

CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022
IN CITY HALL

1. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Mayor Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Melanie D. Ryska, City Clerk, gave the Invocation.
3. Council Members present at roll call: Deanna Koski, Michael V. Radtke, Jr., Maria G. Schmidt, Liz Sierawski, Michael C. Taylor, Henry Yanez, Barbara A. Ziarko.

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, **RESOLVED**, to approve the agenda as presented.

Yes: All. The motion carried.
5. **REPORT FROM CITY MANAGER**
Mr. Vanderpool introduced Daniel P. Gilmartin, Executive Director and CEO of the Michigan Municipal League, who would like to address City Council this evening to talk about what is going on at the League, and also to address a Council member.

Michigan Municipal League's (MML) Executive Director and CEO Daniel P. Gilmartin congratulated City Council on their recent election. He stressed it is great to see communities that are doing well and are well-run, investing in the City's residents and infrastructure, and making their community a great place to be. He noted the goal of the MML is to help improve the human experience in a

community. He thanked the City for being so engaged with MML, not only so they can do great work in their own community but to reach out to other communities. He congratulated Councilwoman Ziarko, who was recently chosen as the President of the Michigan Municipal League, adding that there are 533 cities and villages across the state, and the elected boards and officials are all working to make those places better. He felt that the fact Councilwoman Ziarko was chosen to lead the Board of Trustees and the organization for the next year speaks highly of Sterling Heights as well as Councilwoman Ziarko and the great work she has done. He added she brings a quiet confidence and has the respect of her fellow board members across the State. He once again thanked the City and added that he looks forward to working with the City in the years to come.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that, on behalf of City Administration, they would like to congratulate Councilwoman Ziarko as she proceeds in her position as President of the MML for her term. He stated that concludes his report this evening.

6. PRESENTATIONS

A. Mayor Taylor stated this is to acknowledge and thank Meijer and Warthogs MC Southern Macomb Chapter for generous monetary donations to the Sterling Heights Police Department and Honor Guard, respectively. He invited Chief of Police Dale Dwojakowski and Lieutenant David Allen to give the presentation.

Lieutenant David Allen stated they would like to acknowledge a few businesses and groups that have contributed greatly to the Sterling Heights Police Department and several of the functions they have hosted throughout the years. He noted he has had the opportunity over the years to work with several different

agencies, but he would like to pay special note to two this evening: Meijer and Warthogs MC Southern Macomb Chapter.

Lieutenant Allen introduced Justin O'Neal, Store Director for Meijer, and Carol Sobolewski, Retail Administrator. He stated that Meijer is the epitome of giving back to the community, adding that over the years when he has reached out, they have always been willing to help with no questions asked. He cited some of the examples, including the Law Enforcement Torch Run, where Meijer has donated not only food and supplies, but they also donated money for the Special Olympics on the teams they have. In 2020, a local family with kids aged 23, 19 and 12, lost both of their parents just before the holidays due to Covid, and Meijer donated decorations for the inside and outside of the house. They donated a bicycle to a young man whose bike was stolen when he was working at a local Tim Horton's. Lieutenant Allen explained they recently held a Golden Ticket raffle, where twenty families in need were included, tickets were given to several different bureaus in the department, and officers got to pick some of those needy families. The Chief picked a grand prize winner out of a hat, and one of the winners received a grand prize made up of donations collected from businesses in the community. Nineteen of the families received gift cards, and Meijer was a key business in those donations. On behalf of the Police Department and the City of Sterling Heights, Lieutenant Allen thanked Meijer for their "give-back" to the community, and he stated they look forward to working with Meijer for years to come. He read and presented a plaque to Meijer as a token of their appreciation.

Lieutenant Allen introduced Southern Macomb Warthogs Chapter President Nick Chakur, Vice-President Dave Bonacorsi, Sergeant-At-Arms Keith Gurney, and several members who were also in attendance this evening. He explained the Southern Macomb Warthogs is part of an international organization, with chapters in the United States, Canada, and Norway. They are mainly comprised of police officers and firefighters, and their main goal is to raise money to help fellow officers and firefighters in times of need. They are involved with numerous fundraisers throughout the year and help underprivileged families with gifts and food during the holidays, similar to "Shop With A Cop." Lieutenant Allen thanked them for their generous donation of \$5,000 last spring to the Sterling Heights Police Department Honor Guard, as well as their donations to six additional police and fire organizations last year for the same amount. He added they intend to donate again this year to different police and fire agencies in the area. He clarified this donation goes directly to their Honor Guard Unit, helping to provide for uniform maintenance and equipment, and allows officers to participate in the National Officers Memorial Week in Washington, D.C. every year, paying homage to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. He noted that, due to Covid, their Honor Guard Unit has had to postpone several annual fundraisers, but still incurring costs, so the donation made by the Southern Macomb Warthogs has allowed them to continue to maintain their level of excellence and honor the fallen and their families. Lieutenant Allen read and

presented a plaque to the Southern Macomb Warthogs as a token of their appreciation.

Mayor Taylor expressed appreciation to both Meijer and the Southern Macomb Warthogs for being partners in this community, for the work they do and for their generous donation, helping to make it the great community that it is. He stressed the Police Department and Honor Guard do incredible work, and the community is blessed to have them.

Moved by Radtke, seconded by Taylor, **RESOLVED**, to acknowledge and thank:

1. Meijer for the generous donation of \$1,000 in gift cards to the Police Department's Golden Ticket holiday program; and,
2. Warthogs MC Southern Macomb Chapter for the generous monetary donation of \$5,000 to the Sterling Heights Police Honor Guard.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

B. Mayor Taylor stated this is the swearing-in ceremony for new Sterling Heights Police Officers. He invited Police Chief Dale Dwojakowski to give the presentation and swear in the officers.

Police Chief Dale Dwojakowski stated he is proud and excited to swear in four new recruits, and he noted there were one hundred applicants, which he claimed is the best hiring list anywhere in southeast Michigan. He emphasized that speaks volumes for the City and the Police Department, and it means they are getting the best applicants. He added that all four recruits came from other police departments. He introduced James Michael Bryant, Justin Michael Porter, Corey Christopher Chase, and Jack Michael Currie, and provided a brief background on each one, noting that Officer Bryant was a deputy at the Macomb County Sheriff's

Department and former dispatcher for the Sterling Heights Police Department; Officer Porter was a reserve deputy in the Marine Division and former dispatcher for Sterling Heights; Officer Chase came from the City of Utica; and Officer Currie was a deputy in the Macomb County Sheriff's Department.

Chief Dwojakowski swore in the four officers, and each of them took a moment to thank the City for this opportunity, and to thank their families for their support.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski congratulated the officers and thanked them for their willingness to protect and serve the residents of Sterling Heights. She also thanked their families, noting she has a son who is a military police officer, so she understands what they are going through.

Councilman Radtke congratulated the newly-sworn officers, adding they are taking on a life of public service, and while a lot will be expected of them, they will gain a lot from working in such a diverse and welcoming community that supports the police.

Councilwoman Ziarko welcomed the new officers, and she looks forward to all of them serving the residents of Sterling Heights.

Mayor Taylor welcomed the new officers and referred to one of their comments about making their family proud, pointing out they will have the opportunity to make about 134,000 residents and another 60,000 people who work here proud as well. He commented that their Police Department has the reputation of being a "destination" department, and the new officers have the responsibility to maintain that reputation and legacy for those who come after them. He stressed

they have confidence in the new officers, and he thanked them for taking on this responsibility, adding the City will provide them with everything they need to make sure their job is as safe as possible.

The meeting recessed at 7:21 p.m. and reconvened at 7:22 p.m.

7. **ORDINANCE ADOPTIONS**

A. Mayor Taylor stated this is to adopt an ordinance to amend Chapter 25 of the City Code by adding Article 1 to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations.

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for public comments.

- Jon Matthews – felt this allows equal opportunity for all people; lets people feel they are empowered to make the most out of their lives; urged Council to consider and adopt this tonight.
- Benjamin Orjada – thanked Council for taking up this proposal and treating it seriously; appreciative of Sterling Heights being at the forefront in defending its LGBTQ citizens and giving them the protection they deserve and need; urged Council to adopt this tonight.
- Ken Nelson – opposed to the proposed amendment; needs to go to the voters; 8,000 residents opposed this ordinance in 2014; urged Council to look at gender dysphoria; concerned about how this will affect public restroom; felt Council needs to look at this amendment much closer.

Moved by Radtke, seconded by Sierawski, **RESOLVED**, to adopt the ordinance amending Chapter 25 of the City Code by adding Article 1 to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations.

Councilman Radtke stated this has been a long time coming back, and he is proud to support this ordinance. He claimed statistics show that transgender people are more likely to be beaten up in public restrooms than to be the perpetrators of crime in those restrooms. He reiterated he is happy to see this pass.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski felt that by adopting this ordinance amendment, they are doing what is right to support all residents.

Mayor Taylor felt seven years has made quite a difference, and he thanked the speakers who voiced their opinions. He referred to Mr. Nelson's comment about not being the only one in opposition, but he pointed out that Mr. Nelson was the only one who came up to speak against equal protection and equal rights for people who are in a vulnerable class. He stated he is proud they will be passing this and felt it is long overdue. He addressed the LGBTQ community to let them know the City is doing everything they can to be as inclusive, welcoming, and open to every person regardless of their background, nationality, abilities/disabilities, who they love, color of their skin, and who they worship. He stressed he is proud of the City for "walking the walk" and not just "talking the talk."

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Mayor Taylor stated he has to leave the meeting to catch a flight tonight for a conference he is attending, so they will take a short recess, and Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski will take over the meeting.

The meeting recessed at 7:32 p.m. and reconvened at 7:36 p.m.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski stated this item is consideration of the Consent Agenda.

She opened the floor for public comments.

- Ken Nelson – felt Item 8-G should not be included in Consent Agenda; would like further information even though he pulled up all of the back-up information provided in the agenda package.

Moved by Koski, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- A. To approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 4, 2022.
- B. To approve payment of the bills as presented: General Fund - \$1,316,834.97, Water & Sewer Fund - \$89,248.78, Other Funds - \$2,488,047.84, Total Checks - \$3,894,131.59.
- C. **RESOLVED**,
 - 1. To purchase one (1) 2021 Dodge Durango GT AWD motor vehicle from LaFontaine CDJR-Lansing, 6131 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing, MI 48911, at pricing available through a State of Michigan MiDeal cooperative purchasing contract, #071B7700183, in the cumulative amount of \$41,666; and
 - 2. To approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$41,666 using Capital Fund Reserves.
- D. **RESOLVED**,
 - 1. To purchase four (4) Sofia 2 Analyzers, five hundred forty-five (545) Sofia SARS Antigen and one hundred ninety-six (196) Sofia Flu A, Flu B, and SARS Antigen testing cartridges from McKesson Medical Surgical, Inc. at a total cost of \$14,205; and
 - 2. Authorize a budget amendment from the General Fund Reserves in the amount of \$14,205.
- E. **RESOLVED**, to approve the purchase of maintenance, repair, operating supplies, and library materials from Amazon Services, LLC, 325 9th Avenue N., Seattle, WA 98109, at pricing available through U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance cooperative purchasing contract #R-TC-17006, through January 18, 2024, and any extension of the contract term by exercise of the option to extend two (2) additional two-year periods.
- F. **RESOLVED**, to approve the cost sharing agreement for asphalt resurfacing of Metropolitan Parkway, from Ryan Road to Dequindre Road, subject to approval by the Macomb County Department of Roads and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the agreement on behalf of the City of Sterling Heights.
- G. **RESOLVED**, to approve the Agreement between the City of Sterling Heights and Michigan Economic Development Corporation for grant proceeds to enhance election administration; CASE – 344424.
- H. **RESOLVED**, to approve the Agreement between the City of Sterling Heights and Michigan Economic Development Corporation for grant proceeds to fund tree planting to enhance the community tree canopy; CASE – 344427.
- I. **RESOLVED**, to award the bid for large diameter fire supply hose to HD Edwards & Company, 8550 Lyndon, Detroit, MI 48238, for a one (1) year period at unit prices bid.

- J. **RESOLVED**, to award the bid for printing of the City of Sterling Heights Magazine to Grand Blanc Printing Company, Inc., 9449 Holly Road, Grand Blanc, MI 48439, for one year at unit pricing bid and authorize the City Manager to extend the bid award for a second year at unit pricing bid, upon mutual consent.
- K. **RESOLVED**, to split the award of the bid for police ammunition to the following vendors for a one-year term based upon their respective unit prices bid:
 - 1. To Vance Outdoors, Inc., 3723 Cleveland Ave., Columbus, OH 43224, for eXact iMPact 40 mm #6530 training kits, eXact iMPact 40 mm #6525 sponge round, and Hornady ELD Match Tap Precision .308 Win 168 #80725 rifle ammunition; and
 - 2. To Kiesler Police Supply, 2802 Sable Mill Rd., Jeffersonville, IN 47130, for Federal Buckshot Frangible 12 ga. Ballisticlean #BC13200 ammunition and Federal Slug Frangible 12 ga. Ballisticlean #BC127RS ammunition.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

9. CONSIDERATION

A. Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski stated this is to consider approval of memorandums of understanding between the City of Sterling Heights and the MAPE Supervisory Employees, MAPE Professional and Technical Employees, and MAPE Technical/Office Employees Union. She invited Mr. Vanderpool to give the presentation.

Mr. Vanderpool explained they periodically have to negotiate memorandums of understanding with their bargaining groups. There are three memorandums of understanding in front of them tonight pertaining to three positions that were approved in the budget process. He provided brief details on each of the three positions. With the recent departure of the Utility Service Manager, the Finance and Budget Director determined that the creation of an Assistant Finance and Budget Director job classification provides greater overall benefit to the division by having greater direct management control over the division's multiple offices.

This new position is also part of their succession planning for the Director position, and when they know positions are going to turn over in the next three to five years, they start thinking about replacements for those positions. He pointed out the creation of this position does not add to the City's employee head count because they are eliminating the Utility Services Manager job classification.

Mr. Vanderpool explained the second Memorandum of Understanding being considered this evening pertains to Planner I and Planner II. He stressed the Department of Planning is understaffed based on the City's size and level of development activity, with the City Planner and Development Manager having a Plan Coordinator as his sole professional planning staff. The fiscal year budget includes funding for the Planner I position, which does not exist in the 2019 collective bargaining agreement, and the memorandum of understanding had to be negotiated. The budgeted position will increase the staff in the Office of Planning from two to three, but he pointed out that the development activity in the City averages approximately \$100 million per year in new permitted construction activity, and it is remarkable they have been able to get through this.

Mr. Vanderpool explained the third Memorandum of Understanding being considered this evening pertains to an Assistant Building Official. The City recently completed a successful recruitment for a new Building Official, but the process revealed there is an extremely limited pool of qualified candidates eligible to fill a future vacancy in this classification. The decision to create an Assistant Building Official classification will allow for an internal candidate to promote to Building

Official and provide a logical advancement when that opportunity may arise, consistent with the City's succession planning. The new job classification does not increase the City's employee head count because that position will promote from existing personnel within the office. He respectfully requested that Mayor Pro-Tem and City Council approve the documents this evening. He offered to answer questions.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski opened the floor for public comments, but no one spoke.

Moved by Schmidt, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to approve the memorandum of understanding between the City of Sterling Heights and MAPE Supervisory Employees creating the Assistant Finance and Budget Director job classification and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the memorandum on behalf of the City.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated she is always happy when they can bring a compromise like this forward. She understood the negotiations that had to go on to get it to this point, and she is grateful for that.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Moved by Radtke, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to approve the memorandum of understanding between the City of Sterling Heights and MAPE Professional and Technical Employees creating the Planner I and Planner II job classification and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the memorandum on behalf of the City.

Councilman Radtke felt this is a great start to improving the Office of Planning, which has been understaffed for a long time.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

Moved by Yanez, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to approve the memorandum of understanding between the City of Sterling Heights and MAPE Technical/Office

Employees Union creating the Assistant Building Official job classification and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the memorandum on behalf of the City.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

B. Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski stated this is to consider an appointment to the City of Sterling Heights Board of Review. She opened the floor for public comments, but no one spoke.

Moved by Schmidt, seconded by Ziarko, **RESOLVED**, to appoint Patrick Rye to the Board of Review to a term ending June 30, 2024, subject to the appointee meeting the qualifications set forth in Charter §4.03 and taking the oath of office within two weeks.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

10. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski opened the floor for comments from the audience.

- Ken Nelson – felt they are not seeing an “open” government when there are 400+ pages of backup material in their agenda packages; pages are not indexed; would like a poll of residents to find out how many watch the meetings and research items on the agenda; talked about an item on recent Planning Commission meeting; talked about political contributions.
- Brandy Wright – addressed the concern raised about transparency of agenda items, adding it is not up to the City to “force-feed” the residents with information; information is available, and if residents have questions, they can call the City for answers; addressed resident’s concern about political contributions, allowed by Supreme Court; cautioned corruption should not always be assumed.
- Jon Matthews – urged people to attend or tune in to upcoming Strategic Planning meeting; suggested those searching agenda backup can press “Control-F” on their computer to do a search on a key word and save time; appreciated the Memorandums of Understanding that were approved this evening.

11. REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION AND CITY COUNCIL

Mr. Vanderpool referred Mr. Nelson’s concern about Consent Agenda items. He explained that a Consent Agenda is used by most governmental entities, as well

as many corporate organizations for their board meetings, and the reason is to provide for a more productive meeting. The more substantive issues are listed on the agenda, but the items on the Consent Agenda include more routine items, such as grants and purchases. He cautioned if the Consent Agenda did not exist, the length of the meetings would be considerably longer, and with very few residents who would be willing to tune in or attend meetings that long, it would be counterproductive.

Mr. Vanderpool emphasized residents can question and receive answers on any of the Consent Agenda items, and identical backup is provided for any item on the agenda. He responded specifically to Item 8-G, which was a \$200,000 grant the City received for election administration equipment and software. The City is pleased to be awarded the grant, and he credited State Representative Nate Shannon for being instrumental in helping them obtain the grant. He itemized the purchases that will be made using these grant dollars and outlined their individual costs.

Mr. Vanderpool noted that Mr. Nelson mentioned a Planning Commission item, but he clarified that item has not yet come before City Council. He advised that it was postponed by the Planning Commission for further information, details, and some improvement in the proposal, and he anticipated it will be months before it comes before City Council.

Councilman Yanez questioned whether there is a list of speakers for next Tuesday's Strategic Planning meeting.

Mr. Vanderpool replied affirmatively and informed the Mayor and Council will be receiving the formal agenda on Thursday, and the public will get it on Friday. The speakers will be listed, and back-up material will be included. He offered to provide a brief line-up or get the list to him earlier if he would like.

Councilman Yanez replied that is not necessary, although he would have liked to have had it tonight. He addressed Mr. Nelson's comments about political contributions, and he expressed resentment of the insinuation that anyone who receives a political contribution from anyone who does business in the City is somehow doing something crooked. He spoke for himself and was confident in speaking for his colleagues that is not the case. He stressed the suggestion that they are "bought and sold here" is upsetting to him. He questioned why they received a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) for the election equipment, and he questioned why they are getting their tax dollars back from that corporation to run the city business. He also noted there were recently politicians in Lansing, both Republicans and Democrats, who, in the process of doing their jobs, had to sign non-disclosure agreements with the MEDC over potential work that could happen in the State of Michigan, and in doing so, voted to create a billion-dollar fund. He claimed he has never heard of an elected official doing their work for the citizens of their community sign a non-disclosure agreement. He suggested those who are upset should ask their elected officials why they signed a non-disclosure agreement. He addressed the comment about the 400+ pages in the back-up material and pointed out that is lengthy because

they try to be transparent, and he appreciated the resident's comment about "Control-F" to help find items in the digital agenda package. He felt the City does a very good job of being transparent, and he added that if anyone has a question, they can contact him, his colleagues, or City Administration. He urged people to contact him if they have questions, and he will find out the answers for them. He talked about his volunteering for Meals on Wheels, and he gave a shout-out to the many people who volunteer in so many ways, not only on Martin Luther King Jr. day but every single day and get no recognition.

Councilwoman Ziarko agreed with Councilman Yanez about Martin Luther King Jr. Day being set aside as a day of service. She felt service should be a part of everyone's life, and it does not mean there has to be a lot of time spent on it, but it can be little things done for neighbors or those in need. She talked about the upcoming Strategic Planning meeting, which is her favorite meeting of the year. She questioned whether they will be breaking down the segments of this video to be replayed to the community. She could not imagine someone sitting down to watch the entire video at one time.

Mr. Vanderpool replied affirmatively, noting there will be segments. They will be discussing their Visioning 2040 Plan, because their Visioning 2030 Plan is nearing the end. They will have a segment on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding, prioritizing where that money should go based on community feedback. There will also be an update on the Velocity Center and some of the new initiatives taking place. They will also have an update on what they are doing to promote

the City's boards and commissions, with volunteerism being so important. The City relies on hundreds of volunteers to help run this great organization, and it is a challenge to retain their volunteers and recruit new ones. He stated they are thankful that City Council approved a new position to help administer their many boards and commissions. Mr. Vanderpool stated the Strategic Planning Session will conclude by hearing from their various boards and commissions that need to report annually to City Council. This includes the Sustainability Commission, the Youth Advisory Board, and other groups like the CommUNITY Alliance and the African American Coalition. He assured there will be plenty of time for City Council engagement to discuss and ask questions. After each segment, City Council members and residents will be able to weigh in on their thoughts for each component. He informed that it will be taped and the rerunning of the meetings will be publicized. He agreed it is a good idea to break it up and possibly promote the components separately.

Councilwoman Ziarko questioned whether the MEDC awarded grants to other communities for the same purpose. She recalled when she was on one of their other subcommittees for Michigan Municipal League, she was contacting City Clerk Melanie Ryska about what City Clerks wanted to uphold or to make their job more efficient with regard to elections. She pointed out they used some of the examples they have in Sterling Heights when they were negotiating those bills in the legislature, with one of those being the drop boxes being used at each of the Fire Departments because they were monitored twenty-four hours a day. She

wanted to make sure it is clear that the MEDC was not giving the money solely to Sterling Heights.

Mr. Vanderpool stated the City of Sterling Heights has one of the best city clerks in the State of Michigan, which is why Ms. Ryska was voted City Clerk of the Year. He clarified that MEDC did not run this grant program. He shared Councilman Yanez's frustration over the recent legislation that resulted in Sterling Heights losing \$1 million annually, and he assured they are going to push the Governor and their State Representatives to develop a permanent replacement plan. He noted their current plan only provides one year of replacement revenue. He stressed they are going to work hard on that and hold them accountable. He explained the items in the grant came from the City Clerk and her team, and they are items they felt will make their process even better. He commended the Clerk and her team for coming up with these items. He clarified that not all communities received that grant, and the City had worked very hard with State Representative Nate Shannon to put together the grant application, which was specialized/customized for Sterling Heights. He noted the second grant received tonight, which was a significant grant in the amount of \$200,000 to increase the City's tree canopy, and they are very excited about both grants. He assured the grant only went through the MEDC as a pass-through agency because the State did not know how else to administer those specialized grants. He reiterated MDEC actually had nothing to do with either grant.

Councilwoman Koski questioned whether the public and Council will have the opportunity to comment after each session at the Strategic Planning meeting.

Mr. Vanderpool replied affirmatively.

Councilwoman Koski inquired as to whether there is a way to publish the schedule of that meeting on Channels 5 and 10, so that if there is a certain subject that someone is interested in commenting on, they can see what time that item will be discussed, and they will have the opportunity to attend that portion of the meeting. She pointed out there will be no voting but it is an input session to gather information from the public and ideas from Council. She felt breaking this down on the published agenda would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. Vanderpool agreed, and noted the City has thousands of people signed up for ListServ, an automated list so they received copies of the agendas. They will get that agenda, which will be broken down by items and will have time slots indicated on it, plus or minus about 15 minutes.

Councilman Radtke echoed his colleague's frustration on the legislature eliminating or raising the cap on the Personal Property Tax received in Sterling Heights. He pointed out this is a manufacturing city and they have a lot of manufacturing facilities. The fact that it was done in the middle of night with no debate or hearings, and they did not take any input from the cities from which they are taking the money. He stated he called his State Representative to ask him if they are supposed to cut police officers or a fire inspector. He pointed out that is money being taken out of their pocket and they already had plans to spend it

because they have received it every year. When they are forced to make cuts, they will have angry residents asking why these positions/services are being cut. Councilman Radtke expressed frustration because in this environment, it seems like people feel they should not receive grants because it could somehow “corrupt the process.” He stressed if they do not accept grants, they will have to pay more in taxes because money is limited. He is pleased they received the grant for additional trees. He wished they would have seen the schedule for the Strategic Planning meeting before today. He would recommend in the future that City Administration polls the Council members so they can have input as to what they want to talk about at that meeting.

Councilwoman Schmidt addressed the resident’s comments on transparency, and she agreed with Ms. Wright, adding the City can provide as much information as possible, but they cannot force anyone to read it, get involved with it, or to educate themselves on it. She stressed it is frustrating to be accused of not being transparent to the residents, because all of the information is provided and they are all available to answer questions. She compared it to children in school, where they are given all of the tools to get A’s, but she stressed they have to want to earn those A’s and have to put a little work into it themselves. She stressed they cannot go to individual homes to tell people what is on the agenda, so they need to take some responsibility. She pointed out the information is available to them, but they need to be willing to do a little work to educate themselves. She referred to Councilman Yanez’s comments about volunteers who are not recognized, but she

noted those volunteers who volunteer every day do not want the recognition, and that is not why they are doing it. She appreciates recognizing those who volunteer from the heart, and she thanked them. Councilwoman Schmidt questioned whether Strategic Planning starts at 8:30 p.m.

Mr. Vanderpool replied affirmatively. He replied to further inquiry that there is not a specific end time, but that will be up to City Council.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski stated she is taking Tuesday off work for Strategic Planning and will be in attendance. She recommended residents look at the Strategic Planning agenda and attend the portions of the meeting that interest them or follow up by watching it when it is televised. She is glad that Council could vote today, the day after Martin Luther King Jr. Day, on a non-discrimination ordinance that helps support in the spirit of what Dr. King stood for. She noted today is her birthday, and in honor of that, she requested that residents go out and volunteer.

12. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

13. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

14. **CLOSED SESSION PERMITTED UNDER ACT 267 OF 1976**

Mr. Kaszubski stated there are no items for closed session this evening.

15. **ADJOURN**

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

Yes: All. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

MELANIE D. RYSKA, City Clerk