

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS MI 48336
APRIL 21, 2022, 6:30 P.M.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Planning Commission Special Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Trafellet at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Brickner, Stimson, Grant, Aspinall, Varga, Trafellet

Commissioners Absent: Countegan, Mantey

Others Present: City Attorney Schultz, City Planner Perdonik, Planning Consultants Arroyo, Bahm, and Tangari

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

MOTION carried unanimously by voice vote.

REGULAR MEETING

a. NEW MASTER PLAN STUDY

Planning Consultants Arroyo, Tangari and Bahm led tonight's discussion.

Introduction

The Master Plan is a policy document. By state law, the Planning Commission is the body that is responsible for the preparation and the adoption of the Master Plan; the City Council may also choose to adopt the Master Plan.

The Zoning Ordinance has the force of law, is recommended by the Planning Commission and adopted by the City Council. However, State law also says that the Zoning Ordinance shall be based on the Master Plan, so that even though the Master Plan is a policy document, it carries a lot of weight and has significant importance to the community.

A Master Plan study is a chance for the Planning Commission to envision Farmington Hills' future. Tonight the Commission will be led through a SWOT analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The goal is to direct the Commission to begin thinking about what works in the City, and what needs work.

The Master Plan will include:

- A demographic profile of the City.
 - The City's population has grown about .015% since 2010.

- Growth over the next 10 years is projected to be another .015%.
- Average age growing older.
- Economic profile of the City
 - Market Assessment underway.
 - Survey on the City website, with about 600 responses so far
- Review of natural features and public facilities, scheduled to be delivered in May
- Master Plan will be visual, with graphics and other visual information
- Master Plan should be consistent with MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corporation) Redevelopment-Ready Communities standards
- Three redevelopment sites will be identified and highlighted in the Master Plan
- If the redevelopment sites are ready for change, what type of change is appropriate?

The Master Plan is the Planning Commission's document. The consultant team is here to facilitate, but the plan belongs to the Commission and the City.

SWOT EXERCISE:

Strengths:

Questions to consider: What are the three things that you like best about the City of Farmington Hills? What are the City's positive attributes? What does the City do well? What resources does the City have? What does Farmington Hills have that other cities don't have?

Commission responses via the SWOT exercise:

- Public services, public safety services, city staff
- Community diversity
- Central location
- Parks and recreation
- Residential/business split 65%/35%
- Strong business community
- Community engagement
- Reasonable taxes
- Wildlife and open space.

Weaknesses:

Questions to consider: What could be improved in the city? Is there anything that is in the City that's done poorly? What keeps people from moving to Farmington Hills? What are things other cities would say Farmington Hills was not good at?

Commission responses via the SWOT exercise:

- Storefronts and strip malls not being updated
- Portions of the city are “falling apart”
- City closes down, no evening restaurants or events,
- Lack of affordable housing, lack of housing diversity, focus on one type of housing
- Schools
- City taxes
- Costick Center costs
- Sidewalk maintenance and locations
- Lack of park-like settings

- Subdivisions that don't allow fences
- Opportunities for new development; no mixed use development
- Roads
- Population growing Older

Opportunities:

Topics to consider: Changes in technology, lifestyle changes for an aging population, things seen during the pandemic that may or may not continue. What trends can the City take advantage of? Is there a need for something in our region that no one else has?

Responses via SWOT exercise:

- Opportunities for cutting edge information technology, infrastructure fiber, Wi Fi coverage fiber.
- Technology and housing developed to meet the needs of remote working.
- Innovative sustainability
- Bike lanes, paths, non-motorized pathways, walkability improvements
- Find ways to attract more destination businesses
- Provide facilities and services for seniors and singles
- Promote benefits of bringing in younger families
- Provide higher density residential lots for entry level homes.
- Increase the diversity of the commercial and business profile, to match the diverse residential community
- Provide places for Parents Night Out
- Increase use of YMCA, public library, public facilities and community gathering places
- Placemaking that does not compete with, but rather supports, downtown Farmington

Threats:

Topics to think about: What obstacles does the City face? What do other cities do that might take our residents away? If you were looking for a home, what community might lure you away and why would you consider going there? Are there any other external changes to the economy, technology and population trends that could threaten the City?

Responses via SWOT exercise:

- Older population with fewer families
- Emphasis on construction of private senior facilities
- Overcrowded high schools
- No land for new development, business expansion, new homes
- Becoming a dinosaur city
- Property owners unwilling to make improvements or upgrade commercial buildings.
- No entertainment district; no major food chains
- Using only brownfield money to attract redevelopment in the Grand River Corridor Improvement area; lack of local government commitment

At the conclusion of the SWOT exercise, the following summary was presented:

Future meetings will focus on:

- Review of the existing Future Land Use Map
- Long range visioning and planning

- Implementation strategies, short-term and long-term
- Provide a policy framework for potential zoning ordinance changes

Closing thoughts:

- Public survey closes May 6
- Draft of existing conditions completed in May
- Market Analysis schedule for late June completion
- July – October, public involvement
 - City Staff will participate in similar exercises
 - Utilize an online crowdsource platform, “Picture This”
 - Neighborhood sessions
 - Student public art component
 - Open house for more public input
 - Forum with realtors, business owners, stakeholders in development and redevelopment
- Work toward a more visual, vibrant Master Plan

5. Approval of minutes

None

6. Public Comment

None

7. Commissioner's Comments

None

8. Adjournment

MOTION by Varga, support by Stimson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 pm

MOTION carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marissa Varga
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem