



**FINAL**

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**SPECIAL STUDY SESSION MEETING MINUTES**

A Special Study Session meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on October 1, 2012, in Conference Room A, Farmington City Hall, Farmington, MI. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Buck.

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**1. ROLL CALL**

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Arrived</b>
J.T. Buck	Mayor	Present	
Greg Cowley	Councilmember	Absent	
William Galvin	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	
Kristin Kuiken	Councilmember	Present	
JoAnne McShane	Councilmember	Present	

**City Administration Present**

City Clerk Halberstadt  
City Manager Pastue  
Attorney Schultz

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	JoAnne McShane, Councilmember
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Kristin Kuiken, Councilmember
<b>AYES:</b>	Buck, Galvin, Kuiken, McShane
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Cowley

**3. DRAKESHIRE SHOPPING CENTER REQUESTED ACTIONS**

Pastue advised the Drakeshire Shopping Center property owners have expressed concern regarding the proposed debt schedule associated with the Special Assessment Agreement. They are concerned about their cash flow and ability to secure tenants in a timely manner.

Pastue indicated he contacted Talmer Bank regarding alternative financing arrangements that would give the owners an opportunity to complete the project and find tenants. He advised payment was set up for the July tax bill, although it could

probably be put on December bill. He noted if the owners did not pay, reconciliation of payment would occur with Oakland County.

Kuiken inquired if this was the first time the owners had seen the debt schedule and Pastue responded in the affirmative.

McShane inquired about the consequences of waiting till Spring to move forward on the project. Pastue responded tenants are needed now and it would be difficult to find them if the Center is not ready.

Galvin asked if there were any tenants lined up. Pastue responded there was a possible restaurant and that others are waiting until renovations are final.

Kuiken asked if meeting the debt schedule seemed more feasible if there was leniency on the front end of the schedule and Pastue responded in the affirmative.

Buck questioned how tenant improvements would be made if an alternative financial arrangement is provided.

McShane expressed her concern regarding the commitment by the owners to making the payments given the risk taken on by the City.

Galvin asked regarding the structure of the payment schedule. Pastue advised the first 1 1/2 years would be interest payments only. The principle payments of \$80,000 would be applied to the remaining five years with the interest recalculated.

Buck asked if they were utilizing a broker's services to obtain tenants and Pastue responded in the affirmative.

Galvin asked for a progress report from the owners in their search for tenants.

No action was taken.

#### **4. FARMINGTON ROAD STREETScape GRANT AUTHORIZATION**

Pastue advised DDA Director Knowles and the Board were working on a grant application for Farmington Road improvements from Grand River south to Slocum. He said they are at a point where they're ready to prepare grant application forms and will be looking for City Council authorization for same.

Director Knowles provided some background on the proposed Farmington Road Streetscape. She advised an earlier traffic study of Farmington Road provided justification for the project. They have been working with the Road Commission over the past year on design to ensure they were on board with the project. She felt their early participation in the project garnered their support for same. She stated the next step is to apply for transportation alternatives and has had discussion with MDOT and SEMCOG concerning likelihood of being awarded the grant.

Knowles reviewed a drawing of the proposed streetscape citing goals of improved walkability, neighborhood and downtown connectivity.

McShane inquired about the closure of a curb cut at Hershey's Ice Cream Shop as well as bump-outs for restaurant outdoor seating. Knowles responded additional sidewalk footage would allow for same.

McShane further asked if the Grand River Streetscape color theme would be carried through to the Farmington Road project and Knowles responded in the affirmative.

McShane also expressed concern over a truck's ability to make the turn from Farmington Road onto eastbound Grand River. Knowles responded additional sidewalk footage would help widen the turn.

Kuiken inquired if the area in front of Hershey's had been considered for a green space. Knowles responded that owners will be approached in the preparation of the grant regarding the importance of the same as well as public spaces for gathering and outdoor seating.

Galvin asked if the City had considered a truck bypass for the Farmington Road/Grand River intersection. Pastue responded there is less truck traffic as a result of the Grand River Streetscape and the only bypass would be Orchard to Grove Street.

Galvin cited two difficult parking lots, the Village Commons and the one near Firestone and inquired how the lots will be re-configured. He also asked if the traffic study showed that reducing access to Hershey's would cause more traffic on State Street.

Buck indicated that the traffic flow on Grand River as a result of the Streetscape has improved immensely. Knowles stated the traffic study showed the same result would occur for the proposed Farmington Road streetscape.

Kuiken stated the plans looked good for the project and that it would spruce up the area.

Pastue stated that one area of significant improvement would be the sidewalk on the east side of Farmington Road, just south of Grand River

A handout was provided with regard to the project financing, broken down into two phases and were as follows:

Road/drainage	\$400,000
Landscaping/lighting/pavers	<u>863,000</u>
Total	\$1,263.200

#### Financing Sources

Capital Improvement Fund	\$100,000
Grant proceeds	713,200
General Fund Transfer	\$1,263,200

Other alternatives for funding other than General Fund Transfer:

- Proceeds from sale of courthouse
- DDA contributions

- DDA Debt obligation
- Unallocated capital improvement surplus
- Road improvement millage - up to \$400,000
- Combinations of the above

Pastue indicated action on this item is slated for the October 15<sup>th</sup> Council agenda.

Buck stated he would like to walk the proposed streetscape area and get a better feel for the proposed changes. He advised communication with business owners is key. Knowles stated that a marketing plan would be developed and communicated to the businesses.

#### **5. WARNER STREET IMPROVEMENTS - GRAND RIVER TO THOMAS**

Pastue provided background on proposed improvements to Warner Street. He noted this is an excellent time to consider incorporating streetscape improvements given the recent purchase of Dimitri's by the DDA.

Director Knowles reviewed the plans for the Warner Street improvements including the addition of parking on the east side of Warner.

McShane inquired if they would be working with the church on possible enhancements, i.e. brick work, parking on north side of church, etc. She stated it would be beneficial to approach nearby businesses to see if they have a need to repave their parking lots or walkways which could be incorporated into project.

Kuiken inquired if sidewalk would be narrower after the project and Knowles responded in the negative, that it would actually be wider.

Responding to a question from McShane, Pastue stated any changes to the width of walkways would comply with ADA requirements.

Galvin asked if increased traffic flow was anticipated with the proposed changes and Pastue responded in the negative. Further discussion followed regarding proposed parking spaces.

Buck inquired about estimated cost and Pastue responded approximately \$200,000.

Galvin asked about anticipated date of project and Pastue responded early 2013.

McShane commented it was a good thing Farmington Road was not slated until 2014 given the other projects the City is undertaking in 2013.

Galvin inquired about the length of the project. Pastue responded it will start in April and last a good portion of the construction season.

McShane commented that these projects involve all the main streets that surround the City and the enhancements will make it a homier feel, sense of place, etc.

Kuiken noted the proposed walkways will be a significant improvement also.

Pastue indicated future changes include more on-street parking on Oakland between Grand River and Farmington Road.

## **6. PROPOSED ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REORGANIZATION**

Pastue discussed proposed re-organization involving a number of departments to create a focused economic/community development effort. He stated Farmington is at a crossroads with continuing financial challenges. Administration continues to look at how to strengthen neighborhoods with increased community and economic development. He noted with the retirement of DPW Director Gushman those funds could be re-purposed to enhance the same.

Pastue identified the following objectives of reorganization:

- Build on strength of strong neighborhoods
- Redeploy existing resources
- Context of long term sustainable budget
- Address concerns with DDA budget
- Improve on support with Boards and Commissions
- Enhance quality of staff support to certain boards and commissions
- Ensure the organization is able to withstand future staff changes

Pastue discussed elements of the restructuring which will involve a number of departments including City Manager, Code Enforcement, DDA and the Department of Public Works. He noted there would be less reliance on LSL Planning, Inc.

Pastue indicated proposed changes would require an additional \$25,000 from the general fund and the DDA Board would have to agree to have the Director move to the City Manager's office. He noted job descriptions will be redone for affected jobs.

McShane expressed support for what she believes is a very progressive move that would turn empty buildings into opportunities and utilize department retirements to shift people around and make more out of less.

McShane stated this is an opportune time given the uptick in the retail real estate market and hearing citizens cry for stores to be filled. She stated this proposed action is in line with Council's goals.

Galvin stated this is a tremendous example of Farmington positioning itself as a leader into the future rather than dealing with same old problems of the past. He indicated by raising property values it will be a more sustainable endeavor and will give us more financial stability in the long term.

Kuiken stated it was exciting to hear about the economic development/community development position, it being critical for the city to remain focused on this issue. She inquired about how the hierarchy would be effected by same and how those issues would be resolved.

Pastue responded that the potential for disagreements may be there but insignificant; and that the changes will provide increased business recruitment and retention and more financial resources for the DDA.

Kuiken expressed support and indicated it was a great way to reallocate resources.

Buck stated the City has been looking to focus on economic development for some time and noted the City Manager has carried the burden for this through his various projects. He believes these changes will help the City move closer to their goals, that change was needed and moving forward would not be possible without same. He stated he would rather see this position as a Business Development Director.

Pastue expressed appreciation for Council's support.

## **7. BUSINESS ITEMS**

McShane advised she will not be in attendance at the first January meeting and suggested consideration should be given to not holding same.

Galvin indicated he would like more than one meeting in January and preferred finding an alternative date.

Pastue advised that due to budget there may be a couple of meetings scheduled in January.

Buck indicated he would probably not be in attendance at the January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, but would be available on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was heard.

## **9. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was heard.

## **10. COUNCIL COMMENT**

McShane complimented Director Knowles and all the volunteers on a very successful Harvest Moon celebration.

Kuiken inquired how the dispatch changeover went and Pastue indicated fairly smooth.

Buck asked if the first week report concerning the changeover would be available. Pastue stated Director Schulz will provide same.

McShane asked how issues that arise during the weekend would be handled. Pastue responded he should be contacted or Director Schulz.

Galvin stated that the orange barrels that resulted from MDOT working on sewer lines on Grand River made walking on the sidewalk safer.

Buck expressed concern that there are not enough young people involved in civic activities and to keep this in mind when making Board and Commission appointments.

**11.ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn the meeting.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	JoAnne McShane, Councilmember
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Kristin Kuiken, Councilmember
<b>AYES:</b>	J.T. Buck, William Galvin, Kristin Kuiken, JoAnne McShane
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Greg Cowley

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

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J. T. (Tom) Buck, Mayor

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Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_