

City Council Regular Meeting Madison Heights, Michigan September 8, 2025

A City Council Regular Meeting was held on Monday, September 8, 2025, at 7:30 PM.

PRESENT

Mayor Roslyn Grafstein
Councilman Sean Fleming
Councilman William Mier
Councilor Emily Rohrbach
Councilman Quinn Wright

ABSENT

Mayor Pro Tem Mark Bliss
Councilman David Soltis

OTHERS PRESENT

City Manager Melissa Marsh
Assistant City Attorney Tim Burns
Deputy City Manager/City Clerk Cheryl Rottmann

Councilor Rohrbach led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

CM-25-132. Excuse Councilmembers.

Motion to excuse Mayor Pro Tem Bliss and Councilman Soltis from tonight's meeting.

Motion by Councilor Wrights, Seconded by Councilman Mier.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Councilman Fleming, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach,
Councilman Wright.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Soltis

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS:

- ***Community Connect***

Fire Chief Greg Lelito introduced *Community Connect*, a new initiative from the Fire Department. This secure online platform allows residents and businesses to share critical information directly with the Fire Department, aiming to improve emergency response, boost safety for occupants and responders, and lead to better outcomes. For residents, information can include details about family members with medical or mobility needs, pets, or access points like locks and door codes. For businesses, it can include contact information, building layouts, fire systems, and hazardous materials. This data allows crews to make faster, safer, and more informed decisions. Residents and businesses create a secure account, add important information, and receive an annual reminder

to verify accuracy. The program strengthens partnerships with the community and ensures a more efficient emergency response. Chief Lelito also mentioned an incentive for signing up before October 1st, where 24 fire blankets would be randomly selected and given out.

- ***Summer Beautification Awards***

The Director of Public Services Sean Ballantine presented the 2025 Summer Beautification Awards on behalf of the Beautification Committee, which includes the Active Adult Advisory Board and staff from the AAC and DPS.

- First place winner: Michael Jurich - 817 Elliot
- Second place winner: Kathy Pasternak - 680 E Gardenia

Director Ballantine noted that the Beautification Committee would return in December to look at holiday lights and decorations.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

The following residents spoke in opposition to the proposed project at 28767 Dartmouth:

- Kathy Sapia
- Timothy Ginster

Alice McKeage, resident, expressed concerns about the Special Land Use for a school at 510 W. Girard.

An unnamed resident spoke in opposition to the proposed re-zoning of 500 West Gardinia, PRZN 25-05.

Ann Ericson Gault, Oakland County Commissioner representing Madison Heights, Hazel Park, and part of Troy, provided an update on county matters. She assured continued funding for the Co-Responder Program and was looking into Community Development Block Grant funding. She promoted the Savi student debt relief program, noting it ends September 30th. It is free for a year of service, has resulted in an average of \$1,540/month savings, and \$26 million in student loan debt forgiven for Oakland County residents, with an average of \$42,000 per person for those qualifying for forgiveness. A workshop for the program is scheduled for September 18th.

An unnamed resident raised concerns about a Flock camera installed at 12 Mile and John R. They stated it was an AI camera, not just a license plate reader, capable of searching for vehicles based on descriptions (e.g., "white sports car with racing stripe") even without a plate. The resident expressed concerns about Flock maintaining a license to access customer data, potential security hazards from hacks, and the use of data for training AI models. They encouraged the council to decline renewing the subscription-based contract, citing Austin, Texas, as an example.

Cory Haines, resident, thanked the council and the Arts Board for recent concerts in the park and the Trail Tunes event, which he sponsored. He commended four Boy Scouts (James Kramer, Henry

Kramer, Layman Sandborn, Tanner Langdon) for completing or nearly completing their Eagle Scout projects. He also commended the neighbors who spoke at the meeting.

Randy Wittorp, President of Mount Zion Lutheran Church, stated the church's intent to be good neighbors and expressed excitement about the school project at 510 W Girard. He noted that improvements were being made to address neglected maintenance items.

Pastor Tom Naumann of Mount Zion Lutheran Church, 510 West Girard, spoke about the plan to open a Christian day school. He mentioned the church purchased the building in May and expressed their love for the Madison Heights community. He acknowledged Alice McKeage's concerns about the fence and dog and expressed a desire to maintain good neighborly relations, appreciating the sounds of children playing and learning.

CM-25-133. Consent Agenda.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as read.

Motion made by Councilor Wright, Seconded by Councilor Rohrbach.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Councilman Fleming, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Wright.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Soltis

Motion carried.

CM-25-134. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of August 26, 2025.

Motion to approve the Regular City Council Meeting Minutes of August 26, 2025, as printed.

Motion made by Councilor Wright, Seconded by Councilor Rohrbach.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Councilman Fleming, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Wright.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Soltis

Motion carried.

CM-25-135. Request to Wave Permit, Engineering, and Inspection Fees for Red Oaks Park Project.

Motion to formally waive all city-related permit, engineering, and inspection fees associated with the Red Oaks Park project.

Motion by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Councilman Fleming, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Wright.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Soltis

Motion carried.

CM-225-136. Special Land Use PSP 25-04 – 510 West Gerard Avenue, Private K-8 School.

City Manager Marsh stated that the applicant, Mount Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, requested Special Land Use approval to operate a private K-8 school at 510 West Gerard Avenue, which is zoned R-2 One-Family Residential. The school would operate out of the wing of the existing church building. The Planning Commission recommended approval, subject to conditions, including substantial compliance with the project narrative, installation of a one-way "do not enter" sign at the southern Barrington Street driveway, review of ancillary site improvements (playground, sports field) via minor site plan, and transitional landscaping along the western and northern property lines.

Motion to approve the Special Land Use request PSP25-04 at 510 West Gerard Avenue for the private K-8 school, with the following conditions:

1. The operation of the school, including enrollment, hours of operation, grade levels, etc., shall substantially comply with the project narrative submitted. Any modifications will need to be reviewed under Section 15.05.5 to determine if a new Special Land Use review is required.
2. A "One Way/ Do Not Enter" sign shall be installed at the southern Barrington Street driveway to ensure one-way circulation.
3. Ancillary site improvements, such as playground equipment or sports fields, etc., shall be reviewed through the Technical Review Committee (TRC) via the Minor Site Plan process.
4. Transitional landscaping shall be added along the western and northern property line.

Motion mad by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Councilman Fleming, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Wright.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Soltis

Motion carried.

CM-25-137. Special Land Use PSP 25-05 – 28767 Dartmouth Street, Parking as a Principal Use.

City Manager Marsh stated that the applicant and property owner, Najor Companies, requested Special Land Use approval to develop a parking lot and drive aisle as a principal use on a residential parcel (28767 Dartmouth Street, zoned R-3 One-Family Residential) to serve a proposed adjacent restaurant. The Planning Commission had previously recommended denial due to site plan issues. The applicant has since revised the site plan and held a public town hall meeting. Staff recommended postponing action until the October 13th council meeting and to remand the

revised submittal back to the Planning Commission for further review and recommendation at their September 16th, 2025, meeting. The alternatives were to approve or deny the request.

Motion to postpone action on Special Land Use request PSP25-05 to the October 13th meeting and remand the case back to the Planning Commission for further consideration.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilman Fleming.

Councilor Rohrbach stated she does not believe this proposal makes sense for the neighborhood's safety and consistency and requires further Planning Commission review.

Councilman Wright agreed to send it back, acknowledging ongoing discussions and compromise attempts.

Councilman Fleming encouraged the public to email or call council members to voice their concerns.

Mayor Grafstein supported remanding it to the Planning Commission, emphasizing their role in master planning and ordinances. The Planning Commission meeting for this item is scheduled for September 16th at 5:30 p.m.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Councilman Fleming, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Wright.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Soltis

Motion carried.

CM-25-138. Alley Vacation Request PE 25-01 – 17 Foot Wide Alley between 601 West 12 Mile Road and 28767 Dartmouth Road.

City Manager Marsh stated that the Community and Economic Development Department received a petition to vacate the 17-foot-wide improved alley right-of-way between 601 West 12 Mile Road and 28767 Dartmouth Road, which also provides access to 611 West 12 Mile. All adjacent property owners signed the petition. Staff recommended establishing a public hearing date of October 13, 2025, and referring the request to the Planning Commission for further study and recommendation, specifically linking it to the remanded Special Land Use case PSP25-05.

Motion to remand the alley vacation request PE 25-01 to the Planning Commission for review and comment and to set a public hearing date for October 13, 2025.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach, Seconded by Councilor Wright.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Councilman Fleming, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Wright.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Soltis

Motion carried.

CM-25-139. Scheduled Replacement of Backhoe Number 455.

Motion to award the purchase of one Caterpillar 420XCE backhoe as quoted by MacAllister Cat of Novi for \$176,611.83 through the Sourcewell cooperative purchasing agreement, to approve the trade-in of Water and Sewer Unit #455 for \$30,000 and Street Unit #407 for \$20,000 (reducing total cost to \$126,611.83), and to approve the transfer of \$20,000 from the Water and Sewer Fund to Streets Fund.

Motion made by Councilor Wright, Seconded by Councilor Rohrbach.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Councilman Fleming, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Wright.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Soltis

Motion carried.

CM25-140. Ordinance 2205, City Initiated Rezonings PRZN 25-1, 25-2, 25-3, 25-4, 25-6 (First Reading).

City Manager Marsh stated that the City of Madison Heights initiated a proactive re-zoning of several qualified properties to R-MN (Residential Mixed-Neighborhood), R-MF (Residential Multi-Family), MUI-2 (Mixed-Use Innovation 2), or B-1 (Neighborhood Business). This process aims to align zoning with existing land use, the City's Master Plan, and adjacent street networks to increase opportunities for building expansion and development while ensuring current uses remain permitted. The properties included are 555 East 13 Mile Road, 1434 East 13 Mile Road, 30801 Dequindre Road, 1042 East 12 Mile Road, and the eastern 130 feet of 30728 John R Road. PRZN25-05 (500 West Gardenia Avenue) was not included and was recommended by the Planning Commission to be withdrawn for further analysis. Staff recommended conducting the first reading of Ordinance 2205 and scheduling the second and final reading for the September 29, 2025, council meeting.

Motion to approve Ordinance number 2205 (PRZN25-01 through 25-04 and PRZN25-06) as follows and schedule the Second and final reading for the September 29, 2025 Council meeting.:

ORDINANCE NO. 2205

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE NUMBER 2198, BEING AN ORDINANCE CODIFYING AND ADOPTING A NEW ZONING ORDINANCE FOR THE CITY OF MADISON HEIGHTS, BY AMENDING THE ZONING MAP CONTAINED WITHIN APPENDIX A.

Motion made by Councilor Rohrbach Seconded by Councilman Mier.

Voting Yea: Mayor Grafstein, Councilman Fleming, Councilman Mier, Councilor Rohrbach, Councilman Wright.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Bliss, Councilman Soltis

Motion carried.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilman Mier thanked attendees and reiterated the decision to send the Dartmouth project back to the Planning Commission. He commented on the new garbage and recycling cans, reminding residents to place them with the handle toward the house and mouth toward the street, leaving about 3 feet of space between cans for the automated collection arm. He shared an example of neighbors taking turns collecting small bags into one bin to wheel out. He also noted he is recycling more with the larger bin.

Councilor Wright promoted Revin' in the Heights, an event on September 13th from 10 AM to 3 PM at the Civic Center Campus, partnered with the Human Relations and Equity Commission (HREC) and the Fire Department. It will feature a car show, Fire Department open house activities, an Oakland County Parks bounce blaster, Lego sets, three food trucks, and various cars. The event is free and will include multiple awards. He also addressed previous public comments, clarifying that he was defending Juneteenth against prejudice, not calling the entire city racist. He promoted a "Scream Club" on Tuesday nights at The Hill at 7:30 PM, a neutral event for collective stress release. He concluded by reminding everyone to "be kind".

City Manager Marsh wished Mayor Pro Tem Bliss a happy 40th birthday. She reminded everyone that the next meeting is September 29th and that October council meetings will start an hour earlier at 6:30 PM (except for tree lighting night at 7:30 PM). She thanked the Arts Board for Trail Tunes and announced upcoming events: Downtown Touchdown on October 4th at the 11 Mile Streetscape and the Harvest Festival at Rosies Park the following Saturday. She also mentioned an informal Police Reserves meeting on October 15th from 6 PM to 7 PM at the Police auditorium. Sergeant Steve Shram elaborated on the reserve program, which augments the Police Department for various activities, and encouraged interested individuals to apply via the city website.

Deputy City Manager/City Clerk Rottmann reminded residents about the city election on November 4th. Early voting starts on Saturday, October 25th, at the Royal Oak Senior Center, and absentee ballots will be mailed out by the end of September/early October.

Councilor Rohrbach reiterated the excitement for Revin' in the Heights and thanked Councilor Wright and the HREC for their work. She strongly encouraged residents to sign up for Community Connect with the Fire Department, emphasizing its importance for sharing critical information about pets, accessibility issues, and medical needs. She wished her twin boys, Eric and Evan, a happy 12th birthday on Wednesday. She also mentioned a Halloween dress-up event for dogs at the Madison Heights Red Oaks Dog Park on the 30th.

Councilman Fleming thanked attendees and noted that the Value Center at 14 Mile Road is becoming a Holiday Market. He enjoyed the Trail Tunes event, highlighting new bands and the council's role as judges. He announced a Boy Scouts 9/11 service on September 11th at 7 PM at the fire station and encouraged support for first responders. He also commended the four Boy Scouts mentioned earlier for their Eagle Scout projects.

Mayor Grafstein thanked Councilman Mier for sharing a story about community and good neighbors. She provided background on the church re-zoning, explaining that the changes were made to simplify processes for future uses while noting that the Gardinia property was pulled for separate, resident-input-driven review. She thanked Consumers Energy for their family fun night at Civic Park and their support for the band shell. She recognized the Chinese Community Center's 20th anniversary, Mayor Grafstein emphasized that the Council's primary job is to ensure residents feel safe and comfortable in their homes, prioritizing essential services over "fun" events.

ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further business, Mayor Grafstein adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

Roslyn Grafstein, Mayor

Cheryl E. Rottmann, City Clerk