

JOINT MEETING OF
FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
AND
FARMINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 24, 2004

A special meeting of the Farmington/Farmington Hills City Councils and Farmington Board of Education was held on Tuesday, February 24, 2004 at the Farmington Community Library, 23500 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 6:41 p.m. by Farmington Mayor Arnold Campbell.

FARMINGTON COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bush, Campbell, Knol, McShane, Mitchell

FARMINGTON CITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Clerk/Treasurer Cantrell, City Manager Pastue

FARMINGTON HILLS COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Akouri (arrived at 7:17 p.m.), Barnett (arrived at 7:40 p.m.), Brickner, Bruce, Ellis, Massey, Oliverio

FARMINGTON HILLS CITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

City Manager Brock, City Clerk Dornan

FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bolsen, Brouillette, Inch, Reid, Wallach (Board member elect)

FARMINGTON SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Diane Bauman, Director of School/Community Relations; Nancy Ely, Program Director-Fairview Elementary; Robert Maxfield, Superintendent; Mary Reynolds, Executive Director of Business; David Ruhland, Director of Human Resources; Sue Zurvalec, Deputy Assistant Superintendent.

The meeting opened with introductions and welcomes from Mayor Campbell, Mayor Pro Tem Ellis and School Board President Brouillette.

UPDATES

LOOKING BACK AT LAST YEAR'S DISCUSSION

City Manager Brock provided a brief review of last year's discussion based on a summary report submitted by facilitator, Dr. Joe Ohren, from Eastern Michigan University.

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DOWNTOWN FARMINGTON MASTER PLAN

City Manager Pastue reviewed the Downtown Farmington Master Plan. He spoke about the process used in developing the Plan. He discussed the highlights of the Plan including: a park area, lighting, parking and in-fill development. He spoke about the practicality of residential development in the Downtown District and the goal of expanding the tax base. He stated the Plan should be completed by the end of April 2004.

Council member Knol advised that the purpose for in-fill development planning is to increase density in the Downtown in both the retail and residential sectors.

Responding to a question from Council member Ellis, Pastue stated re-zoning for high density in the Downtown has not yet been addressed. Responding to an additional question from Ellis, Pastue stated that the Main Street Planning Committee is looking at a mix of office, retail, residential, etc. that is appropriate for the Downtown. He noted that two current deficiencies are office and residential.

Discussion continued regarding aspects of the Plan and the need to include a school representative in the planning process as it relates to the Training Center. Pastue noted the Plan is long-term and will cover the next 10 to 20 plus years. Responding to a question from Council member Brickner, Pastue indicated that some current buildings would be lost in building a parking structure.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OUTDOOR FACILITIES STUDY

Superintendent Maxfield spoke about the School's Master Plan for outdoor facilities. He advised that the Plan includes provisions for artificial turf fields, a variety of baseball and softball fields, track fields, tennis courts and connected walking areas, at each of the three High Schools and lesser so at the Middle Schools. He stated that if the Board approves the Master Plan, the options for funding the project could include either a sinking fund millage, bond issue or pay-as-you-go. He discussed the next steps in the process of bringing this project to fruition.

City Manager Brock noted that this project would be a cooperative effort on the part of the Cities and School in that it would be for community use also. Council member Ellis suggested that the Schools research grant opportunities for this project. Discussion continued regarding other options for funding.

ELECTION CHANGES

Superintendent Maxfield advised that although it is important to understand the new election law, he would like to delay discussion until a meeting can be arranged with the City Managers and City Clerks.

City Clerk Dornan explained the new law concerning election consolidations. She stated that the law obligates the schools to choose one of four established dates to conduct their elections, with the addition of a fifth “floater” date under certain conditions. She further stated that local Clerks are now authorized to run School Elections. Clerk/Treasurer Cantrell noted that the original premise of the law was to save taxpayer money and to ensure that voters knew where and when they would vote. Discussion followed regarding the issues to be addressed as a result of this new legislation.

FOCUS ISSUE: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND ISSUES FOR POLICY MAKERS

Facilitator: Joan Lessen-Firestone, Ph.D.,
Director of Early Childhood for Oakland Schools

Superintendent Maxfield introduced Joan Lessen-Firestone, Ph.D., recognized expert in the field of early childhood education and Nancy Ely, Program Director at the Fairview Early Childhood Development Center. He noted the presence of Bev Papai, Farmington Library Director, who was present to discuss early childhood development.

Dr. Lessen-Firestone’s presentation covered the following: an overview on how to promote success in early childhood; the State’s plan, called “Ready to Succeed Partnership”; and the role of municipal leaders.

Discussion followed regarding the key roles for municipal leaders in helping young children succeed and included: assessing community needs, making early childhood a priority, strengthening families, promoting child health and safety, enhancing early learning opportunities and expanding access to high-quality and affordable child care.

Discussion continued regarding the various programs offered in the community through agencies such as: the Commission on Children, Youth and Families, YMCA, Oakland Family Services and Children’s Youth Assistance. Further discussion ensued regarding the critical need for quality infant and toddler care.

Dr. Lessen-Firestone commended the community leaders for their programs in early childhood development and for their state leadership role in promoting pre-kindergarten education programs.

Nancy Ely spoke about a current program, “Picture Books for Kids”, where picture books are collected and distributed to children of different languages from ages 0 to 7.

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Dr. Maxfield asked for a volunteer from Farmington to serve on a joint City/School Early Childhood Coordinating Committee.

Library Director Papai spoke about modification of the State's Great Start Program by the Early Childhood Task Force, to meet the issues and concerns of the Farmington/Farmington Hills community. She discussed the critical components of this program that included: medical support system for each child, early childhood mental health, early care and education, parent education, family support and public awareness.

Director Papai stated the Task Force has two areas of focus: information for families and opportunities for caregivers. She advised that reading is the best indicator of lifetime success. She noted that the Task Force would be working with various groups in the community on early childhood issues.

OTHER ISSUES

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council member Knol asked for an update on the Farmington Public School transportation facility improvements in light of the need to sell the former courthouse. Dr. Maxfield responded that bids have been awarded and much of the work will be completed in the summer, but access to the courthouse will be needed into early fall.

BOARD MEMBERS

No comments were heard.

WRAP-UP

Mayor Barnett asked for support and assistance from community leaders in urging legislators to enact a "fix" to the Headlee Cap and Proposal A in order to provide adequate funding for schools and communities. Discussion followed regarding taxation and the need for change.

School Board Member Bolsen announced a forum, sponsored by the Multicultural Multiracial Counsel, will be held on March 11, 2004, 9:00-10:30 a.m., at the Farmington Hills Library. She stated that programs and services would be discussed as part of an ongoing strategic planning process.

Council member Bush stressed the need to sell the former 47th District Court building and confirmed with City Manager Pastue that sale of the property is proceeding in spite

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of the temporary occupancy by Farmington Public Schools. Pastue stated that the property title is held by the Farmington Building Authority. He stated that there has been a long-term arrangement with the City of Farmington Hills regarding distribution of assets related to sale of the building.

Farmington Schools invited the City officials to a Parenting Conference that will be held at the Farmington Training Center on March 13, 2004 and noted further information can be obtained on their website.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Campbell adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

CITY OF FARMINGTON

Arnold T. Campbell, Mayor

Patsy K. Cantrell, City Clerk/Treasurer

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS

Vicki Barnett, Mayor

Kathryn A. Dornan, City Clerk

FARMINGTON SCHOOL BOARD

Priscilla Brouillette, President