

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
February 1, 2010

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Monday, February 1, 2010, in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Mayor Buck.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Buck, Knol, McShane, Wiggins, Wright.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

CITY ADMINISTRATION: City Clerk Halberstadt, City Manager Pastue.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

02-10-015 MOTION by McShane, seconded by Knol, to approve the agenda as submitted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION WITH CIVIC THEATRE AD HOC COMMITTEE APPLICANTS

Present: Brian Belesky, Galen Chandler, Ronald Donoghue, Lynne Huyck, Stephanie Janiunas, Brian Kantz, Erik Lindquist, Gary Luyben, Joel Marwil, Mary Morgan, Kenneth Murray, Ruth Myers, Charles Paul, Brian Rich, John Shore, Mara Topper and James Wasiloff.

Mayor Buck held a round table discussion with applicants for the Civic Theatre Ad Hoc Committee. Applicants offered a number of ideas and opportunities to achieve the highest and best use of the theatre.

McShane stated she would like to see the theatre developed as a destination location, possibly providing a variety of entertainment.

Knol noted a primary goal of the committee is to develop a business model that is revenue driven and self sustaining. She advised the committee would need to take a close look at the theatre's current operations and management. She stated the Council is open to moving the theatre in a new direction. She noted data collection and analysis would be required in order to reach a conclusion. She described the limitations of the theatre relative to live entertainment. She stated one of the goals of the committee is to determine the theatre's target audience.

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Wright spoke about developing ideas that would make incremental improvements to the theatre. He advised the theatre needs to be self-sustaining and profitable. He noted profits could be reinvested in the theatre to make improvements.

Wright pointed out the committee should capitalize on the uniqueness of the theatre. He stated it is a great treasure with great potential, but is currently underutilized. He praised the phenomenal ideas offered by the committee applicants. He stated it will be up to the committee to determine the strengths and weaknesses of those ideas and which ones have the potential for success. He noted this will involve a huge amount of homework.

Wiggins discussed moving forward with different ideas for the theatre. He noted the theatre is slowly evolving, as demonstrated by a current church rental and an upcoming live entertainment event. He advised the committee could expand on these ideas and develop new ones that may have been tested elsewhere.

Given the number of committee applicants, Wright recommended Council appoint a main committee that would in turn appoint sub-committees.

Council concurred to take a break at 8:55 p.m. allowing committee applicants to leave. The meeting resumed at 9:10 p.m.

Council discussed the process for appointing a committee that would be comprised of nine members. Knol pointed out the need for sub-committees given the amount of work that will be required from the committee. She stated committee members should be realistic with an understanding the theatre has to be self sustaining. She advised there has to be a balance of creativity, new ideas, as well as what works. She stated the City may not have to "throw the baby out with the bath water", if current the business model is what works best.

McShane pointed out Page 2 of the Civic Theatre Ad Hoc Committee Resolution provides the structure for the committee.

Discussion followed regarding current management and maintenance of the theatre. Pastue noted the current Church rental provides approximately half of the fixed operations cost of the theatre. Discussion continued regarding the importance of capital improvements to the theatre.

Buck discussed the formation of the committee, noting the structure could be similar to the DDA Board and its Main Street sub-committees.

In terms of setting deadlines for the committee, Wright pointed out it is better to get it right than fast, especially given the fact that the theatre remains somewhat profitable, removing a sense of urgency in making a change.

Discussion followed regarding the purpose and composition of the committee and the importance of sub-committees providing the opportunity to use the talent of all the candidates.

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In terms of the appointment process, Council agreed to rank their top 12 candidates.

Council concurred that Steve Schneeman, DDA Boardmember, could be a liaison to the committee rather than a voting member. They further concurred a Councilmember would not need to participate on the committee.

Pastue stated he would attend the first committee meeting to provide guidance and direction.

In terms of the appointment process, Council agreed to rank their top 12 candidates from 1 to 12 with 12 being the highest or best score. The City Manager's office will compile the results using a spreadsheet provided by Wright.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was heard.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Annabelle Gabel, 23089 Violet, spoke about attending the Civic Theatre in the 1980's when it was operated by a different manager. She spoke about attending the gala for the grand opening of the Theatre.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Wright stated his opinion that in two years the City will be in the same position with SMART and have the same issues. He noted if voters approve the SMART millage in August, that vote will be used as justification for continuing SMART when it comes up for renewal.

Knol advised prior to the August election, it will be important to educate residents on potential budget cuts and the tradeoffs relative to the SMART millage. She stated there needs to be a public dialogue about the future and what residents are willing to sacrifice.

McShane suggested the City hold one or two public hearings to allow residents to express how they would like to see their tax dollars spent.

ADJOURNMENT

02-10-016 MOTION by Knol, seconded by Wiggins, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

J.T. (Tom) Buck, Mayor

APPROVED: February 15, 2010

Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk