

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
January 7, 2012

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Saturday, January 7, 2012, in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 8:37 a.m. by Mayor Buck.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Buck, Cowley, Galvin, Kuiken, McShane.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**CITY ADMINISTRATION:** City Clerk Halberstadt, City Manager Pastue.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**01-12-005** MOTION by McShane, seconded by Galvin, to approve the agenda as submitted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING FOR 2012**

Present: John Iacoangeli, Beckett & Raeder, Facilitator

Council participated in a strategic planning and goal setting session facilitated by John Iacoangeli of Beckett & Raeder. Mr. Iacoangeli reviewed the results of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) Analyses completed by Council members prior to the meeting.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Mr. Iacoangeli pointed out the most pressing issue identified by Council is economic development. He stated economic development is a community mindset; a positioning of the City.

Discussion followed regarding the need for branding; perception of Farmington and what it wants to be.

Buck pointed out a branding study had already been completed identifying Farmington as a place for families to gather, friends, and fun.

Discussion continued regarding target markets and the difference between recruiting residents and businesses.

Iacoangeli pointed out businesses will not locate where there is no disposable income; businesses always follow money.

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Discussion followed regarding identifying areas for redevelopment and opportunities for new construction.

Iacoangeli commented on Farmington's strong selling points which include: a good school system, strong public safety, financial stability and good neighborhoods.

Discussion continued regarding Farmington's demographic target being young families with children.

Kuiken pointed out the infrastructure of Farmington has not been kept up to attract new, modern businesses.

Buck noted a number of steps have already been taken relative to economic development in the downtown.

Galvin expressed the importance of economic development in the entire city, not just the downtown.

Buck pointed out a strengthened downtown will radiate out to other areas of the City in terms of development. He noted City Administration has already taken steps with regard to outlying shopping centers.

Iacoangeli stated the three guiding principles of a successful economic development plan are: leadership, vision and collaboration. He noted money is not the issue in a successful plan.

Iacoangeli pointed out Farmington has strong leadership, has demonstrated a strong ability to collaborate, but the key to its success is creating a vision of where it wants to be. He stated that by coming up with solutions now, the City may be missing what its end game is. He quoted, "a ship that does not know what port it wants to go to, any wind is favorable."

Cowley noted the City cannot survive with just the local marketplace, it must attract destination businesses. He believes Farmington is a very good destination market. Farmington's strength is location.

Discussion followed regarding a focus on recruitment of young families and professionals.

Buck noted the high ratio of rental to ownership properties is not necessarily a weakness, but rather could be an opportunity for Farmington bringing more shoppers and diners to Farmington. He further noted Farmington is in need of grade A office space.

Galvin pointed out the City has no organized collaboration in terms of attracting new business.

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Iacoangeli asked Council to define the City's economic development goal. He stressed the importance of being on the same page in defining goals.

Council shared their ideas of economic development goals for the City.

Iacoangeli identified one of Council's economic goals as "encourage plus retain younger professionals and age 30+ families."

Galvin pointed out the City has no identified incubators and lacks a marketing plan. It needs to identify an area to incubate a specific mixed use through collaboration.

Discussion followed regarding incentives for attracting businesses and the City Manager's role in economic development.

Iacoangeli stressed the importance of Council establishing a sound economic development policy. Once that is established, the City Manager is responsible for implementation.

Iacoangeli advised that when economic development does occur, someone will come before Council requesting approval, i.e. re-zoning, addition of infrastructure or tax abatement. He stated Council has to be on the same page in recognizing what is consistent with their policy. He pointed out communities that are redevelopment ready take a lot of the guess work out of the private sector.

McShane advised part of the City's goal should be to attract the medical business community. She stated this is a significant goal of Oakland County.

Galvin pointed out the Drakeshire Plaza formerly housed medical businesses and would be a perfect incubator for such a use.

Pastue pointed out each center has to be looked at individually in terms of use.

Discussion followed regarding possible uses of other shopping centers; priority to grow the tax base.

Galvin pointed out published demographics for Farmington; asked what business would be attracted to the City based on those numbers.

Iacoangeli stated Farmington has the necessary assets to attract businesses, but it is up to City Administration to decide what the appropriate mechanisms are to achieve economic development goals.

Buck pointed out diversity should be recognized in the City's economic goals.

McShane stated an active marketing program needs to be a part of the goals.

Iacoangeli stated the City needs to formalize a branding program.

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Cowley pointed out a number of studies have been completed for the downtown, but have not been acted upon for a number of reasons including: parking, inventory and economic tool kit problems.

Iacoangeli stated one of the goals should be redevelopment of shopping centers or "gray fields."

Galvin pointed out the one thing that is lacking the City's current economic development plan is connectors. He stated a successful organization has idea people, doer people and connector people. He advised if there is no one connecting to people outside of Farmington then we are left with a lot of ideas that won't be implemented.

Discussion followed regarding the reasonableness of committing part of the City Manager's job to economic development.

Discussion continued regarding the need to educate Council on all of the marketing studies that have been done.

Iacoangeli suggested providing Councilmembers with a binder of all the studies that have been done relative to economic development. He suggested the City Manager and DDA Director hold a meeting to educate Council on these studies. He pointed out Council needs to buy into these studies.

Discussion followed regarding how the DDA functions and its autonomy from City Council. It was pointed out there is a lack of consensus by the DDA board relative to implementation of study findings.

Kuiken offered that one of the economic goals should be development of the City as a destination place.

Iacoangeli suggested Farmington needs to formalize a city-wide brand for the community. The City needs to be able to communicate what it is to the outside.

McShane suggested a marketing plan as part of the economic goals.

Iacoangeli advised there needs to be a consensus on all facets of economic development in order to be successful.

Buck noted it is a very high standard to have complete consensus.

Kuiken pointed out Farmington's location is a huge asset, but pointed out the need for shopping centers to be well maintained as people approach the downtown.

Galvin offered the City needs to create strategic alliances, i.e. banks, landlords, governmental entity, etc. as a goal.

McShane offered a goal should include the creation of attractive and viable centers of business.

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Buck stated this goal should replace “redevelopment of shopping centers or gray fields.”

Council concurred with the following goals for economic development:

- Encourage plus retain younger professionals and age 30+ families
- Create a marketing plan
- Create strategic alliances
- Create attractive and viable centers of business

Discussed followed regarding publication and education of goals.

Council concurred to break at 10:35 a.m.; meeting resumed at 11:00 a.m.

## **REVIEW OF 2010-2011 CITY COUNCIL GOALS STATEMENTS**

### **Finance and Operational Goals**

Pastue discussed the dismal economic forecast for the next five years.

Discussion followed regarding economic issues related to Farmington’s higher percentage of residential versus commercial property. It was pointed out new construction is needed to impact the bottom line.

Pastue advised City Administration’s goals in setting the budget include:

- A. Maintain a high level of service
- B. Maintain infrastructure investment
- C. Maintain millage rate
- D. Maintain a strong financial position – AA bond rating
- E. Do not engage in ongoing deficit spending

Iacoangeli advised these goals could easily be converted into the City’s financial goals if they are prioritized. He asked Council to individually rank these goals in writing.

Buck requested clarification of each goal.

Discussion followed regarding the meaning of high level of service and those services that may be negotiable. Discussion continued regarding cost of services and the feedback from residents on their priorities.

Pastue spoke about planned infrastructure improvements and related funding challenges.

Pastue discussed proposed 5-year budget plan that would increase the overall millage rate.

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Discussion followed regarding the millage rate in the new economy.

Discussion continued regarding the need to maintain a competitive millage rate in order to stay competitive with surrounding communities in attracting businesses and residents.

Iacoangeli pointed out millage rate does not translate into what communities are doing in terms of level of services. He stated the level of services to the residents should be the driver in determining if they want to live here.

Discussion followed regarding the cost and importance of Public Safety.

Following are the financial goals in priority order as modified and ranked (total average) by Council:

1. Engage in a sustainable financial plan
2. Manage a high level of service
3. Maintain a competitive millage rate
4. Continue and improve infrastructure investment
5. Maintain a strong financial position

Council concurred with the above ranking of financial goals.

Council concurred to break for lunch at 12:00 p.m.; meeting resumed at 12:15 p.m.

### **Commit to Complete, Implement and Continue Strategic Planning**

Council concurred to continue their commitment to complete, implement and continue strategic planning with quarterly reviews.

### **Develop and Implement a Communications and Marketing Plan**

Pastue reviewed the different forms of communication used by the City to communicate with residents.

Galvin pointed out the City communicates with two types of businesses: landlords and tenants. He stated communication needs to be different for each.

Discussion followed regarding outsourcing a public relations/marketing program which would identify the target market and message.

Discussion continued regarding possible need for a public relations expert.

Iacoangeli asked what Council is trying to achieve under the goal of developing and implementing a communications and marketing plan.

Cowley responded to grow the tax base which includes attracting the entrepreneurial investment market.

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Discussion followed regarding development of the right message to the right people. Discussion continued regarding the success of other cities in their use of public relations experts.

Galvin pointed out there needs to be a collaborative effort between tier one and two businesses (tenant and landlord).

Cowley stated a need to subsidize rent for destination businesses.

Discussion followed regarding landlords who are unwilling to market and maintain their properties.

Iacoangeli pointed out that previously under this goal there was a separation of internal and external communications. He suggested bringing in a communications firm that would develop a plan that would meet the City's economic development objective relative to a target market.

Discussion followed on how to develop and communicate the "Farmington message."

Discussion continued regarding the difference between residential and business marketing campaigns.

Iacoangeli advised internal communications would remain under the communications objective, but an external communication plan would fall under economic development. He clarified internal communication relates to residents.

Discussion followed regarding the different forms of internal communications including: website, newsletter, community meeting, council meeting broadcasts and news releases.

No objections were heard to contracting for outside public relations assistance.

### **Create and Implement a Neighborhood Development Program**

Pastue advised this goal was established in large part due to the number of foreclosures occurring at the time.

Kuiken pointed out housing inventory in Farmington is currently low and homes that have been purchased as a result of foreclosure or short sale are being renovated therefore this program may not be necessary.

Pastue advised no further resources need to be committed to neighborhood development.

Cowley pointed out the future opportunity of redeveloping school properties.

*Council concurred to continue the existing property maintenance program.*

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Discussion followed regarding ways to apply pressure to landlords who are not maintaining their properties.

Buck suggested continuing a focus on greater awareness of walkability from neighborhoods to business areas.

Cowley raised the issue of extending the Corridor Improvement Authority to the west side of the City.

Discussion followed regarding the feasibility of extending the CIA since it is a joint effort with Farmington Hills. It was pointed out Farmington Hills does not have the same issues on the west side as Farmington does.

McShane pointed out the number of walking barriers to seniors and children in the downtown.

*Council concurred to continue focus on walkability for commercial connectivity.*

#### **OTHER DISCUSSION REGARDING GOALS**

Iacoangeli inquired if there were any additional goals Council would like to discuss.

In response to a question from McShane, Pastue advised he will develop a work plan to support Council goals.

In a review of the guiding principles of successful economic development: leadership, vision and collaboration, Galvin pointed out they have the first two, but not necessarily collaboration.

Galvin questioned who would implement the goals established by Council.

Iacoangeli advised a resolution incorporating all of the goals must first be adopted by Council before the next step can be taken. Once those goals are adopted, Vince will develop a work plan for implementation.

Discussion followed regarding the City's approach in closing the "big deals" and strategies for business recruitment.

Discussion continued regarding the right person to carry out economic development strategies.

Cowley stated the need to hire the right person for the job. He recommended freeing up the City Manager's time to allow him to pursue economic development. He believes the City Manager has the necessary knowledge and tools to carry out this function.

McShane advised the City Manager's job is to run the City. She pointed out he does not have the resources to take on economic development as well. She supports hiring a professional.



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Pastue discussed the changes the DDA will be facing due to less revenue TIF. He stated the City needs to do what it can with the available resources.

Galvin discussed a hybrid model of the City Manager and a commission or board of economic advisors to carry out economic development.

Iacoangeli advised the tendency is to overcomplicate economic development. He stated the lesson that has been learned, even by the state, is the more streamlined the program with less people involved the greater the success. He noted the City Manager is usually the first contact when a business is looking at a community.

Discussion followed regarding business opportunities in Farmington.

Galvin recommended developing a list of businesses that people want to see in Farmington; more specific ideas; and identifying those that have certain characteristics.

Cowley advised a full market analysis needs to be completed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was heard.

**COUNCIL COMMENT**

No Council comment was heard.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Council concurred to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

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J.T. (Tom) Buck, Mayor

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Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

APPROVED: February 16, 2012