



# City Council Regular Meeting

Monday, February 24, 2025, at 7:30 PM

27400 Southfield Road, Lathrup Village, Michigan 48076

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1. **Call to Order** by Mayor Garrett at 7:30 pm

2. **Roll Call**

Present: Mayor Garrett, Councilmember Hammond, Councilmember Jennings, Councilmember Barksdale

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Kantor

Moved by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Jennings to excuse Mayor Pro Tem Kantor's absence due to personal reasons.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale

No: N/A

Absent: Kantor

Motion carried.

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

4. **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by Councilmember Jennings, seconded by Councilmember Barksdale to approve the agenda.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale

No: N/A

Absent: Kantor

Motion carried.

5. **Presentations**

A. Southfield School Board Student Representative Update

Moved by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Jennings to move item 5a to agenda item 16.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale

No: N/A

Absent: Kantor  
Motion carried.

**6. Public Comment for Items on the Agenda** (speakers are limited to 3 minutes)

- Lauren Beras spoke in favor of the proposed zoning change, and allowing the Surnow Company to develop the site, saving as much of the Building as they can.
- Karen Copus asked why the City has a Master Plan, if it is ditched or worked around when development is proposed, and that she is happy the School Building will be saved, but not happy about the idea of first-floor residential occupancy.
- Diane Anderson expressed her opinion that developers take over a historic building, let it decay, and then threaten to tear it down, and the Council lets them.
- Carol Greene stated confusion regarding the right time for a City Town Hall about the School, since we are considering a zoning ordinance change, and that in her review of the City's Master Plan, what it envisioned for the structure will be different, if there is first floor residency.
- Bill Hogan, a 25-year resident, whose wife went to the School, loves the Historic Building, and brought up that first-floor residency has a different level of safety to consider, and the design will place a lot of units on the East side of Southfield Road, and he thinks that less units would make it healthier for everybody.
- Shelly Reeves, spoke about her opposition to the zoning ordinance amendment, citing that the plans look like a massive building towering over them, and does not think that the City Council, should help the developers by changing the ordinance and rushing.
- Jonathan Terra, said he does not like bringing first-floor units up to the street, and maybe it is time to rethink the Master Plan. He talked about looking at and clearing snow from a flat parking lot behind the apartment, and if underground parking was feasible, as well as being more creative and possibly getting one wing off Southfield Road.
- Sharon Nicolas said she walks her dog by the school and sees it in disrepair, she supports having first-floor residency, and that seniors would not have to take the stairs or elevator, and the green space will be protected and maintained.
- Autumn Sousanis made comments regarding a speaker at the meeting being uninformed, and that she thought more information regarding the proposed site and zoning amendment should be in the City Newsletter. Ms. Sousanis expressed concern about changing the ordinance in this way, and the modern-looking plans for the School building that have been presented by the Surnow Company.

**7. Consent Agenda**

- A. Approval of Minutes
  - i. 1-27-25 - City Council Study Session
  - ii. 1-27-25 - City Council Regular Meeting
  - iii. 2-3-25 - City Council Special Meeting
- B. Building & Code Enforcement Reports

- C. Finance Department Reports
- D. Community & Economic Development Department Report
- E. Police Department Monthly Reports
- F. Planning Commission Annual Report
- G. Downtown Development Authority Annual Report

Moved by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Jennings to approve the Consent agenda.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale

No: N/A

Absent: Kantor

Motion carried.

## 8. Public Hearings

### A. Delinquent Water & Sewer Billing Special Assessments

No comments, the Public Hearing for delinquent Water & Sewer billing special assessments was closed at 7:56 pm.

### B. Public Act 33 - Police & Fire Special Assessment District

- Carol Greene, wanted to know if the Public Act is established how many mills it would be, and if everyone get the same amount of mills.
- Leslie Valiant commented that she supports Safety and Police officers, and asked if this would be 10 mills or 3 mills, and how current tax dollars that are already put into Safety would be used.
- Bruce Copus gave background information on Public Act 33, some things he shared were that it was formed in 1951, and its purpose was to allow communities to get together and form cooperations for Police and Fire Services, he said he was informed tonight that an individual community can do this type of Act, and he thinks it is just simply to grab the money and he is against it.

Public Hearing Public Act 33 – Police & Fire Special Assessment District was Closed at 8:01 pm,

## 9. Action Requests - For Consideration / Approval

### A. Request to Adopt Special Assessment Roll Resolution #2025-02 - Outstanding Water/Sewer Bills

Moved by Councilmember Barksdale, seconded by Councilmember Hammond to adopt special assessment roll resolution #2025-02 – Outstanding Water/Sewer bills.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale  
No: N/A  
Absent: Kantor  
Motion carried.

**B. Request to Approve Resolution #2025-03 - Resolution to Set Date For a Public Hearing on the Estimated Costs & Creation of a Special Assessment District**

Moved by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Jennings to approve Resolution #2025-03 – Resolution to Set a Date for a Public Hearing on the Estimated Costs & Creation of a Special Assessment District.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale  
No: N/A  
Absent: Kantor  
Motion carried.

**C. Request to Amend Zoning Ordinance for Ground Floor Multi-Family Residential in the Village Center (VC) District**

Moved by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Jennings to amend the zoning ordinance for ground-floor multi-family residential in the Village Center District, as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale  
No: N/A  
Absent: Kantor  
Motion carried.

**D. Request to Approve LVPD Patrol Vehicle**

Moved by Councilmember Barksdale, seconded by Councilmember Hammond, to approve the purchase of a new Tahoe, four-wheel drive, Police Package, from Berger Chevrolet, for a price of \$53,275, and a not to exceed cost of \$20,000 for the equipment change, upfitting, decaling of police markings.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale  
No: N/A  
Absent: Kantor  
Motion carried.

**E. Request to Approve Contract for Legal Services**

Moved by Councilmember Jennings, seconded by Councilmember Barksdale to approve the contract for legal services with the Baker Legal Group PLLC.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale  
No: N/A  
Absent: Kantor  
Motion carried.

#### **F. Request to Approve Historic District Commission Appointment**

Moved by Councilmember Jennings, seconded by Councilmember Barksdale to appoint Diane Weems, to the Historic District Commission, with a term expiring on December 31, 2027.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale  
No: N/A  
Absent: Kantor  
Motion carried.

**10. City Administrator Report – N/A**

**11. City Attorney Report – N/A**

#### **12. Reports of Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

##### **a. Downtown Development Authority**

CA Greene said a contractor has been approved for the alley paving project, the plan is to start mid to late April and wrap up July 6<sup>th</sup>

##### **b. Planning Commission**

Councilmember Hammond shared that the Planning Commission had recommended the Zoning ordinance, and they have gotten an update on the Panera Project Cement pad, and expect outdoor seating in the Spring. He mentioned the list of updates of current Projects is on the City's Website.

##### **c. Parks & Recreation**

Councilmember Barksdale promoted the Trivia night scheduled for March 21<sup>st</sup> and upcoming Community Highlight classes and encouraged people to let them know if they are interested in teaching a class.

##### **d. Tree Committee**

Roger Lynn, shared that the City has been validated as a Tree City USA, having met all 4 criteria requirements. He also shared why trees are important, including that they mitigate the urban heat island effect, reduce stormwater runoff, improve air quality, boost mental and physical health, reduce traffic noise, increase property values, and reduce energy costs.

##### **e. Historic District Commission**

CA Greene said they approved the draft plans and proposal for the School next door.

f. Southfield School Board

Councilmember Jennings announced that the Southfield School Board will be hosting the state of the district on March 12, 2025, from 6 to 8 pm, at 24675 Lahser Rd. Southfield, MI 48033, with refreshments and a performance by the University High School Academy Choir. He shared that the School Representatives will not be attending tonight and that he is still working on a joint meeting.

**13. Unfinished / New Business – N/A**

**14. Public Comment** (speakers are limited to 3 minutes)

- Diane Anderson held up a photo of a past protest related to tearing down the Town Hall building and some of the history of the Lathrup Village Historical Society, and her opinions about how she feels about what has happened with the Lathrup Village Historical Society.
- Shelly Reeves, Lathrup Village resident, wanted it on the record that she is disappointed, and thought decisions were already made, and referenced a previous comment, from another lady, regarding Mayor Garrett, and she, said she is “picking up what she was putting down.” She feels the City is divided in two sections, and said she is woke now and is paying attention to how all of you vote.
- Lauren Beras said the Study session is a place for the Council to work out things before they come to vote. She asked if DDA Director Colson could explain the DDA and how they are a separate entity and how they receive their funds because there has been some talk about that online, and why the City could not just take their fund balance if they were dissolved, and that the money would go back to the County, not the City. Lauren Beras also mentioned that coming to the meetings is not a safe place, mentioning what has happened to her including that she has been heckled, and tripped on purpose, and she is disappointed that Council has not adhered to the Code of Conduct on the agendas.
- Ellen Greenia, who lives on Santa Ann, shared “that she is proud to live here and speak proudly of her quiet and loving neighbors and neighborhood” and thanked, the Council for their thoughtful consideration before voting on the first-floor residency and she was glad that they were able to focus on the issues at hand, she shared that “it is by uplifting each other and looking forward that we grow in community, we are all entitled to our opinions, please continue to keep the honest communication open.”
- Autumn Sousanis expressed her opinions, some of which are that: the Council, Planning Commission, and Historic District Commission are supposed to be our protectors, Lathrup’s protectors. She commented on the City Attorneys and the advice that was given by one of them, and quoted the City Charter Section 40-31, “acquisition of Historical property, if all efforts by the Historic District Commission to preserve a Historic structure fail, or if it is determined by the Commission, that public ownership is most suitable than the Council may acquire such property if deemed to be in the public interest using public funds, gifts for historical purposes, grants from the State or Federal Government for acquisition of Historical properties, and proceeds from revenue bonds issued for Historical property or proceeds from revenue bonds issued for Historical purposes, such

acquisitions shall be based on written recommendations of a Historic District Commission, unfortunately, our Historic District Commission caved.”

- Leslie Valiant spoke on being appalled, and ashamed of how the City is torn apart, how some of the City representatives are curt, and that there has to be some way that we can communicate better, and she wants to do good things for her community and her neighbors.
- John Roberts, who has lived on Lathrup Blvd. for 46 years, said he has been very disappointed in the last few years, not with the Council but with the residents who take swipes at the Council who volunteer their time to be here. He also said, I try to comment, but I am met with name-calling, and it is unacceptable, and social media, makes us think we can say things to people that if they said it in person, they would get punched in the face.
- Timothy Hillman, San Quentin Blvd., mentioned one opportunity where we can come together, since Lathrup Village has a majority Black population, it would behoove most residents to come together, by attending the Boys 2 Men Black History Month Panel discussion across the street on Feb 27<sup>th</sup> from 6-9 pm.

#### 15. Mayor and Council Comments

Mayor Garrett apologized if it seemed like she was not paying attention, she was actually taking notes by hand, instead of typing, she wrote out 3 pages of information so that she could address each individual concern.

Mayor Garrett addressed Shelly Reeves, saying It was not a quick decision, it was very difficult because she considers residents’ concerns, and she is a resident. Mayor Garrett expressed that if people take time to get to know her, they will find out, that she does communicate with residents who talk to her in person, by phone, and by email.

Mayor Garrett said the Surnow project started in 2010, by a previous administration, and residents are mad (at this Council) because all they did was move it forward.

Mayor Garrett was repeatedly interrupted during this time that was set aside for the Mayor and Council comments and reminded those in attendance of the rules and acceptable behavior at the meetings. She feels that the Council does protect the community and that they represent everybody, not one side or the other side.

Councilmember Hammond, and Attorney Baker, explained that if the DDA is disbanded the existing money goes to the appropriate authorities, not just to the City for the General Fund.

Councilmember Hammond, addressed Bruce Copus’s comment, sharing that the Master Plan was last updated in 2021, and the envisioned investments have not happened, so we need to change. He mentioned empty retail sites and the proposal for the school. He mentioned calls for diversity in our housing stock, and being able to meet affordable, maintenance, and lifestyle needs of current and future residents.

Councilmember Hammond, addressed Diane Anderson, saying that Sam Surnow is not his Dad, he is a different person.

Councilmember Hammond, addressed Carol Greene, saying the plan does have Community use areas, by reserving them, and a courtyard area for the public to utilize and updates to the dog park.

Councilmember Hammond, addressed a comment by Shelly Reeves, saying that he took offense to it and that the Council has been looking into this for months.

Councilmember Hammond addressed Jonathan Terra's comment about underground parking, and creativity, and said he wants to talk to the Surnow group about plans.

Councilmember Hammond, addressed Lauren Beras's safety concerns at meetings, stating the City Council must be a place where all Community members feel welcome and safe.

Councilmember Barksdale, addressed Leslie Valiant, saying he agrees with her, and that people lose control of their emotions and what they should do, he reflects after meetings and wonders, why people do not treat each other with more grace. He has had more negative comments to his face, than people that reach out to talk with him.

Councilmember Barksdale, commented on Public Act 33, and that his own tax dollars would go up, and he doesn't think it is a cash grab. He expressed that he volunteers his time to do what he thinks is best for the City both now and in the future.

Councilmember Barksdale addressed Shelly Reeves comment that the decision was already made, explaining that we get the (meeting) packet Friday morning, and he does his homework and reaches out, so he is prepared for the meeting, and he said that he is willing to discuss his vote with anyone.

Shelly Reeves asked how the discussion can begin, because she emailed everyone, and only got a few responses, from Jason and Bruce. Councilmember Barksdale responded to her question.

Councilmember Jennings expressed that all the Council members care and want to make the right vote, and this one has been giving him a lot of trouble. He would much rather have residents mad at him for an apartment building instead of them tearing down the School.

Councilmember Jennings, addressed Diane Anderson, saying that he knows about history being erased.

Councilmember Jennings, said this room is dark and divided, but he does the best he can, and Council members have a lot of things going on. He wants progress to happen in the City, and not



be stagnant, he thinks it is a choice most people would love to see happening in the City, and wants to see more things come to the City, he said he treats decisions with lots of care.

**16. Southfield School Board Student Representative Update – No Update**

**17. Closed Session**

- A. Request to enter into a closed session to consider a periodic personnel evaluation at the request of City Administrator Greene per MCL 15.268(a).

Moved by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Jennings to enter into a closed session to consider a periodic personnel evaluation at the request of City Administrator Greene per MCL 15.268(a), at 9:41 pm.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale

No: N/A

Absent: Kantor

Motion carried.

Moved by Councilmember Jennings, seconded by Councilmember Hammond to come out of closed session at 10:00 pm

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale

No: N/A

Absent: Kantor

Motion carried.

**18. Adjourn**

Moved by Councilmember Hammond, seconded by Councilmember Jennings to adjourn at 10:01 pm.

Yes: Garrett, Jennings, Hammond, Barksdale

No: N/A

Absent: Kantor

Motion carried.