the upside of Farmington and what makes Farmington the attractive community it is. He stated this in turn will protect its housing and commercial property value. He believes that Farmington needs to increase interest in the community and investing in North Star is an investment in Farmington's future.

Mayor McShane commented that when talking to Farmington Hills residents they can't tell the difference between living in the City of Farmington and Farmington Hills, but when talking to the City of Farmington residents they know the difference and can state why they live in the City of Farmington. She was confused regarding the statement suggesting that Farmington is a dead zone. She questioned "If we are a dead zone how did Farmington get listed as one of the top one hundred cities in the nation?" She commented it was one person's perception and that doesn't hold true for a lot of other people. Mayor McShane advised that the cost of doing nothing may be a greater than the cost of taking progressive action. She recommended Councilmembers take a look at what they want to do to strengthen the community.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

JoAnne M. McShane, Mayor

Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

Susan Pohto, Recording Secretary

APPROVED: September 17, 2007