

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
City Council Conference Room, 23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
March 9, 2020

Chairperson Crutcher called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall Conference Room, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, on Monday, March 9, 2020.

ROLL CALL

Present: Crutcher, Kmetzo, Majoros, Perrot, Waun, Westendorf (Arrived 7:14 p.m.)
Absent: None
A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Christiansen, Recording Secretary Murphy

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Waun, supported by Perrot, to approve the Agenda.
Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

A. February 10, 2020 Minutes

MOTION by Majoros, seconded by Perrot, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.
Motion carried, all ayes.

PUBLIC HEARING – 2021-2026 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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

Director Christiansen stated this item as indicated in the staff report is a Public Hearing on the 2021-2026 City of Farmington Capital Improvement Program. The Capital Improvement Program Steering Committee and City staff have been working diligently on updating the program to incorporate into the City Master Plan and are requesting the Planning Commission to hold the Public Hearing tonight at the March 9, 2020 Planning Commission meeting. As you recall, at your February 10, 2020 meeting, the Commission scheduled the Public Hearing for the Capital Improvement Program for this evening. The Planning Commission is required by State statute to consider a Capital Improvement Program for the community, in this case the City of Farmington, on an annual basis for a period of six years and to incorporate that Capital Improvement Program into the City's Master Plan. There is a requirement for the Planning Commission to hold a Public Hearing and so it was scheduled, as indicated, the Public Hearing Notice was published, and the draft 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Program is attached with your staff packet for your review and consideration.

So the purpose this evening, Mr. Chair, is to hold the required Public Hearing, and to take any comment, and again, this has Noticed and it's been published in the paper, it's been posted on the City website and it's also been posted here at City Hall for the required period of time. You've actually probably had, if I recall correctly, two, maybe three discussions about this Capital Improvement Program. You considered the appointment of a Planning Commission member to serve on the Capital Improvement Program Steering Committee, and I believe that was an initial discussion back in December. You then went ahead and we had dialogue about the draft Capital Improvement Program in January, then you considered it as drafted by the Committee and then forwarded to you in scheduling for the Public Hearing in February. It was actually almost complete at that time, you might recall that you scheduled the Public Hearing and then the final draft was February 21st, made available to everybody and that's been what's been posted on the website. So if you go to the City website, it is the first item on the website under items of interest and also under the, I believe it is latest news section. When you scheduled the Public Hearing, that was posted there as well, as well as here at City Hall and the newspaper. So, if we look, I'll scroll down, this is the Notice, and this is typically consistent with the Notices that are required by State statute and what the City has posted before, informing everyone that the Planning Commission is holding the required Public Hearing. The purpose of the Capital Improvement Program then with respect to the work that was done by the Steering Committee, compliance with State statutory requirements, and the City's Charter, and again, the program and CIP to be incorporated into the City's Master Plan. So, this Notice was out, it has been in the newspaper and has been confirmed. So, with that, Mr. Chair, I can turn it back over to you. I think what is the course of action this evening is for the Commission to ask any questions that you might have, and if you don't have any initially, would be to open the required Public Hearing, take an comment, close the Public Hearing after you receive comment and then come back to the Commission for your consideration and for any other questions that you may with a final action then this evening that would be a consideration of the draft and action on the draft and forwarding it to the City Council for their review and consideration.

This really is your document in accordance with State statute. So what you're doing is acting on this document, if you so choose, in approving the draft and then forwarding it onto Council again for their consideration as a public document because as we've discussed, the City of Farmington has incorporated the Capital Improvement Program as part of their overall budget program. Even though this is the Planning Commission's responsibility for the Capital Improvement Program portion of the overall City budget. So, with that, I'll turn it back over to you, sir.

Chairperson Crutcher opened the floor for questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Perrot stated that the only comment that he has is just to make sure that once this gets passed along to Council, is that they don't lose sight of exactly what this is. It's a need list from the people that we count on to tell us what we need, you know, and I may sound like a broken record, but they're our subject matter experts for each one of their departments. So, you know, public outcry, and personal interests and emotions aside, we need to stay focused on what we need and I just want to make sure that we don't lose sight of that.

Commissioner Majoros stated that his comment is not as a Commissioner, but as a "Joe Q Public", that there's a lot on here that they've seen before, for instance the streetscape, the Farmington Road Streetscape, you look at that and you say 4 million bucks and maybe there's a grant that eats a million of that, right; so whether it ever happens, who knows, right, that's a huge investment potentially. But part of it is the streetscape on Grand River was an enabler to a lot of other businesses, restaurants, the kind of things that could benefit from the notion of having a streetscape. This is again my personal opinion, so I find it really hard to say or when this potentially could happen, that we do all this streetscape work when we've got a tire store, there are businesses that aren't really to me enablers or those that would benefit greatly. A CVS, right, the CVS is going to be there regardless. The Grand River Streetscape, I think we would all argue along with a lot of other good things that you have done, the DDA has done, has enabled that to grow and prosper. The Farmington Road mechanics and the structures we have there, just don't seem like we're going to fundamentally reshape, like the CVS is going to become whatever, it's going to be a CVS. And so we're going to beautify all of this potential space and it looks nice but what's the purpose of such a thing, and again, that's my personal opinion.

The balance of it, having gone through this, read it, and been a part of it, I think a lot of the comments that we have made still held true. What Commissioner Perrot has said, we've made that point; I know Commissioner Kmetzo has talked about can we get a list of what was done, and what's new, I think that Chris Weber and the team have done a great job responding to that. I think they've been very clear on what the priorities are. I think the feedback that we have always given was, kind of to your point, Geoff, is one of the things that makes the City tick, the fundamental services that people come to expect, the fundamental issues that need to be addressed such as drain repair and fundamentally necessary equipment and it might not be the sexiest things but they're the stuff to keep things running. So that's just a personal comment of mine and then also having been a representative of what I've seen come through, and I think that what we've got is pretty darn good.

Chairperson Crutcher called for a motion to open the Public Hearing.

MOTION by Waun, supported by Perrot, to move to open the Public Hearing.
Motion carried, all ayes.

(Public Hearing opened at 7:11 p.m.)

PUBLIC HEARING

Hearing no comments, Chairperson Crutcher called for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

MOTION by Majoros, supported by Waun, to close the Public Hearing.
Motion carried, all ayes.

(Public Hearing closed at 7:12 p.m.)

Chairperson Crutcher asked Christiansen what the Planning Commission's action would be on this item.

Director Christiansen stated that there are 117 projects in this Capital Improvement Program, and a total of 28.2 million dollars which is consistent with the number of projects, a little more, a little less than the Commission has been considering for the past number of years in accordance with the Capital Improvement Program process the City has implemented on an annual basis now for a number of years, both in accordance with State statute and City Charter. The dollar amount is more in 2020 than it was in 2019, and so on and so on. Again, this is a six-year program. As Commissioner Perrot indicated, this is a list of desired projects, desired at certain levels. Priorities, some maybe not as much a priority as others, some desired, some needed but maybe can be deferred, some very large and significant in scale, and then also in cost, others maybe not as much, but they are pretty much all focused on Capital Improvement needs of the community. If you take a look here real quick, this is the current draft, so this is what Mr. Majoros had made a comment about and that's the Farmington Road Streetscape shown here. In any event, and I don't know if Mr. Majoros wanted me to make a quick comment on that or not.

(Commissioner Westendorf arrived at the meeting at 7:14 p.m.)

Majoros replied when thing this happen, there's a purpose for everything that's in here. And the purpose to fix the Mayfield Drain is to stop street flooding and etc., etc., and to keep property values high. He stated his assumption is that there is a two-fold purpose of a streetscape; one is beautification, road dieting, but he hopes and assumes that the second part of that is to spur economic development desirable for business, etc. He said

his opinion in looking at the footprint of the businesses that are currently there, you know, there's certain things you just say we just don't have the physical footprint there or perhaps deeply entrenched businesses or types of businesses that streetscapes or no streetscape would the businesses we have there remain. Now, you could say that perhaps if the streetscape got done, and I'm just going to use the tire store as an example, I'm not advocating for or against, but maybe they say hey, it's not really much for us to move half a mile down the road and now all of a sudden you can have a Vinsetta Garage cool bar there, okay. So part of this is just well, you know, sometimes you have to spend a little bit to make a little bit.

Christiansen stated that's a very important point about focus on existing conditions, then vision and what things are and what they could be and how to achieve that. And certainly both on appearance, so there's esthetics and there is appearance of existing built construction and built environment and then certainly economic development opportunity. He went on to say he can just tell you quickly and we won't get into specifics on this particular project, but you might recall those who were here back in time, in 2009, when the Grand River Streetscape came about, some of these same kind of considerations were discussed. But he will tell you that the result of the Grand River Streetscape's implementation, took the use space at that time where were predominantly long term retail uses and set the stage to the repurpose of that corridor with road diet, streetscape elements, pedestrian elements and the like, allowing for also other things like outdoor seating and it changed that use space, I will say that it created as a result stimulated and resulted in restaurant row on the north side so to speak and so on and so forth. He also said there was a Goodyear Tire Store, not taking away because the Auto Garage is there and they've done a really nice job, but what he will say about Farmington Road, it's like two legs. If you turn around and they're both getting a little tired and worn out, bones are creaking and the joints aren't working, so you fix this one, you gave it a knee replacement and it's working great. You haven't done the same on this one and now you have an opportunity, if it's the right thing, set the stage you might call it and maybe it then incentivizes and stimulates transition of uses and so on and so forth. What's one of the neat things is these things kind of all intertwine, you have to have the vision first and then you lay out the course and everything else, you put it in your long range plans, we have, it's in the Downtown Plans and we have a new owner of the Savings Bank Building and who knows, you fold over and fold over and you take that corridor and if you were to reset the stage, that the temporary outdoor seating that Dennis Page is having his 5-foot sidewalk, with a road dieted area, would probably be a lot nicer than it might be now. So all of those things come about, will it happen? I think that's why you do your planning, that's why you put something like that on here and you see if it's possible and if you really can make sense of it. CVS one day, you know, that owner has talked about a lot of different changes, but maybe the motivation hasn't been there as much. Sometimes something like infrastructure improvements, a streetscape and other sorts of things like

that, stimulate that. So that's how it all goes and it's interesting and we look at opportunity and I think that's where there is certainly one within the core of this community, within the epicenter at Farmington and Grand River, on the leg that hasn't had the attention. In any event, with all that being said, what's really great is what I think also you made comment about, Mr. Majoros, and I certainly want to make sure that Commissioner Kmetzo, because this was absolutely a focus of hers, and a request and very important, if you take a look here, one of the things that's really important is not only knowing where you're going, what your plan is, but knowing where you've been so you can know where you are so you know where you're going, let's see what happened in the past couple years. We've been through this, we've been through the basis, why the CIP, and this can all be reread if anyone has interest, it's not a budget, it identifies projects, is in accordance with State statute, it's also something that's required in the Charter, and so there's a basis for it. Why create the CIP, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, it's the responsibility of the Planning Commission, the benefits of the CIP, we laid that out that it provides direction, identifies deficiency, provides a means to correct those, for our long term and short-term expenditures, etc. The Executive Summary is one of the most important tools in this document because it lays out in pie chart format where the priorities are. Again, we've always talked about the primary focus of this document really is on infrastructure, that's where most of the needs are currently here in Farmington and we can see that. We see that with roads, we see that with water and sewer and drains, sidewalks and streetscape are in there, parking lots, but then we have vehicles and equipment, recreation and culture relates to our parks and other sorts of elements, municipal assets that are like the Mansion and then parks and things like that need to continually be maintained and enhanced and etc., land development and acquisition, so all in all we look here at the quick view. There are 117 projects, 28.3 million dollars, and then the projects by year laid out. The rest of this document in detail goes into identifying those projects and having some focus on the priority and funding sources. But what I think is really important and was mentioning this, is one of the requests was for a summation of expenditures through the Capital Improvement Program in the last Capital Improvement cycle. And that's what you see here in this chart, the projects themselves, the projects that have been completed, and will be completed through June 2020, and you know our budget year is July 1 to June 30, so we are in the 19/20 budget year, we are in the 20/25 Capital Improvement Program, so these are projects that will be completed by the end of June. And these are projects then that are being added into in this next year in this document. So again, that was a great question, I made sure that that was carried forward to the Committee, and they did a nice job, Mr. Weber, the Finance Director, in doing so. In any event, Mr. Chair, that's all the comments I had to share back to you. The request here this evening is for the Commission's action on the 2021/2026 City of Farmington Draft Capital Improvement Program and forwarding that back to City Council for their review and consideration.

Chairperson Crutcher called for a motion from the Commissioners.

MOTION by Majoros, supported by Kmetzo, to approve the Draft 2021-2026 City of Farmington Capital Improvement Program as noticed and presented, and to forward it to City Council for their review and consideration.

Motion carried, all ayes.

Director Christiansen stated he had a side item he wanted to address on the CIP. He said last year's packet had a picture of the Pavilion with three young children running along the compass roads and that this year with the focus in this document potentially with the Farmington Streetscape, the purpose here is taking what's old, breathing new life, making it new again, Capital Improvements. He said there was a consideration of two different pictures and there was solicitation to the Steering Committee which was posed to the Department Heads. So what he has this evening for the Commission's consideration is the two proposed pictures picked for the cover of the 2021/2026 CIP. The two photos were passed out to the Commissioners and the original picture was marked as "A" and the second submission as "B".

A roll call vote was then taken on the foregoing consideration with the following results:

CRUTCHER:	A.
KMETZO:	A.
MAJOROS:	B.
PERROT:	A.
WAUN:	A.
WESTENDORF:	A.

The picture marked "A" held the majority vote of 5-1.

Director Christiansen stated the CIP is a great tool and it is significant in its importance to the community and he knows it seems like sort of a wish list at times to some people, but it's really not pie in the sky, there's a basis for it. And decision making is done using this tool because this tool actually follows the Master Plan and also aligns with the budgetary focus that is done by Council, so these tools are used and are that significant and that's why it's required by statute. And it is the Planning Commission's charge stewarding the City's planning program and then also, too, making sure that not just the vision, the plan, is current and what the community's direction is looking to be, but then the tools for implementation, zoning and capital improvement. So you know what the next charge is, to go back and look at the City's Zoning Ordinances to make sure that the implementation tool, the City's rules, are able to implement the Master Plan that was just updated. And if there are some areas that need adjustment to achieve the goals and the plans that you

have and implementing the Capital Improvement Program, you may look to through a Zoning audit, to make those changes. We'll look at the Zoning Districts, all the uses, how they're permitted, Special Land Use, etc., spatial requirements, setbacks, building heights, looking at what needs to be tweaked. He cited the tweaking of the single-family setback requirements to allow for a little greater expansion and a little more encroachment into yard areas so people could stay in their houses and do a little bit more, a little more flexibility, those kinds of things.

Chairperson Crutcher asked if there was much activity on that front and Christiansen replied a little bit, not as much as he'd like to see, but what he can say about the City's single-family home base, the stock is pretty solid, and there's a lot of reinvestment that now has taken place in the last number of years since the economic downturn with more than a fresh coat of paint and a re-roof, a lot of interior modifications, whether it's kitchen and bath, whether it's living space, whether it's basement remodel, and there are some bump-outs here and there, people are doing that. We have a couple teardowns in some places and rebuilds. We've got a brand-new house on Shiawasse, let alone 33 down at Flanders, let along 14 coming at Liberty Hill and that pre-con is coming up, the final meeting before the pre-con is this Wednesday. Christiansen went on to say that if you look at some of the older subs, Floral Park is getting some investment, and that's really a sub that needed a shot in the arm, Floral Park is down at Orchard Lake on the east side and Grand River Avenue, a 1922 sub that used alleys, rear alleys, garages were accessed that way, those were abandoned years ago but they're smaller homes, but you're seeing some reinvestment. Bel-Aire Sub, you're seeing reinvestment in the Bel-Aire Sub which is over across from Sorrows that's on the other side of Powers. So, some of those regulations have helped those areas with a little bit of softening and that's a good thing. We'll see as time goes on, it's really important, pretty much 70% of our overall budget is residential, single and multiple family. He stated the next step for the Planning Commission's activities besides all the plans that will be coming up, would be a Zoning audit exercise and maybe that's something we do amongst ourselves, we won't go out for that too much because we're the users, we get it, we have our hands on it all the time, we have an intimate use and knowledge and work together over a couple months to take a look to see what's working and what's not, we'll just go through it and see what you think. If we need to make some changes, let's recommend them and we'll get them done, we'll use our attorneys to do that. And as we along, we've got some significant projects, we probably have about six of them in this next year: Tropical Smoothie, the plans are in, the engineering cost estimates are coming in and they're going to get ready to do that. The façade improvements have progressed to a certain point but they have to be finished and get done and everything else.

Chairperson Crutcher said that he being on the Parking Advisory Committee, that this might also be a time to start to maybe visit some of the parking lots and Christiansen

replied that the Zoning audit will address the parking, Christiansen went on to state there were standards in place for parking, international, transportation, engineer parking standards, ITE parking standards that were pretty significant for big parking fields for shopping centers, strip malls, shopping centers, etc. Parking is different today and driving habits are different today and use of vehicles is different today. You don't need that asphalt sea of parking, but we still need to make sure that we have parking that meets the needs but we can modify that somewhat and maybe reduce the amount required and use some of those parking lot areas for satellite buildings within in a big parking lot or other boxes, other types of development, so very important. I was just mentioning that we'll look at the parking standards for sure.

The six developments that are going to be important this year are: Tropical Smoothie, we'll see what happens with the drive-thru next door that you approved for Panera; they haven't come in with their plans yet, that's kind of why I want to push them a little bit but just waiting on; the gas station, they've been down doing their environmental investigations and everything and we're really hopeful that that's going to also come in with plans very, very shortly. And back in town, we're going to have that demo on the interior of the Village Mall and Savings Bank this year and open it back up and that's significant. As I said, Wednesday is a big internal meeting prior to meeting with the homeowners on the sanitary sewer and the pre-con for Liberty Hill coming up. And down the way, Samurai, Denny Chang and the company have made a change in the name of the Samurai Sushi to the Crusty Crab Seafood Restaurant, same owner, same group, same building, same restaurant downstairs but next door which is going to be the steak house, they're kind of in a holding pattern with building the building so in the interim, they're going to implement Phase I of the PUD for that site, that's go ahead because the barn has been dismantled, boxed, reload and moved at least, the house is down, the site is clean so now it would be build the building or they're going to do a parking lot, stormwater management put in, so they'll put in drainage and a parking lot, a fence in the back, landscaping, that connectivity with the crossing, working with MDOT across Grand River and have it be a parking area right now serving the restaurant and the residential up until the time they're ready to build the building. They're also I think going to do the outdoor seating that was approved, so kind of staged, that's where they're at right now. But that's in play. And then The Winery, we've had a lot of inquiries, a lot of people coming in and meeting and they're all excited and then they kind of back off. That's a big task in that building, it's a lot of money in that building. So that being said, these are all catalytic, particularly the Village Mall and the Winery. And the last one, of course, is the Maxfield Training Center, that's as big as anything that we've had on our plates. So these are significant right now and those are all potential project opportunities here that are going to involve the Planning Commission, you're going to get engaged with. The Village Mall interior, just the demo, not at that stage, but build-out, other things, if it's façade and what not, that will for sure come to you, let alone everything else.

He thanked the Commission for the efforts they put forth in the Capital Improvement Program and Mr. Majoros, for his representation of the Planning Commission on the Steering Committee and accepting that appointment and providing his insight and input. It's really great the work that the Commission is doing, has done and continues to do, we are very much appreciative of it and we like working with you, it's enjoyable, and productive. We're doing some really important things, we're changing this community's built environment in accordance with the plans that have been put together that you've reviewed, approved, and adopted through the process and then the other tools that you have put in place. Your questions about the streetscape were spot on. Question that stuff, how does this happen, what's it going to do, who's it going to benefit, are we putting too much of our eggs in one basket, it's a lot of money. Our budget in this City is 10 million dollars, and a 4 million dollar streetscape project is a pretty chunk of a 10 million dollar budget, even though it's not all coming out of it, and I'm not discounting that project at all, I think it's significant, again, the staging that I talked about but we need to find alternative revenue sources for small communities like ours. Municipal finance is still the challenge. State shared revenues. Proposal A, everything else that goes along with it is a challenge. We keep working on it every day, that's why you've got to lay out your road map. You've got to have your Vision Plan, your Master Plan, your Capital Improvement Program, change your tools if necessary, figure out how you're going to get the money now and for the future, we're not going to be here forever.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

None heard.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Waun, supported by Perrot, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary