

Textron asks for postponement of hearing for tax abatement

by JON HUBBARD
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Farmington Hills city officials received notice late Monday that Troy-based Textron Automotive would need a little more time with their request for a tax abatement.

In a letter faxed to City Manager Steve Brock, Francene Newbury asked that two public hearings be postponed until the council's July 10 meeting. The company didn't provide a reason for the request.

"I think they were surprised at how quickly we moved," Brock said. "That's one for the public side—we're ready, they're not."

Textron representative Kirk Aubrey said Tuesday the company had some issues with loose terms that needed to be finalized.

"Before we proposed it to council, we wanted to have everything nailed down, so we're ready to start right away if we're given approval," he said.

When asked whether Textron had a timeline for completing

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Kirk Aubrey
—Textron representative

the facility, Aubrey replied "yesterday." Detailed plans are already drawn, and a construction schedule depends only on site approvals.

A division of a multi-national company headquartered in Rhode Island, Textron Automotive is seeking the tax break to build on property in the 12 Mile/Drake/Haggerty Road area. The city's contribution is required to leverage an application to the Michigan Economic Growth Association (MEGA), which provides even larger tax abatements for high-tech

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research companies.

Textron Automotive recently withdrew a similar request made of Novi, issuing a statement that the city's timetable had caused them to fall behind in construction of their new facility. Novi City Council members had approved a tax abatement policy just two weeks earlier.

Brock said the company anticipates making a \$40 million to \$50 million investment, consolidating four or five offices into one location. The city's Economic Development Commission has recommended approving the abatement, which would amount to approximately \$2,540,019 from all taxing jurisdictions. The city's share would be \$599,918.

In the city's last MEGA-related tax abatement, Robert Bosch Corp. received \$2,518,868 in personal and real estate tax abatements, with the city's portion totaling \$594,873.



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