CITY OF LIVONIA – CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF STUDY MEETING HELD OCTOBER 6, 2025

Meeting was called to order at 8:41 p.m. by President McCullough. Present: Scott Morgan, Laura Toy, Rob Donovic, Vice President Ptashnik, Carrie Budzinski, and President McCullough. Absent: Lynda Scheel.

Elected and appointed officials present: Carter Fisher, City Attorney; Mark Taormina, City Planner; and Todd Zilincik, City Engineer.

Councilmember Donovic led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

There was no Audience Communication.

President McCullough announced there was New Data for Agenda Item #2.

NEW BUSINESS

1. BLOCK PARTY: Christopher Lee, re: to be held Friday, October 31, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., from 36849 to 36875 Bristol Street.

   Christopher Lee was present to answer Council questions. Mr. Lee stated they will be celebrating Halloween with a mobile pizza oven for this block party.

   Councilmember Donovic explained to the audience that this was a good example of what the block party process looks like, referencing questions during the prior regular meeting.

   Motion was made by Councilmember Donovic to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

2. SITE PLAN PETITION: Planning Commission, re: Petition 2025-08-08-07 submitted by Skilken Gold, on behalf Sheetz, requesting site plan approval pursuant to ZBA Appeal Case No. 2025-03-04, approved May 6, 2025, to construct a gasoline service station, limited service/carry-out restaurant, including a drive-thru window at the S.E. corner of Newburgh Road and Eight Mile Road in the N.W. 1/4 of Section 5.

   Mark Taormina, City Planner, explained this petition is the proposed Sheetz gas station, restaurant, and the drive-thru operation at the southeast corner of Newburgh and Eight Mile Roads. The petition previously brought before the City Council, and denied, was to rezone the property from C1 local business to C2 general business, but the Zoning Board of Appeals granted the use variances on May 6th, bypassing the need to rezone the property to C2. The site plan is subject to the review and approval of the Planning Commission (which approved the site plan at its meeting on September 16, 2025) and the City Council. Mr. Taormina presented a thorough overview of the site plan and answered questions regarding concerns.

Councilman Morgan requested clarification that the sidewalk extended the full length along Newburgh Road.

Councilman Donovic inquired about traffic turn lanes, the retaining wall, fuel systems, outside lighting, EGLE reviews, traffic signals, hours of operation, drive-thru specifications, utilities, billboards and signage, and tank capacity. He also asked clarifying questions regarding any authority Council may have to overturn ZBA decisions.

Councilman Budzinski expressed concern regarding left turns, environmental cleanup liability, and EPA processes.

Todd Zilincik, City Engineer, discussed how the current road reconstruction and traffic study would need to be completed in the area to better understand traffic flow and any adjustments needed to this proposed site plan if it were to pass.

Vice President Ptashnik questioned if the traffic study would include lane tapering or removing the northern driveway on Newburgh. She raised further concerns about the drive-thru and overall traffic in the area. Vice President Ptashnik requested more information regarding their spill response procedures, outdated stormwater systems, and snow removal.

President McCullough requested an overview of the Zoning Board of Appeals process from Mr. Taormina and questioned any provision in the code of ordinances that may restrict gas stations from public places where the public frequently gathers, along with questions regarding the 100-foot measurements for those locations. He further inquired about the hours of operation.

Carter Fisher, City Attorney, responded to questions regarding the authority to overturn decisions from ZBA and clarified this petition is only regarding the site plan approval. He further agreed to look into restrictions to hours of operation as well as restrictions to location questions.

Councilmember Toy asked for clarification over what to review with this petition, and if all ZBA members were present for voting at the May 6th meeting. She also inquired about staff training, snow removal logistics, and signage.

Alex Suwicki, the Petitioner from Sheetz, thoroughly reviewed the site plans, including updates since he last spoke to the Council, and responded to all of Council’s questions. He stated restricted hours would not be considered but he would be willing to eliminate the drive-thru. He stated they would not sell alcohol.

Mr. Suwicki further stated he does not consider this location a truck stop.

Attorney Ali Berro, Berro Law Firm, stated several residents of the city of Livonia requested he address serious procedural and legal issues surrounding the ZBA's May 6, 2025, decision to grant a variance to the corner of Eight Mile and Newburgh.

Motion was made by Councilmember Donovic to give Mr. Berro three additional minutes to make comments, seconded by Councilmember Budzinski. Motion passed 6-0.

Willard Lindley, 21218 Edgewood Avenue, commented the need for Council and the ZBA to follow ordinances as written without exception. He raised concerns about the 100-foot and the drive-thru restrictions that he felt are in violation with this petition.

Patti Riggio, 37204 Bretton Drive, commented she represented residents of Willow Woods, Gulf, Ridge, and Deer Creek who have concerns about the protection of all parks and recreational facilities in the area, potential leaks, and hours of operation.

Cindy Fleming, Livonia resident, reminded Council both Walmart stores have restricted hours of operation.

Nick Lomako, 20154 Edgewood Avenue, is opposed to the petition and believes the ZBA acted inappropriately.

Laura Shoemaker, 36269 Club Drive, raised concerns from Friends of the Rouge about opening a gasoline station close to the streams that lead all through the City of Livonia and then into the Rouge River.

Paula Bullington, 20558 Hickory Lane, questioned the need for another gas station in that area.

Dave Hall, West Eight Mile, a Farmington Hills resident, stated his concerns about the traffic and potential increase in accidents.

Jim Kaurba, a Willow Woods subdivision resident, raised concerns about Sheetz after reading a Detroit News article accusing Sheetz of allegedly paying a commissioner in Oakland County. Mr. Kaurba asked if Sheetz has paid anyone in the Livonia City government as well.

Sandra Moore, 20185 Ellen Drive, stated she does not feel this is the proper location for this business and would like to see the ecological area maintained.

Greg Ralko, Golf Ridge Villa resident, is opposed to the petition and believes the ZBA acted inappropriately.

John Findling, Deer Creek resident, reminded Council of the cities Families First motto posted on signs around the city.

Roderick Gill, Whispering Willows resident, inquired if Whispering Willows qualified as a park. He added his concern regarding drivers ignoring no left turn signs and about potential traffic issues in the area, including snow.

Eileen McDonnell, Livonia resident, would like to know about plans for signage and if they include any billboards.

Judy Weiser, Willow Woods resident, stated she did not support the petition and if passed, would not take her business there.

Frank Engler, Wisconsin Street, stated he recognizes Sheetz is passionate about the communities they are in, bring jobs, and would like to see a compromise for the betterment of the city.

Motion was made by Vice President Ptashnik to put the matter on the Regular portion of the next Regular Agenda.

Councilmember Donovic requested that no illumination, glowing, light fixtures be added to the canopy except related to the specific Sheetz logo and signage as part of the approving motion.

DIRECTION: APPROVING/DENYING/COW REGULAR

3. REQUEST TO APPROVE SPECIALIZED SERVICES OPERATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM THIRD PARTY CONTRACT FOR THE PERIOD OF OCTOBER 2, 2024, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2025, BETWEEN THE CITY OF LIVONIA AND SMART: Livonia Housing Commission, re: with grant funds to be used for the Liv & Go Program to provide lift-equipped transportation to the senior and disabled residents of the City.

Madison Bjertness, Director of Livonia Housing Commission, presented the request to Council. Ms. Bjertness requested approval for the specialized services contract between the City of Livonia and Smart to provide lift equipment, transportation to seniors and disabled residents of the city, in the amount of $33,386 coming from SMART funds.

Motion was made by Councilmember Budzinski to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

4. REQUEST TO EXECUTE THE 2026 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF LIVONIA AND SMART: Livonia Housing Commission, re: to allow the Liv & Go Program to receive the Municipal and Community Credits in the amount of $89,424.

Madison Bjertness, Director of Livonia Housing Commission, presented the request to Council. Ms. Bjertness requested approval to execute the agreement with SMART to provide additional operating funds for the Liv & Go Program in the amount of $89,424.

Motion was made by Councilmember Donovic to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

5. AWARD OF BID: Department of Parks and Recreation, re: the purchase and installation of security cameras at the Jack E. Kirksey Recreation Center, from budgeted funds.

Ted Davis, Director of Parks and Recreation, presented the request to Council. Mr. Davis requested Council award the lowest bidder, FSS Technologies of Detroit, in the amount of $46,0011.17, to increase the number of cameras throughout the building.

Motion was made by Councilmember Toy to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

6. REQUEST TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE APPLICATION FOR THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS PARTNERS IN PUBLIC ART PROGRAM: Department of Parks and Recreation re: the approval of the application and attached resolution.

Ted Davis, Director of Parks and Recreation, presented the request to Council. Mr. Davis requested a resolution to support an application for the DIA's Partners in Public Art Program. This is a mural program with community input, and the proposed location is the Ben Celani play area, at the back of the yellow concrete restroom facility.

Motion was made by Councilmember Budzinski to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

7. REQUEST TO APPROVE ADDENDUM TO AGREEMENT BETWEEN OPTUM

HEALTH CARE SOLUTIONS AND CITY OF LIVONIA: Department of Parks and Recreation, re: Senior Fitness Passport Memberships to the Jack E. Kirksey Recreation Center.

Ted Davis, Director of Parks and Recreation, presented the request to Council. Mr. Davis requested to approve this addendum to the agreement to continue offering the Medicare memberships for seniors in the community. He stated there are approximately 850 people affected by this if Council does not pass the addendum. Optum Health has been very specific, and this is part of what they need to continue offering the services currently provided.

Motion was made by Councilmember Toy to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

8. REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE FOUR (4) STORAGE TANKS: Department of Public Works, re: for use by the Roads Division, from budgeted funds.

Don Rohraff, Director of Public Works, presented the request to Council. Mr. Rohraff requested approval to purchase the storage tanks used for the liquid calcium chloride and the brine used in the snow and ice products. The tanks are 10,500-gallon commercial rated, liquid storage tanks, from Design Plastic Systems at a cost of $90,731 for all four of them from budgeted funds. The State is requiring this change in the regulation to these aboveground tanks.

Councilman Donovic thought it was proactive by DPW to see that the bids came in lower than originally expected, and therefore, decide to fix the other two tanks saving the city money in the long run and ensuring the city remained compliant.

Motion was made by Councilmember Toy to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

9. REQUEST TO AUTHORIZE APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE: Department of Public Works, re: for the multiple repairs of Vactor truck number 343, from budgeted funds.

Don Rohraff, Director of Public Works, presented the request to Council. Mr. Rohraff requested approval to rebuild a Vactor vehicle. He compared extending the life of the vehicle for ten more years with buying new vehicles at a much higher price. Two bids were received. Jack Dehaney Companies was the low bid at total price of $108,694.06

Motion was made by Vice President Ptashnik to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

10. REQUEST TO APPROVE LEAD IDENTIFICATION/REMOVAL PROJECT FOR FY 2026: Department of Public Works, Water & Sewer Division, re: the identification and replacement of lead water service lines.

Don Rohraff, Director of Public Works, presented the request to Council. Mr. Rohraff updated Council on the lead identification and replacement program. They have completed city sections number 1, 34, and 36, replacing 177 lead lines at a cost of $985,513. They have identified and excavated 1,573 homes in their service lines at a cost of $458,790 and have done 160 yard restorations at a cost of $70,320 for a total cost so far in 2025 of $1.5 million. They have 54 homes that have been identified for lead lines. Moving forward into 2026, they are looking to continue the programs in sections 2, 11, 12, and 13, anticipating about 2,266 excavations and investigations at an estimated cost of about $661,000. The 54 homes lines to be replaced will cost approximately $300,618 and estimate replacing another 125 lines found through the investigation process at $695,00875 for a total cost of about $1.65 million.
Mr. Rohraff is requesting Council to approve the funding of $1.7 million, from budgeted funds, to keep the lead line service program moving through the fiscal year of 2026.

Councilmember Toy confirmed with Mr. Rohraff that residents could find more information on the website and Mr. Rohraff added they are also doing door to door flyers when they begin neighborhood investigations.

Motion was made by Councilmember Morgan to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

11. REQUEST TO EXTEND AMENDED CONTRACT WITH D'ANGELO BROTHERS, INC.: Department of Public Works, re: to include lead and galvanized service line replacements for Fiscal Year 2026 as required by the EPA and EGLE at various locations throughout the city, in a not-to-exceed amount of $1,700,000.00, from budgeted funds.

Don Rohraff, Director of Public Works, presented the request to Council. Mr. Rohraff stated D'Angelo Brothers have done an excellent job with the scheduling, the inspections, the removals, and the restoration of the lead line program. He added their professionalism is demonstrated with every completed job and often completed underbudget. So far, 177 lead service lines have been removed, over 1,500 homes have been identified, and 160 restorations completed. D'Angelo Brothers have agreed to hold their pricing for the next contract year.

Motion was made by Councilmember Donovic to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

12. REQUEST TO AMEND THE QBS ENGINEERING CONTRACT WITH OHM ADVISORS: Engineering Division, re: for Construction Engineering Services for the 2025 Water Main Replacement Project (Area 11 and Schoolcraft Road) in a not-to-exceed amount of $198,334.00, from budgeted funds. (CR 336-21)

Todd Zilincik, City Engineer, presented the request to Council. Mr. Zilincik requested Council award the contract to OHM Advisors in the amount of $198, 334 for improvements at the Merriman and Schoolcraft area to replace 68, 12, and 16-inch water mains.

Motion was made by Councilmember Budzinski to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

13. AWARD OF CONTRACT: Engineering Division, re: for the 2025 Water Main Replacement in Area 11 and Schoolcraft Rd, from budgeted funds.

Todd Zilincik, City Engineer, presented the request to Council. Mr. Zilincik stated Murphy Pipeline was the lowest qualified bidder to fix the identified issues in Area 11 planned for next spring on Merriman Road and then continuing into the subdivision to the east of Merriman and north of Schoolcraft.

Councilmember Toy stated she was looking forward to a new signal at 5 Mile and Levan for a left turn. She added her appreciation for the partnership with Wayne County to ensure Livonia roads are improved. She also wished Mr. Zilincik a happy birthday.

Motion was made by Councilmember Donovic to put the matter on the Consent portion of the next Regular Agenda.

DIRECTION: APPROVING CONSENT

AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION

Eileen McDonald, Livonia resident, suggested placing large contracts on a regular agenda, to provide opportunities to have discussions.

Lynn Mills, Livonia resident, wanted to ask everyone on Council to remember Livonia is theirs to protect.

ADJOURNED

Meeting adjourned at 11:11 pm

For October 20th, 2025, Regular Meeting