

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SEVEN PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

ELECTION
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The Farmington Hills City Charter provides the framework for the operation of local government and is a living document, reviewed and updated by city council periodically as the needs of the community have changed.

The Farmington Hills City Charter was adopted in 1973 and has been updated 12 times by voters.

The following is a brief overview of the seven proposed amendments to the city charter that voters will consider at the polls on Nov. 2.

PROPOSAL A

As you'll see it on the ballot:

Shall the City Charter, Section 2.06 relating to remuneration of Council Members be amended to increase the annual salary of Council Members from \$1,600 to \$5,000 and the Mayor's annual salary from \$2,700 to \$7,500 effective July 1, 2000, and to eliminate the authority of Council to increase the salaries of Councilmembers and the Mayor by ordinance, subject to mandatory referendum of the electors, but provide for annual increases of such salaries in a percentage equal to any increase in the United States Consumer Price Index for the previous 12 months?

What it means:

Members of city council receive a stipend. The amount of the stipend has not changed since the original charter was adopted 26 years ago. This proposal would increase the stipend to account for inflation and serves as nominal compensation for council members.

PROPOSAL B

As you'll see it on the ballot:

Shall the City Charter, Section 5.01 relating to Administrative Departments, be amended to remove the prohibition of council adopting ordinances to create additional administrative departments beyond those established by charter?

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

This charter amendment would allow the

council to create administrative departments by ordinance in addition to the five departments created by city charter. The present administrative departments are: Finance, Public Safety, Public Services, Planning and Special Services.

What it means:

The charter adopted 26 years ago established only five principal city departments: Finance, Public Safety, Public Services, Planning and Special Services. It has never been updated to reflect departments that currently provide and are necessary to provide services as a result of the dramatic increase in population over the last 30 years. Critical functions that already exist, but are not currently recognized by the charter as departments include Police, Fire, Human Resources, Central Services (purchasing and information systems) and the City Clerk's office. This proposal would allow council to formally recognize the current organizational structure of the city and provide for future departments if appropriate.

PROPOSAL C

As you'll see it on the ballot:

Shall the City Charter, Subsection B of Section 2.11 relating to managerial audits, be amended to provide for managerial audits to be conducted not less than once in each 10-year period?

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

This charter amendment would increase the time between managerial audits from five years to 10 years.

What it means:

A managerial audit is a review of the city's operating practices and procedures by an objective third party. This audit is currently required to be conducted once every five years and past audits have revealed that the city has been operated in an efficient manner. These audits are costly and significant changes in the audit report are not likely within a five-year period. The proposal allows the audit to be conducted not less than once every 10 years, saving the city consulting fees and allowing the city to initiate a more frequent audit if deemed necessary. This should not be confused with the city's financial audit, which will continue

to be performed annually.

PROPOSAL D

As you'll see it on the ballot:

Shall the City Charter, Section 9.12 relating to Contracts, be amended to require sealed bids or proposals for purchases or contracts involving the expenditure of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or more?

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

This charter amendment would increase the minimum amount of expenditures for purchases or contracts requiring sealed bids or proposals from \$3,000 dollars to \$10,000 dollars.

What it means:

The sealed bid process requires development of written specifications, the soliciting of bids, the administration of formal bid openings and the presentation of a final recommendation to council for approval of expenditures. These procedures and the requirements for written quotes for smaller purchases ensure control, accountability and responsibility in the purchasing process. The current charter requires sealed competitive bids for expenditures that exceed \$3,000. This amount has remained unchanged for over 26 years. As a result of inflation, \$3,000 in 1973 is now worth over \$12,000. This proposal would adjust the sealed bid amount to \$10,000, an amount significantly less than that of other communities of comparable size.

PROPOSAL E

As you'll see it on the ballot:

Shall the City Charter, Subsection A of Section 10.01 relating to the Employment of relatives, be amended to remove the prohibition of appointment or employment of relatives of Councilmembers, appointees or employees of the City without prior Council approval, to allow such appointment or employment provided that Council approval is subsequently obtained within thirty days of the initial date of service or employment?

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

This charter amendment would allow the city to appoint or employ relatives by blood or marriage of any councilmember, appointee or

employee of the city subject to the approval of city council within 30 days of the initial date of service or employment.

What it means:

The current charter requires that the city council review the employment of a relative of any city employee or elected or appointed official. This includes the hiring of part-time and temporary summer employees.

This proposal would maintain the council's review of the employment, but allows that the review may occur within 30 days of employment.

PROPOSAL F

As you'll see it on the ballot:

Shall the City Charter, Subsection D of Section 4.09 relating to signatures required on initiative or referendum petitions be amended to provide that initiative petitions and referendum petitions for City Ordinances be signed by registered electors of the City not less in number than ten (10) percent of the total votes cast for Secretary of State in the City at the last election at which a Secretary of State was elected prior to the filing of the petition, reducing the number of signatures required from fifteen (15) percent?

What it means:

If city council will not adopt an ordinance - defined as a law or an order usually pertaining to a specific subject - which residents of the city have brought forth for consideration, there is a mechanism in place which gives voters the right to petition the council to have the ordinance implemented. This is called an "Ordinance Initiative."

If city council adopts an ordinance which residents do not agree with or feel is inappropriate, there is a mechanism in place which allows voters to try to have this ordinance rescinded or canceled. This is called an "Ordinance Referendum."

The current charter outlines the procedures for registered voters to accomplish an Ordinance Initiative or Referendum. As part of either process, petitions containing the appropriate language must be circulated within a 45-day time period. The petition must be signed by registered voters of the city not less

in number than 15 percent of the total votes cast for Secretary of State in the city at the last election in which a Secretary of State was elected. Currently a petition would require approximately 4,400 signatures.

This proposal would make this process easier for the voters by reducing the required number of signatures on petitions to 10 percent of the total votes cast for Secretary of State in the last election in which a Secretary of State was elected.

PROPOSAL G

As you'll see it on the ballot:

Shall the City Charter, Subsection H of Section 4.09, relating to limitations on amendments or repeal of Initiative or Referendum Ordinances be amended to prohibit the amendment or repeal of Initiative Ordinances and the enactment of ordinances repealed by referendum for a period of two (2) years after the date of the election at which the Initiative ordinance was adopted or the ordinance was repealed, increasing this period from the current one (1) year?

What it means:

An Initiative Ordinance is an ordinance proposed by registered voters through a petitioning effort and then placed on a ballot and subsequently adopted and put into effect by the electorate. The current charter states that an ordinance adopted by the electorate (or vote of the people) through initiative proceedings may not be amended or repealed by the council for a period of one year.

A Referendum Ordinance is an ordinance proposed to be repealed or canceled by registered voters through a petitioning effort and then placed on a ballot and subsequently canceled through the vote of the people. The current charter states that an ordinance repealed by the electorate may not be re-enacted by the council for a period of one year.

This proposal would lengthen the period of time in which city council would be prohibited from amending, repealing or re-enacting an ordinance that was initiated, petitioned and approved by the voters from one year to two years.

HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS

Children trick-or-treating after dark makes Halloween an especially dangerous time. To keep your children safe teach them the following rules for pedestrian safety:

■ STOP at the curb before entering streets.

■ LOOK left-right-left for moving cars

■ WAIT for the proper traffic signals AND be sure the street is clear, even then keep looking for cars

■ WALK, don't run when crossing the street. Use sidewalks, if there are no sidewalks walk on the side facing traffic.

■ STAY AWAY from parked cars and don't run between them.

■ DO NOT enter a stranger's car.

■ WATCH to see if a car is getting ready to move (motor on, rear lights, exhaust smoke, wheels turning, person in the car).

Both children and adults need to think about safety on this annual day of make-believe. The Safety Council for Southeast

Michigan urges motorists to be especially alert on Halloween and offers the following driving tips:

■ SLOW down in residential neighborhoods and obey traffic signs and signals.

■ WATCH for children walking on roadways, median and curbs. If youngsters are wearing dark costumes, they'll be hard to see at night.

■ BE PREPARED for children to dart out into the street at any time, especially from behind parked cars.

■ CAREFULLY enter and exit driveways and alleys.

■ CLEAN headlights and make sure they work.

■ If you are driving children on their "trick or treat" rounds, be sure they exit on the curb side, away from traffic. (And of course, make sure everyone's safety belt is fastened.)

■ If you are on the way to a costume party, do not wear your mask while driving and avoid costumes that make it difficult to move your arms and legs.

■ Costumes should be loose

enough so that warm clothing can be worn underneath and to allow freedom of movement.

■ Costumes should not be so long as to cause a tripping hazard.

■ Outfits should be made with light-colored, flame retardant fabric. Use strips of reflective tape to make children even more visible.

■ Consider using make-up instead of a mask so that a child's vision will not be blocked.

■ An adult or older sister or brother will be supervising the outing for children under 12.

■ Travel only in familiar areas and along established routes.

■ Children know to stop only at houses or apartments buildings that are well-lighted and never enter a stranger's home or car.

■ Each child has change for a phone call in case they have a problem while away from home.

■ A return time has been established.

■ Youngsters understand not to eat any treat until you have inspected it.

Trick or Trot 5K walk to benefit pediatric cancer research

Pediatric cancer research will benefit from the first annual Trick or Trot 5K Run and Walk, scheduled Saturday, Oct. 30 at Maybury State Park in Northville.

All proceeds will benefit Leukemia, Research, Life, Inc., a non-profit, 501-C-3 organization dedicated to the elimination of childhood cancers through

research at Children's Hospital of Michigan.

The 5K event will begin at 6 p.m. For the kids, there will be a half-mile "Tot Trot" beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Entry fees the day of the event are \$20 for the 5K and \$10 for the "Tot Trot." All fees include a long-sleeve t-shirt and party.

Since its inception in 1981,

LRL has raised more than \$2 million for research.

Special guests at the event will include Lile Lazarus of WDIV-TV, Mark Hayes of WXYZ-TV and Q 95.5 radio. A special Halloween production by FTD Theater will follow the Trick or Trot.

Maybury is located on Six Mile Road west of Beck Road. Call (734) 454-7341.

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Saturday, October 30
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