CITY OF LIVONIA – CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF STUDY MEETING HELD JULY 15, 2024

Meeting was called to order at 8:22 p.m. by Council President McCullough. Present: Carrie Budzinski, Scott Morgan, Jim Jolly, Laura Toy, Vice President Martha Ptashnik, Rob Donovic, and President McCullough. Absent: None.

Elected and appointed officials present: Carter Fisher, City Attorney; Lori L. Miller, City Clerk; Mark Taormina, Planning and Economic Development Director; and Todd Zilincik, City Engineer.

Councilmember Budzinski led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

There was no Audience Communication.

President McCullough indicated there is new data on item #7 and item #9. He also stated there was a request from the Department of Public Works to remove item #15 from the agenda and it will be placed on the Study Agenda for August 7, 2024.

AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION

NEW BUSINESS

1. BLOCK PARTY: Wafa Dinaro, re: to be held Saturday, August 10, 2024, from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., on Huff Street between Ladywood and Kingsbury Streets, with a rain date of Saturday, August 17, 2024.

   President McCullough presented the request to Council.

   Councilmember Jolly offered an approving motion for the Regular Agenda.

   DIRECTION APPROVING REGULAR

2. REQUEST TO WAIVE THE SIDEWALK REQUIREMENT: Marc Goodson, re: for the home to be constructed at 19805 Middlebelt Road in the S.E. 1/4 of Section 2.

   Todd Zilincik, City Engineer, presented the request to Council.

   Councilmember Donovic verified they are only asking to remove the sidewalk on Bretton. He indicated he is in favor of waiving on the Bretton side but not on the Middlebelt side of the lot.

   Marc Goodson, petitioner, indicated there is already a sidewalk on Middlebelt. He plans to leave the sidewalk but will remove the driveway on Middlebelt.

   Councilmember Donovic offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

   DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

3. REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: Steven Johnson, re: to allow noise ordinance enforcement to begin at 10:00 p.m.

Steven Johnson presented the request to Council. He would like this placed into a committee since he feels 11:00 p.m. it too late.

Matthew Schlamb, 8844 Cardwell, is in support of this motion.

Vice President Ptashnik offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION LAW AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE CONSENT

4. APPOINTMENT OF PATRICK DROZE TO THE LIVONIA PLANNING COMMISSION: Office of the Mayor, re: for a three-year term, which will expire on June 9, 2027.

Mark Taormina, Planning and Economic Development Director, presented the request to Council.

Patrick Droze indicated he has an engineering background and is pleased to serve on the Commission.

Councilmember Jolly said Mr. Droze started as an intern at OHM when he was in high school and has worked his way up to a partner.

Councilmember Donovic asked Mr. Droze if he helped create roundabouts in Michigan.

Mr. Droze indicated he did not, it was Mr. Katers who contributed to the roundabouts.

Councilmember Toy offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

5. APPOINTMENT OF DEBRA LICHTENBERG TO THE LIVONIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: Office of the Mayor, re: to complete a six-year term, which will expire on June 7, 2026.

Mark Taormina, Planning and Economic Development Director, presented the request to Council.

Councilmember Jolly offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

6. APPOINTMENT OF DAVE VARGA TO THE LIVONIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: Office of the Mayor, re: to complete a six-year term, which will expire on June 7, 2027.

Mark Taormina, Planning and Economic Development Director, presented the request to Council.

Councilmember Jolly offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

7. WAIVER PETITION: Planning Commission, re: Petition 2023-06-02-07 submitted by Seven Mile/Farmington Venture, LP requesting Special Waiver Use approval to develop a Planned General Development consisting of a 75,466 square-foot Meijer grocery store and a 102-unit multi-family residential townhome complex on the property at 33500 W. Seven Mile Road, located on the Southeast ¼ of Section 4.

   Mark Taormina, Planning and Economic Development Director, presented the request to Council.

   Councilmember Toy asked what building abuts the northwest side. Mr. Taormina indicated it is the McDonalds on Farmington Road.

   Councilmember Jolly asked if the berms along 7 Mile and Farmington Roads would be removed. Mr. Taormina indicated most of the berm will be flattened.

   Councilmember Donovic asked how it is currently zoned and what that zoning would allow them to do, for example build a big box store. Mr. Taormina indicated the property is zoned C2 which is General Business. General Business use can range from general retail to office use. Councilmember Donovic asked if Council would need to approve the plan if they just wanted to build a Meijer. Mr. Taormina said they would if it were more than 30,000 square feet.

   Councilmember Budzinski asked if the additional use of utilities including DTE, water and sewer would cause concerns on infrastructure. Mr. Taormina said no, and all storm water would be accommodated underground. It doesn't currently have any storm water management other than catch basins and pipes that flow unrestricted. Wayne County will be reviewing that portion of the project. The preliminary report showed no indications that this would be over capacity. The final engineering evaluation would be done after Council's approval.

   Councilmember Donovic verified there is nothing more than a traditional sewer system currently in place. They plan to use underground detention to comply with Wayne County and that would be an improvement over the current system.

   Councilmember Jolly asked the petitioner and designer if the berms will be removed. Mark Shovers, Spire Design, indicated the berms will be maintained but may be evened out while remaining landscaped. Councilmember Jolly said he has a hard time envisioning how it would look on the corner. Mr. Shovers said the grade does rise from the intersection and that's why they added a wall acting as a retaining wall to create a flat spot for planting.

   Vice President Ptashnik asked if the truck docks in the back could be moved further away from the residents. Cris Jones, Senior Real estate Manager for Meijer, indicated they have already moved them an additional 30 feet from the residential area. Mr. Jones said they will use whisper units to turn off diesel engines. There are 6 docks, and one will only be used for cardboard and trash compactors. The trucks need about 125 feet to make turns, so they have moved them as far away as they can. There will be 24 deliveries per week, with only one or two fresh deliveries made at night. They are currently testing the use of electric trucks as well.

Vice President Ptashnik asked about lighting in parking lot and the hours the building would be open. Meijer is requesting business hours from 6:00 a.m. to midnight for store. There will be 20-foot-tall lights based on the ordinance that can be powered down by the Meijer home office after business hours. The store will have a 3rd shift in the building so some lights will be necessary after hours for security and employee safety.

Vice President Ptashnik is concerned that this will look like a mini big box store and doesn't feel the big red sign will give an artisan market feel. Meijer rep said they are trying to make it inspirational, and they have made significant changes from the original plan. They still haven't decided on the sign yet.

Councilmember Donovic asked if Mr. Schostak or the architect can say if there will be a decrease of impervious surfaces. Mr. Shovers indicated it is currently 91% impervious and it will drop to 76% between residential area and the store.

Councilmember Donovic asked for an explanation of the sound walls. Mr. Shovers said they are precast tilt up walls with a brick form liner to contain noise in loading dock areas. Councilmember Donovic asked if this is a new requirement. Mr. Shovers said it is to comply with the very strict sound ordinance in Livonia, and the walls would be 12 feet and 14 feet tall.

Councilmember Donovic asked about traffic signals and adjusting the timing between the corner and Gill Road. Kyle Reidsma, Fishbeck, indicated there were adjustments made to the timing of the signals at Seven Mile and Gill Road. Additional adjustments can still be made regardless of a new signal.

Councilmember Budzinski feels the presence and look of the Meijer store is important. Mr. Jones said the Rivertown store in Detroit was significant in the changes and look for this store.

Councilmember Budzinski asked what percentage of brick they will be used on the townhomes. Mr. Shovers said the three-story buildings would be roughly 40% and the two-story buildings would be 60% on back and 40% on front. He indicated they have built some townhomes that are 100% sided. Councilmember Budzinski asked if these renderings are final or if this is more of a general ideal. Mr. Shovers said the renderings are very accurate.

Councilmember Budzinski asked about trash cans for units. Mr. Shovers stated there will be two locations for trash, one north of Building A and one west of Building B, with pick up being two or three times per week based on demand.

Councilmember Toy asked Mr. Jones if there would be an outdoor area in Meijer selling landscaping supplies. Mr. Jones said no, it would be strictly the grocery, pharmacy, clothing, health & beauty, and pet supplies needed to serve a family's daily needs. Grocery is 55, 000 square feet. It would be like the Macomb or Lake Orion store. Councilmember Toy verified they will sell beer and wine only but no alcohol.

Councilmember Toy asked if they have spoken with surrounding neighbors. Mr. Jones said Schostak held a neighborhood meeting that had about 250 attendees.

Councilmember Donovic asked the architect what product would be used other than brick that is not vinyl siding. Mr. Shovers said it will be a high-end cement board product that takes paint, is durable, and doesn't dent or crack. The trim will be wrapped in aluminum.

Councilmember Donovic indicated the two-story units would be about the same height as two-story colonial homes. He said he appreciates that they only used 15 units per acre instead of the maximum allowance of 20 units per acre. He is pleased that they are keeping green space and will have no parking garages.

Councilmember Donovic asked about safety bollards along the sidewalk in front of the store. Shovers said there will be bollards and they will be flexible as to color, shape, and size. Councilmember Donovic also verified they will be redoing the entire parking lot.

The following residents voiced concerns about the project:

Gini Krenz, 34075 pembroke
Kris Beers, 19448 Stamford
Aaron Frasier, 19418 Norwich
Christina Rogers 33782 Bretton Drive
Roger Stacey, 19474 Pollyanna
Andrew Mytys, 34008 fairfax
Kathleen McIntyre, Fairway Street
Carol Smiley 19862 Stamford
John Pastor, 33461 Capri Court
Steve King, 33950 Coventry

Philip Kruschka, 34775 Pembroke, said he would like to say good things about the project and feels there is finally a solution to the problem of the deteriorating Kmart.

President McCullough spoke about engineering and storm water management. He also asked if there would be EV charging stations. Mr. Jones said they have a designated EV charging area and the need will be determined by information and data collected by various agencies. President McCullough confirmed they will have dark sky compliance. He also asked if the townhomes could be separately metered so they could be changed condominiums down the road, if necessary. Mr. Shovers said they will be metered separately.

Councilmember Donovic confirmed the townhomes would not be low income or subsidized housing. He also verified that the amount of the proposed rent is the current market rate.

Councilmember Donovic suggested this subject be sent to committee for further review or tabled until the next meeting.

Councilmember Jolly asked if the petitioner is willing to publicly commit to not seek any tax abatement or Brownfield Redevelopment funds to ensure no public dollars would be used for this project. Mr. Jones said there are no extraordinary Brownfield expenses on the site, and he doesn't see Meijer seeking either. Jeff Schostak indicated this will be completely privately funded. It is a 60 million dollar plus project that they have been working on for a year with a lot of homework and changes on their part. He said Schostak is trying to do everything they can to make everyone happy. Councilmember Jolly said he feels there have been substantial movements made due to various requests. He believes these are the only two economically viable business developments going forward, and he appreciates all the work that has been done on this private development.

Councilmember Donovic offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda to send it to Committee.

DIRECTION	COMMITTEE OF WHOLE	CONSENT

8. REQUEST TO WAIVE THE SEALED BID PROCESS AND AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE THREE (3) MARKED AND UNMARKED REPLACEMENT POLICE VEHICLES UTILIZING THE STATE OF MICHIGAN COOPERATIVE BID PRICING: Division of Police, re: to replace vehicles damaged beyond repair, from budgeted funds.

Captain Josh Gilbert, Livonia Police Department, presented the request to Council.

Councilmember Ptashnik asked why the Police Department would use a Wagoneer. Captain Gilbert said they are used as marked and unmarked vehicles for investigative purposes.

Councilmember Morgan offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION	APPROVING	CONSENT

9. REQUEST FOR COUNCIL APPROVAL ON A PROPOSED LOT SPLIT: Department of Assessment, re: for the property located on the South of Eight Mile Road, West of Newburgh and East of I-275, in the Northeast 1/4 of Section 6. (38449 Eight Mile Road) to waive the deficiency in lot area requirements relative to Parcels "A" and "B" (Tax Item 021-99-0004-008).

Mark Taormina, Planning and Economic Development Director, presented the request to Council.

Councilmember Toy asked if they wanted to split this into four parcels at one time and what they are building on it. Mr. Taormina said no and the plan is to build single-family homes.

Mr. Veri, petitioner, was present to answer questions.

Councilmember Donovic asked Mark if the lots would be considered unique in shape. Mr. Taormina said no, the unique part is that they would gain access from the subdivision street but won't be part of the subdivision. Councilmember Donovic said he would prefer to see single family homes adjacent to other single-family homes.

Councilmember Budzinski said the driveway situation seems like it will be impeding the nearest residential neighbor. Mr. Taormina said he isn't sure if there will be constraints or not. Mr. Veri indicated 25 feet is enough for a driveway on the parcel with the least amount of frontage. He plans to build custom homes that would probably be 2000 to 3000 square feet.

Councilmember Jolly confirmed the homes won't be organized as condominiums.

Councilmember Toy offered an approving motion for the Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING REGULAR

10. REQUEST TO APPROVE VACATION TIME INCREASE: Civil Service Department, re: for Department Heads and Appointees.

Jeannine Liable, Civic Service Director, presented the request to Council.

Councilmember Jolly said he feels this is appropriate based on the level of employees we are trying to attract. He asked her if there would be a change to payout practices. Ms. Laible said vacations get paid out at the current salary rate for unused time, but sick time is put into a savings plan for retirement. Councilmember Jolly asked how the new plan would create cost savings. Ms. Laible said if someone terminates now with 3 weeks left in their bank, they will get paid out. If this plan goes forward it is more of a use it or lose it with a small rollover so nothing would be paid out if they terminate.

Councilmember McCullough asked if it correlates to unions or department managers. She indicated it hasn't been negotiated at the bargaining unit level yet. She would like to see it in middle management as well. Councilmember McCullough said he would also like to see a city-wide salary study done to aid in future budgeting.

Councilmember Toy offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

11. AWARD OF BID: Livonia Housing Commission, re: for the replacement of windows in one hundred and twenty units at Newburgh Village, from budgeted funds.

Jim Inglis, Interim Housing Director, presented the request to Council.

Councilmember Morgan confirmed there will be a 30-year warranty.

Councilmember Morgan offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

12. AWARD OF BID: Department of Public Works, re: for the Shelving and Racking Project at the Water and Sewer garage, from budgeted funds.

Doug Moore, Assistant Director of Public Works, presented the request to Council.

Councilmember Donovic confirmed the Department of Public Works will be demolishing the old water building.

Councilmember Toy offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

13. REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE ONE DUMP TRUCK THROUGH THE ROCHESTER HILLS CO-OP AWARD AGREEMENT: Department of Public Works, re: for use by the Parks Department, from budgeted funds.

Doug Moore, Assistant Director of Public Works, presented the request to Council.

Councilmember Jolly asked about maintenance needs in parks and if the City of Livonia is experiencing a shortage of employees that can do those things. Mr. Moore said it depends on the time of year. Councilmember Jolly asked about the playground areas where the mulch is full of weeds. Mr. Moore said we have playground inspections done regularly. He said Roundup weed killer cannot be used on playgrounds and many other options don't work as well.

Councilmember Ptashnik asked about the dump truck purchased earlier in the year. Mr. Moore indicated the other truck is a state truck in the roads division now and this will replace that one.

Councilmember Budzinski asked if we needed the truck that we ended up getting. Mr. Moore said it is replacing one that will be going out to auction. Councilmember Budzinski asked how many trucks are in the whole fleet including the Parks trucks. Mr. Moore said there are approximately 20. Councilmember Budzinski asked if Mr. Moore feels like that is enough. Mr. Moore said there are 14 to 16 in Road Maintenance and 4 to 6 in the Water and Sewer section.

Councilmember Jolly offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

14. REQUEST TO AMEND COUNCIL RESOLUTION 121-24: Department of Public Works, Water Department, re: to include the upfitting costs for the previously approved purchase of (2) two 2024 Ford F150 Super Cab XL pickup trucks, from budgeted funds.

Doug Moore, Assistant Director of Public Works, presented the request to Council.

Vice President Ptashnik offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

15. REQUEST TO EXTEND CONTRACT WITH HYDRO-CORP: Department of Public Works, re: for the Cross-Connection Inspection Program, for an additional three years, with the option to extend an additional two years, from budgeted funds.

This item was removed from the agenda and will be placed on the Study Agenda of August 7, 2024.

16. REQUEST TO WAIVE THE FORMAL BIDDING PROCESS AND AWARD OF CONTRACT: Engineering Division, re: for the Plymouth Road Sanitary Sewer Lining, for an amount not to exceed $275,000.00, from budgeted funds. (CR 224-24 and CR 233-24)

David Lear, Assistant City Engineer, presented the request to Council.

Councilmember Jolly offered an approving motion for the Consent Agenda.

DIRECTION APPROVING CONSENT

There was no Audience Communication at the end of the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:32 p.m.
For the Regular Meeting of August 7, 2024. LORI L. MILLER, CITY CLERK