

CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2016
IN CITY HALL

Mayor Michael C. Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Mark Carufel, City Clerk, gave the Invocation.

Council Members present at roll call: Deanna Koski, Joseph V. Romano, Maria G. Schmidt, Nate Shannon, Doug Skrzyniarz, Michael C. Taylor, Barbara A. Ziarko.

Also Present: Mark Vanderpool, City Manager; Jeffrey Bahorski, City Attorney; Mark Carufel, City Clerk; Madeline L. Ranella, Recording Secretary.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Koski, seconded by Romano, to approve the Agenda as presented.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Mayor Taylor called on City Clerk Mark Carufel to make a special presentation honoring an employee who has been with the City for almost 50 years.

Mr. Carufel made a presentation to recognize Recording Secretary Madeline Ranella, who is retiring at the conclusion of tonight's meeting, and presented her with an award for her 48 years of service to the residents, Mayor, City Council and the City Administration.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATION

I. Visioning 2030

A. The Vision becomes reality...

1. A Smash...the Success of the Sterling Heights Farmers Market
2. A Splash...Clinton River Rehabilitation
3. Dressing Up...Richard J. Notte City Center Improvements

Mr. Vanderpool announced Sterling Heights will soon be celebrating its 50th Anniversary as a City. He stated the City must focus and continue to invest in our infrastructure and most importantly in quality of life services. Sterling Heights refuses to accept the fate of cities natural potential decline and has been working on the Vision 2030 Plan to set the course for success and investing in our future. He pointed out as in past years, there are a number of presentations planned and a number of individuals that will be making those presentations. At the end of the presentations, there will be time to address questions, feedback and concerns from audience members and the City Council. Mr. Vanderpool introduced Tammy Turgeon, Library Director, to provide a brief review of the process.

Ms. Turgeon pointed out how Sterling Heights Vision 2030 was created and addressed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. She discussed the 2030 Visioning Process as well. Ms. Turgeon read the Mission Statement and Guiding Principles and the 2015 Movement Forward, which included the implementation of a new logo, new website, maintenance of public safety personnel, the increased focus on Aesthetics with Major Road Improvements, Successful Farmers Market, City Center Complex Improvements and Clinton River Grant. Ms. Turgeon pointed out the next steps are to update the Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Plan.

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Mr. Kyle Langlois, Parks and Recreation Director, to recap the highly successful 2015 Farmers Market.

Mr. Langlois stated one word comes to mind when discussing the success of the Farmers Market: WOW. He demonstrated this WOW factor by numbers: 2 is the number of television stations that provided live broadcasting, 9 is the number of city departments directly involved in the delivery of this service, 27 is the average number of vendors each week, 22% above our initial predictions, 63 in the percentage of vendor's revenue that also exceeded our projection, and 40,000 is the estimated number of residents and visitors that walked through the market. A video presentation of the first Farmers Market was shown at this time. Mr. Langlois pointed out some changes for the 2016 Farmers Market: A reduction of 4 weeks, the addition of Craft Wines and the instituting of Project Fresh. He stated they plan to expand Music in the Park through August, increase the number of special events going on at the market and they will be looking at a permanent structure for the Farmers Market.

Mr. Vanderpool thanked Mr. Langlois and his team for the phenomenal job they did in putting together the Farmers Market.

Mr. Vanderpool announced one of the largest multi-million dollar grants in the City's history to improve the Clinton River and introduced Mr. Jason Castor, City Development Manager, to explain.

Mr. Castor explained the Clinton River Habitat Restoration Project, the EPA Grant Highlights and the improvements planned for the Clinton River Corridor. He showed renderings of the Pedestrian Bridge over the Clinton River, the Canoe Landing at Dodge

Park Bridge, the MDEQ Coastal Zone Management - Grant and the proposed Rain Garden. He stated the Clinton River has been under utilized for years and Sterling Heights is taking steps to address these issues.

Mr. Vanderpool highlighted one of the most unique things about this grant is that the EPA turned over the entire grant Administration to the City of Sterling Heights. They were very satisfied with our internal team.

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Mr. Brent Bashaw, City Engineer, to discuss the improvements to the Richard J. Notte City Center.

Mr. Bashaw pointed out the improvements to the West City Center were completed in 2015 and included pavement repairs, Police Department retaining wall replacement, drainage improvements including Handicapped Accessibility improvements, Landscaping improvements and aesthetic features. He discussed the East City Center improvements to be completed in 2016, which include Pavement Replacement, Geometric improvements, Plaza creation along the Library and Police Department frontage, Secured Police Department parking area via gate installation, Landscaping improvements and Aesthetic features.

Mr. Vanderpool pointed out Dodge Park Road will be torn out at the same time as all the improvements to the East City Center. He stated 3,000 letters were sent out to the homes that would be affected by the Dodge Park Road improvements.

B. Increasing the love for home...Place Making

1. Art for Everyone...A New Initiative

2. Creating Fun...A revival of the City Parks...Taking Fun to a New Level
3. Reimagining Lakeside
4. A New Place to Do Business...An Industrial Corridor for the Future
5. Honoring the Past...50th Anniversary Celebration

Mr. Vanderpool stated the next phase of the 2030 Plan is entitled, "Increasing the love for home" place making. He introduced Ms. Bridget Doyle, Community Relations Director, to discuss some of the exciting projects to create a better sense of place.

Ms. Doyle presented a concept the Community Relations Department is working on to enhance public art offerings and plan for the future. She recognized Arts Commission Chairperson Jeanne Schabath, Mr. Frank DiMaria and his wife and Grace Finazzo in the audience to support this initiative. She began by defining public art and showed some of the famous pieces from around the world. Ms. Doyle showed the existing public art in Sterling Heights and pointed out Van Dyke will be home to four, 40-foot LED light mile markers at 15, 16, 17 and 18 Mile Roads. She stated they want the City to be known for its art outreach, to get our public art featured on the MI Art Tours App, to create a library of our public art, to engage the community and support interactive events and campaigns to make the City transparent, inclusive and welcoming as a resource for artists and art appreciators around the region. Ms. Doyle discussed the conceptual Clinton River Sculpture Walk and funding options. Looking ahead, the next steps are: Winter 2016 to discuss the plan with the Arts Commission and devise an outline for Sterling Heights Public Art Program; Spring 2016 to meet with the Visioning 2030 Committee and other

key city staff to take input on outlined program; Summer 2016 to take input from the community via website, social media; and Fall 2016 to take the plan to City Council for final review and approval. A video was shown at this time from the City of Calgary Alberta, Canada as an example of what we can provide to our residents and visitors.

Mr. Vanderpool explained the City is working on the Master Plan with Wade Trim and introduced Mr. Nick Lomako.

Mr. Lomako provided an overview of where the City needs to focus additional resources in regard to Parks and Recreation. His goal is to provide the City with information and direction. Mr. Lomako pointed out the importance of parks in relation to a person's health and disposition. He pointed out areas where the City is falling below the quality index of what we might be demanded to have in our recreation facilities. He stated the City will need to focus on outdoor activities, program related activities and address the growth in health and fitness clubs. Mr. Lomako stated the City has to continue to invest in neighborhood parks if we are going to remain a quality place and attract new residents. Mr. Vanderpool introduced Mr. Kyle Langlois to unveil a major initiative.

Mr. Langlois stated he would be presenting a concept that would be an important piece to obtaining long term sustainability for Sterling Heights. He pointed out people, parks and programs make a community. Sterling Heights is comprised of three solid groups of people: residents, businesses and corporations and employees.

Mr. Langlois stated the conceptual plan he is proposing will be comprised of a multi-faceted Community Center and he gave a detailed explanation of the uses. He introduced the amenities they are proposing for Dodge Park and the Senior Center: 1.

Skate Park, 2. Splash Park, 3. Bocce Ball Enclosure, 4. Farmers Market Shelter with Ice Rink, 5. Dog Park in Magnolia Park, 6. Non-motorized path to connect Delia Park to the Nature Preserve and 7. Mini-turf soccer field. Mr. Langlois concluded that the time to further create and strengthen our community is now.

Mr. Vanderpool stated their goal is to bring this exciting initiative to life beginning this year, and unless City Council directs them differently, they will proceed over the ensuing months to better define the scope of work as mentioned by Mr. Langlois, fine tune the cost estimates and develop the required funding plan. He stated the City Administration welcomes feedback from the community and council.

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Mr. Luke Bonner, Economic Development Advisor and Ms. Denice Gerstenberg, City Development Director, to present an overview of new strategies to further enhance the City's economic vitality.

Mr. Luke Bonner, Economic Development Consultant, began by congratulating the City team that put the presentation together this evening. He pointed out their focus is reinvesting in our core economic development assets that have made this community such a strong and viable place in which to work. Mr. Bonner discussed the Lakeside Sustainability Assessment Study, which showed a lack of investment, drop in sales, growing sustainability issues of an enclosed shopping center, future of the anchors, increased competition and the change in customer preferences. He stated Lakeside Mall is a 1.5 million square foot shopping center with four major anchors. It has gone through multiple ownerships and is now facing major competition. He stated they worked with Wade Trim to visualize concepts of what the mall could be. The first concept keeps the

mall intact and develops the perimeter of the mall. The next concept keeps the anchor stores in place and flips the mall inside out, placing more retail and a mixture of uses on the perimeter of the mall property. He stated changes to Lakeside will be over time and they will have regular meetings with mall management and will work with state legislation to support malls.

Mr. Bonner discussed the City's Industrial Assets and pointed out the LDFA/Smartzone District was created in 2008 to encourage local development, prevent unemployment and promote economic growth. He discussed the vacancy rates and the need to expand the tax base. He stated it is necessary to focus on making our industrial corridor attractive to new companies coming into the community and continue to assist our companies that call Sterling Heights home. He introduced Ms. Denice Gerstenberg at this time.

Ms. Denice Gerstenberg discussed the creation of the industrial corridor in the future by looking at our infrastructure, traffic patterns, aesthetics and high quality broadband. She showed a rendering of what Sterling Enterprise Park, formerly Sunnybrook Golf Course, would look like. Ms. Gerstenberg discussed the timetable and introduced Mr. Bonner to review the funding sources.

Mr. Luke Bonner discussed the funding sources. He stated they are in the process of amending the LDFA Development Plan and Tax Increment Finance Plan. He pointed out the first step is taking the plan to the board for consideration in February of 2016, bringing back the plan to the City Council for a two-step process in March and hopefully back in May for final adoption by City council. He reminded everyone these projects are only funded through the LDFA.

Mr. Vanderpool stated in two years the City of Sterling Heights will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary and he introduced Ms. Bridget Doyle, Community Relations Director, to provide the details.

Ms. Doyle explained how Sterling Township became the City of Sterling Heights in July of 1968. She stated a committee will be formed, chaired by herself and Tammy Turgeon, Library Director, and they would invite Community Relations, the Mayor and City Council, Administration and Key Staff, Members of the Historical Commission, Chairpersons of the Arts Commission, Ethnic Community Committee, Beautification Commission and Library Board, as well as designated members of the community. A kickoff meeting is scheduled for September of 2016. Ms. Doyle explained there would be a year of celebrations, starting with a kick-off reception on January 2, 2018. She also explained there would be apparel and merchandise for sale and the Sterling Heights Public Library and Historical Commission are working together to author and publish a book about the City's history, Sterling Heights Television will be creating a video series to use for SHTV, social media and played at City Council meetings. Ms. Doyle stated the big event would be held on Sunday, July 1, 2018 in Dodge Park with a concert series, guest speakers, honoring of past City officials, a petting zoo and bounce house, public art element as well as cake and ice cream. In addition, the City will build a time capsule with the help of the Historical Commission and residents are invited to submit their ideas. The time capsule will be on display at the 50th Anniversary celebration and then buried at the end of the event by the Mayor.

II. Sign Ordinance

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Mr. Chris McLeod, City Planner and Mr. Don DeNault, City Attorney, to discuss signage and the Supreme Court ruling's impact on the City.

Mr. Don DeNault discussed the impact and importance of signage on the community. He stated the Supreme Court made a decision on June 18 2015, in the Read v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona case, which stated the Town of Gilbert sign code provisions violate the First Amendment - not content neutral and no compelling governmental interest in regulating different content differently. The U.S. Supreme Court voted 9-0 on the overall conclusion. He stated the general rule is if you need to read the message on a sign to determine how that sign is regulated, the ordinance is content based and will require the strongest governmental interest, and narrow application, to survive constitutional review. Possible "function-based" exceptions: regulations that do not address the actual message, but still require reading the sign. He turned the discussion over to Chris McLeod.

Mr. McLeod stated in regard to the City of Sterling Heights Sign Ordinance, there will be no proliferation of signs throughout the City. The City can still regulate signs; it's just a matter of how they are regulated. Commercial/Industrial signage will likely not be impacted significantly. Temporary signage will likely undergo the most significant revision. Mr. McLeod pointed out revisions must occur to the current City of Sterling Heights Sign Ordinance. Revisions should focus on location, appearance, number, size, etc., not necessarily what the sign says or the message it conveys. The City's progress in terms of sign quality and sign materials will not be lost; in fact this may be an opportunity to further the progress. Signage will still not be permitted in the road right of way. Online registration for temporary signage will likely be proposed. Mr. McLeod

discussed Content-Neutral Criteria and the types of regulations that would still be permissible provided they are justified by a reasonable public purpose, such as reasons relating to the public health, safety and welfare. There would be additional considerations in regard to design requirements and electronic message board requirements. He stated the next steps will include a draft of new regulations to address the issues raised in the Reed case as well as other desired amendments. The draft text provisions will follow the normal Zoning Ordinance amendment process which includes a review and public hearing at the Planning Commission prior to consideration by City Council. During the development of the Zoning Ordinance amendments, the process for administering sign reviews/approvals will also need to be reviewed - including the potential for a registration process for temporary signs.

Mr. Vanderpool indicated this was the end of the presentations. He thanked all the presenters for their hard work on the presentations and looks forward to feedback on the 2030 Vision Plan.

CITIZEN COMMENT ON STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Taylor opened the discussion to citizen participation.

Mr. Michael Lombardini congratulated everyone on the excellent presentations.

He spoke in favor of the Farmers Market along with Music in the Park. He stated he has been a fan of public art and suggested putting some across the street between the Senior Center and the auditorium area. He also stated in regard to placing art along the trail on Clinton River, there is a very unique flood plain there

and he hopes they take that into consideration. In regard to the Skate Park, Mr. Lombardini is very much in favor of that.

Mrs. Claudia Fromm suggested a digital clock on the walking track and possibly in the new senior center. She also discussed the possibility of swings for children with special needs. Mrs. Fromm is in favor of a Splash Pad/Splash Park in the City to attract young families. She wants the City to continue to be progressive.

Ms. Jazmine Early questioned an area left out of the master plan and inquired the use for the vacant Fillmore School. She also questioned the new development for Maple Lane Golf Course and inquired whether they would be giving any land to the City. She stated the people that live on the south side of the City need something in this area.

Mrs. Loreen Morris discussed the need for more activities for young families and the need for a splash park. She also spoke in favor of the new recreation center.

Mr. Nofar discussed the sign ordinance and his building on Van Dyke. He discussed the new LED message board he purchased and stated he can only use 30% of his signs capacity because of the Sign Ordinance. He hopes the City would address the LED signs.

Mr. Jeffrey Norgrove thanked the members of the City Administration for their presentations and was glad to see more people in the audience. He supports Parks and Recreation and hopes that things go forward with the new community center.

Mr. Norgrove made some suggestions for the 50th anniversary celebration.

Mrs. Sanaa Elias liked the presentations. She also spoke in favor of a new community center and the splash park. She inquired whether all the ideas are firm and moving forward, who comprises the 2030 committee and who is eligible to participate.

Mrs. Kayla Kardelo spoke in support of the splash park in Dodge Park.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL COMMENT ON STRATEGIC PLANNING
PRESENTATIONS

Councilwoman Ziarko stated it is important to look at where the City is going in the future. She also discussed the need for a new community center. Councilwoman Ziarko likes the idea of a longer concert season and stated there are opportunities there. She inquired whether there was a benefactor that was picking up the tab for one of the concerts this summer and Mr. Langlois indicated it was St. Blasé Church.

Councilwoman Ziarko questioned the Clinton River cleanup and how that would impact the tree removal and the echo cycle.

Mr. Castor replied the trees will be removed in some sections, but not in the wetland area. They will be moved and used for habitat.

Councilwoman Ziarko questioned the grant administration and whether Sterling Heights would be the administrator to the City of Utica also.

Mr. Castor replied the funding would be shared between the two communities. They are doing assessments now and our contractor will be doing the work.

Councilwoman Ziarko discussed the security gates and stated they will help to keep our officers safe.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated the new community center would be for everyone to use. She likes the concepts for Lakeside Mall and is grateful for the plan.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated in regard to economic development, the residents want to see new restaurants and stores and this is something we need to address.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated in regard to the sign ordinance, she would like to see a hard copy of what Mr. DeNault presented so the City Council could further study it.

Councilman Skrzyniarz thanked all the department heads for their great presentations. He liked the numbers on the Farmers Market and stated it is a perfect example of how important it is to hear from the residents and then the City Council has to make a decision on what is best for the majority of the City. Councilman Skrzyniarz appreciates the plans for bringing in younger families and stated the City needs to balance our quality of life things.

Councilman Skrzyniarz discussed Futsal, or indoor hard-surface soccer, and stated it would be a good thing to look at. He encouraged the City administration to talk to Total Sports and see if there could be an opportunity for a public/private partnership with the City to help offset some of our costs.

He suggested the placement of another dog park on the east side of the City.

Councilman Shannon commended all the presenters for their great presentations. He stated he wants to attract and retain residents and increase the quality of life. He is very proud of the success of the Farmers Market and thanks all the departments that were involved. Councilman Shannon looks forward to bigger and better things in the years to come. With regard to the Senior Center, he agrees it needs to be improved and he is very

interested to see what happens with it this summer. Councilman Shannon is very excited to see what is happening with the Clinton River improvements and stated that is an asset that is under-utilized. He thanked Mr. Bonner for his continued work with Lakeside Mall and stated it would be a negative impact on the City if we are not able to reinvent it.

Councilman Shannon is 100% in favor of the Community Center and all the other related amenities discussed by Mr. Langlois.

Councilwoman Schmidt questioned the bocce ball courts and whether only the seniors would be allowed to use them since they are at the senior center.

Mr. Langlois stated the bocce ball courts were not constructed with the CDBG funds and this enclosure will not be built with those funds, so it will be open to the public.

Councilwoman Schmidt stated this meeting is to strategize a plan for the future of the City and what has been presented this evening brings a lot of buzz and synergy to Sterling Heights. We are trying to reach the younger families and having a dedicated gym would bring in a lot of new activities. She believes this plan is not set in stone and the City still has to figure out how we will pay for it. A lot of it will be up to the residents of the City.

Councilwoman Schmidt questioned whether the owners of Lakeside Mall would be paying for the changes to the Mall.

Mr. Bonner indicated that is correct, it will not be the City.

Councilwoman Schmidt stated in regard to economic development, we have done a great job with manufacturing, but she would like to see more focus on commercial properties and restaurants.

As far as the City Center, Councilwoman Schmidt questioned when the City signs would start working.

Mr. Vanderpool stated they are still studying the electronic signage, but they may go back to more traditional signage because of the costs. It is on their agenda and a recommendation will be presented to the City Council in the near future.

Councilwoman Schmidt is concerned with the security gates and questioned the provision for drop-offs of book donations.

Mr. Bashaw responded that they need to discuss this further. They need to create a secure area and they looked at a security gate on the north side and on the east side there will be restricted access.

Councilwoman Schmidt likes the art along the Clinton River, but is also concerned with the flooding issue. She thanked everyone who made presentations this evening and looks forward to the future of the City.

Councilwoman Koski stated that Vision 2030 is all the things they have talked about over the years and it will probably take us 15 years to accomplish all of the things in the book. She stated in regard to the nature preserve, she wants to keep it the way it is.

Councilwoman Koski likes the concept of the shelter for the Farmers Market, the ice rink and the splash pad.

In regard to the grant for the Clinton River, Councilwoman Koski stated the City has the ability to manage it and she is looking forward to what is going to happen there.

Councilwoman Koski stated in regard to the City Center, we still have the traffic circle there and she was wishing that it was not going to be there.

Councilwoman Koski likes the idea of the art along Dodge Park and questioned whether the Art Committee would be doing the planning and purchasing of the art there.

Councilwoman Koski stated in regard to the Magnolia Park dog park, she assumes it would be self supporting.

In regard to economic development, Councilwoman Koski asked Mr. Bonner to elaborate on the Sterling Enterprise Park project.

Mr. Bonner stated they are looking to the new revenue generated by the Sterling Enterprise Park project with the LDFA as a way to finance a lot of the improvements mentioned by Ms. Gerstenberg. He pointed out there is no plan to fund any of this out of the general fund.

Councilman Romano stated Clinton River is something the City should be very proud of and he is in total support of any improvements there.

Councilman Romano likes the idea of the splash park, the cover over the Farmers Market and the art work.

Councilman Romano would like to see Dodge Park updated to make the park better for people that use it.

In regard to Lakeside Mall, Councilman Romano would like to see the mall updated.

Councilman Romano stated attracting younger people is good, but what about the older people that want public safety, lower taxes and good streets. He pointed out there is no more property in Sterling Heights to build on. The same is true for commercial buildings; there is nothing left in Sterling Heights as we have reached our capacity.

Councilman Romano questioned where all the money is coming from for all these goodies and questioned whether people really want another tax increase. He stated he is not in favor of another tax raise. He believes some of these things could be done in smaller steps without spending a ton of money.

Mayor Taylor thanked all the directors, managers and city employees who participated in the strategic planning this evening. He thanked Mr. Vanderpool and the city employees for providing a great vision for the City Council tonight. He stated in regard to the 50th anniversary coming up, these are the sorts of improvements that will leave a legacy for everyone of the residents that live here now and those that are moving in. He stated he represents a younger group and what these improvements would cost is far less than a family would spend going for a day outside of the City. He stated this a good investment and benefits everyone. It is a new direction the City will be going in and provides an opportunity for people of all ages. Mayor Taylor can't wait to see how everything unfolds over the next few months and the year ahead.

Mayor Taylor stated in regard to the sign ordinance, he wants to see electronic signs updated and wants to see those changes made when the sign ordinance comes back before the Council in the next few months.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

There were no communications from citizens at this time.

ADJOURN

Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Romano, to adjourn the meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

MARK CARUFEL, City Clerk