

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS MI 48336
NOVEMBER 17, 2022, 6:00 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Planning Commission Special Meeting was called to order by Chair Countegan at 6:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Mantey, Stimson, Trafelet, Varga, Ware

Commissioners Absent: Grant

Others Present: Staff Planner Perdonik, Planning Consultant Tangari

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Brickner, support by Stimson, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion passed by voice vote.

NEW MASTER PLAN STUDY

Tonight's discussion was guided by elements presented in the November 11, 2002 Giffels Webster memorandum.

Suburban Placemaking

Planning Consultant Tangari led a discussion regarding Suburban Placemaking. Readings included *Are the Detroit Suburbs Headed for Trouble?* from Hour Detroit, and *Shifting Suburbs: Reinventing Infrastructure for Compact Development* from Urban Land Institute.

Suburban Placemaking:

- New development will be redevelopment. Change relies on private investment, and takes time. If a community has a committed vision to guide redevelopment, over time it will get the desired change.
- Change is a constant in arterial corridors; a community can take advantage of this characteristic when planning for the future.
- Pursuing walkability aids placemaking, but also speaks to equity and age. There is very little negative affect in terms of making a place more walkable.

Discussion regarding Grand River Corridor

- The above concepts were used in Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority planning. However, the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) funding mechanism set up for development in the Corridor had not worked, and redevelopment had stalled there.
- The Commission needed to think about the Corridor Improvement Authority and what future it has.
- Consideration was being given in terms of approaching MDOT to explore what is possible for the Grand River/M-5 area. Traffic volume on M-5 between Halsted and Middlebelt was similar to 12

Mile Road, and ideas included turning M-5 back to a surface street between Halsted and Middlebelt. This would be a transformative change.

- How will improvements in the Grand River Corridor be funded? A TIF plan was not the only funding mechanism; other funding means existed, including grant programs. ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds could be pursued.
- PUD (Planned Unit Development) Plans and mixed-use development could bring life to the Grand River Corridor area.

Special Study Areas

The Commission held a robust round-table discussion regarding the Special Study Areas listed in the 2009 Master Plan, and as outlined in the November 11, 2022 Giffels Webster Memorandum (pages 2-3). Two new study areas were suggested:

- Grand River/Drake
- OCC Campus

The 2009 Master Plan identified 15 special residential planning areas, and about a dozen non-residential development areas, primarily in the Orchard Lake Road, I-696, Grand River Avenue, and Eight Mile Road corridors.

Planning Consultant Tangari led the Commission through a brief discussion of each study area, emphasizing which study areas had experienced or were planned for significant change, and which study areas remained basically the same and had experienced no change. Some ideas included:

- Combine residential study areas 5 and 15.
- Remove residential study areas 3 and 5, as they were under development.
- All residential study areas could be candidates for cluster housing, and the separation between areas 1-9 and 10-15 was unnecessary.
- Perhaps commercial development should be allowed south of the OCC Campus.
- Mass transit should be accommodated.
- Orchard Lake Road continued to provide opportunities for redevelopment, as well as challenges, especially where the commercial properties had very little depth.
- Discussion returned several times to the idea of changing M-5 between Halsted and Middlebelt Roads (or Farmington Road to Middlebelt) to a surface road, similar to 12 Mile Road. Such a change would provide many acres for redevelopment and offer opportunities to redevelop tired properties along the highway. Again, this would be a transformational change.

Next steps

The next work session is scheduled for December 15. This will include:

- Summary of public input so far.
- Draft Special Study Area memo to City Council.

Picture This

Planning Consultant Tangari gave a brief overview of the “Farmington Hills PictureThis” application, where residents could add thoughts and suggestions regarding the Master Plan update.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Brickner, support by Mantey, to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

MOTION passed by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marisa Varga
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem