

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING
COMMUNITY ROOM
JANUARY 10, 2022 – 6:00PM

The study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Barnett at 6:10pm.

Council Members Present: Barnett, Bridges, Bruce, Knol, Massey, and Newlin

Council Members Absent: Boleware

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Smith, Assistant City Manager Valentine, Directors Gardiner and Randle and City Attorney Joppich

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION CONSULTANT UPDATE

John Randle, Director of Human Resources, explained that Darlene King, DEI Consultant, would be reviewing with Council the Data Analysis Report and Executive Summary with suggested best practices and recommendations. Mr. Randle stated that since the last meeting with Council, the city has developed an advisory board consisting of department directors, city management staff and public relations as well as created a Diversity Council made up of employees.

Ms. King shared that when the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion journey was first discussed with Council, she had mentioned that this would be a 3–5-year strategy. She added that this strategy requires three different data points that include 1) the Executive Summary Report; 2) Organization Readiness Assessment (ORA) Survey, which will be developed by the Council of employees and distributed to all employees and 3) Focus Groups for those under-represented in the organization.

She discussed the role of the DEI Council of employees who would be responsible for reviewing the data analysis report and developing the ORA survey. Training would be provided so that the DEI Council understands the goal of developing the strategy. The ORA survey will help the Council and administration better understand the pulse of the employees on the subject and will be shared with Council. She noted that the focus groups would be based on the information from the ORA and will drive the DEI Plan.

Mayor Barnett wished the data showed a breakdown of physical challenges and commented on the lack of cross-training as well as the turnover expected in the next few years.

Ms. King pointed out that physical challenges often require self-identification which many people are not comfortable doing but currently that information was not provided as it was not captured. Director Randle added that the current software does not allow for such confidential information to be effectively and safely stored.

Discussion was held on encouraging staff represented on the DEI Council to feel comfortable and safe sharing their feelings and Ms. King mentioned that training and education is a component that will help with that but first the city needs to identify the “gaps”. She added that it is important that this education continues when her job is complete with the city and for the city to have an internal Chief Diversity Officer.

Further discussion was held on under-represented groups and potential reasons as well as the need to consider where the city has been. It was pointed out that Farmington Hills looked different 15-25 years ago

but that some of those same employees that may have better represented Farmington Hills at that time are still with the city and that longevity and succession planning within the organization is important.

Ms. King pointed out that the data showed only a 1% increase in diversity overall from 2012 to 2022 and the goal is to see how the city can intentionally change those statistics.

It was mentioned that the benefits of having a diverse work force included a potential increase in revenue for the city.

It was acknowledged that there is a high percentage of discrimination against persons with disabilities and the city should be aware of this and make sure that this does not occur within the city.

Ms. King stated that the executive summary provided are recommendations to fill the gaps that have been recognized from the data analysis report.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE DEFINITION OF FAMILY WITHIN THE ZONING ORDINANCE

Ed Gardiner, Planning and Community Development Director, explained that the Planning Commission has started the process of reviewing the definition of “Family” with the zoning ordinance and wanted City Council input prior to them holding their public hearing meeting on this issue. He stated that the amendment was based on recent changes to the Fair Housing Act along with recent court decisions that prompted the City Attorney’s Office to advise an amendment to the zoning ordinance

Attorney Steve Joppich explained the recommended changes as mentioned by Director Gardiner were based on recent court decisions on what constitutes a “family” and the requirement to make reasonable accommodations for such “family” as determined by the court. He reviewed the proposed ordinance amendment changes that include adding definitions for reasonable accommodation, updating the definition of family and adding special accommodation residence and to include standards for same.

Rod Arroyo, Giffels Webster Planning Consultant, further explained the approach to define a reasonable accommodation and special accommodation residence. He confirmed that any home where all residents are disabled could apply for reasonable accommodations whether or not they are a licensed home. It would be up to the City Manager or designee per the ordinance to review the application and make sure all ordinance requirements have been met.

It was suggested that the number of people are limited based on the square footage of the home and only allowing so many people per square foot.

Mr. Arroyo stated that this may already be addressed in the city code for single-family homes but he will review that suggestion.

Other concerns included making sure there was not only proper parking but adequate driveway capacity and access as group homes may also have caregivers and family visiting.

Mr. Arroyo noted that concerns and suggestions raised this evening by Council will be shared with the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:24pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Smith', written in a cursive style.

Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk