



Regular City Council Meeting
7:00 p.m., Monday, March 6, 2023
Council Chambers
23600 Liberty Street
Farmington, MI 48335

FINAL

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on March 6, 2023 at Farmington City Hall, 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 p.m. by Mayor 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	Absent	
Maria Taylor	Councilmember	Present	

City Administration Present

Building Official Bowdell
Director Christiansen
City Clerk Mullison
City Manager Murphy
City Attorney Schultz (arrived at 8:09 pm)

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Move to approve the agenda as presented.**

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Carrie Dukes, 23231 Cass, thanked the City for its responsiveness in the recent emergencies and was glad to learn about what the City had been doing. She suggested that activity information would be good to share more widely with the public. She also expressed frustration with DTE’s response to frequent outages.

Mark Dukes, 23231 Cass, appreciated feedback from several Councilmembers and made suggestions to help the City communicate with residents who are not on social media.

Katie Hartsock, 23196 Cass, was concerned about power supply problems recently experienced and asked what residents can be doing to help.

4. ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF TOM BUCK AND MIGUEL WILLIAMS FROM THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

City Manager Murphy stated that Tom Buck and Miguel Williams submitted emails stating their desire to resign from the DDA Board. Both terms were to expire on Feb. 28, 2024, and if their resignations are accepted, Administration would post the vacancies on Tuesday, March 7th.

Bowman thanked both Buck and Williams for their work and involvement, wishing them well in their future endeavors.

Move to accept the resignations of Tom Buck and Miguel Williams for the Farmington Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors effective immediately.**

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

5. INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE IX OF THE FARMINGTON CITY CODE TO INCLUDE REGISTRATION AND INSPECTIONS FOR ALL SINGLE AND TWO-FAMILY RENTAL AND VACANT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

Director Christiansen introduced amendments to Farmington City Code that would facilitate a process for the registration and inspection of all single family and two-family rental and vacant residential properties in the city.

Bowman noted that this project had been a long time in the making, including the addition of staff this year in anticipation of this amendment. She appreciated that Christiansen and Bowdell had looked at Berkley and Farmington Hills as related communities to promote consistency. Specific notification processes were discussed, including identification of and communication with the rental properties for the initial roll out. Bowman also requested additional training for the Board of Appeals, as they will be hearing appeals. She asked about the fee structure

anticipated for the fair implementation of the ordinance. Christiansen showed a draft of a fee structure that would cover the cost of administering this new ordinance amendment. Bowman was concerned that it be similar to surrounding communities' fees. In response to a further question by Bowman, Christiansen assured her that all the homes impacted by the amendment are expected to be in the system and inspected within three years.

LaRussa questioned some of the definitions in the amendment and discussion ensued on the effect of legislation on the ordinance, exposure to challenges, short-term rental considerations, and vacancy limitations. He requested that language be added to require at least a "look in" inspection of vacant properties in addition to external inspection. LaRussa questioned whether the City had the resources to enforce this amendment and wanted to be sure the data was appropriately retained and recorded. LaRussa asked questions of staff about deconstruction bonds and interior inspection of vacant properties.

Taylor supported the idea of adding language for going into a vacant property to inspect. She asked what the present inspector requirements are for apartments and rental condominiums. Christiansen and Bowdell explained that the current process for apartments and rental condominiums is more of a reactive than proactive one and not included in the scope of this amendment. She noted that she was supportive of this amendment but indicated that she would be coming back to request a Phase 2 for this project that would include inspections of all types of rental properties.

Balk asked for a few minor proof-reading adjustments to be made before the second reading. She expressed concern with contacting property owners that were not close by or interested in being compliant, including business properties. She requested that there be a check-in period including a report to Council on the progress of these inspections.

In answer to LaRussa's legal questions about this amendment, City Attorney Shultz reminded Council that Farmington does not allow short-term rentals at this time, so this ordinance amendment does not make property owners get an inspection between each short-term rental. Schultz indicated that this amendment is consistent with current rental policy. LaRussa also asked about adding a deconstruction bond to the penalty and enforcement clause to have an instrument for penalizing unpermitted work or unpermitted use of a vacant property. Schultz indicated that such a bond would be speculative and perhaps impermissible but added that he would provide more information to Council before the second reading occurred. Discussion ensued about vacant versus rental properties and how each would be handled.

Move to approve the introduction of Ordinance _-_____-2023 Amending Article IX of the Farmington City Code of Ordinances to Include Registration and Inspections for all Single and Two-Family Rental and Vacant Residential Properties - FIRST READING.**

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

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Murphy apologized for the mix up in the starting time for the meeting tonight.

7. CITY COUNCIL COMMENT

LaRussa gave an update from his membership on the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) executive committee including the regional growth rate and Farmington's position within the report. He indicated that he will investigate the recent SPARK Grant placement in order to improve chances for the next submission. He went on to speak of DTE reliability in circuits and provided Council with graphs and tables highlighting specific Farmington circuits with improvement or lack thereof. He also reported on DTE's metrics on underground versus overhead lines and handed out a one-page excerpt of DTE's response to questions from the Michigan Public Service Commission's open case before them. He concluded that underground, even partial, consistently performs better on all metrics. LaRussa requested that this data be the focal point of the next discussion with DTE.

Taylor asked Schultz about whether a city can mandate that DTE underground lines on new non-residential construction. Schultz agreed to research that question. She moved on to the topic of what people want to see as the City's response to storms, comparing Farmington to other nearby cities. She requested that City of Farmington department heads create a city-wide severe weather response playbook for both winter and summer emergencies that can be communicated to residents. Her request included designating places in Farmington for people to go for warming, cooling, and charging devices and a provision for hauling away giant branches and tree chunks in the winter when there is no yard waste pickup. Taylor also wants the information to be gotten out quickly to residents during a weather emergency. She felt that, in addition to the City taking swift action during the storm, it was important for the City to reassure residents that there is a plan in place and that the City is taking steps. She stated that if people do not see it, they think it is not going on. Murphy reminded her that larger cities have entire departments dedicated to communication, and that Farmington does not have the budget for hiring more staff. Taylor then suggested that current Farmington staff create a bank of standard posts with FAQs on "what to do" for summer and winter storms, such as who to call when their car is stuck in a snow drift or a tree needs to be hauled away, and that the City is on the job during the weather event. She requested that this be accomplished before the summer storm season hits. She also asked that the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) be involved.

Bowman noted that it has been a rough couple of weeks and that it is difficult to communicate with the community since there are no news outlets to call on for help, calling it the biggest void in our ability to reach people. She also noted that it was difficult to get out information about what the City is doing while it is actually handling the work. With regard to branch and deadfall pickup, she reminded Council that the City has to prioritize City properties first and it is the responsibility of homeowners to take care of branches from their private trees.

Discussion ensued on possible communication avenues for emergency response and what is city responsibility versus property owner responsibility. Notable points were the fact the Farmington has no venue for warming stations and emergency shelter, and that the availability of the Hawk and Costick Center in Farmington Hills for those services is communicated to the community during times of emergency. Bowman acknowledged that Farmington was fortunate

to be part of a larger community that has those assets. Suggested avenues for communication were a mass text tool or Nixle. Council requested that Murphy come back with communication suggestions.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Move to adjourn the meeting.

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

Meeting adjourned 8:49 p.m.

Sara Bowman, Mayor

Mary J. Mullison, City Clerk

Approval Date: March 20, 2023

******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.