

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL  
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
FEBRUARY 11, 2026 – 6:00PM**

The goals study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 6:00pm.

Council Members Present: Aldred, Boleware, Bridges (arrived at 6:27pm), Dwyer, Knol, Rich and Starkman

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: Acting City Manager Mondora, City Clerk Lindahl and Director Skrobola

**OPENING COMMENTS**

Mayor Rich opened the meeting by explaining this was their annual goal-setting event, noting that for the first time, council members' goal items had been organized under topic areas from the newly adopted Farmington Hills Strategic Plan.

**REVIEW STATUS OF 2025 GOALS**

Acting City Manager Mondora provided an overview and status update of the 2025 Goals.

**DISCUSSION ON 2026 GOALS:**

**COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING**

Regarding police data transparency, Acting City Manager Mondora reported the city has created its own transparency dashboard that is updated every six months and has received positive feedback.

Councilmember Aldred expressed support for confirming the city's approach and how it compares with other communities.

Councilmember Dwyer recommended having the police department present at a future study session.

For the crime data analyst position, Acting City Manager Mondora shared that the analyst works on intelligence reports, suspect lineups, bulletins, link analysis, investigations, facial recognition requests, special projects as well as the transparency dashboard.

On pedestrian safety, Acting City Manager Mondora announced the city was awarded \$481,675 for safe streets improvements at six locations including schools. Projects include rapid flashing beacons and push buttons at 14 Mile east of M-10, Farmington Road at Tulip, Drake Road at Howard, 11 Mile at Old Homestead, 9 Mile at Whittington, and Shiawassee at Tuck.

Regarding active assailant preparations, Acting City Manager Mondora noted the North American Active Assailant Conference is held annually in Troy with city public safety staff heavily involved.

Councilmember Aldred suggested receiving an assessment of the city's preparedness against 16 best practice areas, with Council agreeing to have a presentation at a future study session.

For mental health crisis support, Acting City Manager Mondora mentioned potential opportunities with opioid settlement funds and resources through staff at Special Services. All police officers receive crisis intervention training with yearly refreshers, and various mental health workshops are offered through city programming.

Mayor Rich discussed vape legislation, noting that Columbia, SC had implemented city-level enforcement of vaping products. The mayor indicated State Rep. Hoskins is looking at state legislation, and this item will be held until seeing if state action occurs.

On carcass tracking, Acting City Manager Mondora shared that discussions are occurring with SEMCOG and Oakland County GIS to develop a tool for tracking locally. The Department of Public Works is now tracking not just the number but also the location of roadkill since April.

### **STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT**

Acting City Manager Mondora noted the Economic Development Department is exploring tools including blanket and master permits for building trades and expanded use of administrative reviews in corridor areas. She recommended a comprehensive study session with the new planning consultant, Ben Carlisle, who will have regular office hours at city hall and be available to meet with council members.

Councilmember Knol explained several zoning concerns: 1) With Fifth Third purchasing Comerica, many bank locations may close, and rezoning may be needed to repurpose these properties; 2) The city has very strict requirements for accessory buildings/structures which create hardships for some properties; 3) The need to consider requiring homeowner association approval before the city issues certain permits.

Councilmember Aldred emphasized the importance of continuing progress on 12 Mile, Orchard Lake, and Grand River redevelopment and changing zoning ordinances to accelerate development.

Regarding data centers, Mayor Rich noted the city already has one data center in the industrial area and suggested potentially creating an ordinance specifying where data centers would be permitted to prevent unwanted locations. Councilmember Knol opposed limiting data centers, arguing that smaller centers use closed-loop water systems and are not harmful, while Councilmember Bridges suggested considering both water and electrical usage requirements. Council agreed to gather more information on data centers before making decisions.

### **PLACEMAKING AND COMMUNITY HUBS**

Councilmember Bridges inquired about Bond Park improvements, with Acting City Manager Mondora referring to information in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Councilmember Knol mentioned a concern raised by South Farmington Baseball about potential changes to Bond Park that would be detrimental to baseball fields.

Councilmember Aldred discussed playground equipment needs and expressed concern about the Heritage Park agreement timeline.

Councilmember Starkman expressed interest in learning which parks besides Heritage might be suitable for sensory play equipment.

Acting City Manager Mondora informed council that while the city typically applies for trust fund development grants for structures and amenities, there is also a companion grant program for land acquisition.

Councilmember Knol suggested that council members should pass information to the city manager's office if they hear of potential properties for sale that might be suitable for park acquisition.

### **WELCOMING COMMUNITY**

Regarding cultural festivals on city property, Mayor Rich recalled previous council discussions about the Multicultural Multiracial Community Council (MCMR) and interest in hosting cultural festivals honoring the city's diversity.

Acting City Manager Mondora noted staffing challenges, citing the Heritage Week event in 2008 which was successful but required substantial resources. Councilmember Boleware mentioned the Arts Commission's interest in hosting events, potentially at Hunter Square or the Heritage Park amphitheater, that could generate some revenue.

Councilmember Knol sought clarification on whether these would be city-run events or external groups using city property. She noted that she supports investigating opportunities for profitable festivals but raised concerns about staffing and capacity.

For public comment placement, Councilmember Aldred suggested adding a limited public comment period at the beginning of meetings to allow residents to speak without waiting through lengthy meetings. Councilmembers Boleware and Bridges expressed agreement with this proposal.

Councilmember Bridges proposed focusing on the south end of the city through meetings at the Grant Community Center to address perceptions of unequal attention, with topics including streetscape programs, parks improvements, and economic development.

Acting City Manager Mondora reported that Plante Moran is conducting a rate methodology study for water and sewer rates, with findings expected to be presented in an April study session.

On redevelopment signage, Councilmember Aldred suggested improving communication about developments through website updates and physical signs at project locations that would display meeting dates and other information.

**ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

Acting City Manager Mondora reported that the Farmington Fair Share study will be available by month-end.

Regarding taxable value assessment, Finance Director Skrobola reported that appeals have remained steady, suggesting satisfaction with the assessment process. Councilmember Aldred requested facilitating a meeting between the assessor and a realtor who had raised concerns.

On property taxes, Mayor Rich discussed programs in other cities that allow seniors on fixed incomes to defer property taxes until their homes are sold. Finance Director Skrobola indicated that current payment rates are high and the city has a poverty exemption program.

Councilmember Bridges mentioned that Governor Whitmer had just proposed a 2% property tax reduction for seniors in her budget submission.

Council agreed to monitor the situation and revisit if data indicates growing problems.

Acting City Manager Mondora informed council that central services would be requesting funds in the next budget for a complete website overhaul. Councilmember Boleware expressed excitement about this development, noting her desire to use AI to improve efficiencies within the organization.

Regarding Planning Department processes and administrative review, Acting City Manager Mondora shared plans to test concurrent reviews among planning, building, zoning, and engineering departments, rather than the current sequential process. She also mentioned that starting the following week, the building department would only accept electronic plan submissions, which would improve routing time despite some initial resistance from users.

Finance Director Skrobola gave a detailed presentation about establishing a pension investment committee similar to Kalamazoo's model, which has been highly successful in earning strong returns. The proposed committee would include volunteer financial experts and would take over investment decisions from the current pension board. Council expressed interest in learning more.

## **OTHER**

Mayor Rich raised concerns about wages for part-time employees. Acting City Manager Mondora reported that the city had been incrementally implementing the compensation study results.

Councilmember Dwyer inquired about school crossing guard wages and recruitment challenges, with Acting City Manager Mondora agreeing to get that information.

For gateway signage lighting, Council preferred maintaining the signs with the city's standard colors during the first year rather than changing colors for various awareness campaigns, which would create challenges in deciding which causes to support.

Councilmember Bridges advocated for supplementing deer culling with non-lethal management strategies including fencing around Heritage Park and Woodland Park near neighborhoods and educational workshops on deer-resistant plantings. Several Councilmembers expressed concern about the effectiveness and aesthetic impact of fencing, and Mayor Rich announced an upcoming meeting with the University of Michigan team working with the city on deer management.

Councilmember Bridges proposed establishing a wildlife/animal welfare commission, similar to those in Southfield and Warren, to demonstrate sensitivity to wildlife and domestic animals and help address issues like the recent Beagle situation, support low-cost vaccination programs, spay/neuter programs, emergency animal care for found pets, and food distribution for families unable to feed their pets.

Councilmember Starkman and Boleware supported the idea, noting it would provide a way for passionate residents to contribute their knowledge and skills.

Councilmember Knol voiced concerns that the commission would need members with scientific backgrounds, such as veterinarians and biologists, to ensure balance.

Council agreed to move forward with the concept, being judicious in recruiting qualified members.

Mayor Rich raised the topic of a potential dog ordinance similar to Eastpointe's, which requires dogs indoors during certain temperatures, but noted enforcement challenges from community experts. Council agreed not to pursue.

Mayor Rich introduced a potential charter amendment regarding term limits for the mayor. She proposed changing to a four-year term with a maximum of 12 years lifetime as mayor, including time already served. Mayor Rich acknowledged she would also like to see similar term limits for council.

Regarding compensation for Mayor and Council, Councilmember Bridges suggested that council members' salaries should be commensurate with neighboring Southfield. Councilmember Boleware suggested providing council members with city phones to avoid using personal numbers for city business.

With insufficient support for either term limits or council compensation increases, both charter amendment proposals were set aside.

Mayor Rich indicated the Economic Development Corporation might no longer be needed given the city now has full-time economic development staff. Council requested more information before making any decisions.

Mayor Rich shared that Andy Appleby, owner of a baseball team, was interested in building a stadium in Farmington Hills and asked if the city would contribute \$100,000. There was no interest from council in the matter.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Two representatives from the Economic Development Corporation emphasizing the importance of maintaining the EDC as a legal entity. They highlighted that the EDC serves the city council and city, has no budget but possesses important legal powers for potential future development needs. Comments were also made regarding the term limits and compensation of council.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The study session meeting adjourned at 9:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk