

COHA GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2025

Featured Speakers – Mayor Dr. Theresa Rich & City Manager Gary Mekjian

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm. Board Members present: Ron Gadoth, Mark Lifter, Jennifer Janson, Ken Kendall, Jack Cooper and Julie Finn

The Mayor's Address

The first speaker was Mayor Teresa Rich. She stated her goal as mayor was to make Farmington Hills a destination. We have a population of 84,000 (104,000 in 2019) residents but up to 413,000 people enter the city each day. This is a testament to the business growth our community has attained.

As mayor, she has performed 68 weddings. She highlighted an event to be held on February 14, 2025, that will be a vow renewal contest. Information can be obtained at the city website fh.gov.

The State of the City address will take place at The Hawk in April. Residents may check the city website for additional details.

The mayor pointed out that Farmington Hills, especially along Northwestern Highway, has become a significant area for medical care. A new Kirk Gibson Center for Parkinson's Wellness will be added to the former Compuware site at Northwestern Highway and Middlebelt. The facility will feature exercise facilities, speech therapy, counseling, support groups, fall prevention, nutrition and safety classes.

The mayor also highlighted the expansion of the MIND Neurological Center on Orchard Lake Road with a new Center for Headache and Facial Pain.

An additional goal for the mayor and city council this year will be more collaboration with Farmington Public Schools.

Currently there are consultant firms studying several areas for future development. These include the Grand River Corridor between Orchard Lake Road and Inkster, the area of Orchard Lake Road and Twelve Mile, and the Costick Center. She emphasized that no decisions have been made yet regarding the Costick Center.

The mayor then gave a broad overview of the process for new projects from ideas through completion and why the process takes so long. Most importantly new ideas need to be researched thoroughly as tax payers dollars are being spent.

Public art is a Farmington Hills priority. There will be new signage at the 696 Orchard Lake Road exit.

Due to residents' concerns regarding potential for crime, noise, light pollution and concern for property values, the council has voted not to proceed with the 24/7 Sheetz gas station / convenience store / restaurant project at 12 Mile and Middlebelt.

2025 Capital Projects

The next speaker was the City Manager Gary Mekjian. He presented a 2025 Construction Projects Preview. First he noted that information on all upcoming and ongoing projects is available to residents on the city website.

He also encouraged everyone to sign up for our emergency alert system, FH ALERT. The first and most extensive area of discussion was road reconstruction. Local roads that need attention include several subdivisions including Farm Meadows, Camelot Courts and Woodcreek Hills. There are also plans to convert gravel roads and several short rehab projects and reconstructions.

Of the major roads, Halsted between 8 mile and 9 Mile, North Industrial Drive, and Sinaloa Court are slated for reconstruction. Additionally, there will be signal modernization at Halsted and 11 Mile, Halsted and 13 Mile, and Farmington at 13 Mile. These projects are quite expensive and pricing continues to climb with the increase in labor costs, materials and decrease in contractors available.

The Road Commission continues its work with plans to resurface Orchard Lake Road from 696 to 13 Mile as well as work on culverts and signal upgrades. Finally, MDOT will be working on the M5 ramps at Grand River and Halsted.

There are also plans for other infrastructure projects including water mains, storm sewers and sanitary sewer work on the Sarah Fisher site. There is a proposal to build 70 homes on this site located at 12 Mile and Inkster.

During the Q&A period, the following information was provided:

- An ordinance was passed in December 2024 preventing the further construction of new car washes, auto repair shops, and gas stations.
- Rose Senior Living will open to residents in February 2025.
- The city master plan has approved the 12 Mile Corridor for mixed use development. This will hopefully utilize the glut of office space in that area. To facilitate the entertainment piece, there were changes made to decrease the parking requirement, and to make liquor licenses less restrictive, allowing liquor to be sold in the absence of food. The City Manager cautioned that this redevelopment project will take 15-20 years to come to fruition.
- The Hunters Square project at 14 Mile and Orchard Lake Road is currently on hold. The plan was approved by the City Council but unfortunately the developer sold the property. The City Council is currently negotiating with the new owners regarding changes they have requested. Meijers is still interested in the development and Nordstrom Rack has also expressed interest. The City Manager remains confident the project will proceed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Minutes submitted by COHA secretary Julie B Finn