

MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING  
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
FEBRUARY 22, 2016 – 6:00PM

The Study Session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Massey at 6:00pm.

Council Members Present: Bridges, Bruce, Knol, Lerner, Massey, Rich and Steckloff

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Boyer, City Clerk Smith and City Attorney Joppich

**DISCUSSION ON SOUTHWESTERN OAKLAND CABLE COMMISSION (SWOCC)**

Mayor Massey explained that the City of Novi had indicated that they wished to withdraw from SWOCC and when this issue was previously discussed by Council, a resolution was adopted to extend the deadline to withdraw from January 1<sup>st</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup> in order to provide all communities additional time to discuss the issue.

Mayor Massey stated that a dissolution agreement was drafted by the City Attorney's Office and provided to Council for this meeting for review. He explained that there are two options that would include 2/3 of the communities deciding to dissolve and to divide up the assets or to not dissolve and wait until the agreement ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. He stated that Novi has already indicated that they want to dissolve and that option allows for SWOCC to dissolve and for all communities to move on. He stated that City Manager Boyer will discuss contingency plans if Council agrees to dissolve SWOCC and Bright House Cable has indicated that they will continue to provide the city with space on their channels.

City Manager Boyer explained that each community had a role on the SWOCC Board and Farmington staff had handled the books for SWOCC. He stated that in discussing this issue, questions came up regarding the funding that would be required to maintain the building until it was sold and once sold how that would be divided between the communities. He outlined the funding required by each community in order to take care of the debt retirement and maintain a fund balance of \$20,000 for any ongoing maintenance issues and the distribution of assets between communities. He added that if the proposed funding were not enough, the SWOCC Board will remain intact until the building is sold and could authorize further funding if needed.

Mr. Boyer mentioned that they had a realtor offer to help sell the building at no commission and they are still reviewing that offer.

Councilmember Lerner expressed concern with using a realtor at no commission and what recourse the City would have if they felt this person was not doing their job but yet not paying them any commission.

Councilmember Bruce agreed and inquired if there were any legal issues with having a realtor involved without paying them a commission.

Attorney Joppich stated that there would likely be some agreement in place outlining the details; but there would not be any legal issue.

Mr. Boyer mentioned that he offered to have Farmington Hills staff continue to provide these types of services to the City of Farmington, but they are still exploring all options. He explained that staff reviewed options for relocating city staff from the SWOCC building and staff was able to negotiate an agreement to utilize the "D" wing at the Mercy Center for office space and a temporary studio for a period of 2 years and meanwhile the City would be looking for a permanent location.

Mr. Boyer informed Council that staff has estimated that the cost to lease the space at Mercy, purchase the required equipment and hire additional part-time staff would be approximately \$100,000 annually with a one-time equipment purchase in the amount of \$100,000. Currently, the City is paying \$330,000 annual for use of the SWOCC building and some equipment, which is very outdated.

Mr. Boyer pointed out that the ultimate goal is to find a permanent location for the video division and to use money from the sale of the existing building for that purpose.

Councilmember Lerner inquired if the new equipment would be high definition (HD) and if SWOCC staff is leaving or staying on board.

Councilmember Bridges inquired if there would be any decrease in public benefit or public access.

Mr. Boyer responded that the new equipment will be HD and existing SWOCC staff is leaving. The part-time staff mentioned will be new staff working approximately 30 hours a week each. He added that the goal is to have a smooth transition and there may need to be some conversation about continued programming, but he feels there should be little change in public access.

Mayor Massey confirmed that the entire SWOCC Board agreed that they wanted a seamless transition and HD will provide for even better programming.

Councilmember Knol inquired if the public access commission would remain. Mr. Boyer stated that he feels it would and that it is important to have that Commission in place.

Mayor Massey added that if the dissolution is approved, Farmington and Farmington Hills can discuss how to move forward.

Councilmember Rich inquired about the programming and providing candidate forums and if that would stay the same. Mr. Boyer confirmed that this would stay the same as that is already handled by city staff.

Attorney Joppich reviewed the terms of the dissolution agreement with Council that explained that SWOCC would be dissolved as of March 31, 2016, but that the SWOCC Board may continue until the sale of the building is complete. He further explained the terms of the agreement as they pertained to payment and satisfaction of SWOCC liabilities and the distribution of SWOCC assets. He reiterated that maintenance and insurance for the building would be addressed by the \$20,000 fund balance that Mr. Boyer discussed and if that funding ran out, the parties would agree to fund the building needs in equal proportions. He added that Farmington would remain as the fiscal officer as is current practice.

Councilmember Bruce inquired who approves the sale price for the building. Attorney Joppich responded that the agreement authorizes the City Managers of each community to approve the sale price within a certain range and the SWOCC Board would have to approve a sale price lower than the authorized range.

Several councilmembers expressed that they were still uncomfortable with having a realtor handle the sale at no commission and asked for staff to let Council know ultimately who will be handling the sale.

Mr. Boyer stated that staff still wants to confirm the offer made and he will keep Council informed. He stated that while they have interested parties in the building, they want to market this as broad as possible through a real estate agent to determine the market value.

There was a general consensus of City Council to move forward with the dissolution of SWOCC.

Mayor Massey stated that the proposed dissolution agreement would be on the March 14, 2016 City Council agenda for consideration.

**QUADRANT INFORMATION MEETINGS**

Mayor Massey stated that through the during the city election process, he heard from residents that they wanted Council to reach out to residents to hear their concerns/issues so he has scheduled meetings to be held in each quadrant of the city at the fire station buildings. All meetings will start at 7pm and have been scheduled as follows:

March 16, 2016 – Fire Station #2  
March 17, 2016 – Fire Station #4  
March 23, 2016 – Fire Station #1  
March 24, 2016 – Fire Station #3

He informed Council that since these will be informal meetings, they can only have 3 members of Council at each quadrant meeting so that they would not be in violation of the Open Meetings Act.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Massey adjourned the study session at 6:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk