



Rochester Hills

Minutes - Draft

Planning Commission / City Council Joint Meeting

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Wednesday, January 17, 2018

6:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Deborah Brnabic called the Special Joint Work Session of the Planning Commission and City Council to order at 6:08 p.m. at the Calf Barn at the Rochester Hills Van Hoosen Farm.

ROLL CALL

Present PC: Deborah Brnabic, Chairperson
Greg Hooper, Vice Chairperson
Nicholas Kaltsounis, Secretary
Stephanie Morita, City Council Representative
Ed Anzek
Gerard Dettloff
David Reece
C. Neall Schroeder
Ryan Schultz

Excused: None

Present CC: Mark Tisdell, President
Stephanie Morita, Vice President
Susan Bowyer
Ryan Deel
Dale Hetrick
Jennifer McCardell

Excused Jim Kubicina

Also Present: Bryan K. Barnett, Mayor
Sara Roediger, Director of Planning & Econ. Dev.
Kristen Kapelanski, Manager of Planning
Tom Talbert, Strategic Innovations Specialist
Jessica Hyrnkiw, Government Youth Council Rep.
Zoe Pizzuti, Government Youth Council Rep.
Maureen Gentry, Recording Secretary

COMMUNICATIONS

- A) *Planning Commission/City Council Survey Results*
- B) *4th Grade Student Tour Surveys*
- C) *Results of Government Youth Council Session*
- D) *Results of Staff Visioning Session*

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Roediger thanked everyone for coming. She advised that the City was working with Giffels Webster, consultants for the Master Plan update. The project was started in November 2017, and there had already been robust public engagement. The process began with a staff visioning session, and a lot of the leadership of City Hall were involved. After that, the consultants met with the Youth Council to have a similar session and to talk about what they thought the future of the City should be. A press release was sent. There was a public opinion survey online, and they had received almost 230 responses so far, and it would be up for a couple of more months. She noted that there would be public meetings as well. The joint visioning session was another step in the process, and staff and the consultants wanted to get the attendees' input to help influence the themes and trends going through the process. It was the hope that the meeting would outline the framework for the updated Master Plan.

Mayor Barnett related that his office had undergone some reorganization over the last year, and he introduced a new member of his team, Tom Talbert. Mr. Talbert was a 30-year resident of the City who spent his career in advertising. He had been a Vice President at Campbell Ewald, and he was currently the President of Adcrafters. He was hired as the City's Strategic Innovations Specialist, and his job was to find innovative solutions for a variety of items presented and follow through to form a more efficient and effective governmental unit.

Mr. Talbert said that it was his second day, and that it was a pleasure to work for the City. He had worked on some of America's great brands, and he oversaw teams in New York, L.A. and Detroit. He commented that he had been in an airport every other week for the last ten years. He hoped to bring some new thinking to a City that meant a lot to him and was truly special. He said that he welcomed everyone's comments, advice and any guidance provided.

Mr. Arroyo with Giffels Webster restated that they were the planning

consultants assisting the City with the development of the Master Plan update. He introduced the other members of his team, and said that their primary reason for coming was to listen to the “experts in the community” who could provide some direction to the Planning Commission as it went through the important task of updating the City’s Master Plan. He turned it over to Jill Bahm, Principal Planner.

Ms. Bahm asked everyone to introduce themselves and their roles and express why they were involved in the community. Afterwards, she said that it was great to hear all the reasons for being involved in the process. She started a power point presentation, and advised that Master Plans were required to be looked at and updated every five years.

Ms. Bahm went over the results of the staff visioning session. One exercise asked people to identify what they perceived as the top strengths and weaknesses in the City. The strengths included trails, parks, schools, natural beauty, diversity in economic groups, reputation of the city, financial stability, OU, neighborhoods, low taxes, employment opportunities and high-end job market, food, shopping, diversity of cultures, progressive, highly educated residents, good mix of development and well-run community. Weaknesses included traffic, affordable housing options, transportation options, lack of downtown, communication/community engagement, staffing levels, limited areas for growth, lack of diversity, lack of neighborhood parks, no indoor recreation facilities, not centrally located in metro Detroit, dirt roads, big focus on residential versus small businesses, that residential is majority of the tax base and no Costco!

Mr. Hetrick was surprised that public safety was not listed as a top strength. Mr. Talbert asked if there had been any specific examples provided with regards to lack of communication and engagement, but Ms. Bahm said that she would have to look further into that. Next, the group identified top opportunities, including potential to address traffic by improving intersections, encouraging neighborhood parks, community/recreation center, greater involvement in regional transit; mass transit, identifying new model of development and retrofit existing, autonomous vehicles, rezoning residential on mile roads, enhance north-south major roads with new technology to improve circulation (smart signals), tiny homes in mobile home parks, affordable housing, accessory dwellings, complete streets, bike lanes in streets, and strengthening partnerships to leverage additional outdoor recreation opportunities. Threats included development pressure impacts on traffic and other infrastructure, sustainability of large homes and developments,

mixed use - if it could be more affordable, backlash from new concepts, if future changes in leadership would continue the strong relationships between boards, commissions and staff, aging population, managing changing household composition, how to plan for next recession, managing diversity in terms of services, communication, safety of pedestrians, lack of sidewalks in neighborhoods, demand for services compared to revenue sources and managing new technology such as drones and autonomous vehicles.

Ms. Bahm went over the results of the visioning session with the Youth Council who were asked the same questions. The top strengths were the Village of Rochester Hills, community parks, community involvement in schools, and downtown Rochester. The top weaknesses were lack of things to do, transportation, health of the community and getting people involved. They also asked them if they were the King or Queen of Rochester Hills for a day, the first thing they would do to make the City a great place. Results were having a venue for teens to hang out, getting rid of dirt roads, having a dog park, better recognizing teen entrepreneurs, fixing the traffic and having more stores in The Village.

Regarding the survey the Planning Commissioners and City Council members took, the top strengths were responsive government and financial stability, parks and open space, safety, schools and neighborhoods/housing choices. Weaknesses included traffic, housing variety/condition, lack of transportation options, communication/community engagement, infrastructure/roads and perception by others. The last one meant that what some people were proud of others did not recognize. It was not that people thought negatively of Rochester Hills; they did not recognize how great it was. Opportunities included roads and road funding, improved communication, redevelopment of landfills and other older corridors, more parks and natural areas and active parks. Threats were traffic, housing variety/condition, lack of transportation options, communication/community engagement, infrastructure/roads and perception by others. Trends scored were autonomous vehicles and other infrastructure challenges; potential for big data, social media to change City operations; need to shift style of development to accommodate changing tastes, aging population, permit height in absence of land for expansion; less land devoted to parking; and open space incorporated into new development. The vision for the City in 10 years was improved transportation infrastructure, diversified housing stock, evolve while maintaining strengths (financial stability, good services, appealing community, safe), denser, more appealing

commercial areas, and tension between maintenance of status quo and adapting to changing times. Some responses suggested that people wanted to keep things as awesome as they were, but there were some things that needed to be changed in the community. Ms. Bahm claimed that it would be common to hear that throughout the entire process. They all knew that they could not keep everything the way it was.

Ms. Bahm pointed to the themes the Planning staff had come up with early in the process: Preserve, Enhance and Diversify. She indicated that everyone taking the online survey should be able to identify at least one thing they loved about the City. There might be areas in the City that needed work, and the community needed to identify what needed to be enhanced, improved and sustained. The City offered more than one-size-fits-all housing, jobs and education. They needed to identify what was working in the community and what needed work when it came to offering a variety of cultural, social and economic opportunities and develop strategies for moving forward.

Ms. Bahm stated that the Plan objectives were to encourage public participation by using a variety of engaging techniques, exploring key planning topics and providing actionable strategies for advancing the Master Plan objectives. Those items had to be a very clear part of the Master Plan document. She talked about the main chapters of housing, land use and redevelopment sites. The influencing themes were community health, age-friendly communities, sustainability of the natural environment and resources and transportation. She knew that traffic and roads were big issues. The City would be updating its Master Thoroughfare Plan later in the year, although the Master Plan update would not include talk about the roads and road capacity. It would include transportation as it related to connecting land uses and about land use policy as it related to non-motorized transportation, but not specifically about road capacity.

Mr. Kaltsounis wondered if the Plan would look at the available sites the City had left, noting that the City was pretty built out. It was one of things they looked at with the last Master Plan. He noted that some areas designated as open spaces in subdivisions were being sold off for money.

Ms. McCardell asked if there had ever been any type of collaboration with neighboring cities to do a regional Master Plan. Ms. Bahm said that there had been those types of plans, but it was difficult because each city had its own timeframe, and they had not talked about it for the proposed

Master Plan.

Mr. Hetrick referred to the slide about tension between innovation and status quo. He felt that it was as much a guiding principal as anything. Between things they were already good at and trying to change to be innovative, he could see an opportunity to create something better. He thought that it was more powerful than they were giving it credit.

Ms. Bahm agreed. The members then broke into smaller groups for about 45 minutes to talk about the chapters mentioned above, to offer some guiding thoughts for the Planning Commission and staff based on their observations and also to discuss influencing themes. The following responses were presented:

Housing:

- *Diverse housing: focus on younger residents, Baby Boomers
 - *Smaller homes*
 - *Ranch homes - one floor living*
 - *Lower maintenance*
 - *Attract college graduates back home to the City of Rochester Hills*
 - *Limit height of multiple family buildings**
- *Retrofit single family homes ("front-door" style of thinking)*
- *Mixed-use*
- *Diverse portfolio of housing choices*
- *Millennials*
- *Aging population - consider a progression of housing to promote aging in community*
- *Include housing at a variety of price points*
- *Housing that is walkable to something: goods and services and entertainment*
- *Close affordability gap*
- *Be sensitive to aging population while attracting younger generation*
- *Housing that supports younger families*
- *Build a closer relationship with Rochester*
- *Preserving character of neighborhoods, including trees, natural features*
- *Mix of housing options*
- *Encourage aging in place and also students - accessory dwellings*
- *New ideas for housing and living*

Land Use

- *Entertainment and recreation uses: skate park, waterpark, splash pad*
- *More mixed use: residential, office, commercial*
- *Drop off for autonomous vehicles*
- *Open space - land banking*
- *Be mindful of parking in residential neighborhoods*
- *Coordinate land uses in nearby communities in terms of traffic*
- *More boulevards - opportunities for green space and landscaping*
- *Landfills - increase economic viability of these properties; explore innovative financing*
- *Redevelopment of aging corridors (Auburn Road)*
- *Reducing setbacks*
- *With less land, the City needs more stories/height - pay attention to design and context*
- *Incorporate autonomous vehicles - circulation/parking*
- *Ensure flow is cohesive between developments - make everything walkable*
 - *Support young and old*

Redevelopment Sites

- *Potential around Brooklands*
- *Consider neighborhood character when planning land uses*
- *Landfill area*
- *Big box stores - reduce parking and let market define what they need*
- *Refresh tired office buildings and aging strip malls*
 - *Incentivize this redevelopment*
 - *Look to Auburn Corridor as template*
- *Incorporate placemaking and walkability into redevelopments*
 - *How to create walkability in places never intended to be walkable*
- *Encourage walkability - increase demand for walkable places*
- *New technologies and their impact on the economy*
- *What structures will be obsolete with autonomous vehicles?*
- *Obsolete commercial centers - increase density strategically and thoughtfully*
- *Increase height when appropriate; consider sun/shade, noise*
 - *Allow in heavier traffic areas (M-59)*
- *Impact of technology on retail and businesses*
- *Timeless/better architecture*
- *Less parking*
- *More green space*
- *Rehabilitate industrial buildings for residential purposes*

Other:

- *How to take redevelopment west down the Auburn Road corridor*
- *Consider where to permit higher buildings/denser development*

Influencing themes

- *Community health:*
 - *Aging population*
 - *Exercise and walkability + parks*
 - *Walkability*
 - *Resources for aging population - branch out to other age groups*
 - *Consider needs of younger families and Millennials*
 - *Promote active lifestyle - 10 minute walk to a park for everyone*
 - *Socially interact with all walks of life*

- *Age-Friendly*
 - *Density*
 - *Walkability*
 - *Mobility*
 - *Diversity of housing*
 - *Parks and entertainment - ability to get there*
 - *Age in community - lifecycle housing*

- *Sustainability*
 - *Low impact design elements: bioswales, raingardens, green roofs*
 - *Changing modes of transportation*
 - *Get people to mass transportation/other modes (Uber, Lyft)*
 - *Parks and open space near larger developments*
 - *Make City more bikable*
 - *Protect natural resources - water, etc.*
 - *Encourage development to incorporate sustainable building elements*
 - *Reduce sea of parking*
 - *Park maintenance*

- *Transportation*
 - *Hard to get to destinations on opposite sides of City*
 - *Future is autonomous vehicles - impact on infrastructure, parking*
 - *More roundabouts*

Other:

- *Ensure all codes are compatible with Master Plan and its implementation*

Mr. Arroyo asked everyone to please encourage friends, neighbors, family and colleagues to participate in the survey and direct them to the website. He noted that the public Open House would be on April 30, 2018, and he wanted people to get that word out. He added that the website would continually be updated.

Ms. Roediger thanked everyone for coming. She talked a little about the City Hall 4th grade tours where the students were also given surveys, asking about their favorite places in Rochester Hills, what they wanted to see in their neighborhoods, what they wanted to see near their school and whether they wanted to live in Rochester Hills when they grew up. She commented that some of the answers had been very amusing.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business to come before the Planning Commission and City Council.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2018 and the next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

The session was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Deborah Brnabic, Chairperson
Rochester Hills Planning Commission

Mark Tisdell, President
Rochester Hills City Council

Nicholas O. Kaltsounis, Secretary