



City Council Study Session

Monday, March 03, 2025, at 6:00 PM

27400 Southfield Road, Lathrup Village, Michigan 48076

1. **Call to Order** by Mayor Garrett

Absent: Jennings, Barksdale

2. **Discussion Items**

A. San Jose Temporary Access

CA Greene explained that this question is due to the I-696 Construction project and is being considered for safety purposes.

Lt. Zang informed us that not only will the highway be under construction, but there will also be closed overpasses that will increase emergency response times.

Southfield Fire Department Captain Jason Deneau gave a report that had looked at calls in that area over two years and said there were 135 calls for service, with response times of around 7-8 minutes. Fire The Fire Department has met with MDOT and recently saw the MOT (Maintenance of Traffic) plan. He reiterated that without the road opening, it would delay response times to that area, both for getting to emergencies and rushing someone to the hospital. Captain Deneau, said a Fire Department believes that "if it is predictable it is preventable."

Councilmember Hammond asked if the berm gets open how do you handle traffic, and Lt. Zang said a Traffic Control Order that the Council enacts, will allow the Police Department to enforce the ordinance and signage will help curtail the traffic.

Councilmember Hammond asked about the cost of opening and then re-closing the street and CA Greene responded that it could be a couple of thousand dollars, if our DPW can do this, with gravel for now, and asphalt later, that would cost about \$3,000. Councilmember Hammond asked if there was an alternate route, and Lt. Zang, said no.

Captain Deneau, said Fire crews have heard people say, "It took you a while to get here", with no construction.

Councilmember Hammond expressed that residents are concerned, and mentioned the option of a Siren-activated gate, and CA Greene said that would cost about \$65,000.

B. City Council Meeting Time

Mayor Garrett inquired about moving the regular City Council meeting time back to 7:00 pm, from its current time of 7:30 pm, and gave reasons why she supported that move.

Councilmember Hammond expressed concern about possibly rushing, if there were many items on the agenda, and Mayor Garrett, said we used to start at 5:30 pm, expressing that we could start earlier, and Councilmember Hammond said he was not against it if we started earlier when there were full agendas, and Mayor Garrett, said she appreciated his flexibility on the issue.

Mayor Pro Tem Kantor said he likes the time between the Study Sessions and Regular meetings to interact with people.

This item will be discussed at another Study Session.

C. City Council Goal Setting

Mayor Garrett thought this should be done when the full City Council is in attendance. Mayor Pro-Tem Kantor commented on Rules for meetings that are in effect and based on comments made to him, modifying the video rules and having a designated area, for people to videotape or broadcast the meetings live.

Councilmember Hammond thought only people actively participating in Public Comments, and on Council should be recorded, and inquired about how a restriction would work, since everyone has a phone on them, and could just start recording during a meeting.

Attorney Baker, spoke on restrictions to minimize disruptions during meetings. Attorney Baker explained that in the current rules the person presiding over the meeting, which is Mayor Garrett for City Council, can stop a meeting until disruptive behavior ceases, the Council can take a motion to suspend a meeting, and a person who will not stop disrupting the meeting can be asked to leave.

3. **Public Comments** (limited to 3 minutes)

- Autumn Sousanis commented that she was happy to see people here, she expressed her displeasure that the Study Sessions, are not recorded, and made available to people who cannot make the meetings. About recording the meetings, she said footage that has been shot, can be reviewed, and she thought it did not show any cameras in people's faces, and mentioned that there is no expectation of privacy at Public meetings, and if you infringe on her rights she will have her lawyer contact the City and believes the meeting place is the wrong room for the meetings.
- Pamela Werdlow, who lives on San Jose, is against opening the road, she thinks it will be dangerous, and that there are bike lanes, and now traffic will be put there, where little kids, blind, and hearing-impaired people walk because it is closed off. She also said the road is not wide enough for 2 cars to pass and urged the Council to consider her points.
- Mayor Garrett asked Southfield Fire Department Captain Jason Deneau, to come back up and do his presentation again, because so many residents came to the meeting after his report, and Captain Deneau repeated his earlier report.
- Lt. Zang, reminded residents that in cases of serious medical emergencies or heart attacks, the construction and the road being closed will slow down the medics.
- Pamela Werdlow, brought up having a gate installed and said people blow through stop signs all the time, and CA Greene, said the gate would cost approximately \$65,000.

- Linda Daniels, from San Jose, asked the Fire Captain, over the 2-year period that you looked at this area, how much activity did you register, and he responded, that they received 135, 911 responses.
- Lt. Zang mentioned that if Fire Station #3 is tied up, then other Fire Stations would have to respond, and that also impacts response time.
- Mayor Garrett, confirmed with Fire Captain Deneau, that the Fire Department run call goal is 4 - 6 minutes, and we are at about a 9-minute response time. She asked how long it would be with the road open, and he responded per Google mapping it would be 3 minutes.
- Linda Daniels asked about the cost to make the change, and CA Greene, said to temporarily remove the berm and put gravel down, which is about \$3 to \$4,000, and to add asphalt about 8,000.
- Mayor Garrett spoke of understanding the residents wanting it to stay closed, and the need for emergency vehicles to get through, and suggested having it open, but with barrels, and Fire Captain Deneau, asked if the Fire Department would be expected to move them away, and then wait to move them back, and Mayor Garrett, suggested the Police putting the barrels back in place.
- Fire Captain Deneau, reminded the residents that if we have to transport you, that would be how we would get you out to transport you for a medical emergency.
- Fire Captain Deneau, said another option would be to make it a one-way street, with signage.
- Councilmember Hammond thought we should try the one way, and then maybe a moveable barrier, and Mayor Garrett commented on using both.
- Fire Captain Deneau, said the Siren gate works well but takes more time to get it in place.
- Rick Wisz suggested using some type of speed bump or apparatus, and Fire Captain Deneau, said it slows them down, and he has seen roundabouts that will slow people down.
- Robert Armstrong, who lives on San Jose, asked if any of this is done, is the cost, taken on by taxpayers or the City of Lathrup Village?
- Mayor Garrett, said if there is a low cost, it comes from the Street Funds, and CA Greene said if there is a high cost it will come from the Street Funds.
- Councilmember Hammond said he doesn't know where they would get money for a \$65,000 gate.
- Mayor Pro Tem Kantor thought there could be some from PA 33.
- Lauren Beras said that she has had a fire in her home, and she knows the difference, between 3-5 minutes, she sees cars fly down her street and she understands getting upset, yet she lived through a fire and would hate for anyone to lose their life.
- Tim Hillman, appreciates Rick Wisz's comment, saying where he works, there is a private drive that has signs, and at the intersection, there is a dip, and he has seen people turn around due to the dip, and he has seen many follow the signs, and it has been effective.
- William Daniels asked what would be the next step, and Attorney Baker said it would require a resolution to do that, a Traffic Control Order, CA Greene said the next meeting is on March 17, 2025.
- William Daniels, asked the Council, if those who live there, will have any say about it.
- Councilmember Hammond responded that City Council is tasked with weighing the concerns both ways, and Mayor Pro Tem Kantor, said the opportunity is now and at the next meeting to address the Council, as well as contacting them in the interim.
- William Daniels made comments including that this is the third time addressing this issue, it was in the contract for his home that the cul-de-sac would be closed off after construction, and once it was done it had to come before Council to get it to be done the way it was written up, and then the street got closed, and this summer, the Fire Chief, went through this issue. Mr. Daniels

commented that he thought the Council, understood that we were solidly against this, but now here we are again, a third time, and it impacts his quality of life and goes against what he signed up for when he moved here.

- Councilmember Hammond said this is different, because construction is closing roads down, and no one is saying we are definitely opening up this berm. Mayor Garrett commented that this is a tough decision to make, and only considering it because of the construction project.
- William Daniels commented that he wants the Council to at least have an understanding of a barrier, some kind of a solution for unwanted traffic.
- Councilmember Hammond, thought, the City could try removing it and using barrels and if that isn't effective, it would be measurable.
- William Daniels, commented that we don't have the money (\$65,000 for a Siren-operated gate), what are we going to do, if we find out (the barrels are) not working, will we have money for that?
- Scott Warner wanted to make sure there was a temporary solution, his house caught on fire, and he referenced that two of the 10 people in the audience have had house fires.
- Pamela Werdlow, asked if anyone has asked MDOT if they have funds for this, and if there are funds for a gate.
- Mayor Garrett, asked CA Greene, to look into that.
- Mayor Pro Tem Kantor said, they won't for a personal gate, and Pamela Werdlow, said, "Just ask they might."
- Councilmember Hammond asked if a representative from MDOT can come to the next meeting.
- Linda Daniels commented that the notice on her door was helpful, but she did not see it until Saturday, and they had an appointment in Lansing that kept them from getting here earlier, and wanted more notice of the meeting.
- Mayor Pro Tem Kantor, said this was a short turnaround for the City to get this information, and notices were given on Thursday.
- George Taylor, who lives on San Jose Ct., said he has talked with CA Greene before, and commented that traffic comes through, in nearby blocks and it is a nightmare, there is a reason why the street is closed. He is concerned for children, if it is open, electric cars make no noise and move fast, it creates a big issue, and we dealt with this 25 years ago to get it to be closed. He also wanted notifications given to the whole neighborhood not just San Jose Boulevard and San Jose Court.
- Autumn Sousanis, commented, on having a public hearing.
- Councilmember Hammond said it is expensive to mail out to everyone.
- Pamela Werdlow referenced the concert flyers, and Mayor Garrett responded that a person actually goes out to put those up.
- Robert Beras, was commenting on cameras in the meeting place, and saying he believed a prior speaker was being disingenuous when he was interrupted. He continued his comments expressing that people do not want to be videotaped and then have the video used against them, when he uses his camera, he is very respectful and doesn't invade people's spaces or film them when they are eating lunch.

4. **Mayor and Council Comments**

Mayor Garrett commented that we will look into what MDOT can do, you can write letters, and you can think of solutions, before the regular meeting on March 17th, 2025.

Mayor Garrett, addressed Autumn Sousanis, explaining the Study Sessions are not recorded due to the cost.

Mayor Pro Tem Kantor said there is no requirement in the Open Meetings Act to record meetings.

Mayor Garrett, addressing Autumn Sousanis, saying that the Council is not infringing on her First Amendment rights, you are infringing on other people's rights, who might not want to be recorded by a private citizen, and that's why they are exploring rules and procedures, because you weaponize the videos and it is upsetting people and they are reaching out and feeling harassed and demonized, if they don't agree with you.

Mayor Garrett addressed comments made to her about speaking louder, which were shouted out during the meeting, by saying that she hasn't worn a mask in 5 years, but on Thursday she was diagnosed with Covid, and now the test came back negative, yet she still is wearing a mask out of concern for the people around her and their family members. She said her chest hurts and her voice is lower because of this.

Mayor Pro Tem Kantor commented that many people have reached out to him about this issue, and he also talked about the unregulated area of encroachments, and making an encroachment policy.

CA Greene, mentioned that he has talked to the Code Enforcement Officer about it and doing an education campaign, for residents using it as a driveway, for gazebos, and putting rocks in the encroachments.

Councilmember Hammond expressed wanting people to feel comfortable and not be on edge, because we want them to be heard, and if we want more engagement and people to be heard it is up to Council. He thanked residents for coming out and speaking tonight. He knows San Jose Blvd and San Jose Ct, residents have been here, he recognizes them, and they have been heard.

5. **Adjourned at 7:30 PM**