

FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, Michigan
June 13, 2016

Chairperson Crutcher called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at City Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, on Monday, June 13, 2016.

ROLL CALL

Present: Buyers, Crutcher, Gronbach, Kmetzo, Majoros, Waun

Absent: Chiara

A quorum of the Commission was present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Director Christiansen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Gronbach, seconded by Majoros, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion carried, all ayes.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes of Regular Meeting – May 9, 2016

Motion by Buyers, seconded by Waun, to approve the items on the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried, all ayes.

REVIEW OF 2016 RECREATION MASTER PLAN FINAL DRAFT AND SCHEDULING OF PUBLIC HEARING

Crutcher introduced this agenda item and turned it over to staff.

Christiansen stated this agenda item is a review of the 2016 Master Plan Final Draft and the scheduling of the required Public Hearing. He gave a brief synopsis of the steps leading up to the presentation of the draft. He indicated he would go over the information contained in the draft and entertain comments and questions from the Commission.

He indicated the City has a comprehensive planning program that has been implemented and put in place over a number of years. In that comprehensive planning program there are various tools that the Planning Commission and the City uses with respect to planning efforts. Under the comprehensive planning program is the City's Master Plan, which will be updated during the next budget year, with its last update in 2009.

Also under the comprehensive planning program aside from the Master Plan is the Downtown Development Authority Master Plan that currently is undergoing a revision.

And under the comprehensive planning program is the Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority Vision Plan and that Vision Plan was adopted for the CIA for the Grand River Corridor in 2013 and that continues to be implemented by the Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority. And in 2015 there was the adoption of the Downtown Area Plan which has both property in the downtown and outside the downtown and in the Grand River Corridor that is part of that particular tool. And the City, in an effort to be redevelopment ready moved forward with creating and adopting the City Vision Plan in 2013. And the current Recreation Master Plan that is in place was completed in 2005 and some of the results of the implementation of that plan include Riley Park and Sundquist Pavilion and that plan is now before the Commission for a review and update and then the holding of a Public Hearing which will then be acted on and moved to City Council.

He indicated another project that was undertaken together with the Michigan Municipal League is the Orchard Lake/Ten Mile Road Project Plan as well as the Rouge River Nature Trail Project analysis and report which came from the graduate students who are part of the Natural Resources and Environment at the University of Michigan who worked along with the Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority in developing that.

Gronbach asked if the latest draft had been reviewed by the appropriate committee and approved and Christiansen responded that yes, the Recreation Master Plan Committee, along with the consultants, brought it to the Planning Commission for their consideration this evening and prior to scheduling the Public Hearing at the next meeting in July.

Gronbach indicated that when they had reviewed this draft at their last meeting that he had raised the point a few times that it should be acknowledged and coordinated with the Farmington Hills Recreation Programs because of the joint programs they share and that he was pleased to see that his suggestion was incorporated into the Draft Plan and that the updates discussed at that meeting were also incorporated into it.

Christiansen suggested that they could flip through highlights of the plan and have an opportunity to ask questions of it.

Majoros stated there was a lot of good background in the Plan and information and public survey and socioeconomic forecast for Farmington, but pointed to Page 5 of the draft as being a summary of the action items which would be worth spending time on. He further indicated at the Public Hearing the public should be focused on what is going to happen and perhaps should be directed to that page.

Christiansen stated that was a good point and a fair assumption and that the whole premise of updating the Plan is not to reinvent the wheel but to evaluate the existing conditions, the Committee took a look at the existing plan, looked at that plan and what it's recommending and now what the current conditions are and evaluated them and

looked at what the opportunities are for enhancing the existing parks in Farmington in the future. It is what the City is looking to do to maintain, sustain and enhance its park system.

Christiansen stated one of the things noted in this draft is there's a focus on each one of the community parks and the City has five existing parks and one to come on line very shortly, the new neighborhood park at the old Flanders Elementary School which will be part of Riverwalk of Farmington. He also indicated what is important is that in the document the effort, like all of the other efforts under the Comprehensive Planning Program and all the documents mentioned earlier, all of the City's Comprehensive Planning tools, from the Vision Plan to the Master Plan to the DDA Master Plan to the CIA Vision Plan to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Orchard/Ten Mile Plan and also the Rouge River Nature report, those are all available online for anyone to look at on the City website.

He stated that planning cannot, does not and should not operate in a vacuum, that it should be representative of the stakeholders that the documents represent, the residents of the City of Farmington, property owners, business owners and others who have an interest in the City as well. But the real focus is on the residents of the community and what they are asking for and the draft is reflective of the residents' voices with respect to the survey that was done which was disseminated on the website and other places and those responses were taken into account when creating the draft.

He stated it's broken up in five different sections, the first being an overview, the second is explaining to the administration about the planning process and the reasons for the Recreation Master Plan. The third section is the recreation inventory, the process of inventory; it discusses accessibility, and focuses on the parks and their facilities. The fourth section is the basic action program, the vision of Farmington and the public input process from the survey and other input, open public meetings. The next section is on parkland and service area analysis, taking into account the relationship Farmington has with Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation in providing services to Farmington. The fifth section is the Action Program, the goals and objectives and five year action plan.

He then indicated this section states the purpose of the plan, provides a guide for decision makers for future improvements and developments, parks and recreation facilities and programming which serves Farmington's residents and visitors. It talks about the Plan itself, the last update occurring in 2005, and that the 2016 update includes an evaluation of parks facilities and programming to update the City's Master Plan and determine where future improvements should be made and discusses the make-up of the administration, those involved in the Plan, talks about the planning process, the community, the inventory of recreation facilities, public participation, the analysis of existing sites, action program and then the plan completion and adoption. So it talks about the various tasks that have been undertaken in preparing the update. It also talks about funding and financing, the various elements of activities here in the City of Farmington Parks and Recreation services, other things like events, Farmer's

Market, the Governor Warner Mansion, other things that are financed and budgeted and is outlined in this section.

It also talks about inventory of existing parks, as the Commission is aware, Farmington currently has five parks, George F. Riley/Sundquist Pavilion, Memorial Park, Shiawassee/Community Park, Drake Park, Womens Park and soon to be Flanders Park. It talks about the parks themselves and analysis based upon recommended park guidelines, Michigan Department of Natural Resources Guidelines, and the National Recreation and Parks Association Guidelines that were developed and are used to help identify the recreational facilities in the community. It talks about classification of parks, neighborhood, school, community. It talks about accessibility, the need to provide barrier-free access for our parks and it rates our facilities based upon their barrier-free accessibility. And it talks about each one of the parks and what their facilities currently provide.

He stated the next section goes into a discussion on each one of the parks .individually There's a picture talking about Shiawassee Park, its location, the purpose of the park, a community park, the largest park in the City of Farmington, being approximately almost 24 acres, the existing facilities at the park, the conditions of those facilities, all of the elements to include parking, signage, bathrooms, ballfields, lighting, play structure, walking paths, pavilion, tennis court, landscaping, sidewalk, are all part of the facility evaluation.

He indicated where it talks about public input, that was derived from the survey.

He then went on to talk about Drake Park, which is on Drake Road in the western portion of the City. It sits next to Longacre School, has three ballfields, one with lights, the other two without. In the parking area there is a small equipment building which has bathrooms in it, small play area, a gathering area, picnic tables and grills and two tennis courts. It is a nine-acre park and the facilities were evaluated and the general consensus was that the park had gone through its life cycle, that the equipment and facilities are older and in need of enhancement and upgrade.

Kmetzo asked if at the Public Hearing will the public get the whole draft and Christiansen responded it is online now for their review. She went on to say there is a lot of information contained therein but it actually boils down to one page of what the actions are, that there is no explanation on how it was prioritized and the timeframes.

Christiansen stated he is working towards that page and will be next in their review.

He then indicated Womens Park is the third park of five, which is classified as a mini park because it is less than a half-acre with walking paths, benches. He stated there was a subcommittee created with respect to the focus on Womens Park, to study it and its history, the existing conditions and then move forward with recommendations for the park which was done and those comments were wrapped into the evaluation.

He moved to Memorial Park, stating it is located at the intersection of Grand River and Oakland Street. It features a war memorial, honors the veterans from the Civil War, Spanish American War, World War I and a small section on World War II with a Blue Star Memorial and was dedicated in 1928. He spoke about enhancements being reflective of all conflicts experienced to date in our country. He indicated there has been a lot of discussion on this and a small group was engaged to take a look at a design for enhancement.

Riley Park/Sundquist Pavilion in the center of the heart of downtown, is a mini park being a little less than an acre with the pavilion opening in 2005, provides a year round gathering place for the Farmington Community and houses many community activities. He indicated although it is fairly new, maintenance is needed on the facility, the bathrooms are not winterized, not insulated.

The last park is Flanders Park which will be located in the southern most portion of the City, being constructed through a public/private partnership as a result of the Riverwalk development of Farmington and the 2.25 acres is in the process of being donated to the City.

He then went on to discuss the basis for action and the vision of Farmington and what the Farmington Vision Plan identifies as far as the vision for programs, recreation, public space, amenities, facilities, the public input process, the parkland and service area analysis based on the National Recreation Park Association standards indicating Farmington is mostly compliant with the exception being a small deficiency in the mini parks and some adjustment at the community park.

He stated the action program is broad brush stroked because it does not break down every park in a specific timeline and identify every element and how that's going to be funded or provided for but it talks about overall goals. It states that the 2016 Farmington Recreation Plan has been prepared consistent with and in the furtherance of the City's Master and Downtown Plans; both plans state the pervasive consensus of the Farmington community for open space, green space, and enhancement of the City's Parks and Recreation areas. They also specifically address the desirability of community facilities such as recreation, park and civic uses, that create an integrative network linked to neighborhoods in the downtown.

Christiansen then spoke of the overall goal being one that was part of the 2005-2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and is looked to be carried forward with further enhancements in the 2016 plan.

The draft goals of the 2016 update were defined as:

1. Retain existing recreational land
2. Continue to maintain and enhance recreational land facilities programs and services to meet the evolving needs of the residents of the City and the neighboring communities

3. Create nodes in the downtown to provide better connective public gathering places as well as opportunities for enhanced social action.
4. Maintain and enhance existing relationships that promote recreational land programs and services for all parks and recreational facilities.

He emphasized these are very broad brush strokes, not specific to a development plan with a timeline, etc., etc.

He went to the next page which focuses on the four goals and explained them to be implementation strategies or action elements of the overall goals.

Waun asked Christiansen if she were looking for additional information on the feasibility study for the new multi-purpose community center and library, would she look to the DDA for that answer.

Christiansen responded yes, that is linked to the Downtown Development Authority Master Plan.

He then went on to the next page where it talks about park specific items; it references the Grand River Corridor Plan and the Rouge River Corridor and the Riverwalk and the plan, and the report for the Nature Trail.

He stated the Five Year Action Plan starts on Page 3 of Section 5 where it states in the near future in the five year period of this plan the City expects to continue conducting its recreational programs and services purchased from the City of Farmington Hills. He stated that Farmington does not have a Parks and Recreation Department and looks to the City of Farmington Hills and their program services. The experience of the past several years has met expectations according to surveys and the City Council still continues to believe that a joint program is the best available method for providing the highest quality and most varied recreational programs for its residents. The City remains responsible for the maintenance of our facilities within our municipal boundaries. Farmington's Recreation Master Plan Capital Improvement Schedule is included in the document as well as a table regarding cost estimates for various improvements.

The Five Year Action Plan identifies recommendations to the City which keeps the City on track with projects and helps to identify funding priorities. The four major ones being, to expand the City's pathway system, to upgrade existing park facilities, to increase the variety of recreational facilities and preserve ample open space. Through this planning process the City identified elements as the most important priorities because of their ability to address all of the established goals and objectives as follows:

Expand the diversity of recreational facilities offered in the City
Expanded programming opportunities for residents, continuing to work with Farmington Hills providing recreation programming for the City

Increased access to Parks and Recreation for all residents
Insure high quality Parks and Recreation services and facilities for the residents

He went on to state that priorities should be reviewed on an annual basis and respond to updated findings and identification of funding opportunities, in particular, costs should be closely monitored.

He identified the specific improvements for each of the parks and detailed the funding of same.

For Flanders he stated that currently the City has \$75,000 budgeted for the park and the developer is also dedicating the property and doing the stormwater management within the park, the finished grading and some of the perimeter landscape per the PUD.

He further described the projected 2018-2020 enhancements for the parks.

Majoros stated that we live in a sound bite world, and that he appreciates all of the work that people have put into this, but has concerns about preparing for a Public Hearing in a month and that there may be questions from the public concerning the time period in which such enhancements will come to fruition. He stated he feels the Commission's job should be how to present this material in a digestible fashion that recognizes the inputs or describes the priorities to the citizens, and make sure it is understandable taking into consideration their input that they provided.

Christiansen stated an executive summary format document can be prepared and available to everyone that could provide a quick sound bite view of the five parks.

Majoros indicated they need to be prepared to convey that the Recreational Plan recognizes the input but it is part of something bigger that will be done once and done properly.

Buyers asked if he was proposing that prior to next month's Public Hearing that in addition to the Plan there will be an executive summary to present also and Christiansen responded in the affirmative.

Kmetzo stated that in the beginning Christiansen had mentioned all of the different Master Plans and asked if there was a way to show how all the Master Plans are somehow linked and Christiansen responded they already do.

Kmetzo expressed concern over having too many pieces of the puzzle without knowing how they fit together.

She then raised a question about the deficiencies and where they are addressed and inquired if there was any suggested level of barrier free that they are aiming for and what the current levels are.

Waun questioned where the funding for the projects would be coming from and who would be charged with researching what grant money is available.

Christiansen stated the Administration and staff are working with consultants and are always looking to offset costs and with the update to the Recreation Master Plan, the City will be eligible for grant funding through the DNR.

Christiansen said he appreciated the comments made by the Commission and that he was going to take them and address them and put together an executive summary.

Christiansen stated these guides are used to provide direction but that priorities may change based on circumstances or opportunities.

He then stated his recommendation would be to schedule the Public Hearing for the meeting in July, and that he will take the comments heard tonight and refer them to the Recreation Master Plan Committee and then put together an executive summary that will be available to the public on line as well in preparation for the Public Hearing.

MOTION by Majoros, seconded by Buyers, to approve the scheduling of the Public Hearing for the July 11th, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting, and that an Executive Summary document will be prepared and put online in advance of the Public Hearing available to the public and for preparation for the Public Hearing.
Motion carried, all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None heard.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Buyers complimented Christiansen on his presentation tonight as well as his participation with the Recreation Master Plan Committee.

Majoros reiterated his statements about presenting a plan in a manner that is easily digestible to the public.

Christiansen thanked Buyers for his comments and explained the role of the Planning Commission related to planning for the City

STAFF COMMENTS

Christiansen stated that Administration is looking to put together some training for the upcoming year with money budgeted in the 2016/17 budget for training members of Boards and Commissions.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Buyers, seconded by Gronbach, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried, all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary