CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2019
IN CITY HALL

1. Mayor Michael C. Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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


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

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
   Moved by Koski, seconded by Ziarko, to approve the Agenda as submitted.

   Yes: All. The motion carried.

   Mayor Taylor explained that this is a Special Meeting for the City’s yearly Strategic Planning, so there will be a number of presentations from Administrators and Directors. He invited Mr. Vanderpool to start the presentations.

5. **REPORT FROM CITY MANAGER**
   There was no report from the City Manager this evening.

6. **STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATION**
   A. Innovating Human Assets
Mr. Vanderpool explained that strategic planning is very important in setting forth big-picture projects, while also serving as a prelude to the upcoming budget. He assured there will be plenty of time following the presentations for questions from City Council and others. He explained the City has been focused on solidifying their financial position over the last ten years on the heels of major restructuring due to declining revenues caused by the Great Recession. After completing the City’s 2030 Visioning Plan, it was determined there must be a focus on the City’s quality-of-life services. The community agreed, and the ReCreating Recreation initiative was approved. He reviewed some of the benefits of this investment, as well as investments in the road infrastructure and related assets that are paying dividends for the community, and he stressed it is important over the next few years that they do not lose focus on quality-of-life services and their growing infrastructure needs. He stressed they will also need to reinvest in the City’s human assets, noting the City’s success story is not possible without the continued growth and performance of their employees. He explained that, while good wages and benefits are important, providing a fulfilling, rewarding and meaningful work environment is necessary to retain employees and entice new talent to the organization. A short video was shown on the importance of investing in human assets. Assistant City Manager Jeffrey Bahorski and Human Resources and Benefits Manager Kate Baldwin were invited to give a presentation.
Mr. Bahorski stated as Human Resources Director, he believes the overall success of Sterling Heights over its fifty-year history is due in large measure to its employees, and the City’s residents rely on the dedicated, talented, productive and well-trained public employees. He explained nearly 69% of the City’s annual General Fund expenditures are dedicated to Personnel Services, and they need to ensure there is a positive return on their investment in terms of employee productivity and efficiency. He stressed that high-performance employees are essential to the City’s lean staffing model, and Sterling Heights relied on the efficiency of fewer employees performing public services at a highly-productive level. He relayed that Sterling Heights has an incredibly low ratio of full-time employees to residents, resulting in 3.6 employees for every 1,000 residents, placing the ratio well ahead of other comparable cities in Michigan, and this model cannot be sustained without highly talented, trained and motivated employees who exhibit a high level of satisfaction. He explained from a cost perspective, it is more efficient to invest in employees rather than to simply add employees. It is important for City Administration to develop and implement initiatives that attract the best talent and obtain and retain it for the long-term. He invited Ms. Kate Baldwin to review some unique and creative initiatives that have already been initiated to accomplish this goal, with more exciting programs to come.

Ms. Baldwin, Human Resources and Benefits Manager, reviewed some of the creative initiatives introduced in Sterling Heights, including the on-site Health
and Wellness Center, CareHere! It provides savings, as well as convenient benefits, and is located in the lower level of City Hall. It is a licensed medical facility, with a waiting room and four exam rooms, as well as an on-site lab and medication dispensary, and is staffed with a physician and a nurse. It serves employees, local retirees, along with their spouses and independents on the City’s health insurance plan, are eligible to be seen by the physician and/or nurse for acute illnesses such as sore throats or ear infections, or chronic care management, such as diabetes or high cholesterol. These services are at a very low cost, or free, to employees and their families. She stressed health and wellness of employees and their families is the number one goal. She outlined some of the wellness programs, including one-on-one sessions with health coaches. Incentives were offered to active employees and spouses to complete a health risk assessment (HRA), which consists of a 28-panel blood draw and a follow-up appointment with a physician to go over the results, and to-date, they have had 102 people complete their HRA. She reported the latest utilization report received from CareHere! shows they are at a 50% utilization, well exceeding what was anticipated. Over time, the City will see health insurance claims decrease with more employees using the center rather than going to their physician’s office.

Mr. Bahorski explained another benefit launched this year involving paid parental leave benefits. He stated there are numerous studies that have linked paid parental leave benefits with more positive outcomes for both the parents
and the newborn, and he explained the reasons. A short-term disability benefit has been available for the mother, but it provided only 60% of the employee’s base pay, so on August 1, 2018, a Paid Parental Leave Benefit was instituted, which provides five consecutive weeks of paid maternity leave for the birthing mother, starting from the date of birth, with a transition to the short-term disability benefit after the five weeks. He explained the second benefit is one week of paid parental bonding leave for the non-birthing or adopting parent, starting from the date of birth. Mr. Bahorski concluded that the policy has been a great success, and they are confident that over time, it will greatly enhance HR’s recruitment and retention efforts in an increasingly competitive market.

Ms. Baldwin presented information on new training initiatives that will bring value to their workforce through Sterling University, or “Sterling U.” It allows all employees of the City an opportunity to gain knowledge, interact with colleagues in different departments and develop an understanding of all of the different departments in the City, and she explained the details of the program, which runs bi-annually in the Spring and in the Fall. There are approximately sixty employees going through each session, with approximately 110 employees completing the program to-date. She added they will be inviting City Council members to the next session this Spring. She stated that once all of the employees have participated in the program, they intend to have a session annually for new hires and are looking into developing a shortened evening program for interested residents. She stressed training is important for
their employees and is key to an organization, so “Sterling U” will become an umbrella for a much larger program for their employees to take advantage of a robust training program. A short video was shown featuring Eduardo Briceno, Co-Founder and CEO of Mindset Works, who discusses how a growth mindset through training can help cultivate a learning-oriented culture. Ms. Baldwin noted that because this is so important, the City is currently vetting new training opportunities, including a program called Lean Six Sigma, to implement lean methodologies into their organization. She explained the benefits of this program, which would allow employees to become certified in Lean by Macomb Community College. Lean provides principles and practices and is aimed at maximizing customer value while improving processes, and she provided several examples where this has been implemented in other communities.

Ms. Baldwin reported another program still being considered is “The Disney Way,” a multi-day training program the City employees would participate in on learning to create a customer-centric culture that includes clearly defined values such as mutual respect and trust and leads the employees “to make customer’s dreams come true.” The program is based on Disney’s original success principles, “Dare, Dream, Believe, Do,” which is their foundation of commitment to creating customer service experiences that are second to none. She provided examples of other communities which have experienced success from this training.
Ms. Baldwin stated under the “Sterling U” umbrella, they will develop a framework of multiple learning paths an employee can take, including a one-day sabbatical in which the employee can take the day to complete a training of their choice, with their manager’s approval. The employees will also have training options through a learning management system, and leadership training will be available for supervisors, managers and directors within the City. Specialized departmental training will also be available. She concluded her presentation by stating that, in looking over the things implemented over the past year, they should all be proud of the strides they have made in these initiatives, and they have had the support of the Mayor, City Council, City Administration and their employees, and that support exemplifies how much they value their employees.

Mr. Vanderpool stated the City is fortunate to have such outstanding employees, and he is looking forward to talking much more about the new training and development opportunities in the forthcoming budget.

B. Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

Mr. Vanderpool explained that ReCreating Recreation consists of many elements, one of which includes the City’s first-ever Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, providing more options for walkers, bikers, canoers, kayakers and others who want to enjoy the great outdoors. He cited benefits from living near and having easy access to these amenities, and a short video was shown featuring the Clinton River. At the conclusion of the video, Mr. Vanderpool invited Mr. Jason Castor, City Development Director.
Mr. Castor stated his presentation will focus on non-motorized transportation options. He explained the importance of this was set forth as a guiding principle in their 2030 Visioning Plan. He outlined the benefits of non-motorized opportunities, one of those being a nine-mile stretch of the Clinton River which was recently opened for traveling and added to the Clinton River Water Trail, made possible with the $4.5 million grant funded from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This grant provided for many improvements, including water quality and connectivity along the river, restoration of the eroding riverbanks, removal of blockages, addition of a water trail stop at Dodge Park, installation of twenty-four river markers that can be referenced in case of an emergency, and the first of two EZ dock launches was installed last fall. These measures have provided residents another recreational opportunity in terms of fishing and paddling, in addition to providing the opportunity for at least one business, Clinton River Canoe and Kayak, to relocate to Sterling Heights adjacent to Rotary Park, capitalizing on this resource. He explained this business has invested a significant amount of money into purchasing and cleaning up the property, removing almost two tons of scrap metal around the property.

Mr. Castor reviewed improvements to the bike and hike trails, noting Sterling Heights has over seventeen miles of shared use trails, which are off-road trails used by both pedestrians and cyclists. They can be found along some major roadways and in many of the thirty neighborhood and major city parks. This
path system provides a five-mile path along the river, extending from Eden
Court to Van Dyke, and connecting the adjacent parks, the path totals over
eight miles. He noted that a public art piece was added along the pathway. He
indicated a new upcoming project in 2019 will be a trail connection from Van
Dyke to the path system to provide a connection from the north Van Dyke
district to the trail system. Mr. Castor reviewed improvements to the mountain
bike path, a 2.65-mile two-way single-track dirt path maintained by the Clinton
River Area Mountain Bike Association, extending from Edison Court to the Van
Dyke overpass, connecting to the asphalt path. He explained the Clinton River
Trail System connects to the eleven-mile Freedom Trail, maintained by
Macomb County, running between Harrison Township’s Lake St. Clair Metro
Park and Schoenherr Road. When combined, these trails provide over twenty-
six miles of continuous path to enjoy, and he added that Michigan’s Iron Belle
Trail is the latest addition to Michigan’s one-thousand miles of recreational
trails. The biking trail will be 774 miles, of which 64% makes up the use of
existing trails, and this will travel through Sterling Heights, entering the City at
Schoenherr and 14 Mile Road, continuing north to 16 Mile Road. There is an
optional route, but the Iron Belle Trail portion in Sterling Heights will be about
eight miles. Mr. Castor explained, as part of ReCreating Recreation, a nature trail
connecting Beaumont to Delia Park will be included in this year’s projects, and
he outlined the details.
Mr. Castor addressed the sidewalk gaps in the City, and stated they are continuing to be developed. The Complete Streets Policy, adopted by Sterling Heights in 2012 and Macomb County in 2014, has been used as a best-practices planning tool for road construction projects to ensure roadways are designed to enable safe access along and across streets. In recent years, developments and road projects have combined to fill in some of the major gaps. A slide was shown, indicating the approximately 4.75 miles of sidewalk gaps that were completed in 2012 to 2015, and he outlined the details. Approximately 4.0 miles of sidewalk gaps were completed from 2016 to 2018. He indicated the approximate 1.5 miles of miscellaneous gap completions proposed to be completed in 2019 and 2020, including Clinton River Road and Saal Road, and 19 Mile and Schoenherr.

Mr. Castor concluded that the trails and sidewalks combined provide good non-motorized alternatives, and he showed areas where gaps still need to be completed. He referred to the Innovate Mound project, which, when completed, will eliminate six miles of gaps along Mound Road. He indicated the success of these projects is tied to the plan review, design and maintenance of the departments of Engineering, Parks and Recreation and DPW.

Mr. Vanderpool stated there will be more about closing many of the sidewalk gaps in the forthcoming budget, and as Innovate Mound project enters the design phase, the plan is to close those gaps as well.

C. Safe Streets Accomplishments
   1. Roads
Mr. Vanderpool stated in 2013, the City’s Safe Streets Initiative was approved by voters and provided $3.3 million annually, or $20 million over six years, to improve neighborhood streets. It also provided $7 million annually, or $42 million over the six years, to preserve staffing levels in Police and Fire Departments. The average cost for residents for the Safe Streets Initiative equated to $157 annually, or $13 monthly, based on the average-priced home. With the need to renew this millage in November, it is important for residents to see how their tax dollars have been put to good use. He invited Mr. Brent Bashaw, City Engineer, to provide an update on local road improvements funded by the Safe Streets Initiative.

Mr. Bashaw provided an overview of the local road network and detailed how the 2013 voter-approved Safe Streets Initiative has impacted the system. He also presented what is on the horizon for the local road network. The Safe Streets proposal was put before voters in 2013 due to the vastness of the local road network and the lack of funding provided by the State to adequately maintain these neighborhood roads. He explained that 2019 marks the final year of improvements to be completed under this voter-approved millage. In 2007, the City began annually rating all 290 miles of its local road system using the PASER System, a uniform state-wide system rating roads on a scale of one to ten, based on condition. These ratings provide an asset inventory of the local road system and enables pavement management of the network. He reviewed how the neighborhood roads would currently rate if no additional funding had
been supplemented into the local road network. In 2012, the number of roads rated in poor condition totaled 11% and outweighed the number of roads in good condition, which totaled 7%. If no supplemental local road funding was applied to the system by 2018, the number of roads in poor condition was projected to total 31%, while the number of roads in good condition reduced to 5%. This is the reason the local roads were included in the Safe Streets Initiative presented to voters. Mr. Bashaw reviewed the various types of repairs, outlined the areas in which those repairs and replacements were made, showed photographs of some of those areas, and summarized that, by the end of 2019, 98 roads will have received full width concrete construction totaling 18 miles of roadway; 137 roads will have received sectional concrete replacement totaling 9.7 miles of roadway; and asphalt resurfacing will have been completed on 11 roads, totaling 4.3 miles of roadway. He stated this results in a total of 246 roads that will have received capital improvement, totaling 32 miles. The improvements, including the completion of what will be done in 2019, have resulted in the increase of good roads from 7% in 2013 to 16% in 2019. The number of roads rated in poor condition have been reduced from 11% in 2013 to 9% in 2019.

Mr. Bashaw stated that, in 2019, Sterling Heights residents will once again vote on a renewal of the Safe Streets millage. He outlined the projected improvements if this millage passes, including 110 full-road replacements, totaling approximately 22 miles and sectional repairs at 150 locations totaling
approximately 10 miles, resulting in capital improvements of approximately 260 locations totaling 32 miles. He showed some examples of what improvements could be made with the passage of the Safe Streets millage renewal, many of them in neighborhoods where some of the streets have already been improved. Mr. Bashaw presented what can be expected without a renewal of the Safe Streets millage, with similar output as to what was seen in pre-2013. The focus would go to smaller-sectional repairs to address the very worst pavement, and full road reconstructions would be minimal. Approximately sixty total work locations could be expected over a six-year period, addressing a little over five miles. A renewal of the Safe Streets Initiative would generate approximately $25.5 million of funds to be expended on capital improvements to neighborhood roads, funding approximately 80% of local road capital expenditure. It would enable another 32 miles of road improvement and continue the trend established in 2013 of improving the condition of the City’s local road network.

Mr. Vanderpool stated they are making steady progress on neighborhood roads with the Safe Street Initiative, and while there has been a lot of talk of increased road funding from Governor Whitmer, the reality is that any new funding from the State would need to be allocated to major roads and not local roads. Any increase in major road funding may take years to realize, but Safe Streets funding will ensure the City reaches their goal with neighborhood roads.
2. **Public Safety**

Mr. Vanderpool noted that, in addition to roads, Safe Streets also funds approximately fifty full-time Police Officer positions, and another twenty full-time positions in the Fire Department. He invited Police Chief Dale Dwojakowski and Fire Chief Chris Martin to talk about how Safe Street funding has been used to preserve these staffing levels while implementing a number of new programs, all of which is necessary to keep Sterling Heights among the safest communities in the nation.

Police Chief Dwojakowski explained the primary goal of Safe Streets was to maintain current levels of staffing in the public safety departments, and he stated that goal has been accomplished, exceeding expectations during the last the time of Safe Streets. Over the last four years, they have had a large turnover and have hired fifty-six officers, and they have a very diverse candidate pool. He outlined some of the programs accomplished during Safe Streets, including Smart Moves Program, which is their school program taught in all nineteen elementary schools throughout Sterling Heights, resulting in 1,500 students getting this program every year. An officer spends ten weeks in the classroom, with one-hour visits, culminating with a graduation ceremony. He indicated the program has been very well received by everyone, including kids, parents, school staff and everyone involved, and they discuss the dangers of drugs, alcohol and social media issues.

Police Chief Dwojakowski explained another program they brought back after nearly a decade is their Citizen’s Police Academy, and they just graduated four
sessions. The ten-week class informs them of everything they need to know about the Police Department, and it is very well-received. The drone program was launched last month, and he credited those involved, noting they have seven people certified through the FAA, and he cited some of the most recent uses. The Citizen Patrol Program continues to provide services to the City every day, serving as the City’s eyes and ears for the police. He acknowledged the large staff of volunteers who donated a combined total of 3,260 hours in 2018, which is $77,935 of volunteer hours back to the City. Chief Dwojakowski explained Officer Detective Lindsay Pappas will be assigned to Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, working with Michigan State Police through a Department of Justice grant. This is a program stretching across the United States, 61 agencies, 4,500 officers and the sole focus of this task force is to track down child sexual predators who use the internet. He noted they have increased their canine unit from one to three, with two brand new dogs. Their CORE Program is doing great, with a neighborhood police officer for all of the districts of the City, and they continue on a monthly basis to do CORE activities. The CERT Program is very active and they donate a lot of hours in the event the area every suffers from a mass casualty event. Another big initiative is the Sterling Heights Drug-Free Coalition, and they are running a lot of different programs such as the Narcan 101 Night, where Narcan training will be provided at the event, and they will soon be applying for a $1 million grant.
Chief Dwojakowski reviewed the staffing numbers in Sterling Heights, noting some of the eliminations of positions were due to privatization, including the running of the jail. Dispatch services were moved to Macomb County. In 2018, they gained two officers through the School Resource Officer Program, and now all three high schools in Sterling Heights have a full-time dedicated uniformed armed police officer assigned to each of those schools, with the cost of salary and benefits split between the school districts and the City. Through the creation of Federal Anti-Narcotics Team of Macomb (FANTOM), they now have another police officer. There are five participating agencies, and each will donate an officer, with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) providing three officers, with their goal of targeting large-scale drug operations in Macomb County, starting in February. By donating one officer, they get the full resource of 200 DEA agents in Detroit. He mentioned they have done all of this while maintaining their ranking as the sixth safest large city in the United States. Chief Dwojakowski broke down the number of police officers per 1,000 residents in Sterling Heights compared to other communities, with Sterling Heights at 1.1 officers per 1,000 residents. He cited the higher ratios in neighboring communities but cautioned that to get to the level of Warren, with 1.45 officers per 1,000 residents, it would require the hiring of another forty officers. He assured they use minimum manning levels, and the officers have to be kept safe, but he added the budget has to be taken into consideration as far as their staffing. Work load base models have to be taken
into consideration. He reviewed and compared the results of the Citizen Surveys, taken in 2012 and 2017, indicating the areas of concern for residents. He noted that 81% of residents felt Police and Fire performance was good, 90% of residents felt current staff levels are important, 93% of residents felt response time is important, and 92% of residents felt feeling safe is very important. The number one thing the majority of the surveys reflected was they want more police visibility in the neighborhoods, and he pointed out they are at full staff at this time. He concluded his presentation by indicating the Police Department’s next step is to plan for the upcoming Safe Streets Millage in November, and they will be hiring a consultant to look at the department from top to bottom to establish a needs assessment and recommendation for staffing and deployment will be delivered to Administration by the end of the year.

Mr. Vanderpool felt Sterling Heights has one of the best Police Departments across the state and country, noting it is in large part due to the funding they receive from Safe Streets. He invited Fire Chief Chris Martin to discuss how Safe Streets Funding has benefited the Fire Department.

Fire Chief Martin outlined some of the key areas of success the Fire Department has experienced since Safe Streets was approved. He stressed their success is not by accident but a result of geographically-placed apparatus and staffing that provides response to emergencies in a timely manner. The saving of lives is a clear sign of a successful fire department and EMS system, and they have
had sixteen Survival Coin recipients, and he anticipated they would have had thirty recipients if the Survival Coin started when the Safe Streets Initiative took effect. He noted the chances of surviving a heart attack are greater in Sterling Heights than in most other places in the country, and the University of Michigan is studying what they do in Sterling Heights to have such a great success. He referred to “Door to Balloon Time,” which is from the time the patient enters the door of the hospital through the time they have the heart blockage eliminated, and he attributed the quick response and transport, which he felt is a clear response to the Safe Streets Initiative.

Chief Martin explained over the past few years, Sterling Heights has faced several major fires, including two of the largest in the City’s history. He credited the help of the neighboring communities through their robust Mutual Aid, the work done in the first moments of these events and responding effort of the Sterling Heights firefighters had the most impact, having been able to greatly reduce the damage from some major fires by their quick actions. He cited specific fires to which the City responded, emphasizing how important staffing is when responding to emergencies.

Chief Martin stated that, in 2016, the City of Sterling Heights saw a significant reduction in its ISO rating, placing it among only two other departments in the State with that rating. Staffing level and ability to respond to fires in an acceptable time is the most important.
Chief Martin stated that, in 2017, the Sterling Heights Fire Department took over the medical transportation of the sick and injured in the City to area hospitals, which allowed for fifteen new firefighters to be on the streets at no additional cost to taxpayers. After fourteen months of this program, he stated it has been a huge success, and would not have been possible without the Safe Streets millage. He concluded by stressing those are just a few examples of how important the Safe Street millage is to the service the Sterling Heights Fire Department provides.

Mr. Vanderpool noted the Safe Street funding is not only important for road improvement, but also to public safety, and he indicated there will be much more to come about the Safe Streets millage in the ensuing months.

D. 2020 Census Update

Mr. Vanderpool stated Sterling Heights is in the enviable position to be one of the only large cities in the State still growing in population, due to expanding residential developments and innovative economic development programs enticing businesses to grow, which results in a robust job market. He added that innovative programs, such as ReCreating Recreation, also is helping to retain existing families and attract new families, as well as individuals and senior citizens. He invited Clerk Melanie Ryska to provide an update on the important effort and plan this year for preparing the community for the 2020 Census count. He was confident the count will validate the impressive growth experienced by the City over the past ten years.
Clerk Ryska reviewed information on the upcoming 2020 Census. She provided a brief history of the census, which is a decennial count of all people in the United States, as mandated by Article 1, Section 2 of the United States Constitution. Population, rather than wealth or land, was selected by the framers of the Constitution to be the basis for sharing political power. The first census was conducted in 1790 and is conducted every ten years. The number of representatives went from 65 to its current 435 members, which was capped, but the number of people represented continues to expand. The 2010 Census reflected the population of Sterling Heights as having 129,699 people. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the City’s population to be 132,631 as of 2017, a growth of more than 2%. With this type of growth and continued expansion, Sterling Heights is on track to becoming the third largest city in the State by 2020.

Clerk Ryska reviewed the reasons why the census is important, including the fact that an accurate census shapes the political landscape of the country, state and county, which directly affects the community. It is anticipated with the slow growth in the State of Michigan, the next census will result in the State losing one representative from the House of Representatives. Another important purpose for the census is correct allocation of funding. The Census Bureau reports that more than $675 billion is distributed to states and communities to fund essential federal and non-federal programs, such as infrastructure, housing, transportation, education and health care. Accurate
data enables state and local officials to determine the need for current and future programs. Census undercounts can have a dramatic affect in the amount of federal funding received by the states, and a 1% undercount equated to a loss of more than $94 million in grant programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Resources due to missed persons in the 2010 Census, or a loss of approximately $954 per person not counted.

Clerk Ryska explained the steps taken by the Census Bureau in preparation for the 2020 Census. In early 2018, the City participated in the Local Update of Census Address Operation (LUCA). Participation in this program assures all new residential developments in the City are identified as “households” so the Bureau will ensure there is a count for each of those addresses. In March 2018, the Census Bureau delivered its questions to Congress for approval, and later in 2018, the Bureau opened six regional offices and forty area census offices. In 2019, partnerships will launch across the country, and Volunteer Complete Count Committees will be established. An additional 250 area census offices will open. In early 2020, a final marketing push will go out through strategic efforts and partnerships to make sure every resident completes the census questionnaire, with a census date of April 1, 2020. She explained people will be able to respond to the census online, which is new for this census, as opposed to the traditional mail-in method. The Bureau will compare the questionnaire to the census address database, and those addresses without a submittal will require an in-person follow up. Census staffers will be in the community
knocking on doors, and the final apportionment counts must be submitted to the President by December 31, 2020, and redistricting counts will be sent to the States by March 2021. She indicated in March 2018, Sterling Heights committee to establishing a Complete Count Committee, which is a volunteer committee dedicated to increasing awareness and motivating residents to respond to the 2020 Census, and this committee will serve as a local census ambassador that will play an integral part to ensure a complete and accurate count of this community, partnering with local community organizations, schools, religions institutions, businesses and media to promote the 2020 Census. It is mandatory for residents to respond to the census, there are concerns of privacy and acknowledgement of immigration statuses. She stressed community education will be vital in assuring that the information collected will purely be used for informational and funding purposes only. She concluded her presentation by stating that this will be a busy year as they embark on a city-wide effort to count all residents of the City of Sterling Heights, regardless of gender, age or status. She urged everyone to complete their census questionnaires.

E. Summary and Conclusion
Mr. Vanderpool summarized that the theme over the next year will be “Sustaining Excellence and Continuous Improvement”, or “Innovating Living”, and he indicated that concludes tonight’s presentations, adding they are willing to answer questions or address any ideas that were not covered.

7. CITIZEN COMMENTS ON STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATIONS
Mayor Taylor opened the floor to the public.
There were no comments from the audience.

8. MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS ON STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATIONS
Councilman Yanez referred to the new health clinic for the City employees and their families, and he questioned what they are doing to help with the mental health care of their employees.

Mr. Bahorski replied it is a very important topic, and in working with Chief Martin and Chief Dwojakowski, they have taken great strides related to stress-related illnesses for their first responders. He has observed more PTSD job-related stress arising in that industry over the last five years, so they have responded to that, working with the union and providing a counseling session and continuing care, if necessary. The employees’ health care coverage is robust, so they can use their private coverage. He added all they have to do is reach out, although there is often a “code of silence” because they do not want to admit they need help.

Councilman Yanez understood they are providing mental health treatment, but he inquired as to whether they are doing anything or planning on anything preventative in terms of education or outreach. He emphasized it is not only first responders, but there will be other employees suffering from stress in their work and in their private lives. He pointed out alcohol has been a problem for many years, and they are now seeing an opioid crisis. He felt it would be beneficial to make an investment in employees regarding their mental health,
and he hoped the City will look at programs that will be proactive in preventative mental health care.

Councilwoman Koski commended Mr. Vanderpool and the department heads for great presentations this evening. She liked what they are doing for employees, including “Sterling U” and the Lean Principle. She noted they have tried to prepare the new generation coming in for management, and their directors are doing an excellent job. She questioned whether they are still going forward with educational reimbursement and whether they are still going forward with a succession plan.

Mr. Vanderpool replied they have spent a lot of time in the area of succession planning for the organization, and he thanked the Council for their support of this plan, which has worked very well. He pointed out they are hiring people who are sitting side-by-side for six months to a year with the person they will be replacing, and that is an excellent way to learn. He thanked the Mayor and City Council for allowing them to implement that succession plan, even though it has cost the City hundreds of thousands of dollars to implement, but it has resulted in seamless transitions throughout the organization. He agreed they need to focus on the younger generation and prepare them for leadership position, which is one reason they are creating a plethora of training options under “Sterling U,” including technical training and the one-day sabbatical. He replied to inquiry that the Tuition Reimbursement Program has been a big part of their nurturing of the development of employees, and many of them have
taken advantage of it, including some who have taken advantage of obtaining a graduate degree.

Councilwoman Koski questioned whether employees of the various departments are consulted when those departments are going through renovations.

Mr. Bahorski replied they have had a very extensive outreach by City Administration, and he believed every building being touched, with the exception of the Court by reason of the nature of the work being done, has completed a needs assessment analysis. A consultant has come in and held a focus group with the employees because they know best how their department functions. He stated that has been completed, and on Thursday, they will be opening an RFP for a Construction Manager, and they hope to have renovations underway later this year. He assured there is quite a bit of outreach at each of the facilities.

Mr. Vanderpool stated they are looking at the DPW renovation project as well, and he is aware the Director has been very engaging with the employees, so their feedback has been laid out and taken into consideration.

Councilwoman Koski is glad Mr. Vanderpool brought up the DPW building. She suggested that, with the new building, they need a gun range, pointing out they are at maximum staffing levels. She felt their officers should have the opportunity to become a “one-shot officer” and they need practice to do so. She felt this would also save on ammunition.
Mr. Vanderpool recalled Councilwoman Koski had mentioned to him before her suggestion about the gun range at that location. He has discussed it with the Police Chief and there are a number of logistical, physical and practical challenges, although he assured that does not mean they can look at closer to determine whether it is an option at that location or elsewhere. He stated he will report back to City Council with some ideas for how they may be able to improve gun range capabilities. He informed they currently share a gun range with the City of Troy, and they have access to Macomb County’s gun range. He assured he understands Councilwoman Koski’s interest and concern.

Councilwoman Koski was thankful that the sidewalk gap at Clinton River and Saal Roads is going to be done this year. She questioned whether there are any plans to pursue the enlargement of Donovan Park to provide for parking so parents and their children will not have to cross Clinton River Road for baseball practice. She added she would like to see the Fire Department’s Squad One put into service and felt it is time to have five squads. She asked if the Fire Chief would consider having a Fire Fighters Explorer group, similar to the Police Explorers, because she felt it is important to work with the youngsters in the community to select their employees of the future. She stated she is looking forward to working on the Safe Street millage.

Councilwoman Schmidt thanked all of the presenters this evening on their fantastic job. She questioned whether human trafficking is talked about at all in the Smart Moves program.
Police Chief Dwojakowski assured they try to have age-appropriate information in the program, and since these are fifth- and sixth-graders, the topic of human trafficking is a delicate topic, but he assured they do talk about social media, the fact that the internet is usually the first step, and the predators who will use tricks to get children to send pictures, which can turn into blackmail and more pictures. He explained they talk about people who have been arrested for this, and they definitely talk about the dangers involved in social media.

Councilwoman Schmidt wanted to make sure they are covering this in some way. She realized it is tough because some fifth graders are very advanced, while others still play house at home with baby dolls, but she felt kids need to understand there are “bad people out there.” She is glad they have the program in the schools. She questioned whether they have paper leaflets showing the bike/hike path, possibly in weather-proof containers in Dodge Park. She questioned whether there is a place where people can pick up a copy of the path map.

Mr. Castor replied maps of the entire Clinton River Trail System are available at the Parks and Recreation Building and at the Senior Center.

Councilwoman Schmidt questioned whether it would be possible to make those maps more accessible in the library and possibly in Dodge Park.

Mr. Vanderpool felt that is an excellent idea, and he was confident they could do a better job of getting those maps updated and out to the public. He felt they could come up with some creative weather-proof kiosks they could
employ throughout the path system and do a better job of marketing that
great asset. He assured they will be glad to follow up on it.

Councilwoman Schmidt stated she and her daughter are anxious to get their
kayaks in the water this summer. She requested they look into the ordinance as
far as addressing unpermitted temporary structures, based on their size or lack
of size. She expressed concern about them being unsightly and/or unsafe, and
felt there needs to be some restrictions, especially with the possibility of
people growing their marijuana plants. She is in favor of the Safe Streets
millage renewal, noting if it does not pass, they are looking at only 5.3 miles of
roads being repaired rather than 32 miles, which is a huge difference. She
stressed the Safe Streets millage also pays for fifty full-time police officers and
twenty full-time fire positions. She questioned what happens to the Fire
Department’s transport if the millage does not pass. She emphasized it is
important to make the residents understand they need this millage to maintain
their safe city and the services they have. She stated she was extremely grateful
the residents passed it six years ago and will be extremely grateful if they pass
it again.

Councilman Radtke felt they should have a conversation about updating the
recycling program. Recycling should be put in every home so the drop-off
recycling centers can be closed. The DPW has made it a point to tell him the
recycling centers are unsightly and attract rodents and vermin, it is not the
aesthetic image that Sterling Heights should project. Also, he has had residents
ask why they have to pay for recycling, this should be a provided service similar to other communities of comparable size. He raised the question of creating a public/private mural partnership program, where public art could be brought into the community on a lot of blank walls. Business owners could have an opportunity to lease their walls to the City and have input on potential murals, possibly paying for a large portion of the paint and the artist’s fee. The City has done a tremendous job filling the sidewalk gaps, especially on major streets. He stressed they should also be getting into some older neighborhoods as well.

Councilman Radtke stated the Innovating Human Assets was wonderful, adding they are going out of their way to help and strengthen their employees. He commended Mr. Bahorski and Ms. Baldwin for the work they are doing. He would like to see a program to encourage employees, especially public safety employees, to live in the City. This will be a contractual issue and if employees already have a home established somewhere else, they will not be as likely to move into the City, but with all of the new hires, if they can provide an incentive for them to live in this City, it will strengthen their public safety.

Councilman Radtke stated, along with the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, he would like to see a Reforestation, or Tree Plan. That is a part of the zoning review that will be upcoming, but he felt it is a goal they should have, especially since a lot of trees were lost over the years to disease. He agreed with Councilwoman Schmidt about trail maps being available in the parks, and even information on the canoe/kayak options. He felt that better marketing would
let people know how to use it. He requested, if there is no objection, that the City bring forward a new Fireworks Ordinance before the Council. A new law was passed last year that allows further limitation of fireworks by the City, especially the days and times of use.

Mayor Taylor referred this to Mr. Vanderpool upon seeing no objection from Council.

Councilman Radtke felt the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan enforces why they should go forward with the 15-1/2 Mile linear park plan for along the County-owned Sterling Relief Drain. He felt that would afford a wonderful connection to the City’s parks. He commented that Sterling Heights is becoming a destination location for outdoor activities, parks, public art and amenities that not every suburb has. He agreed with his colleagues that the Safe Streets millage renewal needs to be passed, noting he has advocated how the City needs more police and firefighters. He also felt they need a lengthen the renewal period, possibly every ten years at minimum, rather than six years. He felt without it, the City’s public safety and streets would be decimated. He felt the jail should be brought back in-house and should not be contracted out.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated that this is her favorite meeting of the year, partly because it is a presentation of possibilities, looking at not only what they have done but where they want to go. She agreed the City needs to invest in the employees’ training as well as their benefits so they can retain talent. She recalled it was hurtful back in 2008 when the City had to start eliminating some
of the programs for their employees because there was no money. The employees were making less and working more, so she is glad they are turning part-time positions into full-time positions, and she felt the benefits added have proven to be beneficial, especially the parental leave benefits. She commented the goal should be that everyone working here loves their jobs, and that the people feel they are working in one of the best cities in the State. She questioned whether there has been any more discussions about partnering with another community in sharing the cost of the clinic.

Ms. Baldwin replied they have had no formal discussion to date; however, she stated the HR Director from Shelby Township is coming to look at the clinic next week, so there is some interest as they have gotten momentum with their center, and they are currently navigating.

Councilwoman Ziarko indicated the clinic could possibly be open more hours if they had more people involved, and that would also cut the cost. She thanked Ms. Baldwin for talking with Shelby Township’s HR Director. She felt it is important to start working on the Safe Streets millage renewal and communicate to residents the importance of the passage of this millage. She questioned whether a “reverse projection” showing the taxes people paid in 2007 or 2008 and compare it to the taxes they are paying now could be made available on the website. It would reflect that most people are paying less now in taxes, even with the ReCreating Recreation millage and the renewal of the Safe Streets millage. Councilwoman Ziarko would like to see the City work on
an app for the parks and trails, including the Clinton River and the markers along the river. She would like to see a cost to develop an app, so those using the trails can look at the app on their phone rather than a paper map. She would like to see the City look into using beet juice as a treatment for winter road conditions rather than salt. She recalled she raised this question of beet juice about ten years ago because it was used in the northern communities, but Ferndale is now using it to take care of their roads. She explained it is a by-product of making beet sugar, so it is beneficial and seems to be able to keep the snow from sticking as fast if it is applied prior to a snow event. She would like a study done to show the actual cost and whether they would be saving money using this as opposed to salt, especially since it is good for the environment. She thanked all who had a part in the presentations, as well as those who took part in the preparation of those presentations.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski thanked all of the department heads and their employees on the wonderful presentations this evening, providing a lot of good information. She liked the term “strengthening human assets” because if they do not have happy employees, they will not have a good customer-based center of City Hall. She stated she loves the non-motorized activities they have increased from the 2030 Visioning Plan, adding she uses almost all of them. She is pleased with the water quality of the Clinton River, noting it is a healthy non-polluted river with fish. She agreed with Councilwoman Ziarko that they need an app for the trail maps, which would be an excellent amenity for all residents
and requested the City Manager to look into that possibility. She also agreed with Councilwoman Ziarko on the suggestion of using beet juice for the roads in the winter months, noting it does not pollute the area and destroy the environment like the effects salt can have. She agreed with Councilwoman Koski that the Fire Department’s ALS units needs to be increased by one unit. Mayor Taylor thanked the Administration, Directors and all who presented and helped to prepare the presentations tonight, and he thanked the Council for their comments. He referred to Councilman Yanez’s concerns about mental health treatment for employees and felt they can take that a step further to look at mental health in the community. He recently attended a conference and heard from experts in the field about what they need to be doing to address this like a public health crisis “bubbling under the surface.” He stated they can look at any number of problems, including homelessness, crime, being unproductive at work, divorce, problems at home or school, and they almost all relate back to mental health, so it touches almost everyone. He suggested they get their workforce trained to recognize mental health crisis in their coworkers and to have the training to be able to step in when someone needs extra help. He stressed they are trying to make residents’ lives better in Sterling Heights, and if 20% of their residents, or 1 out of 5, are suffering from mental illness, it is a major issue and time to address it. He felt they need to engage stakeholders and change the stigma of mental illness, and make sure
their police officers are trained to recognize the mental illness symptoms in
residents so that help can be provided to them.
Mayor Taylor stated with the extreme cold weather coming, they have
mobilized the Senior Center as a warming center and a location for MCREST to
provide services, and many of those who need these services are struggling
with mental illness. He questioned why they do not mobilize doctors from
Henry Ford Macomb or Beaumont and get services to these shelters because
these are the people at risk. They need to identify where these people are who
need the services and then get the services to them. He commented that
people love pets, and they possibly need to look at ways to make the City more
pet-friendly.
Mayor Taylor stated he would like to see a ten-year renewal for Safe Streets
millage because it is something critical to their organization. He does not like to
look at what will happen if they do not pass Safe Streets, but he prefers to look
at what will happen when they do pass Safe Streets, including having great
streets, and continuing to provide the City with great police and fire
departments, maintaining a low ISO rating. They will continue to provide the
wonderful service because Safe Streets is successful, and they have a six-year
success story to prove it. He stressed he is going to start talking more about the
2020 Census coming up, noting the City has a very high immigrant population,
and they feel very much at risk. Immigrants have privacy concerns and
concerns of providing information, so as a community, they need to work with
the number of organizations that will help to make sure they have a complete and accurate count of everyone living in the City of Sterling Heights, so that the federal dollars and state dollars they receive is as high as absolutely possible. He felt the City is on a great path for the future, and they have hard-working dedicated people who are increasing the quality of life for residents in Sterling Heights. He appreciated their service to the community.

9. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS**
   There were no comments from citizens.

10. **REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION AND CITY COUNCIL**
    Mr. Vanderpool stated he had nothing further to report.

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

11. **ADJOURN**
    Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Schmidt, to adjourn the meeting.

    Yes: All. The motion carried.

    The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

    __________________________________________

    MELANIE D. RYSKA, City Clerk