

MEETING MINUTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

REGULAR MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 2025 – 8:00 AM

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS - COMMUNITY ROOM

31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD, FARMINGTON HILLS, MI

CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN SCOTT ELLIOTT AT 8:05 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: T.R. CARR, SCOTT ELLIOTT, VIVIANNE ROUSSEAU, CASSIE CLARK, MARK ZACHOS, SWAMI SWAMINATHAN,

ALSO PRESENT: Michael Bridges, Council Liaison, Gary Mekjian, City Manager, Cristia Brockway, Economic Development Director, John Trafellet, Planning Commission Chairman

EXCUSED: EUNICE JEFFRIES, FRITZ BEIERMEISTER, VICKI BARNETT

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by T.R. Carr, supported by Cassie Clark, to approve the agenda as submitted.
Unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Vivianne Rousseau, supported by Cassie Clark, to approve the minutes of July 30, 2025 as submitted.
Unanimously carried.

BUSINESS

Scott Elliott opened the discussion on Tier 1 automotive suppliers and asked Cristia Brockway about the status of major corporate neighbors. Brockway noted that a key challenge was businesses gaining visibility with OEMs to build name recognition.

T.R. Carr shared that Astemo (formerly Hitachi) would be leaving the City within two to three years for a larger facility in Wixom. He explained that the company was landlocked in Farmington Hills, limiting expansion options. Michael Bridges asked about potential job losses, and Brockway said she would follow up with a count. Bridges also requested a report on whether the company has received a tax abatement.

When asked about redevelopment challenges, Brockway explained that they varied by area. Along Orchard Lake Road north of I-696, shallow parcels and single-use zoning made redevelopment difficult. In the southern industrial areas, outdated buildings with low ceilings and tight layouts limited appeal for modern manufacturers. However, smaller R&D users were showing interest due to their more flexible space needs.

Brockway had contacted DTE to assess electrical capacity along Twelve Mile Road, anticipating future mixed-use development, including biotech. She highlighted active projects like the redevelopment of Hunters Square and the upcoming Emerson Luxury Lofts. The City was also exploring infill opportunities, such as underused parking lots. Bridges asked about public-private partnerships, and Brockway noted that Schaeffer was acquiring parcels on the east side of Orchard Lake Road for redevelopment. Elliott added that the developer was eager to work with the City.

Brockway shared a recommendation from the market study to explore a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) along Orchard Lake Road, potentially extending into nearby residential areas. A CIA would allow the City to reinvest increased tax revenue into public improvements like façade grants and streetscape enhancements. She noted that fragmented property ownership made it difficult to encourage upgrades, and a district could help incentivize improvements and walkability.

Elliott emphasized that Orchard Lake, Twelve Mile, and Grand River remained key redevelopment challenges, with Orchard Lake seeing particularly high traffic. Brockway reported growing interest in restaurant development. The McDonald's at Orchard Lake and Ten Mile was under contract to become a sit-down restaurant. Culver's, Dunkin' Donuts, and a high-end Eastern restaurant were exploring nearby out lots. First Watch was a potential tenant at Hunters Square, and out-of-state investors were considering upscale brunch cafés.

Brockway also discussed four proposals to convert office space to residential following OS4 zoning changes. One major project involved the former Google building at Twelve Mile and Farmington Road, which would be converted into residential units with workforce housing, retail space, and pedestrian-friendly features. The developer also planned to connect the site to the adjacent BCS property. With nearby amenities like OCC's hockey facility and physical therapy center, the area was expected to attract residents at rental rates of \$2,300–\$2,400 per month. Additional opportunities were explored at the BCS out lot and the Trinity Health building. Elliott noted these developments would complement the new Sara Fisher residential project by Robertson Homes. Brockway confirmed the Brownfield Board had approved the Sara Fisher plan, with council review scheduled for October 27 and a vote on November 10.

Elliott also suggested exploring redevelopment opportunities at the Baptist Manor area on Thirteen Mile Road. Brockway agreed the area needed further discussion, noting that recent proposals did not align with current zoning and raised concerns about density and traffic impacts.

Brockway announced the upcoming Bagels & Business Guided Grow Conference, which would cover vendor registration, SBA loans, and business formation. Steve Amnear from the Kirk Gibson Parkinson's Foundation was scheduled to speak. The event will be held at the Hawk on October 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., with registration available via QR code.

Finally, Brockway shared that a developer was under contract for the Radisson property at Twelve Mile and Orchard Lake. The plan included converting the hotel into approximately 64 residential units with potential retail, while incorporating pedestrian and green space elements in line with the City's market study goals.

CHAIRMANS REPORT

Scott Elliott did not have any comments

REPORTS

Michael Bridges added that the City Council was highly interested in economic redevelopment and commended Cristia Brockway for the outstanding job she had done at the Monday night study session

Gary Mekjian commented that there is no need to fear density or diversity, noting that during his recent travels to Europe, he observed that the region was extremely populated. He pointed out that mixed-use development was prevalent throughout Spain and Italy, where public gathering spaces were abundant. Scott Elliott agreed with the observation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mark Zachos suggested the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce could help reestablish small business representation on the committee following Gerrard Allen's resignation. He also revisited the idea of using ambassadors and social media to boost outreach. Cristia Brockway shared that the City had increased marketing efforts through Crain's and RE Journals and was reviving the "Business Spotlight" series. She and Gary Mekjian were also exploring membership in additional Chambers to expand visibility.

Michael Bridges supported outreach to cities like Detroit and other impactful organizations. Cassie Clark agreed, emphasizing the value of a Chamber liaison. As an active Chamber ambassador and advisory board member, she stressed the importance of a strong relationship between the City and the Chamber, which primarily serves small and mid-sized businesses. She noted that consistent community engagement was key.

Scott Elliott proposed Cassie Clark as the committee's liaison, given her Chamber involvement. Clark expressed interest, and Vivian Rousseau, also active in the Chamber, supported the idea and praised Brockway's presentation.

Swami Swaminathan shared that his focus was on diversifying sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing. He noted that MSU, a \$100,000 member of his consortium, had 172 members

and was ranked the top U.S. supply chain school for the past decade. He offered to collaborate with Brockway and expressed interest in bringing MSU initiatives to Farmington Hills.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 a.m.

Unanimously approved.

Minutes Drafted by Cristia Brockway, Economic Development Director