



FINAL

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on December 7, 2015, in 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, MI. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor William Galvin.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Sara Bowman	Council Member	Present	
Greg Cowley	Councilmember	Present	
William Galvin	Mayor	Present	
Steve Schneemann	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	
Jeff Scott	Councilmember	Present	

City Administration Present

Director Christiansen
City Clerk Halberstadt
City Manager Murphy

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Steve Schneemann, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	Greg Cowley, Councilmember
AYES:	Bowman, Cowley, Galvin, Schneemann, Scott

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Galvin read a letter from John and Jane Feiten, 24165 Twin Valley Court, regarding saving Queen Anne homes on Grand River from redevelopment.

Laura Myers, 33601 Shiawassee, Chairperson of the Historical Commission, stated the Dick Carvel award was recently given to JoAnne McShane. The award was created to recognize people who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to the preservation of Farmington history. She noted JoAnne retired after serving 26 years on Council and also served as Mayor. She often spoke out in support of preserving Farmington history.

Myers advised the Historical Commission had its first meeting in December with recently appointed new members. She will be scheduling training for new commission members and invited Council to attend as well.

Polly Varhol, 32146 Freedom Road, Farmington Hills, expressed support for preserving the Queen Anne homes on Grand River, discussing the uniqueness historical structures give the city.

Penny Oglesby, 34002 Grand River, expressed support for preserving the Queen Anne homes on Grand River. She does not want to see parking structures or apartments replace these homes.

Mary Lou Knight, 21536 Chestnut, expressed support for preserving the Queen Anne homes on Grand River. She expressed concern that action is being taken behind the backs of residents. She would like to see this issue voted on by residents.

Alice Benson, 33618 Hillcrest, expressed support for preserving the Queen Anne homes on Grand River. She discussed the history of the homes. She would hate to see them torn down for a parking lot.

Jenna Stacy, 31721 Sherwood Street, stated redevelopment of the property on which the Queen Anne homes are located is incompatible with the city's Master Plan. She read wording from the Master Plan that supports preserving existing historical structures in the downtown. She also expressed support for preserving the Queen Anne homes.

Annika Taylor, 23750 Gill Road, also cited sections of the city's Master Plan that is in direct conflict with the Downtown Area Plan. She noted Main Street Oakland does not believe downtown parking in Farmington has reached a critical point, rather management of parking as a better alternative.

Dirk Van Den Muijesenberg, 23718 Wesley, discussed a Main Street Oakland County presentation given at a recent Downtown Development Authority meeting. He noted Main Street standards provide that historic preservation is central to the Main Street program purpose. He continued to read excerpts from the Main Street website.

Cheryl Blau, 23350 Cass Avenue, stated she lives here because history is alive in Farmington. She noted currently there is no ordinance in Farmington to protect historical homes. She stated an ordinance needs to be adopted that gives binding authority to the Historical Commission. She cited a number of organizations under which residents must abide by their rules, such as the Downtown Development Authority, Sub-Division associations, etc. She also discussed Oakland County Mainstreet comments.

Marilyn Weimar, 33620 Hillcrest, stated she recently resigned from the Historical Commission due to the city's disregard for preservation of structures in the historical district. She cited recent approval of a modification to a four-square home that will make it a non-contributing member of the historic district. She discussed how the Historical Commission has made efforts to educate the public on historic preservation.

Maria Taylor, 23750 Gill Road, discussed the need for better communication with residents regarding upcoming plans for redevelopment. She stated earlier this year when the Downtown Area Plan first came out some of the members of the Historical Commission wanted to share with the community their concerns over the potential removal of the Queen Anne homes on Grand River. She stated when the Historical Commission took first steps towards educating the community about this potential change, they were told that their job as a commission was to agree with the city and support the city plans. She stated this was unacceptable and a key factor in her resignation from the Commission. In the future, she

would like to see stronger steps taken toward true cooperation and understanding between local government and members of the community.

4. PRESENTATION - EIGHT MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

A. Eight Mile Boulevard Association Presentation

Present: Jordan Twardy, Executive Director, Eight Mile Boulevard Association (8MBA)

Mr. Twardy provided an update on the accomplishments and planned activities of the Eight Mile Boulevard Association.

Responding to a question from Schneemann, Christiansen stated the city has approximately 12 properties that are part of the Eight Mile organization.

Scott expressed the importance of Farmington's continued participation in 8MBA.

5. ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Christiansen provided a written and oral report on status of economic and community development.

6. DISCUSSION - PUBLIC ALLEY REPAIR & MAINTENANCE

A. Review of Alley Maintenance Policy

Present: Robert Hahn, 34005 Oakland Street

City Administration advised the city has received a request to perform maintenance on an existing un-improved alley on the south side of Oakland Street between Wilmarth and Picket Streets.

City Administration advised the Department of Public Works classifies alleys in three categories:

1. Commercial Alleys: All commercial alleys have been paved, snow is plowed in the winter and cold patched as needed;
2. Improved Residential Alleys: Residents have contributed to the cost for the alley to be paved and snow is plowed in the winter, no cold patch has been needed as of this time; and
3. Un-Improved Residential Alleys: Existing alleys which are gravel or badly deteriorated asphalt; no maintenance is done on this type of alley.

Christiansen provided an overall history on alleys currently in existence in the city. He advised Mr. Hahn had contacted the Economic and Community Development Department with his concern regarding a public alley adjacent to his property that is in poor condition. He stated there is an overhead utility line that runs along the east side of the alley along Mr. Hahn's property line. He noted that area is routinely accessed by utility vehicles that have over time caused significant deterioration of the alley. Mr. Hahn is looking for the city to perform repairs on that alleyway.

Mayor Galvin invited Mr. Hahn to speak on this issue.

Robert Hahn expressed appreciation to Council for addressing his concerns regarding the condition of the alley behind his house. He stated the alley has deteriorated to the point where safety concerns have arisen. He stated establishing a Special Assessment District (SAD) as proposed by the City would be an injustice to the homeowners given the significant deterioration has been caused by AT&T trucks. He stated the trucks use the alley every day with no regard for the freeze/thaw cycle.

Hahn stated if this issue is not addressed the alley will soon become impassable. He stated the alley should be ripped out and repaved, but his concern is more immediate. He suggested the city throw some patch on the alley, filling in the pot holes. He noted that he had contacted AT&T to fix the alley and they suggested it was the responsibility of the city. He further noted that if the city abandons the alley it reverts to the homeowners and they will not allow AT&T to access the utility box which is paramount to the city.

Christiansen clarified that the city was not advocating the establishment of an SAD. He merely pointed out that a SAD was used in the past to address maintenance of another alleyway.

Discussion followed on whether AT&T requires vehicle access to the utility box. Mr. Hahn stated if the city abandoned the alleyway, homeowners by way of "easement of necessity" would be required to allow access to the utility box but not necessarily by vehicle.

Hahn stressed that the hazardous alleyway needs to be addressed now.

Schneemann advised there are two issues in front of Council: a short term solution and a long term vacation of the property.

Responding to a question from Bowman, Eudy stated the funds to repair the alleyway would come out of the local roads fund.

Bowman asked if this would be considered a violation of the alleyway maintenance policy.

Eudy confirmed that this would be a policy change which is why he referred this issue to the City Manager's office.

Galvin pointed out the only policy in place relates to snowplowing. He stated maintenance of unimproved alleys is a matter of practice, not policy.

Discussion followed regarding other alleyways that are routinely accessed, other than for commercial uses.

Hahn noted the policy regarding maintenance of commercial alleyways should be applied to his alleyway because of its consistent use by AT&T.

Responding to a question from Schneemann, Eudy stated the cost to patch the alleyway would not be significant.

Cowley advised the city should either cold patch the alleyway or put some gravel down.

He suggested the possible use of PEG fees since it is an AT&T box. He questioned how many other alleys the city has and what is the procedure going forward.

Scott expressed concern regarding the amount of times AT&T needs to access their utility box. The city should be pushing them to upgrade their system.

Galvin identified three points: 1) approach AT&T regarding refraining from driving their trucks down the alleyway; 2) address the holes with cold patch; and 3) find a long term solution.

Bowman expressed support for cold patching the alleyway. She does not believe this action would lead to something larger.

Discussion followed regarding the concern that homeowners adjacent to other city-owned alleyways will request repairs as well.

Murphy confirmed he can approve moving forward with the cold patch.

Mayor Galvin thanked Mr. Hahn for being present.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was heard.

8. COUNCIL COMMENT

Cowley reminded everyone to shop local during the Christmas holiday season.

9. ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion To Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jeff Scott, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Greg Cowley, Councilmember
AYES:	Bowman, Cowley, Galvin, Schneemann, Scott

William E. Galvin, Mayor

Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

Approval Date: _____