

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS  
23600 Liberty Street  
Farmington, Michigan  
March 9, 2026

Chairperson Perrot called the meeting to order in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 9, 2026.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Crutcher, Gray, Kmetzo, Perrot and Westendorf  
Absent: Majoros, Mantey

A quorum of the Commission was present.

**OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Chris Weber, Assistant City Manager; Beth Saarella, City Attorney; Brian Belesky, Director of Media, Brian Golden, Director of Media.

**APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. February 9, 2026 Minutes**

MOTION by Crutcher, seconded by Westendorf, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.

MOTION carried, all ayes.

**APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON REGULAR AGENDA**

MOTION by Kmetzo, seconded by Crutcher, to approve the items on the Regular Agenda.  
MOTION carried, all ayes.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. None**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. 33338 GRAND RIVER PARKING WAIVER REQUEST**

Chairperson Perrot introduced this item and turned it over to staff. Weber stated that the current owner of 33338 Grand River Avenue is considering converting the upper floor of the building to 2 apartments. Parking for the apartments will not be available on the site. The applicant is seeking a parking waiver from the Planning Commission for the proposed new apartments under Sec. 35-104.D.3 - Central Business District—Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Development Requirements. Parking.

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Parking lot design shall conform to the requirements of [Article 14](#), Off-Street Parking and Loading Standards and Access Design. Because the regulations of this section are intended to encourage pedestrian/transit friendly design and compact mixed-use development that requires less reliance on automobiles, on-site parking required under [Article 14](#) may be waived under the following conditions:

- a. The site is located within 500 feet of other parking facilities intended for public use, such as a municipal parking lot, parking structure or on-street parking that provides adequate parking spaces to serve the proposed use.
- b. Failure to provide on-site parking shall be deemed to constitute and acknowledgement and acceptance of a benefit (i.e., the relaxation of on-site parking standards) such that, if the city establishes a special assessment district to fund the construction operation and maintenance of public parking that will serve the property, the property owner agrees to become part of such district and further agrees to payment of the assessment in lieu of providing on-site parking. The city may require a written acknowledgement with respect to the benefit provided.

Weber stated that a site plan review letter from OHM regarding the parking waiver request is included in the staff packet. He then invited the applicants to discuss their project.

Gregory Cowley and Michael Cowley then approached the podium and stated that they were the primary owners of the business, although their parents were still involved through the family trust. They stated that their business had suffered due to covid resulting in a drop in business coupled with an increase in expenses. They stated their proposal is to change the upstairs square footage into two apartments. The square footage is roughly 1,500 for one and the other is almost 1,600. They're two bedroom, two bath for rent. They'll have their own private elevator. Parking will be public. They stated their plan is to start this summer, have it completed in the September timeframe, and rented.

Weber then provided a summary of the planning consultants letter, which stated that converting the second story to residential will reduce the number of seats at the restaurant by 140. Based on the numerical parking requirements in the ordinance, 140 seats would require 47 parking spaces. By contrast, the multi-family residential use only requires 4 parking spaces, a pretty large reduction of what the parking requirements would be. Weber also noted that the planning commission is currently considering reducing the number of parking space requirements for multi-family residential and that the four required spaces may be reduced down to a smaller number if that ordinance passes. The proposed use indicates a significant reduction in parking demand generated by the second story of the structure, and additionally, the multifamily residential land use would likely not share the same peak hours that a restaurant would. He then stated that the recommendation from the planning consultant is to approve the parking waiver request

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so long as the planning commission believes that off street parking for the proposed use can be adequately supported by public parking.

Perrot then asked if there were any external building modifications. Michael Cowley responded that there were not. Perrot then asked if there was anything being done to the roof, walls, windows. Michael Cowley responded there was not.

MOTION by Crutcher, seconded by Westendorf, to approve the parking waiver request for 33338 Grand River Avenue, subject to the first floor being used for a restaurant use, because the proposed uses can be adequately supported by the public parking.

Motion carried, all ayes.

## **B. PUBLIC HEARING - 2025 MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Perrot introduced this item and called for a motion to open the public hearing.

MOTION by Kmetzo, seconded by Crutcher, to open the public hearing.

Motion carried, all ayes.

Weber provided an introduction stating that the City is required to update its master plan every five years. The Master Plan Steering Committee and its consultant OHM Advisors have been working diligently to create the updated master plan based on data collection and analysis and public engagement. At its January 12, 2026 meeting, the Commission heard a presentation by Jennifer Morris, Rachel bush and Justin Sprague of OHM Advisors on the 2025 Master Plan update. The Planning Commission then scheduled a public hearing for March 9, 2026, to review any public comment on the plan. Administration published the required notice, and the plans have been available for review since that time on the City website and in printed form in the City Manager's office. The plan was circulated to all of the neighboring communities and other various agencies. The City heard back from one, which was the Oakland County Planning and Local Business Development Division. The Division submitted some comments which could be added or modified in our plan. Their letter was included in the packet. The City also received written comments, which would be read into the record. Weber then invited the public to speak.

Dan Blugerman made the following comment: He stated he worked at PA Commercial and does a lot of selling and leasing. He stated the viability of a small downtown like Farmington is dependent on having enough variety, synergy and activity to keep the shoppers and visitors engaged at a sustained level. Farmington Central Business District has a limited inventory of commercial spaces and no room for growth except vertically. Unfortunately, the central business district is steadily losing many valuable retail storefronts due to the continuing problem of non-retail uses. He stated in his estimation,

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this problem has ballooned to between 10% and 20% of the storefronts we see financial services, lawyers, insurance agencies, doctors, accountants and other professionals owning and or occupying some of the best retail spaces. While the occupants and owners are proud of their locations and see their prime business spots as a nice reflection of their prominence, we as stewards of downtown Farmington know that pretty buildings are not adding to the downtown retail experience. We don't fault the current owners and occupants with professional services as they all work to be good community members by supporting the Downtown Development Authority initiatives, the Chamber of Commerce events and local charities. He then stated that they are the same as vacant storefronts in the downtown Farmington retail shopping lifestyle experience. So the landlords, sellers, brokers, and other real estate professionals are unable to say no to this continued loss of good storefronts, as these uses are allowed. So, until the zoning code is changed regarding these uses, it's going to continue. We all recognize the changes are hard, but strongly urge the leadership of the City of Farmington to begin the process to update the city zoning ordinance.

Bill Munson, 32900 Grand River Avenue, made the following comment: I wanted to mainly find out what they're doing with the Shiawassee Park. I was told they're going to put in the ADA bridge. Are they going to remove the stairs and put in an ADA bridge there?

Weber responded that public comment was not a two-way dialogue, it is meant to be a chance for the public to state their comments. He then stated that the questions could be answered by staff after the meeting.

Kimberly Campbell, 31622 Shaw Avenue, made the following comment: I live at 31622 Shaw. It's a small neighborhood by the Winery, and I noticed on the master plan that you have it as green space. For the future, the houses would be gone. So, when do you think the master plan would go in effect, putting in a green space? Because me and my neighbors have no intention of moving or raising the building or anything like that. So, that's the problem I have with the master plan. It should be left to be residential. Don't plan on taking all the buildings. Well, okay, by attrition, it could happen, and if you keep encouraging and only improving buildings that would somehow infringe on us living there, which are happening right now. That's my issue, and you're just going to keep making it difficult for us to maintain our residence, because we plan on all living there for many decades. So, with this green space, I don't know how you guys plan on putting that into place, without removing us? So, I think it should just stay residential. It's a nice two streets. Works great and we get along with each other. I think it should stay that way.

Justin Sprague from OHM Advisors then stated that this item would be researched to determine if it was a mistake or was a product of steering committee engagement.

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Kimberly Campbell then stated that she agreed with Dan Blugerman's comment when he stated that the downtown shouldn't be reserved for places that are not heavily trafficked, like, you know, going to an insurance company or data. She agreed that those building units should be used, probably for people that are going to be walking and probably using it more often than some of the other uses.

Bill Munson, 32900 Grand River Avenue, then stated that he just wanted to say, is there a way that you guys can get a hawk signal right there at that crosswalk in front of or near CVS Pharmacy. They had a flashy yellow before they redid Farmington R, but they never put it back. Being seen at that crosswalk is very dangerous because, with the height of a mobility scooter versus parked cars, the driver's view is blocked. I mean, they don't see you until they're right up on top of you. But there's a median in between the two lanes on Farmington Road that has plants. The plants are so high, that people would not be able to see people crossing at that crosswalk. He stated he would like a hawk signal to go there with a flashing red to let the drivers know to stop, so people can cross here safely. He stated the current sign, that is not far off the ground, says to stop for pedestrians, and no one is going to see it, especially at night, until you're right on top of it. So, I'm just asking that something be done about that.

Weber then read the following three comments:

Comment one: Please consider improving the walkability of old Farmington road.

Comment two: I'm absolutely opposed to the concepts shown in the downtown Focus Area renderings. Multifamily dwellings is the last thing our city as a whole, needs, but especially downtown. Doing any part of college project would ruin the small town feel that draws so many people to Farmington

Comment three: From Oakland County, there are a couple of different suggestions, which are in their letter. I won't go and read through all of them right now, but there was a list of five of them, upon review, that we thought we would make an adjustment for in the plan. Those are also in your packet, which I'll just read as follows. One is updating all the maps to accurately reflect the city limits at the Nine Mile Road pump station that was excluded from the maps. The second is recognizing the smart bus service routes and incorporating transit stop improvements and transit oriented development principles into the plan's recommendations. Third will be recognizing the Michigan Natural Features Inventory data regarding the upper Rouge River Plain and the Oakland County Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area System. Fourth, add links to the 2023 Oakland County Hazard Mitigation Plan as it relates to the city's infrastructure. And fifth adding the text to acknowledge that the City of Livonia is an adjacent bordering community.

MOTION by Crutcher, seconded by Westendorf, to close the public hearing.

Motion carried, all ayes.

### **C. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE 2025 MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

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Perrot introduced this item and turned it over to staff. Weber and Saarela discussed that, due to the uncertainty regarding the future land use on Shaw Street, this item should be tabled.

MOTION by Crutcher, seconded by Westendorf, to table approval of the 2025 Master Plan Update.

Motion carried, all ayes.

#### **D. PUBLIC HEARING – 2027-2032 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Perrot introduced this item and turned it over to staff. Weber stated that, as discussed at prior meetings, Michigan P.A. 33 of 2008 and Farmington City Code section 23-39 state that a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) shall be created each year for the ensuing six years. The plan has been available for review on the City's website at:

<https://www.farmgov.com/media/s4rjhbio/capital-improvements-program-2027-2032-draft-watermark-reduced.pdf> and in printed format in the City Manager's Office. At the Planning Commission's February 9, 2026 meeting, a public hearing was scheduled to hear comments from the public on the 2027-2032 Capital Improvement Program. This public hearing was advertised as required.

MOTION by Crutcher, seconded by Kmetzo, to open the public hearing.

Motion carried, all ayes.

No public comment was made.

MOTION by Kmetzo, seconded by Crutcher, to close the public hearing.

Motion carried, all ayes.

#### **E. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF 2027-2032 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Perrot introduced this item and turned it over to staff. Weber stated that now that public comment has been held, the next step is to consider approval of the 2027-2032 Capital Improvement Plan. Perrot mentioned that the plan was based on Steering Committee review and the subject matter expertise of the Department Heads who do a fantastic job.

MOTION by Westendorf, seconded by Crutcher, to approve the 2027-2032 Capital Improvement Plan Resolution.

Motion carried, all ayes.

### **UPDATE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

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Weber provided an update of the proposed pathway from Riley Park to Shiawassee Park.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None heard.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Crutcher stated that, following up on Dan Blugerman's comments, Northville was just in the news passing a similar ordinance. He wondered if Blugerman was proposing something similar. Crutcher stated that, while not that familiar with Northville, he guessed that they had more multi-level buildings than Farmington and had space to move office and professional-type uses to an upper floor. Farmington does not currently have that space for office and professional businesses to move to.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Crutcher, supported by Westendorf, to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary