

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
January 13, 2025

Chairperson Perrot called the meeting to order in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 13, 2025.

ROLL CALL

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

A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Chris Weber, Assistant City Manager; Brian Belsky, Director of Media, Brian Golden, Director of Media, Bonnie Murphy, Recording Secretary.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Kmetzo, seconded by Crutcher, to approve the agenda.
Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

A. November 11, 2024 Minutes

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

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A. Accept Nominations for Chairperson**
- B. Accept Nominations for Vice Chairperson**
- C. Accept Nominations for Secretary**

Chairperson Perrot introduced this item and stated there are three positions on the Planning Commission and former protocol called for a nomination for the position and acceptance of the nomination and then a vote.

Commissioner Crutcher asked if there could be one vote to just move forward with the current board as it is slated and Weber replied there is no issue with that.

MOTION by Crutcher, supported by Mantey, to move to approve the current slate of officers of the Planning Commission to serve in the same capacity for the 2025 year .
Motion carried, all ayes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Master Plan Update

Chairperson Perrot introduced this item and turned it over to staff.

Assistant City Manager Weber stated as reported last meeting, OHM was chosen as the consultant to help us with our Master Plan, our Downtown Master Plan, and our Parks & Rec Master Plan, so we are working on a contract with them currently and should be signed by the end of this week. The first meeting for this whole process is going to be Tuesday, January 26th, we are all going to meet that day and circling over the administrative topics. We do have a listing of phases that this project will take place in, there will be five phases, I passed out a sheet that I put together that describes those phases that just gives you a general idea for when things will be happening as part of this process. We'll post this on the website for people, once the website gets developed, this is just a rough sketch of things that will happen. But the first phase which will happen in February and March is really kind of an internal phase where we come up with a communications and engagement strategy, OHM starts collecting data and reviewing all of our current plans and then create a website that's going to coordinate the whole project and come up with communication materials for the public. So, that's all kind of internal for February and March. Starting April-May timeframe is when they'll really take a look at Farmington's specific conditions, where things are at now and start getting an idea of what should be put together in the final document. And really where the community will start coming in will be in June through August, that's when a community survey will go out, our consultant will be meeting with small groups to solicit their input, maybe it's brokers, maybe it's local businesses, that sort of thing. And then also, there will be a large community workshop that people can come in and provide their feedback. And then going into August through November is the Phase 4 which is developing the plan where they'll be working on putting together the documents and analyzing specific areas to concentrate on for the development of the City. They have a pretty good idea of which areas of the City are going to be focus areas that will really be the eastern side of town going down Grand River and Orchard Lake, so it will be specific areas for those locations. And then Phase 5 which will happen December through January, there will be another public outreach to show what's been come up with to date and get feedback from the public and then finalizing the plan. So, it's about a year long process with again the community really getting involved in the June through August timeframe.

Perrot thanked Weber for the additional information and the update and he then opened the floor for comments or questions from the Commission.

b. Capital Improvement Plan

Weber stated the first meeting of the Steering Committee that helps the Planning Commission put together the documents, we collected information from all the different boards and commissions and department heads and put together a list of new projects to add to the plan, totaling about twenty new projects totaling about 16 million dollars. And then also recognizing the completion and the removal of about 9 million dollars of projects, so we got quite a bit done in the last year and we can report on that at a future meeting. So, we've got two more meetings that we're going to be working on the Capital Improvement Plan and it should come, a draft of that, either in February or March to the Planning Commission for their review.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Planning Commission 2024 Annual Report

Perrot introduced this item and turned it over to staff.

Weber stated that for a number of years now we have put together an annual report for the Planning Commission which you have in your packet is the 2024 Annual Report and it just summarizes all the different things that the Planning Commission has addressed over the 2024 calendar year. It's just a real nice tool to track all of the things that the Planning Commission has done. You know, a lot of times you try to look back and say okay, when was this decision made or that project got off the ground, so there's a one or two page annual report for each year where you can find those projects so you don't have to go through each packet, you can just look at the Annual Report and see what's been done.

Perrot stated that's exactly why he likes this tool for that exact fact, for example talking with neighbors and fielding questions and things like that, just because we vote and approve something doesn't mean that the shovels go into the ground the next day. We've had plenty of business that has come across our plate that never comes to light, sometimes you just get contractors that just put feelers out there and then they decide to go do something else or whatever, so these are really handy and personally I appreciate these. He then opened the floor for questions or comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Kmetzo asked if there is a required number of meetings that the Planning Commission needs to have per year and Weber replied he is not aware of a required number. As long as there's business, we'll have a meeting and if there's not, we do not need a meeting.

UPDATE – CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Perrot introduced this item and turned it over to staff.

Weber stated where the Annual Report came in handy is we have some work going on on Grand River, I don't know if everyone has noticed, but Los Tres Amigos is doing work on their patio and I was going to report the date that that was approved by the Planning Commission and I went to these Annual Reports to track it down and it happened, they came here in April of 2021. And Covid hit and kind of put the brake on that project and now they're picking it up again.

Crutcher asked if they had to come back before the Planning Commission for approval and is there an expiration on approvals and Weber replied that is not deemed necessary because they are not making any changes.

Crutcher then asked for clarification if there are not changes they don't have to come back there is no expiration and Weber replied he will look into that and get back with the answer. Crutcher then stated Detroit has an expiration date after approval and that's why he was asking and further discussion was held. Weber stated they came back to get their building permits and if the Building Official felt there was a problem, he would have directed them back to the Planning Commission.

Weber continued with his update saying that Mason's Corner is close to being a completed project, they're working on the gas lines that are going to connect the main art feature, that's a fire feature, so that should be done by the end of this week or next and then plantings will go in in the Spring and there should be a grand opening at the park.

Perrot asked if that track of land that runs from Farmington Road back to Memorial Park and Weber replied Memorial Park would be the corner where the World War I monument is, and Perrot said that's a City park and is that City property?

Weber replied Memorial Park is a City property. The City got a lease from the Mason's for the corner of Grand River and Farmington, we probably have a little bit of right-of-way but there was a substantial amount of their land that they gave a 99-year lease to build the park on. Weber stated he thinks there was a lease that was existing for part of it, and we designed the park and wanted more space and they were very nice in allowing us to sign a lease for additional space.

Perrot stated we do a good job taking care of parks and public property so I think for a small town we should give ourselves a pat on the back, those guys do a great job year-round.

Weber stated and we keep adding to them so the DPW Director is very accommodating. He went on to report our Pathways Committee are looking at crossings on Grand River. We walked from Halstead all the way down past Orchard Lake, so the whole length of Grand River so we thought about different points where crossings might be helpful to the public and came up with a number of them. And a survey was sent out to collect feedback and very shortly we had over 350 response which is amazing for a survey to get that much feedback so rapidly, along with 175 or more written comments in the feedback, so people are really interested in that will definitely pass all that feedback onto our Master Plan Committee and have that analyzed as part of the Master Plan process.

Crutcher asked if the DDA was involved in those conversations and Weber replied the DDA became involved, unfortunately there wasn't the best communication between those groups, so but the DDA has boosted that message through their channels now as well.

Crutcher stated with the Maxfield development there is some plans for a connective park and one of the things that came up in discussion was the thought of crossing Grand River at Grove Street, so if they're looking at it, those pathways, then that's something that should be looked at or at least that should be part of the conversation.

Weber stated a lot of it had to do with areas outside of the downtown, there's a lot of options, although most of the feedback from the residents had to do with the crosswalks within the downtown. Really it was as you head out downtown east, there's really not too many places to cross Grand River from downtown all the way to, there's one crossing on Power Road and then the Orchard Lake crossing, so there's not a lot of good options there. And then heading west out of town, there's no crossing by the Mansion, there's no crossing by Women's Park. You see a lot of traffic crossing Grand River, not at any crosswalks so where to put the crosswalks and how to put them in, that's another challenge because that's not a Farmington Road, it's a State road and they have a lot of regulations. The speed limit on Grand River is 45, so getting people across the road safely is another issue. Crutcher said it's not 45 there and Weber replied it goes from 25 to 35 to 45 as you're heading out towards Halstead. Crutcher said from Farmington to Shiawassee, it's 25 right there and Weber replied it's 35 by the Mansion because I know we had a complaint on that and counterintuitively if you want to lower the speed limit, you have to have a study done. And maybe you're all aware but if you do the study and you find out that traffic is moving faster than what the posted speed limit is, then you need to raise the speed limit, not lower it. So, it's kind of a tricky situation so if you think people

are going too fast through there, you do the speed study and then you have to raise the speed limit, rather than lower it.

Perrot stated I am really happy that the focus is not just on the downtown because there are plenty of residents that I've heard from for years that have said why is the City only focused on the downtown. Why is all of our money, all of our time and effort, all of the volunteers and this, that and the other thing, I've heard it from people that live in Farmington and people that don't live in Farmington but I'm really happy to hear you say that. I live down right by where you're saying with one crosswalk on the east end right by Power, there's that one, and I've got kids so I'm very concerned about crosswalks and stuff like that, so I'm happy to hear that and appreciate it.

Weber said other than that, we've had a couple ribbon cuttings over the past couple months, we had Talia's Salon open and Bijous Salon and Day Spa. We've had a couple business openings in Joe's Coney Island and Pop Up Pickleball, Joe's Coney Island being where the old Panera was.

There are a couple of businesses opening in the next couple of months. We have Spruce & Ash opening up in the downtown, Lone Light Spirits late spring and Sante's Stove anticipating opening around springtime.

Gray asked if there was any update on Dream Tacos and Weber replied they're getting close to opening soon in the old KFC location and Perrot stated they also own Rolling Stoves.

Weber stated that the City has been talking with the MEDC as a redevelopment ready community, Farmington has access to resources to help with their planning and development and we're talking with the MEDC now about them funding a study for our parking requirements for the downtown and doing sort of a benchmarking and best practice review of what our standards are and that may take place and come before the Planning Commission at a later date.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENT

Commissioner Crutcher was commended for his ten years of service on the Planning Commission and Perrot thanked him for his expertise and commitment of time that he has rendered to the City in his tenure.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary