

CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2017
IN CITY HALL

Mayor Michael C. Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Melanie Ryska, Deputy City Clerk, gave the Invocation.

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

Also Present: Mark Vanderpool, City Manager; Marc D. Kaszubski, City Attorney; Melanie Ryska, Deputy City Clerk; Elizabeth Sierawski,; Carol Sobosky, Recording Secretary.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

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

Yes: All. The motion carried.

PRESENTATION

Mayor Taylor introduced Judge Steve Sierawski to swear in his wife, the newly-appointed Councilwoman Elizabeth Sierawski.

Judge Sierawski stated this is a proud moment for him, and added that Ms. Sierawski is compassionate, committed and intelligent. At this point in the meeting, he swore in Councilwoman Sierawski, and she took her place at her council seat.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated it has been a pleasure having known Councilwoman Sierawski on a personal level for many years. She added the Council is looking forward to working with her, and she thanked her for applying for the vacant position.

Mayor Taylor welcomed Councilwoman Sierawski, stating it has been a pleasure knowing her through the work she has done in other capacities. He stated he is proud to have her as a member of City Council.

Councilwoman Sierawski thanked the Council for appointing her to this position. She stated she is excited about it and is looking forward to working with the Council and for the citizens of Sterling Heights. She explained that she has an open mind and heart and does not come with a personal agenda, and stated she will do her best for the City of Sterling Heights.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATION

1. Visioning 2030...*From Vision to Realty*...

Mr. Vanderpool reported that each year, the City is involved with a planning process, which is one way they receive feedback from the City Council and the community. He stated that, over the last year, there were public forums to discuss the City's Master Plan, and recently, the community was involved in developing the City's *Visioning 2030 Plan*. He reviewed the statement and guiding principles for this plan and indicated that as the initiatives are highlighted throughout the presentation this evening, the City's actions are centered around the important *Visioning 2030* guiding principles. He announced that there will be seven

directors and managers who will be speaking about exciting initiatives for next year, and he stated they will take questions and comments at the end of the presentations. He explained the timing of strategic planning is important because it is the prelude to the upcoming budget process, and depending upon feedback and direction from City Council, many of the initiatives discussed will be included in the proposed Fiscal Year 2018 budget proposal.

A. Let the play begin!...Recreating Recreation is underway

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Ms. Denice Gerstenberg, City Development Director, to provide an update on ongoing progress on an important quality-of-life initiative approved by the voters last November.

Ms. Gerstenberg stated that on November 8th, 2016, the voters approved a dedicated Parks & Recreation millage approving *Recreating Recreation*, which will provide a diverse mix of recreational opportunities to city residents. She discussed the proposed projects, including a new 122,000-square-foot community center and various capital improvements valued at approximately \$45 million. The millage will continue for twenty years, but the goal is to complete all *Recreating Recreation* projects within three years. She provided an overview of the design and construction schedule, noting the first step was the hiring of the architectural firms Dorchen/Martin Associates and George J. Hartman Architects this past November. She informed that planned development for the community center will continue through Fall 2017, and bids will be solicited for a general contractor and presented to City Council for award approximately February 2018,

with the one-year construction phase anticipated to be completed by Spring 2019. She stated the projects proposed for 2017 include the Spray Ground, Skate Park, Senior Center Bocce Court, Farmer's Market Pavilion, and the upgrade of as much playground equipment as possible in neighborhood parks, as well as the sports field lighting at Baumgartner, Delia, Jaycee and Washington Square Parks. In addition, each year, site improvements will be completed in about one-third, or seven, of the City's neighborhood parks, and she outlined the typical improvements made. Ms. Gerstenberg reviewed the 2018 projects, including the kayaking/canoe livery, the dog park at Delia Park, and completion of another one-third of the neighborhood parks. In 2019, the projects include the path from Delia Park to the public nature preserve, building renovations and improvements to the nature center, athletic storage building and the existing Dodge Park Recreation Center, as well as completion of the last one-third of the neighborhood parks. She concluded by stating that the City is well on its way to implementing the *Recreating Recreation* projects approved by the voters of Sterling Heights, which will make exceptional quality-of-life in Sterling Heights a reality.

Mr. Vanderpool thanked the design team for getting the very ambitious plan implemented, and assured it will be done in the anticipated three-year time span and within the budget.

B. The unveiling...a public art initiative for Sterling Heights

Mr. Vanderpool talked about the importance of having focal points to serve as destinations for residents and visitors, and he introduced Ms. Bridget Kozlowski to discuss the plans to expand the City's public art display.

Ms. Kozlowski reviewed the details, proposed time line and vision projects related to public art. She explained this is part of the City's 2030 Visioning Plan, and this will help with future placemaking and building community gathering places in the City of Sterling Heights. She outlined the benefits of art in a community, and reviewed research by the National Arts Council that showed art has proven to attract and retain talent in an area. She reviewed the definition of art, stating that it includes sculptures, memorials, murals, integrated architectural work, landscaping work, community art, digital new art and includes performances and festivals. Ms. Kozlowski explained that when people stop to enjoy a public art amenity, attend a festival or go to a local park, they often eat, shop and spend other money in the community, so there are economic benefits as well. They have identified the goals of the program as creating a greater sense of place, advocating for public art in the community, establishing Sterling Heights as a community dedicated to the arts, and cementing Sterling Heights as one synonymous with arts and culture. They will be evaluating the art, looking at whether it is fun, whether it invites interaction, and whether it brings people together and makes them smile. The priorities of the program include taking an inventory, and assessing, repairing, reconditioning and preserving existing public art in Sterling Heights, establishing an organizational structure for selecting future

locations and criteria for public art, implementing a sustainable funding model, and establishing collaborations and partnerships that will be vital to the success of the program. Because this process will take more time and effort than the monthly meetings of the Art Commission, they intend to establish an ad hoc committee, to be known as the Public Arts Commission, with three to seven members comprised of professional artists, art teachers or those who work in the arts field. They will work together and submit their recommendation to the Arts Commission for final approval. Ms. Kozlowski explained for this program to proceed, they will need to establish a secure funding mechanism, and she reviewed the details of the proposed Public Art Fund. This would provide all residential and commercial developers with three options for contributing to the fund, and she reviewed those options, noting that there would be exceptions to the rules. She added that once established, the Public Art Fund would also provide a place for donations and grant funds. She explained that there are many communities that run successful Percent-for-Art programs, and cited some of those communities, both large and small. Ms. Kozlowski stated she met with Building officials and City management to analyze annual reports and determine what type of budget may be able to be generated based on development activity during a given year. She explained that she was conservative and considered that some developers may choose to supply their own piece of public art, they estimated the fund would generate about \$150,000 annually, and the City would then commit a General Fund match of \$75,000. If these projections are accurate,

the annual Public Art budget would be about \$225,000, with a large amount of this money going to clean, refurbish and maintain the existing public art, which has basically remained untouched since its installation. She added that she, along with others from City administration, met with leaders from the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) to take advice on this ambitious Public Art Program. She stated after funds are generated and the City is ready to move forward, they will work with Parks & Recreation, as well as Engineering, to identify the best locations for public art, and she showed some of the potential areas. She discussed the possibility of an Art Park in the future to be built on existing city-owned property, and she indicated it could be modeled after Sandy Springs Art Park in Sandy Springs, Georgia. She concluded by reviewing the anticipated timeline through early 2018.

C. Why green matters...a plan for the reforestation of Sterling Heights

Mr. Vanderpool explained that another Visioning 2030 guiding principle is well-maintained and aesthetically-pleasing roads and greenspaces, noting that trees and landscape not only beautify an area but increase the value of property. He introduced Mr. Michael Moore, Public Works Director, and Mr. Chris McLeod, City Planner, who will give a presentation on a reforestation plan.

Mr. Moore talked about the benefits of a tree canopy, including providing cleaner air, promoting physical activity, reducing stress, and enhancing a community's respiratory health. Trees soften the appearance of buildings, and can be a stimulus to economic development, attracting new business and tourism. He

added that, per research, mature trees on a residential property bring more money for the sale of that home, and trees can serve as a natural air conditioner. There are about 60 million to 200 million spaces along the City's streets where trees could be planted, and this equates to a lot of money that could be saved in energy costs. He added that trees can absorb and block sound by as much as 40%. He showed a map provided by Green Macomb and Urban Forestry partnership with local communities, showing the City's tree canopy, and reflecting where trees are a moderate priority, high priority and very high priority. He stated Macomb County is far below the regional average of tree canopies, and Sterling Heights ranks among the bottom compared to their neighbors. Mr. Moore informed that the Department of Public Works (DPW) oversees the tree program, which includes planting, pruning, removal and inventory of right-of-way trees throughout the City. He explained when dead trees are removed, their contracting company returns the following year to plant new trees in their place. He stated that the DPW annually awards to the lowest bidder to prune all the right-of-way trees in five to six square miles, which includes approximately 4,000 trees each year. He concluded his presentation with a brief video showing 18 donated trees being planted on the 17 Mile Road right-of-way, south of Utica Road, when the City teamed with Relief Michigan. He stated Mr. McLeod will detail the City's reforestation goals and policy changes to help increase funding for new tree plantings.

Mr. Chris McLeod explained that, to accomplish their reforestation goal, they will need partners such as Green Macomb, through the County, as well as SEMCOG, and he stressed it is important to implement regional policies at a local level. He discussed the goal of establishing a policy for no net loss of trees, planting programs through both public and private citizens, and promoting citizen education involved with this process. He informed the City's current tree canopy is at approximately 19%, leaving 81% of the City non-canopied, which includes buildings, roadways, parking lots and some grassy areas. Studies have shown the City's tree canopy could go as high as 55%, and although that is a lofty goal that may be unlikely, it is a goal for which to strive. The City has started with the commercial/industrial landscaping standards, and with the changes implemented last year, the City is anticipating the planting of over 750 trees based on the commercial and industrial site plans from last year alone. Mr. McLeod stated they need to look at private programs through other partners, such as Clinton River Watershed Council, the Relief Program, Macomb County Initiatives, along with the Tree City program, of which the City has been a member for over 32 years, along with the City's Arbor Day events. The City will continue to seek grants for green infrastructure. He outlined some proposed local policy changes for major roadway projects, including the dedication of 2.5% of the road construction budget to green infrastructure. With local roadway construction, the policy would be to commit to one tree per lot. Mr. McLeod outlined the implementation of residential tree policy, which states that for every tree removed

by the City, another tree gets planted. He outlined the City's cost-sharing program, where the City would provide up to \$150 per tree, and would promote the availability of trees at a reduced cost. Mr. McLeod stated if the City Council agrees with these recommended policies, a Resolution for Green Streets Resolution will be coming forward in the months ahead. He recapped some of the public planting programs, and noted that the improvements to Van Dyke incorporated these recommendations, and he showed an artist rendering of the impact these policies would have on the upcoming M-59 project. He stated implementing these policies for the residential streets for all the reasons he noted is very important for the City, and he noted the *ReCreating* Recreation Program will also provide the ability to replant in the parks as well as around the new Community Center. He emphasized the importance of leading by example. He concluded that the City has a great opportunity to provide for a green movement.

Mr. Vanderpool stated the City has made significant progress in the last couple of years with the green infrastructure, and he looks forward to presenting the Resolution for Green Streets to City Council.

D. Coming home...a 50th anniversary celebration in Sterling Heights

Mr. Vanderpool stated that in 2018, the City will celebrate its 50th anniversary of incorporation, and the Anniversary Committee has been working hard to plan the celebration. He introduced Ms. Tammy Turgeon, Library Director, to provide an overview.

Ms. Turgeon stated that she, along with the Communications Director and Assistant City Manager, held a 50th Anniversary planning meeting in September, with representatives from various boards and commissions, along with City staff and City Council members in attendance. They will meet again in March, and intend to release a schedule of activities to kick off the anniversary year starting in July 2017. They have created a logo and it will be used on banners as well as merchandise that will be sold at all city events and on the website. She outlined the marketing and social media plan, indicating there will be a special website announcing events and news related to the celebration. They will also be using social media #SterlingHeights50. They will create a Facebook event for residents to follow all the activities, and will have a cover story on the Winter 2017/2018 City magazine. They will have a press release and other outreach efforts to the media, and they will publish a brochure outlining the year's activities, made available to residents in all the City's buildings. Sterling Heights Television will also create a video to use for SHTV, social media and shown at City Council meetings. Ms. Turgeon reviewed event plans for the entire year, including a kickoff reception with the sale of merchandise and a book outlining the history of the city, Coffeehouse concert, Cultural Exchange, Community Foundation Brick Sale, Local History program, Farmer's Market, a City Celebration at Dodge Park, National Night Out, State of the City Address, Fire Department's Open House, Sterling Freights, Veteran's Day celebration, Sterling Christmas, and a culmination of the year with special activities at the last City Council meeting in

December. She noted there will be a time capsule and they will be seeking ideas from residents for contents. She stated the reasons for celebrating this important milestone. She reviewed the budget for these activities for the year, indicating some will be requested in this upcoming budget, with the remainder to be requested in the 2018/2019 budget. She stated the overall cost is project to be \$37,000, with sales of merchandise and the history book defraying some of that cost. She concluded by stating that this is an exciting time in Sterling Heights, and she looks forward to working on this great project over the next two years.

2. Innovating Living...Serving and Protecting

Mr. Vanderpool stated that in its 50-year history, Sterling Heights has earned the reputation as a safe city. He stated that the Sterling Heights Fire Department is one of only two fire departments statewide that has a superior Insurance Services Organization ranking of "2", and there are none in the state with a ranking of "1".

E. Fire Safety...A new residential self-inspection program

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Fire Chief Christopher Martin to give a presentation on a new innovative program.

Chief Martin stated their mission statement is very comprehensive, and includes their goal to reduce deaths, injuries and property loss from fires by being proactive. He stressed the Fire Department is well-trained and equipped to respond to fires, but when a fire occurs, they failed their mission because it was not prevented. The City is large, and the Fire Prevention Bureau focuses on inspecting over 4,000 businesses, but there are over 35,000 residences in the city,

and the Fire Department has very limited authority to enforce fire safety within homes. He outlined a proposed Home Self-Inspection Program, which provides all the tools for residents to make their own homes safe. He stated this information will be available at every fire station, on every fire apparatus, and it can be printed from the City's website. It includes information about smoke detectors, tips about fire safety, information about electrical appliances, and the home safety checklist. Residents can go through the checklist and look for specific issues to address, and there is information about a drawing on the bottom. He explained the drawing is to provide added incentive for residents to take part in this program, and they are working with the Chamber of Commerce to acquire gifts they can use for this raffle. He cited statistics to show why this preventative action is so important, and emphasized the importance on having working smoke detectors, clean venting in clothes dryers, as well as having an escape plan in place with a pre-determined meeting place so everyone can be accounted for. He concluded that the motto of the Sterling Heights Fire Department is "Our Family Helping Yours".

F. Building bridges...an innovative approach to community policing

Mr. Vanderpool introduced Police Chief John Berg and Community Relations Director Bridget Kozlowski to make a presentation on community policing.

Chief Berg explained they are launching a new program called CORE, which will grow their police/community relations in an exceptionally positive way starting this spring.

Ms. Kozlowski explained the CORE (Community Outreach and Engagement) Program to expand community outreach efforts was put together after analyzing and researching other model programs across the country. A digital atmosphere and constantly connected social media have created new challenges for departments.

Chief Berg stressed the reputation and professionalism of the Sterling Heights Police Department (SHPD) is one of the strongest in the region and in the state, and he outlined some of their outstanding qualities.

Ms. Kozlowski explained how crime prevention efforts can help build bridges between residents and law enforcement to work together to build safer, caring communities. She outlined the goals of the CORE program.

Chief Berg outlined the benefits to improving police/community relations for both police officers and residents.

Ms. Kozlowski used the area district map to show the City divided into six areas, and each area will be assigned a specific police officer. That officer will be their area's direct contact, advocate and regional expert. They will act as the face of the department in their specific district, giving each resident someone to call in a non-emergency. The officers will work to make more meaningful relationships in their district, but identify and report potential crime trends or neighborhood issues to their leadership in SHPD.

Chief Berg introduced the following six officers, providing a little background on them as well: Officer Robert Wojciechowski, Officer Lamar Kashat, Officer Eric LeRoux, Officer Guy Lynn, Officer Kirk Swenson, and Officer Anthony Roeske. Ms. Kozlowski stated each officer will be working to meet with residents in person and be available by email or by calling 586-446-CORE (2673). The caller can leave a message in their specific officer's mailbox, and that call will be returned within 48 to 72 business hours. She advised that links to the officers' email are available on the City's website. She stated there will be a press release this week, and each officer will be equipped with flyers about the program, along with business cards and other information to help residents learn more about the program. There will be six neighborhood meetings scheduled in the coming weeks, and they plan to meet with school leaders in each area to introduce outreach efforts and opportunities for children and teenagers to get involved. She concluded by stating she looks forward to reporting back on the success stories with Chief Berg and the outreach in the coming months.

3. Innovating Business

G. Retail Strategy Update

Mr. Vanderpool mentioned some of the economic development that has been occurring in the City, and their strong manufacturing and commercial tax base has resulted in low property taxes for residents, in addition to the high number of jobs created. He stressed commercial and retail is also important, and they have been working in these areas, including looking at strategies to reimagine the future of

Lakeside Mall. He introduced Mr. Luke Bonner, Economic Development Advisor.

Mr. Bonner talked about retail strategy for 2017 and beyond, noting that the retail market is constantly changing, with large department stores announcing massive store closings weekly. The automotive industry has recently experienced an explosive boom, leading to higher wages and more employment, thus resulting in a greater demand for services. To maintain a viable retail center, it is important to better understand the trends and opportunities retail provides, and capture that for economic opportunities. He explained this past year the City partnered with E. Smith Realty Partners, a national commercial real estate firm providing strategies, services and solutions. They are headquartered in Dallas, Texas, and have a robust capability to provide retail consumer data, enabling the City of Sterling Heights to create a more targeted retail attraction list. Mr. Bonner stated that the map shows a very highly competitive retail market, not only in Macomb County but also the surrounding areas. He reviewed the map and the information provided on it. He explained the information provided on customers, which is important to identify the right kind of retailer that fits the community. He explained the segments, or types of consumers, based on their lifestyles. He displayed a map indicating the customer profiling and market opportunities, and from that information, a “gap analysis” was prepared to determine “leakage” and surplus in the market to understand where the gaps in supply and demand exist. The “leakage” is something that this community could support, but the residents

currently drive elsewhere for these products and services. He outlined some areas of need, including specialty food and beverage, clothing, furniture, garden supply and health care. The surplus included liquor stores, gas stations, auto dealerships and fast food. He showed other communities in the country which have similar customer segmentation, and that helps to determine what businesses would fit into this community. Mr. Bonner cited some of the businesses that would be a good fit for this City based on the information gathered. He also explained they spent considerable time looking at how this all fits in with Lakeside Mall, what that development would look like if it were being developed today, and what it would look like if they were adding other types of uses to it, such as residential, institutional, community college, bank or headquarters, hotel or conference center, or other retail. He reported that they have come up with plans and have talked with many people, including attending a conference in Phoenix for the International Council of Shopping Centers, and they received a lot of good feedback. He explained that M-59 is a hot market for retail, with traffic counts of between 110,000 to 115,000 cars per day. He explained that a mortgage payment for Lakeside Mall was missed last summer, and that began discussions between the mortgagee and the servicer managing the loan; however, he stated that Lakeside is doing well, the occupancy rate is good, the operating income of the mall is good, and they have had good conversations with some groups that would be new to Michigan and have expressed a considerable amount of interest in Lakeside. He anticipated there will eventually be new ownership of the mall.

They have created the appropriate marketing materials and marketing plan, and their goal is to contact retailers, retail developers and brokers directly. He showed a sample postcard that will be sent out to target retailers.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that concludes the presentations this evening, and he thanked the managers and directors who made presentations, along with their staff. He reported that a lot of time and effort went into this, and he thanked the staff in his office for putting these presentations together.

CITIZEN COMMENT ON STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for public comments on the Strategic Planning Presentations.

Mr. Charles Jefferson – voiced concerns about the art project and cost of trees for residents; questioned whether new police station is still being considered.

Mr. Paul Smith – voiced opposition to the art project, closing of golf course, and vehicular bridge at Dodge Park.

Mr. Thomas Neil – spoke in favor of the CORE program; voiced concerns about trees near power lines and traffic.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL COMMENT ON STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATIONS

Councilman Shannon inquired as to whether Upton House can be included in the Art Initiative, considering its architecture and contents inside. He liked the idea of an Art Park and felt it will be a great addition to the City, and stated he would

like to be included if they are considering a Council representative for that committee. He agreed trees are important. He questioned whether the proposed Splash Pad and Skate Park be open for business this summer.

Ms. Gerstenberg replied they are both in the planning phase, but since the Spray Ground is the first project scheduled, they want to make sure it is available for use this summer. She anticipated that the Skate Park will possibly be open for use by Fall 2017.

Councilman Shannon inquired as to the design of the Spray Ground. He stated he would like to see a first-class development.

Ms. Gerstenberg replied it is in the design phase, and they are working with different vendors to see what is available.

Councilman Shannon thanked Chief Berg for his work on the CORE Program, and added he would also like City Council to be involved with that program. He stated he would like to be involved with his neighborhood, and that would be under Officer Wojciechowski.

Councilwoman Schmidt inquired why the dog park was moved to Delia Park.

Ms. Gerstenberg replied they felt it was a better location to have it in one of the City's major parks, and it will be further away from abutting residential homes.

Councilwoman Schmidt thought that is why the location was changed, and she is pleased they took that into consideration. She inquired as to how much the tree canopy will increase with the planting of the 750 trees resulting from the new development.

Mr. McLeod replied that every tree helps, and while 750 trees may sound like a large number, it will not make a significant dent in the tree canopy percentage.

Councilwoman Schmidt inquired as to how many trees would need to be planted to get to a 55% tree canopy.

Mr. McLeod replied it would take “thousands upon thousands” to get to 55%, but this is a long-term commitment and there is no quick fix. He stated every positive step they take moves them in the right direction. The adoption of policies that do not allow net loss of trees, in addition to requiring the planting of more trees, will get them toward their goal. He urged the Council to look at it as a positive step they can take through the adoption of the policy rather than focusing on the number of trees needed to meet their goal.

Councilwoman Schmidt recalled the Emerald Ash Borer decimating so many trees, and she is in favor of encouraging residents to replace trees. She stated the CORE Program is a great opportunity for them to be out in the communities and neighborhoods, and she stated she would love to see an opportunity for Council to be involved. She stated she would like to help in any way she can. She commended Chief Martin for his ideas on encouraging participation in the home self-inspections, and stressed more people need to be aware of what to do in emergency situations. She stated the Fire Department is very proactive and she appreciated the work the Chief and his department have put into this.

Councilwoman Koski stated she does not have questions, but she reviewed a “wish list” of items she would like to see considered in preparation of the

upcoming budget. She stated she would like to see a historical park at the location of the former Belvedere Park located west of Hayes, north of Utica Road, where there used to be a dance hall. She inquired as to whether it is city-owned, and if so, suggested it could be considered for the proposed Art Park. She asked Mr. Vanderpool to do some research for the Council. She inquired as to whether the Citizens Police and Fire Academy could be reinstated for adults. She has talked with people who enjoyed that program, and she would also like to see a Fire Academy for young adults, similar to the Police Explorers. She stated the CERT Program is doing very well, and she inquired as to whether they could hire a retired police officer to run that program. She suggested if that is a possibility, that person could also oversee the COPS Program. She stated she is in favor of citizen public safety programs. Councilwoman Koski stated she would like to see City Administration do research on the ratio of police officers to residents in the City, and would like to see a goal to get police staffing to the level where it should be, possibly by hiring one officer every two months over the next couple of years. She stated it is important to continue to offer safe neighborhoods to residents. She stated that the planting of trees is important, and she would like to see portable restroom facilities where younger children play t-ball.

Mayor Pro-Tem Ziarko thanked everyone for their presentations. She inquired as to what percentage of residents opted not to replace the trees after the removal of those trees affected by the Emerald Ash Borer.

Mr. Moore stated he did not have an answer on the number, but he offered to look into it and report his findings to the City Manager.

Mayor Pro-Tem Ziarko recalled that there were a lot of trees lost in the City's parks. She would like to see incentives given so that residents will replant trees. She inquired as to the cost for the City to replant the trees.

Mr. Moore replied the contracted cost is \$285 to \$300 per tree, and that is for a 2-1/2" caliper, salt-tolerant tree that would be planted in the road right-of-way. He stated that the City is subsidizing about \$85 to \$90 per tree when the residents opt to go through the City for their tree replacement.

Mayor Pro-Tem Ziarko inquired as to whether residents can plant their own trees.

Mr. Moore replied the City does not generally allow the residents to plant them because they are in the right-of-way, and the residents can occasionally run into problems when digging the hole to plant the tree.

Mayor Pro-Tem Ziarko inquired as to whether residents are given a break if a second replacement must be planted.

Mr. Moore replied once a replacement tree is determined to be dead, diseased or dying, the inspector will visit, and the resident may not have to pay the full amount, depending upon the circumstances. They may be able to purchase it at 50% cost.

Mayor Pro-Tem Ziarko inquired as to whether it is possible for someone to pay for a memorial tree in one of the City's parks.

Mr. Moore replied they work with Mr. Kyle Langlois, Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, and they are glad to assist residents to want to make that donation.

Mayor Pro-Tem Ziarko felt that information should be posted on the City's website. She liked the idea of the home self-inspections outlined by Chief Martin, and inquired as to whether the Fire Department offers any service to conduct these inspections for residents at a cost.

Chief Martin replied the Fire Department does not offer inspection services for residents. It is something that could be created but they would have to look at fee structures to determine what it would cost. He replied to further inquiry that there are companies that offer home inspection services and they could probably handle this type of inspection as well.

Mayor Pro-Tem Ziarko felt it is a service that the Fire Department should investigate. She stated the CORE Program is a great idea, and she was confident it will be successful. She was pleased that the City is being proactive with the possibilities for Lakeside Mall. She stressed it cannot sit empty, and she has heard of other commercial developments that have closed and remained empty for years. She inquired as to whether the City needs to do anything else now that has not been done regarding marketing Lakeside.

Mr. Bonner replied they can always do more. He stated Michigan Thrive is a statewide organization looking at incentives for major redevelopment projects. He stated they have been vocal about that and have submitted written testimony to

them. When a major mall is enhanced, expanded or remodeled, there is a considerable amount of cost and the traditional economic development tools will probably not be helpful. He stressed it is important to stay engaged, which is what they are currently doing. Mr. Bonner replied to further inquiry that he does not know the current vacancy rate for Lakeside now. He stated the overall vacancy rate in the city is 7% or 8%, which is a fairly healthy rate. He added it was at 16% at one point.

Mayor Pro-Tem Ziarko stated she would like to see an app for Dodge Park trail maps. She suggested the City look into the cost for this, and as those trails connect to other trails, possibly that could become a bigger app.

Councilman Skrzyaniarz was impressed with the type of projects presented, stating they are indicative of a city on the rise. He liked the home self-inspection program where tools can be put in the hands of the residents so they do something for their families. He was pleased with the *Re*Creating Recreation progress, and pointed out it is giving families a way to get involved outdoors and enjoy a more active lifestyle. He appreciated the hard work put into these presentations by the departments and the City Manager for promoting this. He stated trees are important for quality of life, and he stated he would like to see a turf field to be put in at Delia Park, which could be used for soccer or football. He added there is a high demand for turf fields, so he was confident it could be rented out when not in use, and he stated they are nice for long-term maintenance and consistency.

Mayor Taylor commended all directors, managers and employees who took time to put these presentations together. He stated they are always first-class and presented in a way that is helpful to the Council and residents. He added that *ReCreating Recreation* is great, and the City's 50th Anniversary will be very exciting. He liked the CORE Program, and stated the City has been blessed to have great citizens and police officers, so they have avoided many of the problems other communities have faced. He stated this is a proactive way to continue that good relationship between the police and the residents, and he is looking forward to the coming year.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Mr. Travis Paulik, owner of AZ Premier Management - commented on medical marijuana legislation.

Mr. Charles Jefferson – commented on the road conditions of 18 Mile and Mound, and 19 Mile between Hayes and Saal.

Mr. Paul Smith – voiced opposition to public comment time limits , number of petition signatures required to run for City Council, medical marijuana.

Mr. Thomas Neil – congratulated Councilwoman Sierawski; diversity and transparency; opposed to time limits on public comments.

Ms. Jazmine Early – questioned why presentations were not included in agenda materials online; liked CORE Program and would like to be involved in her area.

REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION AND CITY COUNCIL

Mr. Vanderpool responded to a citizen comment regarding the condition of the roads, explaining that Mound Road is a county road, and the cost to redo that road is estimated at \$200 million. He stated there is no money now, but they continue to spend money annually to repair it. He cautioned that the next couple of months, with the freeze-thaw cycle, will be tough on the roads.

Mr. Kaszubski stated he has nothing to report this evening.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/ NEW BUSINESS

Councilwoman Schmidt addressed a citizen comment regarding signatures on petitions, and she stated that every one of the signatures on her petitions were checked by the Clerk's Office. She commended them for the job they do.

Councilman Skrzyniarz addressed the refugee program in Sterling Heights. He stated it has received some criticism during the public comments, but he emphasized these refugees are Christians and Muslims who have had their lives threatened and have sought refuge in the United States. He explained they want a safe place to worship and live, and have not brought violence with them. He stated this community has been enhanced by these people, and they have become quickly involved in the community. He reminded that these are people who have been fleeing violence, and he was proud of what the City has done to welcome them.

Mayor Taylor addressed a public comment about a meeting that was held, and he stated it had to deal with the sewer collapse. He advised that there are eleven

communities that will be responsible for paying to fix it, and they must make sure they do everything within their power to recover costs and limit expenses. He explained that, as one of the eleven communities, Sterling Heights could be liable for tens of millions of dollars. They need to make sure their residents are protected and will continue to look for whatever avenues are available to reduce liability to their residents. Mayor Taylor congratulated Councilwoman Sierawski on her appointment to the City Council.

ADJOURN

Moved by Koski, seconded by Schmidt, to adjourn the meeting.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

MELANIE RYSKA, Deputy City Clerk