

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
January 4, 2010

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Monday, January 4, 2010, 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 7:04 p.m. by Mayor Buck.

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

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** Knol.

**CITY ADMINISTRATION:** City Clerk Halberstadt, City Manager Pastue.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**01-10-001** MOTION by Wright, seconded by McShane, to approve the agenda as submitted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**DISCUSSION SMART OPT-IN/OPT-OUT**

Pastue advised the millage allocated for SMART Public Transit System is set to expire in 2010. He noted the County Commissioners recently passed a two rather than four year millage renewal. He further noted Farmington Hills will take action on this millage at their next meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup>. He advised if Farmington Hills opts out there would be no benefit for Farmington to stay in. He pointed out the City does not receive the full benefit of its proportionate share of funding given its location at the end of the line.

Pastue confirmed the City's approximate annual cost for SMART is .59 mils or \$240K. He further confirmed the City receives some of those funds back through municipal and community credits that amount to \$22,000-\$23,000. He stated the City has historically earmarked those dollars for the senior transportation program.

Discussion followed regarding the fragmented regional transportation system currently in place. Council cited one of the major concerns is transportation for seniors. Concerns were expressed regarding a lack of ridership data from SMART, making it difficult to justify staying in the system.

Discussion continued regarding the impact the economy has had on SMART and its viability going forward. It was noted that if the City is already unhappy with the current service it may only get worse. Discussion followed regarding the limitation of the transportation service and the inability to get riders to key areas such as the Novi Mall.

SPECIAL MEETING -2-  
January 4, 2010

Responding to a question from Wright, Pastue stated if Council decides to take no action the SMART millage renewal would be put on the August ballot. He noted if everyone in Farmington voted it down, but the vote was carried by the remaining Oakland County communities, Farmington would remain a participant.

McShane again emphasized the current system does not make sense with communities having the choice to opt out. It provides inconsistent and fragmented transportation that does not work.

Wiggins speculated if Farmington opted out it might place more pressure on Oakland County for a regional transportation system. Pastue noted a lot of the transportation systems throughout the country are not reliant on property tax, but are usually funded through local option sales tax.

Council agreed a mass transportation system is necessary.

McShane advised she would be very hard pressed to opt in without sufficient data showing that the ridership makes it worthwhile to spend \$240K.

Council concurred that it would be difficult to make the decision to remain with SMART without the necessary ridership data to support it.

Wiggins noted four years ago there was a lot of support from Farmington residents to stay in the SMART System, however, economic circumstances have changed. He stated at that time Council expressed the same concerns, but recognized there was a need and decided to opt in and give SMART more time to improve service.

Discussion continued regarding transportation alternatives to SMART. Pastue advised the City may not be able to provide alternative transportation at a lower cost, noting SMART receives Federal and State funds. He stated the only thing the City may be able to do better is target ridership.

McShane stated if Council allows the SMART millage renewal on the August ballot, residents should understand the financial crisis the City is facing as well as the number of Farmington riders using SMART.

Pastue stated he will contact SMART to obtain information regarding ridership relative to numbers and destination. He will invite SMART to attend the meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion followed regarding public comment on this issue at the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Buck pointed out that most of the public attending will likely be in support of the SMART System.

Wiggins pointed out Farmington has a decision to make only if Farmington Hills decides to remain with SMART. If they opt out, then Farmington has no choice but to do the same.

SPECIAL MEETING -3-  
January 4, 2010

Discussion followed regarding the possibility of putting the transportation millage question on the November ballot. This would allow voters to make a decision regarding public transportation in Farmington. If approved, the City could seek to contract separately with SMART.

Council continued discussion on the need to educate residents on current budget challenges, SMART millage tradeoffs, and structure for allowing public comment regarding the millage at the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS**

Pastue advised the City is in the process of drawing down what remains in the Capital Improvements Fund. He stated currently there is a little over \$637,000 allocated for Shiawassee Park improvements with the addition of matching Federal Funds. He asked Council to give some thought on prioritizing planned capital improvement projects. He stated his belief that the Grove Street Project would have greater impact on the City than the Shiawassee Park improvements.

Pastue recommended against undertaking any capital improvement projects in 2010. He stated the DDA has indicated the downtown businesses would prefer a year without construction.

Discussion followed regarding how the Grove Street Project might impact the redevelopment of the shopping center on that street. Pastue stated he would not recommend approving the project if he thought it might be a hindrance to future redevelopment of that property. He noted the Grove Street Project would go up to the sidewalk of the center only.

Responding to a question from Wiggins, Pastue stated the Federal grant for the switchback in Shiawassee Park expires at the end of 2013.

Pastue advised there are no projected increases to the Capital Improvement Fund.

Responding to a question from McShane, Pastue stated there is little chance of obtaining a grant from the Transportation Enhancement Project for the Grove Street Project.

Wright asked about other commitments that would make it necessary to move forward with the Grove Street Project. Pastue advised there is one commitment to KIMCO through an easement agreement to provide 15 additional parking spaces on Grove Street.

Responding to a question from Wiggins, Pastue stated Council is making a permanent decision between the Shiawassee Park switchback and the Grove Street Project.

McShane recommended talking to the DDA regarding their priorities concerning these projects.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Pastue advised an ordinance may be presented to Council regarding a moratorium on the distribution of medical marijuana. He stated the moratorium would give the City time to consider and develop a set of regulations.

Buck briefly discussed the design of the new City and DDA logos. He stated they are trying to bring those representations a little closer together so that a more cohesive identity of the City can be projected.

**NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was heard.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was heard.

**COUNCIL COMMENT**

McShane asked about a campaign to ensure residents are educated on the importance of the census before it is mailed in March. Pastue responded the City is working on a campaign that in particular reaches apartment dwellers.

McShane noted a recent article that indicates snow birds do not respond to the census surveys. She recommended putting a notification in the water bill or newsletter regarding what is included in the survey and what it means to the City.

McShane indicated Susan Warner, Farmington Arts Commission member, is showing her artwork at the Costick Center. She pointed out that several years ago Farmington artists regularly displayed their art at City Hall. She stated the City would also host a reception for the artist. She expressed disappointment that this no longer occurs.

McShane requested displaying Susan Warner's artwork at Farmington City Hall once her show ends at the Costick Center. She would also like to have a reception in conjunction with the display.

Responding to a question from Pastue, McShane indicated Warner's display ends at the Costick Center on January 8<sup>th</sup>. She asked City Administration to appeal to the Arts Commission to display works of Farmington artists at City Hall.

Buck offered space in the Cook Building to display the artwork of Farmington artists.

McShane suggested the City might consider other ways to celebrate its artists, such as using the Cook Building or other locations in the downtown. It may be a way of bringing people to the City.

SPECIAL MEETING -5-  
January 4, 2010

Wright referred to the Royal Oak Resolution concerning an amendment to PA 312. He recommended the City support the resolution as well.

Pastue advised the MML is currently working on legislation to amend PA 312.

Wiggins asked for a copy of the proposed House Bill in regards to amending PA 312.

In regards to DDA appointments, Wright noted the decision to extend terms of boardmembers appears to be made by the boardmembers themselves. He questioned whether Council should determine whose terms should be extended. He stated in order to make that determination there should be a score card that could include recommendations from Committee Chairs, the DDA Director and number of meetings attended.

Buck stated an additional criterion would be whether the boardmember has served as Chair on a Main Street Committee.

Wright expressed interest in serving on the Civic Theatre Ad Hoc Committee.

Council discussed the structure, content and facilitation of the goal setting session scheduled for February 6, 2010.

Wiggins noted former employee, Don Gould, expressed gratitude to the Council for continuing the City holiday party. Gould asked that before the City considers canceling the event due to budget constraints, please consider charging a fee to attend. He further recommended just having an event for members of boards and commissions.

Wiggins noted in a Mike Cox campaign pamphlet Farmington is mentioned with regard to the Abandoned Residential Property Ordinance.

McShane recommended the City issue a proclamation in memory of Dick Tupper and his service to the community. Pastue stated at a minimum, his name would be placed on the plaque in City Hall that recognizes outstanding residents who have passed away.

Buck stated Dick Tupper was an inspiring leader in our community and will be sorely missed.

Discussion followed regarding the relatively good condition of foreclosed properties in Farmington. Pastue pointed out banks are complying with the backend inspections.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**01-10-002** MOTION by McShane, seconded by Wiggins, to adjourn the meeting.  
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

SPECIAL MEETING -6-  
January 4, 2010

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

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J.T. (Tom) Buck, Mayor

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Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

APPROVED: February 15, 2010