



Special Council Meeting
6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 22, 2023
Council Chambers
23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, MI 48335

FINAL

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on March 22, 2023 in Farmington City Hall, Farmington, MI. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 p.m. by Mayor Sara Bowman.

1. ROLL CALL

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Johnna Balk	Councilmember	Present	
Sara Bowman	Mayor	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 Saarela

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Move to approve the agenda as presented.

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was heard.

4. DISCUSS NEXT STEPS FOR GOVERNOR WARNER MANSION AND ADJACENT PROPERTY

Council reviewed the Warner Mansion Feasibility Study as produced by City Engineers OHM in June 2022. Since that study was completed, the City has acquired the church property immediately to the west of the Warner home which will allow more options to be considered for the use of the property.

Bowman suggested that there were three remaining viable alternatives for the Mansion, after eliminating both moving the building closer to the Downtown district and coming up with unspecified additional uses to the Mansion. She went through each option to gauge the interest of Council, including options for the adjacent property: Improve Facilities, Operations Agreement, Divest. Bowman proposed putting a dedicated millage to voters to decide whether or how to improve the property and to discover whether the Mansion property was a priority for residents. Options for the next-door property were to tear the building down and sell off lots; keep the building and find a use for it; or sell it to another church who has expressed interest in owning it.

Schneemann said he was strongly in favor of bringing it to the voters. Much work would need to be done to prepare that, and he feels the adjacent church property should be held until that vote is taken. Balk agreed with preparing a millage question for the ballot. She asked about selling the church property but keeping the parking lot for Mansion use. Taylor suggested selling the church to pay for the demolition of the building, sell off the lots as residential, and get the property on the tax rolls. LaRussa said that once the highest and best use for Mansion was discovered, enough property for parking needs to be available for that use. He questioned the use of a millage request for the Mansion only because repairs and upkeep of the Mansion was already included as a point in the Capital Improvement Millage of 2018. Discussion ensued as to how a repurposing of the property would be perceived as a new need, rather than as the "band aids" provided by the Capital Improvement Millage.

Council also discussed how the community values the iconic property, how a millage might also allow for other City-owned properties to be included, and whether a portion of the already-approved Capital Improvement Millage could instead be diverted to this project. Millage options were considered: a one-time assessment of a mil and a half or a half mil for 10 years for significant improvements, care, and developing a revenue model.

Council requested that research be started as to how much of a millage would be needed and the options that could be taken to the voters so that Council could move forward to the next steps for the project. Decisions that would need to be made include asking for a big fix or just including ongoing maintenance and operations costs. Council also requested the City Attorney prepare a draft of a millage proposal for them to consider.

Other potential uses of the Mansion and property were discussed.

Council indicated that they would prefer to address the adjacent former church property by moving forward with tearing the building down in preparation for whatever use may be decided upon. Murphy will bring a proposal for demolition to Council at the next meeting. Schneemann offered to bring several options to the table with estimated costs and differing levels of possibilities.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Bowman asked whether anyone on Council had interest in heading a committee to organize a 200-year anniversary celebration for Farmington, as Farmington Hills is celebrating 50 years of existence this year. She stated that she had already told 360 Productions that Founders Fest 2024 should be a celebration of the anniversary of Farmington's founding, but if anyone else wanted something more they should start investigating possibilities. Bowman requested that Council mull it over and decide whether it feels very strongly that this sort of celebration is desired, and if so, who will take it on. She suggested that it be a dedicated committee rather than additional work for City staff.

6. COUNCIL COMMENT

In response to a question by Balk, Murphy stated that insurance claims have been made to take care of the brand-new bleachers that were destroyed by a fallen tree in Shiawassee Park.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Move to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Schneemann, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Balk, Councilmember

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm.

Sara Bowman, Mayor

Mary J. Mullison, City Clerk

Approval Date: April 17, 2023