



Regular City Council Meeting
7:00 p.m., Monday, January 4, 2021
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

FINAL

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on January 4, 2021, as a Virtual Meeting via Zoom, an electronic meeting platform. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976 and electronically as authorized under the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.261, et seq., as amended by HB 1108, in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, protect the public health, and provide essential protections to vulnerable Michiganders by limiting in-person contact and the number of people interacting at public gatherings.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Bowman.

1. ROLL CALL

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Sara Bowman	Mayor	Present	
Dave DeLind	Councilmember	Present	
Joe LaRussa	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	
Steve Schneemann	Councilmember	Present	
Maria Taylor	Councilmember	Present	

City Administration Present

City Clerk Mullison
City Manager Murphy
City Attorney Schultz

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Move to approve the regular meeting agenda as presented.**

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	LaRussa, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	Taylor, Councilmember

3. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS INTERVIEW: COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY HEALTH

Alexander Mott was interviewed for a seat on the Farmington/Farmington Hills Commission on Community Health.

Move to appoint Alexander Mott as an alternate to the Farmington/Farmington Hills Commission on Community Health for a 3-year term ending December 31, 2023.**

RESULT:	APPROVED AS PRESENTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	DeLind, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Taylor, Councilmember

4. REAPPOINT BRIAN SPITSBERGEN TO THE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Mayor Bowman welcomed comments and questions toward the reappointment of Mr. Spitsbergen.

Move to reappoint Brian Spitsbergen as an alternate to the Commission on Children Youth and Families for a 3-year term ending Dec. 31, 2023.**

RESULT:	APPROVED AS PRESENTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	LaRussa, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	DeLind, Councilmember

5. DISCUSSION OF MTC – NEXT STEPS

City Manager Murphy asked for clarification as to how Council would like Administration to proceed with the next step on this project. Mayor Bowman summarized what had happened at the last meeting, stating that the motion from LaRussa directed Administration and CIB to move forward with getting additional information from three of the four applicants but did not provide an avenue for Council to meet with them. She noted that it seemed that there was some discussion and interest in moving forward with Council meeting with each developer.

Schneemann reiterated his statements from the last meeting and said that he felt it was beneficial for Council to meet in person with each applicant so that all can learn things. There is value to at least reaching out to proponents to see if they would be willing to have a conversation with Council.

Bowman recalled that DeLind's comments at the last meeting indicated that there seemed to be a miscommunication about what Council was directing, and that he was interested in Council having the opportunity to hear from the proponents. She wanted to make sure that Council is fully respecting what they asked CIB to do for them and indicated that it was important to stay in line and true to the process. DeLind commented that he would like to have each entity present to Council to allow pointed questioning.

LaRussa echoed Bowman's comments about having respect for the work that was done and the instrument presented. He indicated concern that the process doesn't get challenged in these personal presentations and undermine the work that was done. He cautioned that this should be a clarifying presentation with nothing changed for this, no criticism of others, and that proponents should keep to their original proposals.

Bowman stated Council's willingness to revisit the instruction presented to Administration, to put next steps briefly on hold and interact with developers. In response to a question from LaRussa about what a possible timeframe would be, Murphy said that developers had already done their presentation preparation and should be able to present, if interested, as soon as Thursday of this week.

Times and dates were discussed to offer to meet, along with possible time limits for both the presentations and the questions. A motion to amend the previous motion was discussed.

Taylor asked what happened to the smooth, orderly process previously planned. She noted that the process had originally been designed to conduct Council's decision making in an orderly way, and felt like this was taking a step backward and throwing the process out the window. She listed concerns about why the process was being overturned at this point. She said that everyone involved in this process need to hear councilmembers commit to following the process. She would rather hear presentations from the top two proponents but would be amenable to hearing from all four.

Bowman clearly stated that none of the proponents had been ruled out. She said that Council had the obligation to ensure that they are all given their due. In her estimation, indicating that decisions had been made before the process is completed is throwing out the process. Bowman did not think there were any ulterior motivations. She said that Council is working through the process and it is her obligation, as Mayor, to make sure the process is above reproach. Part of the process is listening to all needs of the Council. Months were spent putting the RFQ together, and she does not see this as a step back. Additional information can be received and processed, and Council will now have the opportunity to ensure that each proponent is reviewed at a Council level.

Move to amend the previously approved motion sending three of the proposals on to the next step in the process, by amending that action to instead be that we set a special meeting on January 7, 2021 to allow each developer that wishes to make a presentation the opportunity to make a presentation providing only the same documentation originally presented to CIB and City Administration, followed by an opportunity for council members to ask any questions they may have. Presentations will be -limited to 15 minutes per developer, and after that, council will decide which of the developers will move on to the next stage of the due diligence.

RESULT:	APPROVED (UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	LaRussa, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	Schneemann, Councilmember
AYES:	Schneemann, Taylor, Bowman, DeLind, LaRussa

6. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was heard.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Janet MacDonald, 33221 Oakland Street, requested that gray areas be addressed on the RFP process for the Maxfield Training Center site.

Matt Pearson, no address given, indicated concern with traffic and noise impacts of the project on the Historic District.

8. COUNCIL COMMENT

LaRussa commented that it is important to draw a distinction to where Council is in the process. He said that an RFQ is not remotely close to an RFP, and that an RFQ is just one portion of the packet asked for. Ability to obtain financing, qualifications, prior project experience, ability to execute, and timing are all things that are wrapped up in the qualifications request. This is a transformational project and will need confidence building. It is important for Council to understand that whatever the final plan is, Council should be most focused on finding the right developer that will work with the City. He reassured residents that Council is taking a deliberate approach and will find a quality partner. He asked for patience and continued feedback from community members.

Schneemann added that while meeting with developers might be an additional step to the process, it's still an important step to take. It will allow Council to be so much better informed when they need to make decisions.

DeLind noted that Council had the responsibility to review and get what they can on behalf of the community. It is important to talk to each of the people interested in being a part of the project.

Taylor remarked that recent COVID status reports for Farmington/Farmington Hills were promising and she asked the community to keep up the good work and keep wearing masks.

Bowman commented that she truly wanted to ensure that the process is above reproach, and that robust and full discussions can occur with everyone's voices heard.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Move to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	DeLind, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Taylor, Councilmember

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Sara Bowman, Mayor

Mary Mullison, City Clerk

Approval Date: January 19, 2021

******To view approved documents, please see the Agenda Packet link that is relevant to this meeting at <http://farmgov.com/City-Services/Government/Agendas-and-Minutes/City-Council.aspx> or contact the City Clerk.

January 3, 2021

To: Farmington City Council

From: Farmington Residents for Responsible Development

Re: Recommendation to accept Robertson Brothers Homes RFQ proposal

Dear Council Members,

In response to the City of Farmington's Request for Qualifications concerning development of the Maxfield Training Center site, we recommend that the City accept the proposal from Robertson Brothers Homes. We are excited that Robertson Brothers Homes has maintained its interest in building in downtown Farmington. They are strong, experienced builders with a reputation for designing and developing desirable, high-quality residential communities. They have completed a number of developments in surrounding downtowns, featuring attractive townhomes, some of which we have had the opportunity to visit and admire. The specific proposal for 59 owner-occupied townhomes on the 3-acre MTC site seems reasonable and appropriate for the property, which adjoins our Historic neighborhood. And an attractive, high-quality community will enhance the character and viability of our downtown, as well. As RB states, "it would be a win for all stakeholders involved."

In addition, other positives about the RB proposal include their innovative idea of a "Woonerf" or pedestrian walkway and the "Hill Hiker Tram" strengthening the connection to Shiawassee Park. These ideas address the City's goals of a walkable downtown with a connection to the Park.

As for the other proposals, the PVL Farmington proposal for 185 rental apartments well exceeds the maximum number of units specified in the RFQ and would create enormous parking, traffic, and safety issues in our downtown. The River Caddis design also proposes upwards of 124 rental units. High-density rental units would not provide the stability we'd like to see in a development at MTC.

This is obviously an incredibly unique time. No one can predict what a post-pandemic economy will look like. Certainly, if social-distancing or simply concerns about future epidemics were to continue, a large apartment complex where people live in close proximity and need to share elevators would not be desirable. So, to decide on a development based on a pre-pandemic scenario about business in a downtown, might not be the right thinking.

Let's go for the highly-experienced developer, Robertson Brothers Homes, and a high-quality, timeless design concept which includes owner-occupied dwellings where individuals and families can make their homes and put down roots in our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Farmington Residents for Responsible Development:

Jane and Rick Gundlach

Kevin Gromley

Jill Keller

John Kennedy

Anne Marie Kurzyniec and David Simowski

Leslie and Chris Schroer

Darlene and Dave Allen

Claire and Matt Perko

Kathy and Jim Steinke

Holly, Dan and Dave Delling

Susan and Bob Black

Shelby Calo and Stephen Ebaugh

Nita and Gordon Bose

Marilyn and Charles Weimar

Gretchen and Ron Cline

MarySue and Don Munter

Erin McRobert and John Grandstaff