

CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2022
IN CITY HALL

1. Mayor Pro-Tem Liz Sierawski called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Judy McHale, Clerk Coordinator, gave the Invocation.
3. Council Members present at roll call: Deanna Koski, Michael V. Radtke Jr., Maria G. Schmidt, Liz Sierawski, Henry Yanez, Barbara A. Ziarko.

Absent: Michael C. Taylor

Also Present: Mark Vanderpool, City Manager; Marc D. Kaszubski, City Attorney;
Judy McHale, Clerk Coordinator; 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. **BUDGET WORKSHOP DISCUSSION**
 - A. **Presentation of Budget
Capital Project & Other City Funds
City Administration Department
Legal
Public Library Department
City Development Department**

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski stated this is the first of two special City Council meetings for the budget. They will have a number of presentations from Administration, and will have another special meeting in two weeks, with the adoption of the budget at the first meeting in May.

Mr. Vanderpool stated that, on behalf of their finance team, he is pleased to present the fiscal year 2022/2023 budget for City Council's consideration. The budget is available online, and it focuses on infrastructure improvements with another busy year of road construction, sidewalk gap elimination, public safety, and financial stability. The budget incorporates feedback received back from City Council throughout the year, including Strategic Planning and other forms in which the community provides feedback. There are a number of presentations planned this evening, and he requested that if Council desires any budget

amendments, they should indicate such after the presentations. Any suggested amendments will then be formalized, with motions to consider at the second budget hearing on April 26. All motions for any amendments will need to be voted on April 26 so they can be incorporated into the final budget, which will be approved on May 4. He assured there will be time for questions and comments from City Council and audience members. He invited Budget and Finance Director Jennifer Varney to provide details on the proposed budget.

Budget and Finance Director Jennifer Varney provided an overview of the proposed 2022 / 2023 fiscal year budget with the use of a PowerPoint presentation, stating that the total proposed City budget for 2022/ 2023 is \$251.6 million, which is broken down into five major fund types. The largest fund, which is the General Fund, totals \$117.2 million, or 47 percent of the total fund budget, followed by the Water and Sewer Fund, at \$59.3 million, or 23 percent of the total budget. She added Special Revenues, Capital Projects, and Debt Service Funds make up the remainder. The budget increased by 3.4 percent, or about \$8.3 million, over last year, and she reviewed the major changes and the reasons for those changes, including an increase of \$5.2 million in the American Rescue Plan Fund, which was created this year to account for all the expenditures related to the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund received from the federal government. She advised that a full ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Action Plan will be presented to City Council for approval at the April 19 City Council meeting, but the proposed budget includes ARPA funds for two road construction projects. There is also an increase of \$3.4 million in the General Fund, as well as an increase of \$3.4 million in the Road Construction Fund, a \$2.4 million increase in the Water & Sewer Fund, and an increase of \$850,000 in the Road Bond Debt Fund having to do with the Mound Road construction project. She outlined decreases and provided details on the reasons for those decreases, including a decrease of \$5.1 million in the Capital Projects Fund, a decrease of \$1.25 million in the Facilities Improvement Fund,

and a \$600,000 decrease in Community Development Block Grant Fund, due to the extra funding they received last year because of the Coronavirus.

Ms. Varney noted the City's largest fund, the General Fund, is \$117.2 million, or about 47 percent of the total fund budget, and is divided into the City's eight departmental budgets. Nearly 65% of the General Fund budget funds are for Police, Fire and Public Works. She advised the General Fund budget increased 3.0 percent, or \$3.4 million over last year, and she outlined the main variances. She stated \$2.8 million of that amount is due to increased wages and benefits due to contractual wage increases, which is an approximate 2 percent increase over last year. She added \$1.8 million is due to an increase in the required contribution to the Police and Fire Pension Fund, and \$950,000 is due to an increase of 9.3 percent in health insurance rates, and although it is anticipated rates may come down next year, this rate increase explained the transfer to the Capital Projects Fund is about \$500,000 higher than last year, and they were able to add about \$250,000 to the transfer to major roads, bringing the total transfer amount to \$500,000. She pointed out fuel costs have increased significantly due to higher gas prices, and software costs have increased, primarily due to a change in the model for Microsoft Office, which now requires annual licensing. She added an annual license of NearMap software is also proposed, and it provides frequently updated, high-resolution aerial imagery which will be used in many departments throughout the City. Postage costs are increasing about \$100,000, and that is mainly due to the transition to monthly water bills. She commented that they are actively trying to get people to sign up for e-billing and auto-debit, which can be done on their website. Legal fees are increasing, primarily due to additional work related to illegal marijuana grow operations, work on the Safe Homes Task Force, and legal work required for the major developments on the horizon. Contractual services related to snowplowing, grass-cutting, and custodial services are all increasing, and additional services are proposed for window and floor cleaning, along with security system maintenance. A General Fund transfer to the Parks and Recreation Fund

increased by \$220,000, related to wage increases, additional part-time wages, and incentives for seasonal employees. Sterlingfest expenditures will increase as they return to their annual Sterlingfest after a two-year hiatus. There are decreases in the required contributions for both pension funds and the retiree medical funds, totaling \$870,000. She added that strong investment returns, as well as the City's long-standing commitment to fully funding these plans, has resulted in the first decrease in required contributions in many years. Street lighting costs are lower, primarily due to the one-time expenditure last year to convert all their streetlights to LED and the expected annual savings in electricity costs.

Ms. Varney highlighted the status of their pension and retiree medical plans. She noted that, as of the June 30, 2021 audit, the Retiree Medical Plan is over 78 percent funded, the General Employees Pension Plan is over 86 percent funded, and the Police and Fire Pension plan is 72 percent funded. She pointed out that the City's overfunding of the Retiree Medical Plan can be seen, where it was under 9 percent funded in 2006 and has gone to nearly 80 percent in 2021, which is remarkable. The commitment this upcoming budget still includes a \$1 million contribution over and above the contribution recommended by the actuaries.

Ms. Varney outlined the General Fund revenues of \$117.5 million, with 62 percent coming from property taxes. Total General Fund revenues increased by \$3.4 million, or 3.0 percent. Property tax revenue increased \$2.4 million due to an overall rise in taxable value of 4.6 percent; however, the inflationary increase most residents will see is only 3.3 percent, with the remainder of the increase coming from growth and home sales resulting in the uncapping of values. She advised that revenue from the Police and Fire Pension millage is decreasing this year due to the reduction in the required contribution. Additional revenue from the personal property tax and taxable value increases also reduced that amount. This will reduce the tax rate for residents by about 0.29 mills. The personal property tax reimbursement is anticipated to be higher this year by about \$650,000. They had lower revenue last year, in part because of several

companies that did not turn in their exemption paperwork on time, but for the current year, due to the hard work of the Assessing Department, 100 percent of companies filled out their forms. State revenue sharing is projected to increase by \$330,000 from last year, based on estimates from the State of Michigan, and it totals about \$14 million annually. The current year's revenue is currently higher, at about \$14.6 million, but that is due to a spike in consumer spending that they do not expect to continue. About \$200,000 of the increase is directly related to their increased population in the 2020 Census. Court fines are projected to be up due to the reopening of the court, as well as a renewed focus on traffic enforcement and the additional officers hired for the Directed Patrol Unit. Sterlingfest revenue is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels, and interest rate revenue should increase due to expected increases by the federal government. Expected grant revenue is lower this year due to the expected receipt of reimbursements from FEMA for their Covid Vaccine Center. The proposed City millage rate for the 2022 tax year is 16.38 mills, which is a decrease of 0.29 mills from the current rate, and the average taxable value for a home in Sterling Heights is \$85,660 based on the current assessment roll, and that equates to a home with an average market value of just over \$231,000. She added the annual city taxes on the average home would be just over \$1,400, which is about \$117 per month for all City services, less than a \$5 per month increase over last year. She showed a chart reflecting the City's tax rate as one of the lowest in Macomb County.

Ms. Varney stated the proposed General Fund Expenditures exceed the expected General Fund Revenues by \$300,000, resulting in an addition to the Fund Balance of just over \$300,000. They have increased Fund Balance every year since the Great Recession, and it now totals just under \$34 million, which is 29 percent of expenditures. She added this is a healthy level that will allow the City to continue to invest in City services and infrastructure.

Ms. Varney reviewed the Special Revenue Funds, involving ten funds totaling \$42.6 million, with the Major and Local Road Funds making up over 50 percent

of the Special Revenue Funds and total \$21.7 million to fund the maintenance and repairs to the City's major roads and local neighborhood streets, and they receive funding from the Gas and Weight Tax Revenue (Act 51 Revenue) from the State of Michigan. It is expected to increase slightly by about \$200,000 from the current fiscal year. The City's share of proposed Major Road projects totals \$6.8 million and includes repairs to 14 Mile Road, from Hayes Road to Maple Lane; Ryan Road, from Metro Parkway to 18 Mile Road; Schoenherr Road, from 19 Mile Road to M-59; and repairs to the 17 Mile Road bridge over Plumbrook. Safe Streets Revenue continues to fund the repair and reconstruction of neighborhood streets, although revenue growth is limited to inflation because of annual rollbacks in the millage rate. Safe Streets revenue, in combination with Act 51 revenue, will fund the repair and reconstruction of thirty-two neighborhood streets. Local Road revenue is also used to fund neighborhood street tree plantings, and an additional \$250,000 will be funded this year due to the receipt of a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). She explained that, combined with the \$500,000 for street trees proposed in the ARPA Action Plan, next year will be an unprecedented year for increasing the City's tree canopy. She stated that, across all funds, there is a combined investment in major and local roads of \$37 million, including the second phase of the Mound Road total reconstruction, and two additional roads using funds from the American Rescue Plan. She reviewed the remaining Special Revenue Funds, including the Parks and Recreation Fund, totaling \$9.1 million, which is a 1.3 percent decrease from the current year, and she explained the reasons for the decrease. The debt service on the bonds to fund *Re*Creating Recreation improvements totals approximately \$3 million annually, and the last *Re*Creating Recreation improvement is anticipated to be completed this year, so there are no additional capital expenditures in the proposed budget. She stated the Capital Expenditures for Parks and Recreation budget includes several new programs. She advised that the remaining Special Revenue Funds include the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), funded through federal dollars,

and she outlined the proposed uses for this fund. Public Safety Forfeitures funds equipment and supplies for the Police Department through the proceeds from seized property. The Indigent Defense Fund tracks revenue expenses related to rules implemented by the State regarding legal counsel for indigent defendants, and this is completely funded with grant proceeds through the State of Michigan. The American Rescue Plan Fund was created this year to track the expenses for the \$20 million received through the American Rescue Plan, and she reiterated the complete plan will be discussed at the next Council meeting, although the proposed budget includes funding for the repairs to two roads. The Corridor Improvement Authority uses tax-captured revenue to fund improvements in the North Van Dyke Redevelopment District, and the current budget includes funding for potential property acquisitions in the district. The Local Development Finance Authority uses tax-captured revenues to fund the Velocity Business Incubator and other SMART Zone activities, and this year's budget also includes funds for the reconstruction of Brentwood Drive. The Brownfield Development Plan uses tax-captured revenues to reimburse eligible Brownfield project costs to encourage redevelopment of contaminated and obsolete properties. Ms. Varney stated the Capital Projects Fund totaled \$24.1 million and includes the use of proceeds from road bonds, as well as \$6.1 million investment in capital projects, equipment, and vehicles. She outlined some highlights in the proposed budget, including Phase II of the Nature Center Roof Replacement, the modernization of the elevators in the library, heating and cooling system replacement at Fire Station #5, the continuation of the project to replace the parking lot at Delia Park, the resurfacing of Magnolia Park tennis courts, the reconstruction of the Baumgartner ball parks, and the continuation of the sidewalk gap and repair programs. It also includes the purchase of new and replacement vehicles and equipment that will be detailed throughout the departmental presentations.

Ms. Varney stated the Debt Service Fund totals \$8.4 million and provides funding for the debt payments on outstanding road bonds, bonds for facilities

renovations, and the new DPW building. She advised that voter-approved debt on the Fire Stations is included and will be paid off this year. She explained the proposed budget includes debt service for two new bonds to be issued at the end of this month, the first being a \$16.5 million bond to fund the second phase of the Mound Road reconstruction, and it is funded with Act 51 road funds from the State of Michigan. The second is a \$12 million bond to be issued to finance the replacement of all commercial and residential water meters throughout the City, and she provided details on the advantages of these meters. She added this debt service is funded through water and sewer rates. She stated that, even with these two new debt issuances, the City is still well below its legal debt margin, having used only one-quarter of the amount permitted by law. She explained that, even with the Mound Road project, which was part of the long-term road plan, the City is using seventy percent of their legal limit; however, there is still \$3 million to \$4 million available each year to finance additional road projects. She added that their percent of debt service used will start to decline in about ten years when other road bonds meet maturity. She showed a chart summarizing all debt payments included in the 2023 budget, along with their funding sources, adding that eighty-five percent of annual city debt service has a dedicated funding source. She explained the small portion of debt service coming out of General Fund for the facility renovations and the new DPW building, clarifying it equates to only 2.5 percent of total General Fund expenditures. Ms. Varney informed that Standard and Poor's (S&P) rated the City just last week, affirming the City's AA bond rating, but updated the outlook from "stable" to "positive." She added that S&P noted the City's track record of financial performance and tax base growth, sustained improvement in pension and OPEB liabilities, and a positive outlook indicates a strong possibility that the City will be upgraded to AA+ in the next two years. She noted that less than two percent of local governments rated by S&P have a positive outlook.

Ms. Varney talked about the three departmental budgets being reviewed this evening. City Administration is comprised of two divisions with fifty-seven full-

time and twelve part-time staff. Their budget totals \$12.2 million, and a slide was depicted showing the breakdown. This budget increased by \$875,000, or 7.7 percent, and she outlined the expenses, as well as their capital budget. The Public Library includes thirteen full-time and twenty-six part-time employees. Their budget totals \$2.9 million, which is a decrease of 2.4 percent over last year, due to personnel costs. She outlined their expenses and capital budget. The City Development Department is made up of five divisions totaling forty-six employees. Their budget, which totals \$5.6 million and is comprised of five different divisions, decreased \$40,000, or 0.7 percent, over last year, and she outlined the reasons for the decrease. She outlined their expenses and capital budget. She stated this concludes her overview of the proposed budget.

Mr. Vanderpool stated the community is taking great pride in the diversity fostered over the years, and Sterling Heights is one of the most diverse communities in the metro area, reflective of many religions, ethnicities, and races. He noted that over forty languages are spoken in schools, representing regions across the world, and the City's foreign-born population is almost thirty percent. He explained this diversity creates a rich environment for economic vitality and community vibrancy. He stressed it is important that municipal organizations represent community demographics in which they serve, and this organization, consisting of over six hundred employees, has become very diverse, but they need to continue to make progress in this area. He introduced Human Resources & Benefits Manager Kate Baldwin, who will provide an update on the City's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan. He added that she will be joined by Ms. Darlene King, from Life's Journey Consulting, who has been instrumental in guiding the City's administrative team through this process.

Human Resources & Benefits Manager Kate Baldwin introduced Ms. Darlene King, adding that Ms. King and her team are providing the City with their expertise on their DEI efforts. She provided some background on Ms. King, noting she is a certified diversity professional and an executive director of the

Michigan Diversity Council, a division of the National Diversity Council. Ms. Baldwin provided updates on the DEI journey, with their goal to develop a long-term sustainable Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan to align with the City's visioning plan. This will include reviewing practices and programs to meet the diverse needs of those they work with as well as those they serve. It will include a learning development plan providing training opportunities to all employees in the organization, providing education on diversity, equity, and inclusion. There will be many goals and objectives defined. She reviewed the three phases, or milestones, and Phase I has been completed, which involved the development of their DEI Employee Council and the DEI Advisory Board. She provided details on these two groups and explained that Phase I consisted of the data analysis and Organizational Readiness and Cultural Competency Survey. She shared information on those two components, and informed that within the next couple of months, they will transition to Phase II, which is the creation of employee focus groups, and the development of the City's Sustainable Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy. Their DEI Employee Council will be reviewing the results of the survey to determine which employee focus groups are needed within the organization, and the DEI strategy will also be developed with input from the DEI Employee Council and the employee resource groups, with the support of Ms. King and her team. They anticipate Phase II to be completed mid-summer. The last phase will consist of a learning development plan, or DEI training for all employees in the organization. These plans will be outlined in the DEI Strategy, and the training is anticipated to begin this fall. She invited Ms. King to provide highlights on the timeline and a summary of the data analysis. Ms. King explained they finalized and delivered the Organizational Readiness Assessment and Cultural Competency Survey to all employees. She and her team analyzed and presented an Executive Summary Report of the survey results to the DEI Employee Council and DEI Advisory Board and had subsequent discussions with both groups. They will be developing the employee focus groups this month through June and will be compiling the feedback so they can

develop the City's DEI overall organizational strategy. She provided detailed information on the data analysis process as they analyzed the organization's diversity dimensions from 2018 through 2020, including gender, race, age, and tenure. The goal was to take this data and define what has the greatest influence and impact on the organization's performance, culture, and the employee's workplace experience. Specifically in the leadership data, their key findings concluded that of the thirty-five leaders in the organization, twenty-three percent are women, with five being executive leaders or directors at all levels of the organization. The leadership is one-hundred percent white, so based on the data, there is a significant underrepresentation of women as well as people of color, which results in an underrepresentation of perspectives that contribute to the City's decisions and practices. Ms. King added their key findings concluded that female representation averages twenty-six percent of the employee head count, with female minority representation averaging less than one percent. Of the total employee population within the organization, the average minority population representation is only two percent, yet the City of Sterling Heights represents a seventeen percent racial minority. She stressed that the effort to increase the employee population from two percent to seventeen percent requires years of commitment and accountability to the workforce and community in the efforts of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Ms. Baldwin provided detailed results on the Organizational Readiness and Cultural Competency Survey results, noting this survey was sent anonymously in January to employees in the organization on behalf of Ms. King's team. She reviewed the questions, specific to inclusion strategy and the strategic drivers. She informed that fifty-two percent of their employees participated in this survey, the results were compiled and presented in a detailed report to DEI Employee Council and DEI Advisory Board in late March. She also explained the demographics of who responded to the survey.

Ms. King explained that the City received an average overall rating of 3.4 with respect to the strategic drivers. She noted the national industry standard

benchmark is at least a 5.0, which indicates they have a lot of opportunity to further enhance their organization with respect to the DEI journey.

Ms. Baldwin explained that with the financial support from the Mayor, City Council, and City Administration, the City has budgeted \$175,000 for the next fiscal year to continue their strong momentum for the DEI journey. She explained this will enable them to enter Phase II, which consists of the employee focus groups and the development of their DEI strategy. They look forward to providing updates along the way, and a formal update upon completion of the DEI strategy. Phase III will consist of the learning development plans and DEI training.

The presentation concluded with a short video featuring messages from some of their DEI Employee Council members.

Mr. Vanderpool stated this is important work, and although it is not easy and will take some time, the entire organization and community will benefit from it. They fully expect, based on the good work of the DEI Employee Council, they anticipate the hiring next year of the City's first-ever DEI Director, who would be responsible for working with the DEI Employee Council and implementing the DEI Strategic Plan, updating it when necessary. He thanked the team for their good work in that area.

Mr. Vanderpool explained that the Library has had to adapt and evolve rapidly since Covid-19 changed the way people interact and work together, and they have had to find new ways to connect with library customers. He stated the Library has been on the cutting edge in this area, and he invited Library Director Tammy Turgeon to provide updates on new, exciting, and innovative services that are continuing and came about during the Covid-19 era.

Library Director Tammy Turgeon spoke about how the 2022/23 budget will provide the library with new service opportunities. The library's major goal is to enhance the quality-of-life services they offer for their residents within the current budget. She outlined the four new projects and services over the next twelve months, including Strategic Planning, Patron Chat Service, Bike Lending

Service, and Outreach Services. She explained the recent renovation has provided them with more space, including a teen room, three new study rooms, and a Maker Space. She added that the library has also experienced staffing challenges similar to other businesses, and that has altered the number of programs and services they are able to provide. They are working with Rethinking Libraries on a strategic plan for the next five years, with their consultants based in Indiana. They have assisted multiple clients in the Midwest to develop library plans that meet and exceed resident expectations. They held their kickoff meeting in March and are gathering data for benchmarking. She outlined the Strategic Planning process, which will lead them to develop priorities over the next five years and a structure for staffing to meet these community needs. She encouraged everyone's input. She talked about the ability to provide a chat experience for patrons to communicate with the library, which will expand the library's service hours without hiring new staff. The service will be available seven days a week for ninety-six hours each week, and she provided details of the service. She assured it will not replace their dedicated staff but will allow their staff time to focus on serving residents in the building, as well as provide residents not in the building with a fast and easy way to interact with the library. They are excited to be the first library in Macomb County to provide this unique chat service.

Ms. Turgeon talked about a program where residents will be able to borrow a bike to ride around Dodge Park, and all they will need is a library card. They will be working with the City Attorney to develop a waiver for patrons to sign in order to borrow a bike, and she thanked the Parks and Recreation Director for already securing four bikes to be purchased from Macomb Bike, who will also be providing maintenance of the service. She stated she will be meeting with the Friends of the Library regarding funding, and she hopes the service is up and running by June. She clarified this is a pilot project, and if it is successful, continuous funding of the service will be requested in the following year's budget. Ms. Turgeon explained their outreach efforts, noting they currently

have three delivery service options. Their homebound outreach service has been providing deliveries for decades to seniors who are homebound, as well as collections of large-print books for senior resident facilities in the community. The materials for this service are funded by Community Development Block Grant funds. Their second outreach option is curbside delivery, which was started during the Covid-19 pandemic. Library staff provide delivery to residents' vehicles parked in two designated spaces in the parking lot, and she explained the process. She noted at the beginning of this service, circulation staff were serving over 2,800 vehicles per month. Residents have since been welcomed back into the building, but they still have over one hundred of these deliveries each month. Their third outreach option is home delivery, also developed by staff during the pandemic, where they use the Community Relations van to deliver library materials to residents' homes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Residents can call the library to reserve a spot, and the library staff will bring them items they have on hold, as well as pick up any items that need to be returned. She stressed this was a very important program last year when students were attending virtually and needed materials for classes. She stressed that library staff want to be where the residents are, so their goal is to attend two community events per month. Ms. Turgeon informed that over the last year, the City's intern has been researching drone delivery and how it could be used by the library. She explained the advantages of such delivery and provided more details on the City's current usage of drones through the Police and Fire Departments. The top companies now in the drone delivery market are Amazon's Prime Time Air, Fedex, UPS, DHL, and Alphabet's Wing, with the latter being the only system of drone delivery that has notably worked with local government to offer books to kids. She explained how that drone delivery service started with a library in Christianburg, Virginia. She explained this could be part of the library's outreach program for delivery of books, and she explained how it would work. They would need to find a drone that has a round-trip length of twelve miles so that they could service the entire city from the library grounds.

She stressed that FAA regulations, weather, privacy concerns, and staffing are some of the challenges they are looking to overcome, but they want to be ready as automated transportation and delivery become more commonly accepted. She stated this program, and others that would involve drone usage, should be reviewed in the upcoming years as technology and public opinion advances. She concluded her presentation by stating she is intrigued by the research and will continue to work with City staff to determine if there is a contractor that can provide this service, as well as reviewing cost and feasibility as another option for library outreach in the future.

Mr. Vanderpool stated the final presentation for this evening consists of two components, centered on their City Development Department, which covers many areas, including Code Enforcement, facilitation of residential and commercial development across the City, implementation of the City's Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, and continued maintenance and improvement of the Clinton River as a recreational asset. He added road construction will be addressed as well. He invited City Development Director Jason Castor to give a presentation, followed by City Engineer Brent Bashaw.

City Development Director Jason Castor provided an update on code enforcement, which has contributed to maintain strong property values they see across the City. He attributed this to a direct result of City Council's support of code enforcement over the years through the increase of code enforcement staff, providing necessary technology through the use of iPads, providing all-wheel-drive vehicles necessary to navigate the City, especially during their snow emergencies, and providing a professional appearance. He informed the Code Enforcement staff has doubled from seven to fourteen since 2014. Prior to the new model adopted, code enforcement was primarily complaint-based. He provided statistics on their cases, noting their cases have increased threefold to approximately 12,000 cases per year, and over the past four years, they have resolved almost 50,000 cases. He explained their process for issuing violations and closing cases, and Sterling Heights sets themselves apart from other

communities by their Administrative Hearing Board process. He provided background on this Board, which meets year-round but more frequently during the summer months. They review cases almost weekly, providing quick abatements. He noted that, considering some of the cases are repeat offenders, this would equate to approximately seventy percent of the population not having any problems. A very small portion of the properties need to appear before the Administrative Hearing Board, and he added that property owners do a great job of contacting the code enforcement officers and working with them on a correction plan. He noted that about ninety-eight percent of the violations are corrected by the property owners. He stated the top five most common violations involve trash and debris, outdoor storage, landscaping maintenance, property maintenance, and illegal sign placement in the right-of-way. He provided details on each of these violation categories, and showed before-and-after photographs, depicting the violation and the same property once the violation was abated. Mr. Castor talked about repeat offenders and how those are handled. He explained that the Administrative Hearing Board can impose a standing order on a property for a time period from three months to one year and provide a clean-up time of one to five days. The standing orders can be applied to both commercial and residential properties and are only used in extreme situations to alleviate habitual recurring violations. They have also implemented a seventy-two-hour commercial trash tag, used for commercial properties with regular trash or dumpster areas, and he detailed that process, showing before-and-after pictures. He also reviewed rodent control, tall grass and weed enforcement, the Residential Inspection Program, and the Illegal Home Grow Inspections, and provided detailed information on each. The City does not charge for rodent treatment. He noted that the City enforces the Noxious Weed Ordinance from May through early November of each year, noting tall grass and weeds is a contributor to rodent harborage. They tag between 1,700 and 2,000 properties per year, the City's contractor only services twenty-five to thirty percent of those properties, with the remainder being cut

by the owner. They have brought over 6,200 properties into compliance over the last four years, and he showed before-and-after pictures serviced by their contractor over the last year. He informed the Residential Inspection Program, which started in 2013, provides a bi-annual inspection for non-homestead properties, intended to provide assurance that investor properties receive an exterior property maintenance inspection on a regular basis rather than relying on a complaint-based system. In 2013, they started with approximately 2,000 non-homestead properties, and about fifty percent of those were in front of the Administrative Board Hearings. They currently have about 1,600 non-homestead properties, and only a handful that are non-homestead turn up at their Administrative Board Hearings. He felt these programs that Code Enforcement performs keep the non-homestead properties maintained on a regular basis.

Mr. Castor stressed that illegal marijuana grow homes have become a serious problem over the last couple of years, and the City created a staff force made up of staff from various departments to tackle this issue. The City has shut down over 722 illegal grow houses and filed seventy-three lawsuits, most of which have been resolved prior to the first pre-trial conference. Photos were shown of what they have been finding. Mr. Castor stated that Sterling Heights ranks as one of the top five cities in the State of Michigan for equalization values, and the City ranks number one of the top five local municipalities in Macomb County. He emphasized the initiatives provided by Code Enforcement help to maintain home values, and they will continue their hard work to review their older commercial centers, looking at landscaping and parking lot conditions. He talked about some of their recent work and showed before-and-after photos of some commercial developments. He noted the various Code Enforcement programs he just reviewed, and their follow-up inspections resulted in 20,000 site visits per year.

Mr. Castor talked about the Clinton River as a natural resource and great recreational asset. He explained that in 2015, the City was awarded with a \$4.5

million grant which enabled them to remove the woody debris blockages and clean up the river. He showed photos of what the City is doing to keep the river flowing freely, and he talked about the public/private partnership the City entered with Clinton River Canoe and Kayak to maintain the river's navigability and perform launch and landing maintenance. He noted the increasing numbers of paddlers using the Clinton River Canoe and Kayak service, in addition to paddlers who use their own boats. Mr. Castor informed that the Clinton River Watershed Council has applied for a grant to add Clinton River water trail signage throughout the entire trail regarding safe river use. He further explained the Clinton River Watershed Council's work on keeping the river clean, adding that their river run events removed approximately 1,000 pounds of trash last year, and weekly cleaning events, visiting various parks throughout the City, removed approximately 730 pounds of trash last year, which could also potentially end up in the river. Clinton River Canoe and Kayak regularly removes items from the river as they paddle weekly, with the most common items being 150 to 200 old tires and many glass bottles. Mr. Castor concluded his presentation by explaining that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will use the bulk of a \$1 billion investment in the Great Lakes to clean up and restore degraded sites that are areas of concern, and this funding will provide a major acceleration in progress that will deliver significant environmental, economic, health, and recreational benefits for communities in Michigan and throughout this region. The Clinton River Watershed Council expects to get further direction during their summer meeting with the EPA.

Mr. Vanderpool stated they have made a lot of progress on their roads over the years, thanks to funding sources, grants, Safe Streets millage, and others. He invited City Engineer Brent Bashaw to provide an update on the road program. City Engineer Brent Bashaw presented the 2022 road plan for construction, as well as the five-year major road plan, extending to 2026. He reviewed what has been accomplished since 2014, adding that 2022 was the end of a long-term plan development many years ago. He showed a map depicting the roads that

have been improved since 2014. The total investment in the plan was \$416 million, but the actual investment exceeded this amount, with over \$454 million in road improvements. He outlined the details of each road project for 2022, including the Mound Road construction project, which will be paved from north of 15 Mile Road to M-59. He added the projects involve the resurfacing of Hayes Road from M-59 to 18 Mile Road; the resurfacing of Metro Parkway from Dequindre to Ryan; resurfacing of Metro Parkway from east of Van Dyke to Dodge Park; concrete repairs on Ryan Road; and resurfacing of Plumbrook Road, from Utica Road to Van Dyke. He talked about major road initiatives, including partnering with Utica Community Schools for a pedestrian safety study along Dodge Park Road and Utica Road. A SEMCOG-funded study was recently completed to provide a path from Dequindre Road to Van Dyke Avenue, along the south side of Dobry Road. The project is in partnership with the City of Troy and the City of Utica and would provide connectivity to the neighboring communities to the north, and to the Iron Belt Trail. The City has budgeted its share of the project in the Major Road Fund and will pursue a grant this summer that would cover eighty percent of the construction costs. He explained the City recently finished a study of adding a pedestrian crossing, including a refuge island, off 15 Mile and Van Dyke, and this work will be done this summer. They are looking at the feasibility of adding bike lanes to Plumbrook Road within that road project, and they will be pursuing a citywide traffic study to look at ways to make their roadways calmer and safer.

Mr. Bashaw explained the City has updated its five-year major road plan and includes calendar years 2022 through 2026. He stressed it is a great planning tool but remains flexible as they annually revisit the plan. He informed that it is based on anticipated Act 51 funds and federal financing already secured. He provided details of that plan, and the total road improvement value based on this period is over \$206 million.

Mr. Bashaw reviewed the 2022 local road construction projects amounting to \$5.2 million, and he showed a few examples of the streets that will be worked

on. He showed a listing of the twenty local roads that received full reconstruction this year, equating to 3.5 miles of reconstruction, or 18,820 linear feet. Twelve roads will have significant improvement through their sectional road replacement, providing 1.3 miles, or 7,040 lineal feet, of concrete replacement. He stressed that since 2013, the local road network continues to improve since the inception of the Safe Streets Millage that year, and the number of roads in good condition have increased from seven percent to twenty-two percent.

Mr. Bashaw concluded his presentation by explaining a few things they will be implementing this summer, including a text alert system to provide enhanced communication with their projects, and their sidewalk gap completion projects will be one of the largest in the City's history.

Mr. Vanderpool stated this concludes the budget presentations this evening and thanked all the directors and managers who worked with their finance team, let by Ms. Varney, to analyze their operations and put the budgets together.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski opened the floor for comments from the audience on the presentations, but there were no comments.

6. ORDINANCE INTRODUCTIONS

A. Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski stated this is to introduce the fiscal year 2022/23 Appropriations Ordinance.

Moved by Ziarko, seconded by Schmidt, **RESOLVED**, to introduce the Appropriations Ordinance for the 2022/23 fiscal year.

Councilwoman Schmidt thanked everyone for their hard work in preparing this budget and the presentations, and she appreciated their flexibility in working with Council. She commented she is proud of all the work that is going into Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and she felt it speaks volumes as to how they care about their community as well as their employees and their environment. She added she will look forward to more reports forthcoming. She questioned whether the Maple Lane road project, from Volpe to 14 Mile, slated for 2026, will include widening. She questioned whether this is being held off because of the anticipated development for property on Maple Lane.

Mr. Bashaw replied they do not currently have the full road right-of-way across the golf course, but they only have thirty-three feet so it is difficult to plan on any type of expansion until that property is developed and they can acquire the right-of-way. He admitted Maple Lane is in very bad condition so they may not be able to wait that long for that improvement, and they may have to do something in the interim.

Councilwoman Schmidt stressed it is in bad shape, and they need to be able to patch better than what is currently in place. She stated Moravian, from Schoenherr to Hayes, is another road in bad shape but not scheduled until 2024. She urged them to pressure the County to fix it since it is a county road. Councilwoman Schmidt requested, without objection, that she would like to instruct City Administration to formally request that the County provide their plan to address the crumbling condition of the walls and median of the 16 Mile Road bridge over the railroad tracks. She felt it is a safety issue because they are crumbling powder. She felt it would not take much for a car to go through it, and felt the walls create a very unsafe situation, even if the bridge is stable.

City Council members offered no objection, and Mr. Vanderpool replied to inquiry he has what he needs for that request.

Councilwoman Schmidt questioned Ms. Turgeon on the difference between "homebound" delivery and "home" delivery.

Ms. Turgeon replied the "homebound" delivery is for senior residents who are not able to get to the library. It is funded through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Residents signed up for that program receive a monthly delivery to their homes, and they work with a librarian to select items and have them delivered by a staff person. She replied to further inquiry they must qualify, although it can be a temporary situation. She explained the "home" delivery service is available to everybody, and anyone can sign up for an open spot to have the library bring items to their homes and pick up library items that are due. She clarified the homebound service has been in existence for

decades, but the home delivery service started during Covid. She added that service has been very well received.

Councilwoman Schmidt inquired as to whether they have seen the home delivery service decrease since they are "getting back to normal."

Ms. Turgeon replied they have noticed that in-person visits back to the library building have doubled in the last couple of months, but they want to provide the option. If it is not needed as much, they have not expended any extra funds for the service, but it is a convenience for residents.

Councilwoman Schmidt stated the bikes for residents is an excellent idea, and she thanked Parks and Recreation for their collaboration on this program. She appreciated Ms. Varney helping to lower their millage, and since the Fire Station bond is expiring this year, next year they may be able to lower it a little more, which she looks forward to. She commended Ms. Varney and her team on doing a good job.

Councilman Radtke felt the efforts in DEI are tremendous. He stressed he is a big proponent of this and brought this motion forward. He felt it is good to have data, so they can start to make improvements. He would like to see an evaluation per department to make sure there are not some departments excelling while others are lagging behind, and they should all be brought up together. He agreed the library's bike program is tremendous, and he anticipated they will be buying more bikes. He hoped if this is successful, they may be able to lure a bike vendor into this so they can get out of the bike maintenance business. He asked Mr. Castor about the six standing orders for habitual violators in Code Enforcement. He requested, without objection, to task the City Attorney to create an ordinance to hold the habitual violators to account. He understood that currently they have the City's contractors fix the violation, and then they charge the property owner on their tax bill.

Mr. Castor replied that is correct, noting the standing order allows them to bypass the process of taking the violation to their Administrative Board. He explained they put a violation on the door, citing the violation and giving them

a set number of days to correct it. If they do not, the contractor would show up and abate the violation. Any work done is sent out as an invoice, and if it remains unpaid, it is placed as a lien on their tax bill.

Councilman Radtke noted there is a habitual violator who lives on his dad's street, and to his knowledge, he has never cut the grass in the five years he has been on City Council, nor has that owner ever shoveled their snow. He stressed it has become an "abscess" in the neighborhood. He would like to see them held civilly liable, because as it stands, the City has now "just become the maintenance service" for this home. He suggested a fine could be imposed to personally fine them on top of the contractor fee, possibly on a sliding scale to \$5,000.

Mayor Pro-Tem stated she has an objection to Councilman Radtke's request because there may be extenuating circumstances.

Councilwoman Ziarko questioned whether their current ordinance could be amended in a way where they would not actually need a new ordinance. She agreed with Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski that they may not know the circumstances. She questioned how many of the habitual offenders are rentals. She questioned whether it is the tenant or the owner who is notified about the violation.

Mr. Kaszubski stated he would like to provide a report to Council on the various avenues they have to address this situation. The Ordinance Board of Appeals (OBA) Board is what they use to address these violations, and it gives them full due process in the quickest manner. He admitted there are other ways to do things through ticketing and also through taking Circuit Court abatement actions. He explained that, instead of drafting a new ordinance, he would like to provide this report.

Councilman Radtke amended his request from the Mr. Kaszubski's preparation of a new ordinance to instead receiving a report from Mr. Kaszubski, as he outlined. He also clarified that the house in violation on Dryden is not owner-occupied but has been vacant for at least ten years, although the owner lives

three blocks away. Councilman Radtke asked Mr. Bashaw whether they have ever conducted a needs assessment for their local road infrastructure. He felt they are repairing the roads, which costs a significant amount of their budget, and he questioned whether they need all the roads they currently have. He further questioned whether they could take lanes away rather than adding them, and whether their road structure could be changed. He pointed out when they widen roads, it is just more that will have to be maintained in the future.

Mr. Bashaw replied they have not conducted a needs assessment, but as part of the Federal Aid Committee, which disburses the federal funds, there is a shortage of funding. They are trying to preserve the pavement and surface the best they can because there is not the funding available to do many capacity projects. He assured they do a good job of trying to find funding services, and he pointed out the Mound Road grant was the first grant in the nation ever given to a local agency. He explained the County has about \$15 million in federal aid to disburse each year, and that has to be spread across the entire county, so it is not a lot of money.

Councilman Radtke felt they are spending almost every resource to repair what they have, and they are falling behind because of the system. He referred to "induced demand," pointing out if they continue to expand and widen roads, it will induce people to drive on them. He would like to see a needs assessment conducted, to see if they can funnel people who are driving *through* their City rather than *to* their City to the county-funded roads to keep the City's costs down. He would like to see the road projects completely fix the road, including the road, sidewalk, street trees, and paved bus stops. He questioned Ms. Varney as to whether the City could refinance bonds that have higher interest rates, and he questioned the current interest rates on their bonds.

Ms. Varney replied the most recent bonds issued last year were under two percent. She is not anticipating that low of a rate for the current bonds and is anticipating closer to three percent. She explained that when bonds are issued, there is a period where they cannot refinance, and she believes that period is

approximately ten years. She assured that they refinance when they can after that period, and the Bond Counsel constantly looks at that; however, there are none available to refinance at this time.

Councilman Radtke is happy to see the City's pension plan is performing well. He questioned why they are investing even more than their estimates from their fiduciaries. He felt they need to let the returns on the market do some of the work. He would like to see the Zoning Ordinance fixed and updated, and he recalled it has been proposed for the last few years for \$300,000. He suggested taking the \$300,000 they were going to put into their "rainy day" account and put it into redoing their zoning map, pointing out that all the things they are doing go hand-in-hand with the zoning map. He recalled the last zoning map was amended in 1987 or 1989, and he stressed a lot has changed since then. He stated he is going to ask for a budget amendment of \$300,000 to fix their zoning map in their final meeting.

Councilwoman Koski recalled they did an update of the zoning map around 1989 or in the early 1990's. She is aware they have rezoned properties throughout the years, so she questioned whether it is Councilman Radtke's intent to have the zoning map updated to reflect what is currently developed.

Councilman Radtke replied the zoning map is unclear, noting they currently have multiple commercial, residential, and office districts. He noted that most cities have eliminated most of these categories and have one of each of these classifications, letting the city decide how that works administratively, although he did feel that they still need two industrial classifications. He added the average citizen and most developers cannot explain the difference between the multiple zoning districts in the same category. He suggested they could eliminate the parking zoning, and they should bring their overlay districts into compliance, adding that the Master Plan does not match the zoning map in many places.

Councilwoman Koski questioned whether this would mean they would need to start over and rewrite the ordinance regarding the zoning classifications.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski questioned whether Councilman Radtke is asking to complete redefine all zoning codes.

Councilman Radtke felt it needs to be simplified, and although it has been placed on the proposed budget each year, it has not been funded. He felt there are too many classifications, making it hard for developers to do business in the City.

Mr. Kaszubski understood Councilman Radtke's request that he would like Administration to prepare a motion for an amendment to the budget to include a wholesale review and change of the ordinance.

Mr. Vanderpool understood what is being requested of Councilman Radtke, noting they have had many discussions on this over the last couple of years. He clarified it is not that they have been requesting and it has been denied, but it is a matter of funding priorities in allocations for the City. He indicated it is more of a philosophical discussion more than the Zoning Ordinance being "out-of-date." He pointed out they have repeatedly updated the zoning ordinance with numerous amendments to incorporate best practices, so their zoning ordinance is functional, and the developers are knowledgeable of it. In terms of collapsing zoning districts and allowing C-3 uses in C-1 districts is a philosophical issue that the City Council would have to determine whether it is something they want. He noted it may be something they want, but he cautioned there could be some consequences. He provided some examples, including whether ancillary dwelling units should be allowed on a residential property. It could be a good thing to help affordability by allowing people to convert their garages to rental space or add an apartment to their home to be rented out. He clarified it is not a simple matter of spending \$300,000 to update the zoning ordinance, but it will take philosophical discussions. They will need engagement from community residents and businesses. Mr. Vanderpool informed they are scheduling a follow-up Strategic Planning Session in June to get more direction from City Council on some of the more complicated ideas. He assured if City Council wants these changes to the Zoning Ordinance, they can certainly get it done, but the

philosophical discussions are important and how this ranks with other priorities they each have on their lists. He stated in the interim, they have made their development process more streamlined, with plans submitted electronically and reviews done virtually in a timely manner. He stressed that Sterling Heights is currently the epicenter for development in southeastern Michigan, so the current zoning ordinance is not hindering development.

Councilman Radtke requested that the budget amendment be prepared, although he assured they can have a vote on it.

Councilman Yanez appreciated the request made by Councilman Radtke. He noted that Sterling Heights considers itself a progressive community, and they have a visioning plan. He questioned Mr. Vanderpool's reference to the zoning ordinance being "functional," but he would like to hear more about this. He admitted planning is not his forte, but he stated he would like to hear from the City Planner on this topic before he would commit to spending \$300,000 on what Councilman Radtke is requesting. He agreed it deserves a robust discussion on how they move forward in the City with their planning.

Councilwoman Koski agreed they need more information and discussion with the City Planner. She stated she is impressed with the DEI presentation this evening, commending Ms. Baldwin and Ms. King for their fantastic job. She questioned whether they are sharing their analysis with the African American Coalition.

Ms. Baldwin replied it is information they are going to disseminate throughout the organization to the employees, and they have a communication strategy developed. She assured she will work with Community Relations Director Melanie Davis in disseminating it to the African American Coalition. She is scheduled for a presentation on DEI with the COMMUNITY Alliance Coalition in April, so there is some outreach.

Councilwoman Koski also noted that Council would appreciate any written updates from Ms. Baldwin.

Ms. Baldwin replied to inquiry that the development of the focus groups and the DEI Strategic Plan is scheduled to be completed by the end of this summer. They plan on launching the development plans, or training, in the fall.

Councilwoman Koski questioned whether there is any part of the DEI program where they could request the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and she requested Ms. Baldwin let Council know if so.

Ms. Baldwin clarified the funding for the DEI Journey is not coming from the ARPA funding.

Councilwoman Koski explained she listened to the Detroit City Mayor's State of the City address, and how he plans on helping Detroit grow. She cited the example where people wanted to apply for jobs, but some could not pass the employment tests due to reading difficulties. The mayor was setting aside funding to teach these adults how to read so they could successfully apply for the job to be trained for full-time employment. She understood that they seem to have difficulty attracting a diverse group, and she questioned whether there is any program Sterling Heights could offer to help any of the diverse population regarding assistance in education.

Ms. Baldwin replied they do not have anything defined that would meet that framework; however, through the DEI Strategy they will be developing with the DEI Employee Council and focus groups, the important part they will be looking at is the talent acquisition/recruitment process to create a more diverse pool of candidates. There is nothing definitive but there will be a lot coming out of the DEI Strategy.

Councilwoman Koski commented Ms. Turgeon and questioned whether they need more bike stands.

Ms. Turgeon stated they have the colorful shaped bike stands where the bikes will be locked. Circulation staff will take patrons to the bikes and unlock them. She added the circulation staff is very excited about this program.

Councilwoman Koski requested more explanation on the "Patron Chat" service.

Ms. Turgeon noted a lot of retail websites have the option, in a little pop-up box, for customers to "chat." This will do the same thing, asking if they have a question or need help. If a patron has a question or needs help, they can type that in the box while they are on the website, and the staff member will be able to chat with them online rather than the patrons having to make a special phone call.

Councilwoman Koski inquired as to whether the library still has the program that has to do with memory enhancement for seniors.

Ms. Turgeon replied they used to subscribe to "Brain HQ," but it not something they have any longer since the usage declined.

Councilwoman Koski liked the idea of drone delivery, commending the library for being on the cutting edge.

Ms. Turgeon thanked Brooke, the City's intern, for doing a lot of research. She stated it will not be done right away but is something they can look at for the future, and she is excited about it.

Councilwoman Koski questioned whether there is anything on the City's website as to what type of donations the library will take.

Ms. Turgeon replied the website has all the information as far as Friends of the Library Used Bookstore. They will be talking at an upcoming meeting about having larger donation days. The store is not open as many hours. She replied to further inquiry there is information on the website on how to volunteer.

Councilwoman Koski questioned who people can contact at the City for rodent control. She informed that she was recently asked that question by a resident who wanted to file a complaint but did not want the neighbor to know she was the one who called.

Mr. Castor replied there are a couple of ways to reach out anonymously. One option is the SeeClickFix feature on the front page of the City's website, and any issue can be reported anonymously. They have the option of providing an email or contact so they can receive an update. The telephone number for Code Enforcement is on the website, and the information of anyone who calls in is

kept anonymous, especially if they make that request. The same officer goes out on all calls regarding rodents, so he is very knowledgeable.

Councilwoman Koski questioned whether they have a company that comes out to set traps, and whether those traps are safe for other animals, such as cats and dogs.

Mr. Castor stated they recently switched vendors, so they are now with Ehrlich Pest Control, a worldwide company. He explained they recently reported they use the most sophisticated boxes for rodent bait. The boxes are locked and can only be unlocked by a key, and they are weighted with a stone inside so a child or animal cannot drag them away. It is designed so it will only allow a very small piece of the bait to be removed at one time. He replied to further inquiry that skunk issues are referred to Animal Control.

Councilwoman Koski noted that years ago, Ryan Road was a two-lane road, but it is now a five-lane road. She complained that people who want to pass someone now use the left-hand turn lane. She understands there is a program where they are considering eliminating left-hand turn lanes, to be replaced by medians with turnaround lanes. She inquired as to whether that could be done with Ryan Road.

Mr. Bashaw informed they applied for a grant to look at their options. He explained this is a large-scale grant to determine how they can re-envision this roadway to make it safer and meets where industry is going, including the possibility of including non-motorized transportation (bike) lanes, sidewalk improvements, landscaping improvements, green infrastructure, storm water management, etc.

Councilwoman Koski stated she would never ride a bike on Ryan Road, and she strongly supported the installation of a median to replace the left-turn lane, although she does not like roundabouts. She is pleased that they are up to having twenty-two percent of their roads in good condition. She questioned whether that will be up to twenty-five percent next year. She congratulated Mr. Bashaw on the good work he and his team have done.

Mr. Bashaw replied he does not anticipate going up three percent in one year, but he assured over the next few years, that number will continue to grow.

Councilman Yanez noted some of the roads are getting "patches" and he questioned what that entails.

Mr. Bashaw referred to them as "sectional repairs." It is a full width road improvement, where they remove about three hundred feet to five hundred feet and replace that section. They have done sectional repairs over the last five years.

Councilman Yanez noted he drives daily over the Red Run bridge on Schoenherr, and there is a lot of deterioration. He questioned how they determine when it needs to be fixed.

Mr. Bashaw believed the County has applied for federal funding to get it repaired, but he has not yet heard back. He offered to follow up to check the status and report back to Council.

Councilman Yanez questioned Ms. Baldwin as to whether a fifty-two percent employee participation rate in the DEI survey considered good.

Ms. Baldwin replied no. She explained they ideally look for at least a seventy percent participation rate.

Councilman Yanez questioned whether the next steps will be skewed because of the low participation rate.

Ms. Baldwin replied this indicates they have a group of employees who are not engaged or did not want to respond to this survey for one reason or another. The response rate will give them the opportunity to shape the way they proceed with the journey, and what trainings will be needed for the employees. Through more engagement in the process, they are hoping for more engagement in a subsequent survey at the end of the process. They will be looking to see if that data shifts in a different direction from where it is now. She replied to further inquiry that DEI Employee Council has representation from all departments.

Councilman Yanez questioned whether there were any specific departments that refused to participate more than others.

Ms. Baldwin replied she does not know the answer to that question, noting they only responded with demographic information and not their departments.

Councilman Yanez questioned Ms. Turgeon as to whether the bike-loaning program will require the use of bike helmets.

Ms. Turgeon replied she has not yet talked with the City Attorney. She replied to further inquiry they cannot provide helmets because they would have to fit each individual person. They may have to include a waiver that indicates they have been told to wear a helmet, although she indicated that will have to be determined by the attorney.

Mr. Yanez stated he rides a bike and uses a helmet, and felt it is especially important in Dodge Park, where the edges of the asphalt are fairly steep, there are trees, a lot of foot traffic, etc., so safety should be primary. He appreciated the work everyone put into the presentation and is looking forward to the next budget hearing.

Councilwoman Ziarko thanked everyone who had a part in these presentations, adding they are providing Council with the very best information they need to make a decision. She likes the Parks and Recreation programs. She suggested that one of the future road improvements is Moravian Drive, from Schoenherr to Hayes, and she suggested working cooperatively with Clinton Township to improve from Schoenherr to at least Utica Road. She thanked the residents for the Safe Streets millage, and the improvements to the roads show what has been done with what the residents voted for. She asked Mr. Castor whether Code Enforcement issues violations to other residents if they notice them while they are checking another address in the area.

Mr. Castor replied that Code Enforcement is both proactive and complaint-based reactive. If they are monitoring a property and notice something, there is an occasion they would cite multiple properties while they are on the street. It may be a result of the complaint that brought them to that street, but if a resident brings it to their attention, they may let that person know through

conversation that they are also in violation, but they would not get into an official violation status if they are there at that person's request.

Councilwoman Ziarko questioned whether they sent out letters in the last week to businesses, reminding them of the noxious weed ordinance.

Mr. Castor every vacant property owner receives a letter advising them their property is vacant and it is required to be maintained. They do not send these out to every property in the City, but only to owners of vacant properties because there is no one there to recognize the grass is long and needs to be serviced.

Councilwoman Ziarko recalled the last time they had a AA+ bond rating is when they raised the millage 1.9 mills. She questioned why they anticipate getting an upgrade in their bond rating in the next two years, and why the process is taking longer.

Ms. Varney replied the main reason they were downgraded at that time was during the Great Recession, with the local economy down. She noted a lot of communities were downgraded through no fault of their own. The past few years, one reason why S&P is indicating the City is still at a AA rating is because of their pension and OPEB liabilities, and they went to Chicago this year to present to S&P because their pension liabilities have been doing so well over the past two years, along with their overall development and economic health of the City. They felt they had a great chance of getting upgraded, and she added the overall tone of the report has improved. They look at per capita income levels and price of housing stock, which are things the City does not have control over. She noted in talking to the analyst, they want to see that this upswing will continue and that it was not a "one-time thing." She expressed confidence that if they continue with their strong fund balance and their strong commitment to working on their pension and OPEB liabilities, they may be upgraded next year. She added that it was the S&P analyst who told her only two percent of governments have a positive outlook, so it says a lot about the progress they have made and the overall health of the City.

Mr. Vanderpool explained that a AA is a superior bond rating. The City's bond rating is outstanding, and this is an effort for continuous improvement. They are "best of class" but they want to get to the elite level.

Councilwoman Ziarko understood they have an excellent bond rating, but she felt with as good as they are doing, they should not have to wait so long to get it upgraded. She commended the library for their great ideas, and she noted they are purchasing the bikes at Macomb Bike. She added that there are places that provide a free tune-up because of purchasing the bike from that company. She suggested they may be able to work with the store to see what they can do in the future to help with the maintenance.

Ms. Turgeon stated this is a new venture for Macomb Bike as well, so they are willing to work with the City to make sure the bikes are being maintained.

Councilwoman Ziarko questioned Ms. Baldwin as to whether there are term limits established for the DEI Employee Council and DEI Advisory Board.

Ms. Baldwin replied they can serve as long as needed.

Councilwoman Ziarko felt the information gathered from this DEI journey should be shared with the Michigan Municipal League (MML). They are watching closely regarding the African American Coalition, and this would tie into it. She felt other communities would be interested in seeing the success and the work they are doing. She felt a common question is "Why don't minorities want to work here?," and it may be good to follow-up interview with minorities who turn down the job opportunities to find out why they do not want to work in this community. She stated minorities are very faithful to the communities in which they were raised, so they may go to college and become successful in their field, but they go back to their home cities to bring other people up. She felt that may be what they are seeing, specifically in Police and Fire Departments. She would like see the City's strength and weaknesses in DEI, or areas in which they need improvement.

Councilwoman Ziarko stated she would like more information on the zoning map. She felt what she heard tonight is looking for a problem to a solution

instead of the other way around. She noted they frequently get compliments from developers saying how easy the City is to work with, so they seem to understand the process. She questioned those who do not like possibly have a parcel they want changed so it suits them. She recalled seeing a home in 1977 that had the attached garage converted to a bedroom, and a detached garage was added in the rear yard, so this is nothing new.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski thanked all the departments for their presentations. She inquired to Ms. Turgeon as to whether the bikes will be stored on the bike racks all the time.

Ms. Turgeon replied they intend to keep them locked outside unless they feel there will be storms, in which case they can bring them into the library. She replied to further inquiry that if it becomes a problem storing the bikes outside at night, they can bring them in.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski felt it would be better to store them inside at night as a safety measure. She suggested the police officers may agree that would be a good idea.

Ms. Turgeon stated they can do that. She replied to further inquiry that they will be starting out with four bikes, two for adults and two for children. She clarified that the bikes will be able to be rented for a maximum of two hours at a time because they want to keep them on the city campus. They are hoping there will be other people waiting to use them.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sierawski stated she loves the Clinton River, and when she first moved here, she was so disappointed that she could not utilize it for recreation. She is so glad they have cleaned it up, and she thanked the Clinton River Watershed Council and the Clinton River Canoe and Kayak for keeping it maintained, and she encouraged everyone to get out and use the river. She commended Ms. Baldwin and Ms. King for making wonderful strides in DEI. She stated in her new position, they are starting to explore the journey of DEI. It is a challenge because she is working with Jesuit priests, and it is a new venture for them. She is looking forward to seeing how the City progresses with it, and to

be able to recruit and acquire talent that mirrors the community in which they live and work will make sure they are successful in the community.

Yes: All. The motion carried.

7. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS**

Mayor Pro-Tem opened the floor for comments from citizens.

Ben Orjada – spoke in favor of marijuana dispensaries in the City; aware of vacant stand-alone buildings that would be ideal for this use, and they are a distance away from residential developments.

8. **REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION AND CITY COUNCIL**

Mr. Vanderpool stated he had nothing further to add this evening.

9. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

10. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

11. **CLOSED SESSION**

Mr. Kaszubski stated there are no items for Closed Session this evening.

12. **ADJOURN**

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

Yes: All. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

JUDY MCHALE, Clerk Coordinator