

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI  
MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**Mayor Fischer called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL:** Mayor Fischer, Mayor Pro Tem Casey, Council Members Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas

**ALSO PRESENT:** Victor Cardenas, City Manager  
Tom Schultz, City Attorney

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Member Staudt added "Nine Mile Road" to Mayor and Council Issues.

**CM 24-03-32 Moved by Staudt, seconded by Casey; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**To approve the agenda as amended.**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-03-32**                      **Yeas: Casey, Gurumurthy, Heintz, Smith,  
Staudt, Thomas, Fischer**  
**Nays: None**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS: None**

**PRESENTATIONS: None**

**ATTORNEY REPORT: None**

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS:**

Kazi Afzal, 48160 Andover Dr, said he has been a resident of Novi for five and a half years. He said that Novi has a diverse population and culture and has been a great city for his family to call home. He said he is a technical person and a problem solver. He explains he has led global teams and faced many challenges with members who were afraid to take responsibility, make the right calls, or take action He said that in the past few meetings, audience members have shown the Council what has been happening in Palestine. He said for 75 years Americans have been complicit in oppression, human rights violations, and destroying generations. He said it needs to stop, and the City of Novi needs to be on the right side. Mr. Afzal said he understands that many wars are happening around the world, but in no other way is the US as deeply involved as what is seen in the war carried out by the regime in Israel. He said as Americans, we bear a larger burden. He said the Council is probably hesitant to call for a ceasefire because they are worried about upsetting some individuals who would like to see the outrageous levels of casualty of human lives continue. He said it is similar to being a witness to mass murder, but you're told to not go and help the victims, let the murderer finish the job. He said that the demand to end the war was for both sides. The war is creating thousands of refugees and they have nowhere to go. He said to let the Palestinians live in their homeland with

security and dignity. He said a ceasefire resolution can be a part of avoiding a major refugee crisis. He said many Novi residents are victims of doxing by groups who want to suppress basic civil rights such as the freedom of speech and right to protest. He said these entities can be local or not local. He said a ceasefire resolution would show that Novi is against these violations and stands against hate. He said Novi residents have denounced hate and promoted peace. Novi is a global community and has shown global awareness and compassion as seen in support of Ukraine during time of need. He asked the Council if they were going to be a body that, despite being shown the truth with facts and reports, refuses to make the right call given the history of compassion and action. He said he urged the community and Council to consider a ceasefire resolution today.

A resident of Novi said that she is the co-founder and volunteer at the Novi Food Pantry at the Tawheed Center of Novi Association in collaboration with Forgotten Harvest Food Bank. She said she stood before the Council with a heavy heart and a plea for humanity. She said the Council has heard for over a week the comments about the seamless violence, important lives lost, and devastation of families torn apart in Gaza. She said she doesn't need to repeat the numbers and statistics of casualties and dead that have just shrunk to a mere number. She said as food supplies are being made available to the people of Palestine, planes and helicopters are waiting to bomb them, and hundreds and thousands of Palestinians are being massacred within a few seconds being labeled now as the 'Great Flower Massacre'. She said despite the cries of justice echoing around the world and in the Chamber, we remain silent. She said that we sit here unmoved as if the suffering of millions of Palestinians does not weigh heavily on our conscience as if we don't care for the plight. She explained it is the plight of people who look different than us, speak a different language, and believe in a different God. She said although our own Pledge of Allegiance talks about 'liberty and justice for all' the response from the Council is silence. She asked how we as a community can turn a blind eye to such injustice. She said she would like to applaud Member Heintz for his Facebook post, which was very brave, although he received backlash from other lobbyists, he stood on the right side of humanity. She said unfortunately that was just a Facebook post and not a resolution or action the Council took by invoking and passing a resolution for a ceasefire. She said we continue to be complicit in the bloodshed and violence plaguing Gaza. She said we must act now before it is too late and implores the Council to pass a ceasefire resolution; to send a clear message that we stand in solidarity with the people of Gaza and that we will not tolerate the continued loss of innocent lives. She reminded the Council that election day is judgment day and a day of reckoning where the Council's inaction and silence will be accounted for. She said history will judge you, not only by your actions but also by your failures to act in the face of injustice. She said that Muslims around the world are observing the holy month of Ramadan. She said in this blessed month of Ramadan when all prayers are answered, she will use the remainder of her time to pray for the victims of the genocide.

Phillip Kasper, a Novi resident, said he lives on Sunflower Road, on the south side of Nine Mile, between Meadowbrook and Haggerty. He said he is at the Council Meeting to protest the cutting of the trees along Nine Mile, and the widening or putting in the turn

lanes on Nine Mile called the Nine Mile Rehabilitation Project. He said he hopes there are some of his neighbors here, and that they only became aware of this when they saw big pink ribbons around historic trees that are hundreds of years old. He said they found out through a few calls that those trees would be cut down to put in a few turning lanes in a residential area of Novi. He said this subject is near and dear to his heart. One of the reasons that he was attracted to the area was because the trees make a tunnel of trees. He said it is reminiscent of being up north. He said if you cut down all of those trees, it will look like Ten Mile Road or Eight Mile Road. He said he drove up and down Nine Mile to see how many turning lanes there are in residential areas. He said there are none on Nine Mile. He said if you go to Beck Road, on Nine Mile the west portion turns into dirt. If you go after Haggerty, you go into Farmington Hills. So, he said, within Novi there are no turning lanes on Nine Mile Road. He said he doesn't know if there has been a traffic study done or something that causes the trees to be cut down and put in turning lanes on what is literally a residential street at almost its entire length. He added there is a turn lane from Chase Dr. to Novi Road where it is all businesses. He said there are no turn lanes in residential areas, not even at Center Rd. which turns into Northville from Nine Mile. He said he doesn't believe there is a need for a turn lane on Nine Mile between Haggerty and Meadowbrook in any way, shape, or form. He stated if this was Federal Money that was being used, he believed it would be better used somewhere else. He said it was not necessary in that area and asked the Council to please not cut down the ancient trees.

Zafar Salim, a Novi resident, said he was in attendance to talk about the Palestinian ceasefire, a matter that transcends global borders and touches the very essence of our shared humanity and community. He said the Ceasefire in Palestine was not merely a distant diplomatic term but represents a beacon of hope for the countless humans whose lives have been marred by conflict and loss. He said innocent lives are being lost, families torn apart, and generations are being eradicated. He said it was not just an issue for those living in the midst of the conflict, it echoes around the world affecting many people in Novi. He said Novi prides itself on being a community that stands for justice, compassion, and human dignity. He said we are a city of global citizens, where global issues find a local voice and the wealth and welfare of all people guides our actions. He said many residents with ties to Palestine share a deep concern for human rights. He said the principles that define us as a City, our vision, our inclusivity, our commitment to peace, and our dedication to the wellbeing of all calls upon us to acknowledge and act upon the global issues that align with these values by advocating for a ceasefire to support Novi citizens who have friends and families in Palestine, or to support those who simply advocate for humanitarian causes. He said that the people in the room were not overstepping their bounds, and neither would the City Council. He said we are just fulfilling our responsibility as global citizens and leaders in pursuit of a just world. He said the Novi City Council has the opportunity to set a precedent to show that they're not indifferent to the sufferings of others, no matter where it occurs. Zafar said by passing a ceasefire, we send a powerful message that Novi is a city that cares, leads, and stands on the right side of justice and history. He said he urges everyone to consider the profound impact our collective voice can have when joined together to support peace, to call for an end to the loss of innocent lives, and to affirm a city's role in the global community. He asked Councilman Heintz to raise his hand and officiate his call for a ceasefire.

A student from Novi High School said she is a proud resident of Novi. She said she stood before the Council to advocate for a ceasefire in Palestine. She said the city has long been a beacon of diversity and progress. She said that it's from this place of unity that she implores our leaders to heed the urgent pleas for peace in that region. She said that through her years as a resident of Novi, she has dedicated herself to the betterment of the city, working to uplift marginalized communities and foster a sense of belonging for all. She said she has served as a student representative of the Student Novi Library Board advocating for the DEI committee. She said she founded and currently directs a food pantry at the Tawheed Center of Novi, serving over 200 individuals a month. She said she has campaigned and volunteered for our elections. She said that she recognizes that our responsibilities extend far beyond our own borders. She said we cannot turn a blind eye to the injustices faced by our brothers and sisters in Palestine. A call for a ceasefire today is a testament to our humanity. She said to the Council that this was their affirmation and commitment to the voices of their constituents. She said this was a step towards building a more peaceful future where all people, regardless of their backgrounds, religion, race, or color of their skin can live in peace and security. She said as a diverse community of Novi, it is our obligation to speak up and keep speaking up for this issue. She told the Council that their constituents and members of the community have come up again for the past few weeks and will keep coming. She said she is there, while fasting, during the holy month of Ramadan to implore the Council to use their voices as community representatives and vote for a ceasefire. She said to please listen to their voices, and represent those who have brought the Council there, and whose power it is to keep bringing them here. She reiterated to please call for a ceasefire today.

Concetta Varana, 4035 Village Wood Rd., said she has lived in Novi for 30 years. She said she is saddened by the plight of the humans who are suffering in another country but is also saddened about what is going on here. She explained she has learned through Nextdoor.com what is going to happen to Nine Mile Rd. between Haggerty and Meadowbrook. She said she walks Nine Mile Rd. regularly. It distresses her mind and emotions. She said it was a wonderful thing that it was paved by the city to make it a walkable City. She said the trees and nature left on Nine Mile fill her heart with joy. She said we have the opportunity to use government money, and what we use it for is to tear down this beautiful part of Novi. She said a perfect example of a waste of government money is the roundabout by the Double Tree Hotel. She said this is the most pointless roundabout, and there is no traffic there. She explained she is disappointed that this project is even on the agenda to happen possibly within the next several months. She said to please not do that. She asked the Council to please not take away her refuge.

Farah Baig, 23169 Inverness Ct, said this is her third time coming to share her thoughts with the Council. She said she is a concerned resident of Novi, who is speaking at length but is not being heard. She said she feels like her words are falling on deaf ears, and it is very frustrating. She said she is confident that the City Council members have a deep concern for the wellness of Novi residents. She said she had the opportunity to sit in on a recent meeting of the Older Adults Committee, and it was really clear that the Council Members are very much concerned for the wellbeing of the community. She said the ceasefire

resolution sought speaks directly to the mental wellness of our Novi community atrocities that have been happening in Gaza, as many of her colleagues have spoken at length about in previous City Council meetings. She said she has asked others to come to the City Council meetings to voice their concerns. However, she said, she often hears responses that are disheartening and filled with frustration. She said she received a reply from a fellow educator who is going through some severe trauma and distress. She wrote "Beyond heartbroken over what has been happening as Palestine was my parent's homeland along with Jordan for many years. You can't know how painful it has been for us to see the images of many generations decimated to nothing. We still have family there. Unfortunately, my son-in-law lost eight members of his father's family when the churches were bombed. Very sad and disappointed that our government never took the initiative to intervene early on." Farah explained she is a resident and a mother of five, and this issue directly impacts her family. She said if you are wondering what a ceasefire resolution might do, it will directly address the pain she and her family are going through. She said the mental wellness of a community is key for a community to thrive. She said she is confident that each of the Councilmembers is deeply concerned for the well-being of all the community members. She said to pass a ceasefire resolution and stand with the community you represent.

Ferdi Gomes, a Novi resident, said he has lived here for 40 years. He said he had come to the Council meeting to address the Nine Mile Rehabilitation project and turn lanes. He said he doesn't believe it is necessary. He said considering the input from the other speaker, the money could be used elsewhere, and on other road improvements. He offered he is happy to help with input and participation. He said that adding turn lanes will only encourage the speeders that exist on Nine Mile Rd. He said the Police have helped by adding speed trackers to track the speeds. Mr. Ferdi added that he had become good at being able to tell who was over the 35-mph speed limit. He said that he would like the Council and whoever is responsible to consider reducing the speed limit on Nine Mile to 30 mph. He said an increase in trucks has been continuous on that particular stretch, which there are signs to prevent, but they still pass through. He added that he rarely sees Police patrolling the area looking for speeders. He said he would urge whoever has the ability to encourage a speed and truck restriction. He said, as someone mentioned before, those trees are over 50 years old, and it would be a shame to cut them down. He added that he sees this project as a done deal, but he didn't see any public input from residents. He said he would request this particular project to be reconsidered.

Kelly Kasper, 21505 Sunflower, said she lives in the Whispering Meadow Subdivision and is at the meeting to discuss the tree situation on Nine Mile Rd. She said the City told her the amount of trees coming down is 25. She said they are over 100 years old and make a beautiful tunnel. She said when they purchased their home in Novi, she remembers thinking it was so beautiful. She added it felt like living in a community up north and she enjoys the trees on their side of town. She said they don't have any beautiful parks like Lakeshore Park, or any real walkable areas to walk in. She said it is nice to have Nine Mile with all the mature trees, for when they walk down the sidewalks, and it would be a shame to see them go. She said she doesn't know much about project development but

has done a little bit of research on her own. She added that widening lanes and roads creates induced demand. Rather than alleviating traffic problems, it creates more traffic problems because more people will drive on that road over time. She said she doesn't see a need to have a turn lane on the road, because Nine Mile is not a major entrance or exit ramp onto any major through fares; it is almost completely residential from one end to the other. She said she would like to use her last minute to discuss a resolution on peace in Gaza. She said, she stands with humanity and sees her neighbors and community members hurting. She thinks we need to stand up and say something on their behalf. She said she would like to call for a resolution for a ceasefire as well. She said if the Nine Mile project is going to go through with no say-so from the residents, she would like the city to consider replanting mature trees all down Nine Mile to repair some of the damage they are getting ready to do.

Khurram Abbas, 26508 Mandalay Cir., said he urges the Mayor and City Council to adopt a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. He said there have been over 30,000 casualties, many being women and children. Children constitute almost half of that number. He said the ones alive are facing an acute and deliberate shortage of food and medicine. He said many other cities have called for a ceasefire through proclamations and resolutions, and he wants his Novi leadership to do the same. He said to be on the right side of history, take a stand, and call for peace and tranquility around the world. He said there had been a lot of people speaking, and he could see a lot of frustration and growing resentment among community members because the City Council was not listening to them. He said the second thing he wanted to discuss was the tree removal on Nine Mile Rd. He explained he used to live in that area and had personally never encountered a traffic problem there. He said he doesn't see the need for a left turn or the widening of the road. He added that the area reminds him of the tunnel of trees up north. He said the city staff probably did their due diligence and looked into it, but he would implore the city to look again and see if there is a way to proceed and preserve the mature trees.

Panagiota Wolstencroft, 40611 Oakwood Dr., said she was in attendance to oppose the widening of Nine Mile Rd. She said she grew up in this city and lived in the Village Oaks area for over 20 years. She said several years ago, the city put in a sidewalk that took down the trees that served as a buffer for those that back up to Nine Mile Rd. She stated that the city now wants to remove another 20 to 25 trees. She asked what effects the removal would have on noise levels, clean air, and the beauty of the road. She asked why the city was winding the road. She explained there is no need as it is in a developed residential area with a speed limit of 35 mph. She said winding the road would cause traffic to come closer to the sidewalk that was just put in. She said by taking the trees down, you remove buffers between pedestrians and traffic. She added that this will also result in more property loss for the residents on the north side of Nine Mile. Ms. Wolstencroft said there was mention of a traffic study increase, because of a year-long construction project on 10-Mile. Now, she said, it has returned to preconstruction levels and accidents do not happen on Nine Mile Rd., except at Nine Mile and Haggerty where people try to run the light. She said to maybe revisit the plan and focus on fixing traffic on Haggerty instead.

Farahnaz Ashtiani, 43145 Emerson Way, said she has been a Novi resident for the past 20 years and attended her first City Council meeting two weeks prior for the first time. She said many people requested a resolution for a ceasefire. She said she asked what was going to happen and when they would hear back, and was told they were not, because the Council does not consider this a topic related to the city. She said her discussions are why she thinks it is directly related to the city and residents of Novi. She said she understands that the Council cannot address every humanitarian topic in the world. But, she specifically wanted to talk about what is happening in Gaza. She said what's happening in Gaza is related to all of us as humans and Americans. She said none of us can claim to live in a human and democratic country if we witness the massacre of children and women that is funded by the Country you are a citizen of. She said everyone in the Council Chambers prides themselves in making an honorable and decent living for their families. She said part of our earnings and other indirect contributions are actually funding these massacres. She said that before October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, we did not know what was going on. The unfolding of these crimes beyond belief being broadcast to the world by the people is happening to have opened our eyes and questioned many of our values. She said she humbly asks the Mayor and City Council as representatives, parents, a spouse, daughter, or son if it is acceptable to see your hard-earned money directly or indirectly supporting a genocide, killing other families. She asked if it was acceptable that we are funding the starvations of other families and children in another corner of the world. She asked if it is acceptable that this money could be used in our community but is being used to fund crimes on the other side of the world. She said what happened in Palestine should not continue to happen. She said if the residents of Novi from any ethnicity or background want to have peace and want their children to live in a peaceful world, it does not happen by supporting the killing of other innocent children somewhere else in the world. She said she is asking for a resolution for a ceasefire.

A Novi resident of 5 years said he was at the meeting to talk about the Gaza ceasefire resolution. He said Gaza has 13,000 children already dead and thousands left with lifelong injuries and living in terrible conditions. He said hunger and starvation are just adding to the long list of dead children. He explained that he sits every day with his kids at the dinner table thinking about the fathers who aren't able to see to see or feed their kids anymore. He said he prays his daughter will never go through that. He said he humbly requests that the City of Novi passes a resolution to show that we stand for humanity, peace, and unity. He said to follow what other major cities have already done.

Noah Boehm, 40559 Oakwood Dr., said he attended the meeting to speak about the widening of Nine Mile Rd. He explained he had witnessed constant speeding, almost nonstop, people passing other people. He said he knows that he does the speed limit and gets dirty looks for it. He said he has called the police a handful of times about the matter, but he thinks this also falls on deaf ears. He said he rarely sees the police patrolling there. He said the digital speed sign is more of a target for seeing how high the number will go. He said you would think people would slow down, after seeing their speed on the digital sign, and then the road sign that says 35, but they don't even touch the brakes. He said if you add more to the road, it will make more room for passing, rather than

having to stop for someone who is turning into one of the neighborhoods. Rather than going around them and into oncoming traffic, they can just go around. He said right now, he believes it is a solid lane, uphill, but it still doesn't stop people from passing or going double the speed limit. He said he received an output from one of the sergeants at the police department that nobody was exceeding 40 mph, and he knew that wasn't true. He said he agrees that the road needs to be cleaned up, but clean up the trees by trimming them properly, not by cutting them down. He said that the money can be utilized elsewhere.

Meena Ansari, 40620 Camborne Ln., said she is a devoted mother of three and an educator within Novi schools. She said she stood before the council with a plea for peace, compassion, and humanity. She said the Holy Manta Ramadan commenced the evening of Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. She said the day began marked by the abstinence from food and water, beginning at the break of dawn, and concluding at sunset, and most completed an arduous eight-hour work or school day without the nourishment they typically rely on. She said that night, instead of breaking the fast, they stood before the Council, because as constituents, they find themselves profoundly impacted by the situation in Palestine. The month of reflection and spiritual rejuvenation coincides with a period of heightened unrest and suffering. She said in Palestine, the plight of brothers and sisters there weighs heavily on their hearts and minds compelling them to gather at the meeting not only seeking solace but also solidarity. She said they are asked why there is a need for a resolution for this war when no other resolution was adopted for other conflicts. She said the reason is, because the City needs to speak out and that tax dollars are being directly used to fund a genocide. She said they need statements from a local level, so they can convey to the White House that its laws support funding a genocide. She said this is a genocide, not a war or a conflict. One side has a powerful army backed up by the most powerful country in the world. At the same time, the other side is an oppressed occupied population made up of mostly women and children. She said Palestinians go to sleep not knowing if they will wake up in the morning. She said people are eating grass because they are starving to death. Calling for a ceasefire is not about attacking the only Jewish state in the world or being antisemitic; thousands of Jewish Americans are calling for a ceasefire. She said they are rallying cries, not in our name, never again for anyone, and ceasefire. She said as Muslim Americans, they condemn the atrocities committed against Israel and Israeli civilians. She said they need the city to call for an immediate ceasefire. Silence in the face of genocide is not an option.

Ann Gayton, 40700 Mill Road Ct. W said she has been a resident of Novi for 37 years, and in her time, she has never had a problem making a left-hand turn. She said she didn't understand the need. She added she understands the road noise and the trucks that are currently disrupting the use of their yards. She said if your home backs up to Nine Mile, you'll hear a loud rumbling. She said you can't even have a conversation if you're sitting on a patio. She said she would ask the Council to reconsider the project and use the money elsewhere, like resurfacing the road. She added she loves those trees.

Firdaus Maldar, 39565 Westminster Cir, said the Council stated that it is not their place to speak on international policy, and their hands are tied. She said she also heard President



Biden's surrogate say that he has limited power over Israel's actions, yet there he has a quote from retired Israeli Major that says all of the missiles, ammunition, guided bombs, and airplane bombs are from the USA. She said the minute they turn off the tax, they can't keep fighting. They will have no capability. She said everyone understands that this war can not be fought without the USA. She said in 1982, Beirut was under siege by the Israeli troops. On August 12<sup>th</sup>, an Israeli jet bombed Beirut for 11 consecutive hours, killing over 100 people. President Reagan was shocked by the ages of Carnage he saw on his television. He called the Prime Minister begging of Israel to express his outrage. He called it needless destruction and bloodshed. She said it was a ten-minute phone call, and twenty minutes later a complete ceasefire had been called. She said those were the actions of a true leader and the power of the United States. She said some actors were born to lead nations while some play out as leaders. She said the biggest movements that changed the course of a democracy and made the USA a beacon of hope like women's suffrage, civil rights, and the Tea Party movement were started at the grassroots level by people like the council and similar positions. She said some of the Council would not be in the position they are if not for the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. She said our county faces a leadership vacuum; we don't have people who can inspire, energize, or unite the country as one at the state or federal level. She said the greatest leaders our world has seen have emerged in times of chaos and turmoil. She said the stage is set for the next great leader, a person of convictions and moral fortitude, willing to fight the good fight the gauntlet has thrown. She asked if anyone was up for the challenge. She read a Facebook post from the deceased Aaron Bushnell, US Air Force, "Many of us like to ask ourselves, 'What would I do if I was alive during slavery or the Jim Crow South or apartheid? What would I do if my county was committing genocide?'". She said the answer to those questions was whatever you were doing at this very moment.

Timothy Hasse, 23873 Pheasant Run, said he was here for a ceasefire resolution. He said this resolution would call for a bilateral ceasefire, the release and return of all hostages, and an entry of unhindered humanitarian aid into the region. He said it could condemn all hate and violence, racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia. He said it could ask that we all come together as a community for peace, love, and non-violence. He said he started getting active politically for the first time after his wife had their first son, who is a month old. He said he doesn't think anyone who was a parent in the room is not scared about the world their child will grow up in. He explained we can't talk to each other, we hate each other, and there is constant violence and war everywhere. He said he thinks about what world his son is growing up in and feels like he needs to do something about it. He said we need to come together. He said his life is split in two. He grew up before 09/11/2001 and after growing up in Northville schools, when the towers came down, and parents rushed to pick up their kids, suddenly, he was growing up in a world full of fear where nobody trusted each other and has gotten more violent ever since. He said Dr. King said that meeting with violence only multiplies violence, and this is what we are seeing. He said we can use this situation to come together. People would like more engagement and to hear more from the Council. People would like to have conversations about this. He explained he helped the Northville Mayor develop a worldwide Peace Day instead of a ceasefire resolution. He said they are working to host

an event that brings the community together. He said there are multiple options and that people just want to talk and have some discussions.

John Garbacik, 45626 Emerald Forest Dr., said he is 30 years old and has been a Novi resident for 30 years. He said he has seen a lot of road construction throughout the years. He would like Novi to reconsider the funding for Nine Mile and try to find another road, like Twelve Mile Rd. He said he would also like to see a resolution to support our friends in Haiti. He said an article in the paper was absolutely disgusting, and we need to do something over there. He said we have totally ignored that poor country. He said he supports the senior bus system that Novi currently has for its senior citizens. The drivers are very enthusiastic, they know their customers and where to take them and are friendly. He said other places that have tried to outsource have not gone well. He explained that you get a constant changeover of drivers, and it is very important to have consistency.

Colleen Crossey, 22279 Brockshire St., said she lives just south of Nine Mile near Meadowbrook. She said that they needed the trees to stay and that it was good for cleaning the air, buffering the sound, and for habitats for humans and animals. She said, of course, there is also the ceasefire resolution, and asked, since when has peace been so controversial. She said not to get involved, because the conflict is considered international relations seemed like an empty reason. She added that someone wished a happy St. Patrick's Day, and the Irish have had their share of war. She said she attended the open house at the Muslim temple and got a free Quran, which was awesome. She said it was very encouraging to see so many Council Members there but discouraging to not see everyone there. She said very polite people have said 'Novi has always been known as a welcoming society that embraces diversity' and yet these people are cast out when the Council did not show up to find out more about these people. She said to please bring a resolution for peace.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS AND APPROVALS:**

Mayor Pro Tem Casey removed Item H from the consent agenda.

**CM 24-03-33            Moved by Thomas, seconded by Smith; MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**To approve the Consent Agenda as amended.**

- A.    Approve Minutes of:  
      March 4, 2024 - Regular Meeting
- B.    Approval to award design engineering services to AECOM for the 2024 Salt Dome Replacement Project, in the amount of \$27,600.
- C.    Approval to award engineering design services to OHM Advisors for the assessment of operational improvements at the Island Lake Booster Station, in the amount of \$35,250.00.

- D. Approval to award a unit price debris removal services contract to Ellsworth Industries, Inc., the low bidder, in the estimated annual amount of \$50,000. The contract term is one year with three one-year renewal options.
- E. Consideration of approval to purchase three unmarked vehicles for the Novi Police Department, two from LaFontaine CDJR-Lansing and one from Lunghamer Ford of Owosso, through the MiDeal Cooperative purchasing contract, in the amount of \$118,393, and amend the budget.
- F. Consideration of approval to purchase three 2024 Ford Police Interceptor Explorers from Lunghamer Ford of Owosso, through the MiDeal Cooperative purchasing contract, in the amount of \$128,970.
- G. Adoption of a Resolution requesting the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) include the existing bridge on Ashbury Drive over the Middle Branch of the Rouge River in the State Local Bridge Program List for Replacement. If MDOT selects the bridge, the City of Novi will accept 100% of the design engineering costs and 5% of the total construction cost.
- H. Approval of the Beautification Commission's recommendation on the Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Program to award the requested grant amount for the following neighborhoods upon successful completion of the entryway work depicted in the applications: Village Oaks (\$5,000.00) and Walden Woods (\$2,526.50). **Removed/ Later Approved**
- I. Approval of the request of Singh Development LLC for JSP 20-27, Griffin Novi, for a one-year extension under Section 3.31.4.F of the Zoning Ordinance for the Preliminary Site Plan with a PD-2 option. The subject property is located at the southeast corner of Twelve Mile Road and Twelve Oaks Mall east access drive, in Section 14. The applicant received approval from City Council on March 14, 2022, for the Planned Development 2 (PD-2) Option to develop 174 multi-family residential units on a vacant 7.5-acre parcel.
- J. Approval of the request of DTN Management/Tricap Holdings for JSP 18-10, The Bond development, for a one-year extension of their Final Site Plan approval. The property is zoned TC-1 (Town Center One) and is approximately 7.74 acres. It is located on the southwest side of Bond Street, south of Grand River Avenue and west of Novi Road in Section 22. The applicant received Final Stamping Set approval for a mixed-use development with two four-story multi-family residential buildings with a total of 260 apartments on April 14, 2022.
- K. Acceptance of a Woodland Conservation Easement from Catholic Central High School of Detroit, Inc, being offered as a part of JSP21-44, Catholic Central STEM, for property located west of Wixom Road and south of Twelve Mile Road, in Section 18 of the City.

- L. Acceptance of a Woodland Conservation Easement from Novi Development Company, LLC, offered as a part of JSP22-48, Extra Space Self Storage, for property located on the east side of Novi Road, south of Nine Mile Road in Section 35 of the City.
- M. Approval of Grant Agreement with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) in connection with a State of Michigan grant for Jessica's Splash Pad at Bosco Fields.
- N. Approval to grant a 10-foot wide easement to the DTE Energy Company for the Jessica's Splash Pad at Bosco Fields project located near the southwest corner of 11 Mile and Beck Roads at 25802 Beck Road or parcels 22-20-200-011 and 22-20-200-022 and authorize the City Manager to sign the document.
- O. Approval of claims and warrants – Warrant 1152

**Roll call vote on CM 24-03-33**

**Yeas: Gorumurthy, Heintz, Smith, Staudt,  
Thomas, Fischer, Casey  
Nays: None**

**MATTERS FOR COUNCIL ACTION:**

- 1. **Consideration of approval to award engineering design services to OHM Advisors for the design of a Southwest Water Main Loop Connection in the amount of \$368,054.**

**CM 24-03-34 Moved by Casey, seconded by Smith: MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**Approval to award engineering design services to OHM Advisors for the design of a Southwest Water Main Loop Connection in the amount of \$368,054.**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-03-34**

**Yeas: Heintz, Smith, Staudt, Thomas, Fischer,  
Casey, Gorumurthy  
Nays: None**

**2. Consideration of a Resolution to Adopt the City of Novi 2023 Active Mobility Plan.**

City Manager Cardenas said they were looking forward to the Council's consideration of the proposed revisions to the Active Mobility Plan. The changes that are recommended will provide staff with a good work plan. He introduced Senior Planner Lindsay Bell. Ms. Bell said the Non-Motorized Master Plan was adopted in 2011 and served as a foundation for the past 12 years for the goal of working toward providing an interconnected and comprehensive system of pathways, sidewalks, and other facilities in the city. Many of the strategies recommended were implemented through the years with over 16 miles of trails and sidewalks completed between 2011 and 2022 by both public and private

funding. Recognizing the success of the 2011 plan and the realization that standards continue to adapt to new technologies and safety awareness, City Council contracted with the Greenway Collaborative to produce a comprehensive update of the Non-Motorized Master Plan, which we are now calling the Active Mobility Plan. The process kicked off in December of 2022 and continued through the year. The public input process included two public open houses, a survey to get initial feedback and another survey after the draft. She said preliminary plans were shared as well as several pop-up events attended by staff and the consultant team to get information and feedback from the community. There was also a session held at Lakeshore Park to hear from community members near Walled Lake about options to consider for both South Lake and East Lake Drive. During the process, they met several times with a technical advisory committee and the Walkable Novi Committee which both provided valuable feedback. She thanked the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem for their involvement as members of that committee. During the process at the Walkable Novi Committee's October meeting, the members gave comments on the draft final Active Mobility Plan and the Planning Commission reviewed the plan and recommended it for approval. She said City Council is being asking to consider a resolution to adopt the 2023 Active Mobility Plan.

Norm Cox from The Greenway Collaborative thanked the residents of Novi that provided the input throughout the course of the project. This was driven by public input and that developed the themes throughout the plan. He said he would focus on the key elements of the plan. The near-term network is really the focus. Those are the priorities and the things that the city would be working on for the foreseeable future. It has three main components that came out of public involvement. A neighborhood greenway network, connecting to transit, and improved access to shopping and dining. The neighborhood greenways should be thought of as a family friendly network. It will connect the key destinations in the city and is a strategic building upon the existing pathway systems with some key crosswalks and filling in gaps. It's trying to create a nice network that everyone will feel comfortable using to get around the city. That ties into a larger regional greenway system, much of which is already in the works with your neighbors to build it where you can have a 30-mile loop connecting to the regional trail systems. He said another key aspect is connecting with the new SMART routes because you can't have a bus stopping without sidewalks and crosswalks. He said we want to take full advantage of this new service in the community and make sure the first and last mile of getting to and from the transit stops are well accounted for and very safe, which was the second key element. He said the third was access to shopping and dining. He said the city has done a wonderful job of providing facilities along the road right-of-way, but getting to the actual restaurant or store is something that needs to be improved upon. He said the near-term network will build on the existing trail system with strategic investments and integrate with the new SMART transit route. It will link to create a core active network that will link to recreation, civic and commercial destinations. This is the backbone of the system. The long-term network is something that will be implemented over time. He said this is trying to set up best practices so as the city rebuilds roadways, they could all be implemented. He said there are a lot of elements that could be implemented over time.

Member Smith said he didn't have any questions but wanted to thank everyone who was involved with this project for all the hard work that went into it. He said was pleased with the plan and thought it gave a great start for short-term and long-term goals for improving our non-motorized transit. He was looking forward to turning it into reality. He said there were a couple items to keep an eye on such as crossing over I-96. We have regional trails north of I-96 and south of it and it's a giant barrier. He said East Lake and South Lake Drive were very challenging areas to work in and it will take some creative long-term thinking to find a good solution.

**CM 24-03-35 Moved by Smith, seconded by Thomas: MOTION CARRIED: 4-3**

**Approval of the Resolution to Adopt the City of Novi 2023 Active Mobility Plan.**

Member Thomas said the report was incredibly thorough and thanked everyone for the amount of work that was put in. She said it's important that people show up when there are opportunities to get feedback, so they know they're meeting the needs of the community. She said she was looking forward to being able to start implementing.

Member Heintz said he appreciated the amount of effort and work that went into this. He said the slides show all of the different sources of information to support all the different initiatives to make sure there's a variety of ways people can get around. There is a strong emphasis on listening and meeting the needs of the public. He said he was looking forward to seeing the work ahead.

Member Gurumurthy said she was happy to see this plan and thanked everyone for providing feedback to get to this point. She said with respect to sidewalks, she's been talking to residents and one of the key things for seniors is that they would appreciate good rest areas and she said that in the plan. She wanted to reinforce that and make sure we evaluate where those rest areas can be put and integrate that in the map for the sidewalks. She recognized that you can't add everything at once, but maybe we can see a plan on how we can add those. She said she was glad to see pedestrian scale lighting. She wanted to request that we look into solar because that would increase the number of people using the sidewalks. She said she was hoping to see that implemented more in an actionable plan. She requested that we look for quick wins, less budget, less time, more impact so we don't have to wait for the long-term.

Member Staudt said the Walkable Novi Committee evolved out of the Sidewalk Prioritization Committee. He was a member and there was no such thing as a non-motorized master plan. There was a lot of vision but no money. He said one of the very first things they did was start building out the Eight Mile sidewalk between Beck and Napier, and nobody really lived there. The idea at the time was that we were going to connect to Maybury Park and someday have the ITC Trail. He said they built the Eight Mile sidewalk and over the years built the ITC Trail, but 14 years later we still haven't connected to Maybury Park. He asked how that was covered in this particular plan. Mr. Cox said there were a couple ways to connect such as having a connection along the

roadway and having a midblock crosswalk into the park at their north entrance. He said there's been discussion with the park managers about leading a trail from their entry road that would hook into their trail system. He said Northville is looking at making a connection to the park as well which would be a key part of hooking into that large regional trail system. Member Staudt said he heard that 14 years ago and we are no closer to it. He said that was a major priority to him and without that connectivity, the plan would not realize its full potential. He said he's learned that homeowners' associations and residents don't like pathways running through their backyard. He asked how that was addressed in this study. Mr. Cox said a lot of the open space that came part of a site plan approval actually restricts the type of pathway that could be put through an area. It allows nature trails, but not necessarily an 8-foot-wide paved trail. He said they've tried to respect that as they've located connections and identified the way that a lot of people get around by bicycling through the neighborhood roadways and ways to get from a neighborhood roadway to things like the ITC Trail. He said they're not proposing trails across someone's backyard but trying to stick to designated open space of right-of-way. Member Staudt said that was one of the number one things he's heard from residents is they don't want trails from my neighborhood directly between homes and from street to street, so that's important. He said another issue is not completing segments of major sidewalks that are highly rated to be finished. He said there has been a tremendous amount of discussion for years about finishing sidewalks. We have a lot of areas in Novi that have short segments where subdivisions were built, but there were older homes in between and those segments never got completed for a bevy of reasons. A lot of times it's because the right-of-way is blocked and a lot of times it's just very expensive. He asked what the plan's focus on finishing segments is. Mr. Cox said in the near-term plan, the neighborhood greenway looked at some of the key gaps that are in the system and how we can create the most impactful network with the fewest key gaps, filling in the key gaps, sometimes switching across the road by adding a midblock crosswalk. That whole network was also denied by where we saw the greatest need to provide non-motorized access. They prioritize based on the corridor and then create that core system. Member Staudt said he would personally like to see a lot of the gaps completed before we start doing anything else. He said his last comment is about having sidewalks on both sides of a street. A good example is Nine Mile Road between Haggerty and Meadowbrook. They had years' worth of discussion when they built the Nine Mile sidewalk and he thought they gave up federal dollars to make the sidewalk narrower so they wouldn't cut down as many trees. He said it left it as a much safer and long-term environmentally sound area. He said he saw there are suggestions about going across the street where there are primarily berms, where there isn't a place to put a 10-foot sidewalk, with the idea that in the long haul we'll putting sidewalks on both sides of the street. He felt very uncomfortable about having that in the plan, especially after they've studied it over and over. He said part of the issue of not having longer term Council members on some of the committees is that they don't remember the things that we went through years ago. He said he is opposed to trying to force sidewalks or pathways in areas that have long been determined as a very bad place to put them. If people are concerned now about what we're doing with roads to fix things, just wait. He said he is in support of the walkable idea that we've have in Novi for a long time. He and Council Member Mutch were the ones who started and pushed for it, but there are things that really concern him about

the plan, and he wasn't sure if they could fix it before they adopt it.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said this has been a labor of love and commended everyone on the work to get resident input because that is critical. She said generally this was a very solid plan. She had concerns that she's expressed previously. She was seeking a list of items to prioritize, and they've got a good start. She was looking forward to the Mobility Committee having a chance to really go through some of those, prioritize those after we get the cost, but there are a couple of places in the plan where there are recommendations that don't read as recommendations. She said when they get adopted, it's going to look like this becomes Council policy in certain instances and she wasn't comfortable with that. One example was the idea of evaluating automatic counters. She thought it was a fantastic recommendation, but in the plan, it starts to look like it's a Council policy. She said a previous speaker spoke about the idea of sidewalks on both sides of the road and generally, that is a policy Council has held for many years, but there are places where it is not practicable. There should be language that says "where practical", and even more specifically, where we know with a level of certainty there's no likelihood of putting a sidewalk in. She said generally this was a rock solid plan. She thought some of the ideas he highlighted resonated with her, specifically what drove her to start talking about the fact we need a Mobility Committee instead of a Walkable Committee and a Roads Committee. So much of what is in the plan is getting the right combination of paying attention to the rest of the mobility around them. What concerned her was some of the recommendations looking like we're going to do every piece. She said they are ideas, but it's not phrased as an idea, so it looks like we are going to do all of it. There were a couple places in the plan where she thought needed work tweaking and it would make the difference.

Mayor Fischer said he must have been reading a different plan than his colleagues because he took a more critical approach to this plan. He said he's brought up concerns to the Walkable Novi Committee, so his comments shouldn't come as a surprise. He said the problem with doing a plan like this is that it grows legs. He said Mayor Pro Tem Casey mentioned that it becomes the policy or the recommendation of City Council. In 2011, the Council said the policy will be two sidewalks on every major road. He said a couple years ago he heard from residents on 10 Mile that the road was being re-done and they shouldn't put a big pathway there. He said he didn't get support and they ended up with a pathway, which may be great from a mobility perspective, but he didn't think the size was required to be that large. He said is also has an environmental impact when you drive down 10 Mile because a lot of nature was taken down all because someone, years ago, decided the City of Novi wants sidewalks on every single major thoroughfare on both sides. He said we know there are areas where a sidewalk just doesn't fit so to have an actual plan that shows maps where they know from a policy perspective that they don't want sidewalks on both sides is a disservice to the residents. He said if he were a resident along the south side of 9 Mile, the plan shows that we are putting a side path, which is an 8- or 10-foot pathway all the way down 9 Mile, he was not in favor of that. He said he will not support a plan or resolution that has that in it. He said that goes for some of the other proposals that are in the crosstown corridor, which is 11 Mile, 9 Mile, Taft Road, and Meadowbrook. He said it's the same thing. Are we going to put sidewalks on both



sides of Meadowbrook, including one that a side path that's 8- or 10-feet across? He said he did not support that and never will. He said the concept of the minor road stops, maybe the language needs to be tweaked, but it talks about having raised crossings at every single minor road stop. Every single entrance to every single subdivision along 9 Mile, Meadowbrook, is going to have a raised cross. He said they've heard people talk about roundabouts being a waste of money. He said if he were talking to residents who have potholes in their roads, they're going to want the money going towards that over other things. He said he didn't think it was part of the planning process to look at this through a Novi specific lens as a city being built out of 50 years. He said that was disappointing. It's a great plan that pulls a bunch of best practices, but a lot of items in the plan don't match up with reality or a policy that he supports for the City of Novi. He said there are a couple heat maps that try to focus on where we should put our emphasis and it highlights areas where residents are more likely to be dependent on non-motorized travel. Apparently, there's some conglomeration of data, but the people in the City of Novi who are most likely to be dependent on non-motorized travel, based on demographics, poverty, and household type, is Fox Run. He said he's been to Fox Run plenty of times and he didn't think that was an accurate portrayal of what's going on there. He said they need other types of mobility, but to say they're most dependent on non-motorized trends is a misstatement. He said that shows once again another situation where this was probably put together with some data, but no one took that next step to analyze it and say, how does this really apply to Novi. He said he would not support the plan or the motion.

**Roll call vote on CM 24-03-35**

**Yeas: Smith, Thomas, Gurumurthy, Heintz  
Nays: Fischer, Casey, Staudt**

**3. Consideration of a resolution requesting Oakland County amend its agreement with People's Express (PEX) to add transportation services to the City of Novi.**

City Manager Cardenas said Oakland County put a measure before voters in 2022, which passed, and mass transit has begun to be offered in the city via SMART. Since the passage of the millage, the Older Adult Needs Committee has recommended expanding senior transit services for the older adult population in our community. The matter before the Council tonight is to pick the preferred operator for the door-to-door services. The city staff has done significant due diligence to date and believes People's Express (PEX) offers the best level of service for the older adult population along with residents with disabilities and for all other riders. Ridership fares are set by the county and currently it's \$2 for seniors and persons with disabilities, and \$4 for everyone else. He said hours would be extended and days of operation would be extended as well.

Member Gurumurthy said when she looked at the whole PEX transition, one of the things that stood out was customer service. She said there was a paragraph about customer complaints and there is a number that riders can call if they have questions. She said she wanted to make sure that after the transition they didn't compromise on customer service. She asked what the current state of complaints were, such as the number of complaints, reasons, and response times. She said it's a good baseline to have in mind

before the transition. Evelina Taylor, Deputy Director of People's Express, explained there is a driver supervisor who handles complaints related to the driver and it's addressed by the next business day. The driver supervisor would also contact the driver. She said if the complaint is about an incident that happened in the vehicle, they have dash cam software and they can pull the footage to make sure it's documented accurately in an incident report. She said they deal with customer complaints immediately, but typically it's just feedback about what services people want to see. They don't really get complaints in terms of missed trips because they are diligent in making sure no one is left behind. She said sometimes they get compliments, which is awesome. She explained they have documentation and file all of the incidents. Member Gorumurthy asked how many customer complaints they had in 2023. Ms. Taylor said she didn't have the exact number, but they rarely get complaints. She added that they could set up a way to get direct feedback moving forward.

Member Smith said he was happy to see this on the agenda and thanked the staff for putting it together. He said contracting with PEX will address a lot of the issues they saw with the current older adult transit system. While it works great, it's understaffed compared to what PEX could do. He said it would cost roughly \$2 million to reach the level of service that PEX can provide with our current transit system. We are currently budgeted around \$170,000. He was glad to see that the Youth Council was represented because that's a group we also need to be serving. He said contracting with PEX makes the curb-to-curb service available for everyone in Novi for \$2 to \$4. He calculated we spent \$170,000 in 2023 and provided roughly 14,000 rides, which equates to \$12 a ride. He said if we decided to maintain a free service for seniors, we could either cut our budget to \$30,000 or we could give about six times as many rides. He said he was hoping to see that as part of the discussion with PEX on how to address that issue.

**CM 24-03-36 Moved by Smith, seconded by Casey: MOTION CARRIED: 4-3**

**Approval of a resolution requesting Oakland County amend its agreement with People's Express (PEX) to add transportation services to the City of Novi.**

Member Thomas asked for an explanation about driver safety, how their training works, and how we know for sure that our residents are safe on PEX vehicles. Ms. Taylor said that have both an onboarding safety training process and recurring training. They have a safety trainer on site that works with the new drivers and it's a 40 hour work week for new hires to go through defensive driver, passenger safety, and sensitivity training. They have Taptco Paratransit operating training. They go through first aid and CPR. She said it's a whole work week of online training and on the road training. The safety trainer assesses all drivers to make sure they are physically capable of securing a wheelchair properly and safely. There is an assessment that is done for them to be able to go on the road. When they are on the road, the drivers are trained to be able to assess that new candidate to make sure they are interacting with the clientele and understand the expectations of the job. She said all drivers get background checks, and drug and alcohol screens. They have monthly driver meetings and an annual driver training where all drivers renew their training. They also have reoccurring training through the year with

the dash cam software. She explained if there is a coaching event where the driver maybe braked too hard or accelerated too fast, the driver supervisor and safety trainer can coach the driver to resolve the problem. She said that also have a corrective action plan if it is a medium safety event. Member Thomas said there were different levels of service they provide and asked if it was correct that they provide door to door service. Ms. Taylor said they provide curbside, but for those who need door to door service, they do provide that. Member Thomas asked what population that would be for. Ms. Taylor said people who have a mobility device or need assistance to get to and from the vehicle. Member Thomas asked if the city provides that today. City Manager Cardenas said yes, they do provide door to door service. There is a vetting process, and we don't enter a person's house.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said this topic has been well discussed by the Older Adult Needs Committee and she was thrilled to see forward momentum. She asked if the drivers are required to have a CDL. Ms. Taylor said they have a mix of both chauffeur and CDL drivers, it just depends on the vehicle. Mayor Pro Tem Casey said she was intrigued by the dash cams because they provide safety for the driver and the riders. She asked if the riders were notified that there is a camera running or if there is any kind of privacy statement. Ms. Taylor said she didn't believe there was signage, but the camera is very visible. Mayor Pro Tem Casey asked how many instances they had where the block riders for being disruptive, cause damage, or are abusive. Ms. Taylor said they are very lenient on any type of suspension because oftentimes, PEX is their only solution to be able to get to appointments. Especially if it's a life sustaining appointment, they don't want to prevent someone from accessing that healthcare. She said sometimes a person needs an aide, like a relative or caregivers. They can connect them with different community resources who might be able to offer one. She explained that conversations happen before any type of suspension. Mayor Pro Tem Casey said using People's Express is going to offer a service to Novi residents 14 and older, not just like the service we offer which is only for residents 50 and older or those with disabilities. She said we're really opening the door for so many more residents and she was thrilled to be having the conversation. She said one of her colleagues asked about complaints and that's something staff will need to know and understand what's happening. If complaints are being raised by Novi residents about the driver, or not being able to get a ride, the city is going to want to be well aware of what's happening. She said her expectation was that they would provide regular reports. She said we have had our senior transit program for so long that our residents have an expectation of how service operates, and we are all well aware of what's happening. She said to be prepared to provide reports at the staff's request so we can fully understand how well the service is being provided. She said generally this was a service that we have provided, and she commended staff and the drivers for the work they've done. The movement to PEX is not in any way, shape, or form any kind of indication that we are less than happy with the service provided. This is just a chance to enhance it. She said she was still interested in understanding more details behind the transition plan. She said she liked the suggested 90-day transition. She loved the idea that we're exporting data over, so PEX has the information on our riders. It should be seamless for the riders. She will be looking for more information on what that transition is going to be like and how those 90 days will operate.

Member Heintz said he wanted to take a minute to recognize the awesomeness of this opportunity. They'll be able to expand from not only providing the service to aging adults, but everyone 14 and above without doing anything different because of the millage that was passed. He said he is looking forward to being able to work with PEX and being able to provide another resource and opportunities for people to get around Novi.

Member Staudt asked what amount of the \$4.3 million that Novi is paying as part of the transit tax is PEX receiving for adding Novi to the contract. Ms. Taylor said they haven't worked out the budget adjustment but possibly \$1.5 million. She explained a lot of that is looking at the demographics of the current ridership and costs that will influence the budget adjustment to the county. She added that nothing was confirmed but they are looking to get capital expenditures for vehicles, so they have the capacity for the riders. They have to look at what they are projecting with marketing and a campaign in the community. They would have projections, but most of those numbers haven't been worked out yet. Member Staudt asked if County Commissioner Raman, who was present in the audience, would answer a question. He said they just heard this service provider will get \$1.5 million. He asked why those funds are not better served coming back into the City of Novi and letting us continue to run a program that we were doing on an extremely low costs basis. He asked what the County Commission's position was as to why they have refused to allow the City of Novi to do its own program. County Commissioner Raman said part of the reason is the millage passed and we're trying to get Novi connected to the rest of Oakland County. He said Novi is very good at delivering senior transit and they've done it successfully for years. The problem is if you travel much farther than Novi, you're limited in how far the residents can travel. Member Staudt said there was a period of time where he was in a disabled state, and he got rides for \$4 to Plymouth Township. He said that is outside the service area that is being provided for by this service. He said he didn't understand because this isn't connected to SMART or other activities. They are very clear in their language on their website that they'll go outside their service area if that have capacity to do that. He said Novi could do a really good job with \$1.5 million. We could buy all new buses, we could have full-time employees, we could have software. He said we were told point blank that wasn't an option and he'd like to understand why he can't get an explanation. He asked what percentage of the trips are outside your boundary area. Ms. Taylor said she would work with the Older Adult Needs Committee and provide that information. Member Staudt said all the questions he's asked about this proposal, nobody seems to have answers and he was concerned. He said one of his concerns was that our program doesn't currently allow 14-year-old to ride at any cost. The idea that we're going to allow for \$4 a group of young students to get on a bus with 80-year-old folks who may be going to different medical procedures really concerned him. We have a physically challenged older adults program and now we're incorporating this into a transit program. It concerned him. He asked if other communities that they've taken over had a transit program like Novi. Ms. Taylor said prior to the millage, they contracted with communities individually. When the millage passed, the contract was transferred to the contract with the county. She said Novi has invested more than they've seen in the past. She said their company is usually the one going into communities and advocating for residents that this should be an investment. They didn't

always find established programs with people ready to invest back into their residents with transportation. Member Staudt asked if she was familiar with how many communities that are funding the transit millage that are greater than Novi in terms of dollars contributed. Ms. Taylor said she wouldn't be able to answer that. Member Staudt said we feel extraordinarily capable, especially with \$1.5 million to run our own program, but we aren't even given that option. That option is limited to a handful of companies that were chosen by the county executive and the county commission. He asked if the drivers were part of a union. Ms. Taylor said no. Member Staudt asked if they anticipated going back to the county commission for greater funding or if they will raise the rates if their costs go up dramatically. Ms. Taylor said they have a contingency built in their budget for those fluctuations. Their organization also goes out and finds other funding sources. They are working with the county to access more of the state funding so it wouldn't be just the millage dollars supporting transportation in the communities. Member Staudt said he looked at their budget and this will be a big part of their budget moving forward. It's a big addition to their budget. He asked if they were a nonprofit organization. Ms. Taylor said People's Express is a 501(c)3. Member Staudt asked if the board was made up of local representatives. For example, \$1.5 million would represent 30% to 40% of their budget moving forward if this occurred. He asked if they were going to invite members of our community to participate as members of their board. Since they represent a big part of our community, we should have some input as to the way you're run. Ms. Taylor said the board of directors is made up of various community members. They don't have direct seats that are allocated to community members, but they are open to inviting a representative from the community. She said the company really values that input. They want to be involved in community events so they can bring a vehicle and show what kind of services they offer. During the transition, they are looking for feedback from community residents as we as the city representatives. They have quarterly meetings with all of the community representatives where they get feedback on what's good, what's bad and just general thoughts. She said that's what's unique about them, that want to be cohesive and have hands-on engagement. Member Staudt said the contract is between Oakland County and People's Express, the City virtually has no voice in this.

Member Staudt asked administration if the intention was to liquidate the current senior transportation program. City Manager Cardenas said it will be brought back to City Council for consideration in terms of the Council's will and how they want to deal with those assets. There's a possibility of entering into an agreement with PEX to divest some of those assets, sell them outright, or maintain a portion of them for our own programming purposes. Member Staudt asked specifically if senior transportation, as it currently exists, remain. City Manager Cardenas said the intent is to keep senior transit in place until we have a complete transition to PEX, and then it will go away in its current form. Member Staudt said he was very opposed to this and didn't think it was good for the community. He said he didn't understand why we were being forced to move to a third-party system when we're fully capable of managing this system ourselves. He said he expected our county commissioner to be supportive of Novi being funded and providing a service that was Novi-focused and Novi run, but clearly, we have lost in this. Our residents have lost, our seniors are going to lose and 2-3 years from now, if this doesn't work, we will have nothing to start with.

Mayor Fischer said he couldn't believe, despite many emails, that they've gotten to this point where they are talking about a resolution to do this, to figure out what the actual cost to residents will be and it sounds like it's \$1.5 million. We are currently providing a service for about \$200,000, which equates to \$14 per ride. He said he didn't know what all of the money would be going. Either you're going to increase the number of rides to more than a hundred thousand or we're funding something. He said to get to this point and finally start talking about dollars was crazy to him. He asked why they were even there. Why is City Council being asked to opine and have a resolution. It was his understanding that this was a contract between the county and this business. The county would be free to go ahead and enter into this contract without us, unless there's something in the legislation or the millage that says the city must sign in. City Attorney Schultz said he was not aware of anything in the legislation or the millage, but this is the process to get Oakland County to add us to their contract. Mayor Fischer said it's an Oakland County process to force the Council to make a resolution, but legally there's really no requirement other than the process, correct? City Attorney Schultz said not that he was aware of. You indicate to the county, if the resolution is adopted, that PEX is an adequate provider. Mayor Fischer said the fact that we've gotten this far without talking dollars and cents shows how premature we are in this discussion. When the millage was passed, there were a lot of different talks about micro mobility and subsidies for things like Uber. He said he loved the idea of our system being able to continue with some sort of subsidy from the county and he didn't think we'd exhausted all of those discussions. He said he thought one company came along and we're just going to jump on the contract and spend \$1.5 million of the \$4.4 million. He said this is way too premature. He said we've spent years, probably decades, as a Council building up our senior services and senior transportation. He said when he talks to senior citizens, they talk about the relationship that have with the drivers and they're comfortable with those people. He said if he were to guess, being able to know who's coming to take care of them, as opposed to the benefit of having additional hours, is what matters. He thinks they like what they have and they're comfortable with what they've had. He said he was nervous about this proposal and didn't think we'd vetted it to the extent that we should for our seniors. He didn't feel like the question had been fully answered so he asked the administration if this gets approved, is the intention to shut down senior transit services. City Manager Cardenas said that was correct once we get PEX up and running. There is a tentative start date of July 1<sup>st</sup> for PEX and we're not shutting down tomorrow.

Member Staudt asked Director Muck if he knew there was going to be \$1.5 million spent on the City of Novi. Director Muck said he did not know the exact amount. Member Staudt asked how he would be able to run a senior transit program with \$1.5 million. Director Muck said they included that information in the packet and if they wanted to maintain that within the city, it would cost us around \$1.5 to \$2 million to hire full-time staff, full-time drivers, match the hours of service, and expand the number of vehicles. He added that \$1.5 million would be a good start.

Member Thomas said a recommendation was made to move forward and they discussed that. She asked Director Muck to talk about the due diligence the City has

done prior to recommending PEX. Director Muck said the city only received two proposals and they were vetted by a mix of staff from several departments and rated on several categories. PEX was the highest level of service by far. He added they did an on-site visit to the PEX headquarters and had extensive conversations with their representatives. Member Thomas asked if during that process, did they give any thought to maintaining Novi as one of those options. Director Muck said based on the Older Adult Needs Committee conversations, they talked significantly about expanding hours, not confusing the residents by having multiple services, it would be very confusing to the residents. He said they talked with Youth Council and were surprised that the response from the Youth Council as to how much safer they would feel using a service like this, which was vetted and accepted by the City of Novi, rather than a private provider like Uber or Lyft. Member Thomas said if they do move forward with PEX and there ends up being an issue or problem with the service, what are our options to make changes. City Manager Cardenas said they've been told by the county that in order to make a change to another provider that's approved under the county's list of providers, the only option would be the Western Oakland Transit Authority (WOTA). SMART has, to this point, not expressed interest in offering this kind of service for us. Member Thomas noted that she heard from staff that they were highly confident after doing the due diligence about the service that would be provided. We have other opportunities not having our buses used for senior services. She said everyone wants to make sure the seniors get the top top-notch service they expect, and she believed that would continue and it doesn't necessarily have to be provided by the City of Novi. She said she strongly believed we outsource things to companies all the time. They have their area of expertise, and we hire consultants and engineers. She said she viewed this in the same way. If you have a company that is focused on doing one thing and doing one thing well, they can do that reasonably. That gives us opportunities to be able to expand some of the transit and senior services. We're looking at the ability to do day trips. She asked the administration if the intention was to wind down the program and get rid of the assets or will that come back to Council. City Manager Cardenas said it was his intention to bring it back to City Council for consideration on what happens with those assets and to come forth with a transition plan to confirm how we're going to do this. They will make sure the starting date is realistic and possibly present a voucher program that we work out with PEX that could continue the free rides program we currently have. All of those things will be brought back. Member Thomas said she believed that we could maintain the level of service to our seniors and that we have mechanisms in place to ensure that we're getting the level of service that our seniors require. She personally liked the idea of extended hours and being able to provide a broader area. She said she was ok with 14-year-olds being able to get transportation, it's a good thing. She said she would be supporting the motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said there was a map in the packet that shows their current boundaries, but she understood the boundaries will expand to include our current boundaries as well. Ms. Taylor said currently they are looking to maintain those boundaries covering the ten-mile radius from the west and the north, but east and south would get into the Plymouth and Canton area, which would not be covered under the flat fair. She said if, for some reason, they are unable to do that trip they could help the resident book an Uber or a Lyft. She said a huge part of the company is making sure

people are serviced on their very first call. Mayor Pro Tem Casey asked if there is a consideration for boundary expansion in 2025. Ms. Taylor said it would be based on the feedback of the riders and the demand. She said they look at when riders are going to out of the distant area. One example is the U of M health system, people may have special appointments in Washtenaw County. She said staying with the current boundaries will be the most seamless for residents this year, and they can look at expansion for next year. Mayor Pro Tem Casey asked how many drivers there are on staff. Ms. Taylor said there are 40, but they service areas other than Oakland County. Mayor Pro Tem Casey asked how likely the drivers would become consistent to Novi. Ms. Taylor said some of their drivers are retirees who live in Oakland County, and she is confident that every driver has a relationship with every client. She gave examples like remembering birthdays, grievance cards, etc. She said the personalized connection is there. Mayor Pro Tem Casey said she believed the expansion would be better for residents overall. Although there may be challenges to a transition of any kind, she is counting on Ms. Taylor's staff, and the Older Adult Services leadership, to be very focused on how this transition runs. She added she is confident that any challenges will be eliminated as quickly as they arise.

Member Heintz asked who decides what the contract entails, and how much the service will cost once the Council passes the vote. Ms. Taylor said the resolution is the first step, then the Council can deep dive into the data, and the company will work with them, Older Adult Services, and the County. She said this is the first step in formalizing a partnership for the company to engage with the City on a more formal level, and this would be the first of many meetings. Member Heintz explained he wanted to know more about the next phase of finalizing the parameters of the contract, the exact amount of money it would cost, and whether there would be a conversation between the company and the County. Ms. Taylor said the budget adjustments themselves are worked out between the County and themselves as the provider. She said the current expenditures and ridership levels will influence projections of what they need to adjust for the budget. Eli Cooper, Oakland County's Transit Manager, said he will be working with Evalina Taylor and the City to create the parameters of the proposed contract for Council consideration. He said there is a small group of staff at the County level with the capabilities to understand the various components of the type of services that People's Express provides. He said they will look at their forecast based on the previous ridership and that will be looked at with a crisp eye to ensure that there is an adequate amount of service for the community. He explained that the parameters, charges, and mileage to be delivered are reflected in the request that was prepared for the Council. He said historically, in the first year each of the operators had come back for an amendment, most of them reallocating, because they were offered more resources than the services that they could provide. He said the resources made available to the People's Express will be contingent upon the information the Council provides them and their assessment of that including projected longer and more trips. He said the number of trips and how far those trips are going, because the amount of distance correlates to the amount of labor it takes to deliver that person to their location, is not well known right now. He said they would create a contingency and have an opportunity to make amendments if need be.



Member Gurumurthy said she would like to go over some of the stated problems. She said there have been people younger than 70, needing rides, and now People's Express will be offering rides to even high school students and offering weekend hours. She said we could explore PEX for the different problems stated. She said they are not putting an end to the current senior transportation without piloting the program. She offered that the item to come back to the Council in possibly three months after they pilot and understand the program. She said if it had already been six months, what would be done? She asked if the Council would have the opportunity to close everything, and said this part was not clear. City Manager Cardenas said the plan would be to work with the current staff to maintain them until the July 1<sup>st</sup> transition. But, if they do a three-month transition after July 1<sup>st</sup>, not all of the drivers necessarily may want to go to People's Express. He said a trial period is something the Council could explore as well, as that is what is being done in Independence Township currently. He said they are operating their system, and doing a pilot with People's Express to see how it works out. He offered that it is unknown whether the driver pool would hang out for three months and then come back, or if they would immediately be onboarded to People's Express. He said we could maintain our vehicles, but our employment pool would be difficult to maintain. Member Gurumurthy said there are some issues if you run the programs parallel. She said she would be comfortable if she saw a pilot and could say the customer service is good, residents are happy, and you can close. She said if the programs do run parallel and there is a problem, is there a way for a solution? She said she would like to request to see if that is a possibility because she is open to exploring People's Express but is not comfortable saying they are done with the current senior transportation.

Mayor Fischer asked how many rides were given in the last trailing 12 months by People's Express. Ms. Taylor responded that there were around 25,000 rides for the seven communities. Mayor Fischer asked what the amount was from the county for those 25,000 rides. She said they took over the contract with the county in September. Before then, they were not a part of the initial rollout of the county millage. She expressed she would invite the Council to talk to the neighboring communities about the experience of not initially being part of the millage, and then being adjusted to have People's Express included. She said the County contract started in September, so they had 4 months of budget. She said the January 2024 budget is just shy of 2 million, including capital expenditures. Mayor Fischer clarified that by contracting, the City of Novi would increase ridership by almost 50%. Ms. Taylor said as a company, People's Express provides much larger ridership numbers working in Washtenaw County, Livingston County, and a partner with the City of Detroit. Mayor Fischer expressed to drop our residents into doing this program in 90 days and increase the ridership by 50% is a lot for that company to take on and it is a risky plan to completely shut down our City service. He added there are very few options for a transportation service that can handle Novi. He described WODA and said it was inadequate as a senior transit option. He said this is like putting all of your eggs in one basket without a backup plan. He asked how we would be able to revamp our senior program and rebuy seven buses with the shortages that we are facing. City Manager Cardenas asked Director Muck about the lead time on purchasing vehicles if they had to revamp the program. Director Muck said it is about a year to get seven

vehicles back up and running at about \$80,000 a vehicle. Mayor Fischer clarified that it would be about half of a million dollars to try to re-up the feet in a year. Director Muck added that we could come back to have a discussion with the Council about changing the current staffing model of all part-time employees. Mayor Fischer added that if we go down this patch, we still have to subsidize out of our budget for our seniors to get a free ride, which will be very disappointing with the amount of money that Novi residents put into the county and how much money is going from the county to this program. He said the fact that the city could still have to pay the \$2.00 if the County and PEX can't figure it out, and then it comes back to Council, he will be very disappointed. He said this is still a very early strategy. He said he loves outsourcing if it could save us a little money such as hiring some of our cleaning facilities, or people to help our DPW with plowing. He said he wouldn't outsource our people or our Parks Department.

**Roll call vote on CM 24-03-36**

**Yeas: Thomas, Casey, Heintz, Smith**

**Nays: Staudt, Fischer, Gurumurthy**

**CONSENT AGENDA REMOVALS:**

- H. Consideration of approval of the Beautification Commission's recommendation on the Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Program to award the requested grant amount for the following neighborhoods upon successful completion of the entryway work depicted in the applications: Village Oaks (\$5,000.00) and Walden Woods (\$2,526.50).**

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said she removed this item because this program impacts her neighborhood and subdivision. She lives in Village Oaks and one of the signs is at the end of her street. She disclosed that she is not on the subdivision board. She had no conversations with anyone in the subdivision about the grant program and application. She said she just wanted to go on record to say that she has had no involvement in this process and can be completely impartial on the issue.

**CM 24-03-37 Moved by Casey, seconded by Fischer: MOTION CARRIED: 7-0**

**Approval of the Beautification Commission's recommendation on the Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Program to award the requested grant amount for the following neighborhoods upon successful completion of the entryway work depicted in the applications: Village Oaks (\$5,000.00) and Walden Woods (\$2,526.50).**

**Roll call vote on CM 24-03-37**

**Yeas: Thomas, Fischer, Casey, Gurumurthy,  
Heintz, Smith, Staudt**

**Nays: None**

**AUDIENCE COMMENT:**

Anna Gaden said she was an active biker around Novi until about a year ago, but through the years was stymied many times by how unconnected all the paths were. She said a ten-foot-wide path is not needed, but we need to connect the pieces we have. She said to spend the money on connecting the sidewalks we already have, not buying new ones.

A member of the audience said when she spoke to Rebecca, Project Engineer, she was directed to the project plan and in that plan, there was no mention of the removal of any of the trees that are now marked for removal. She said from a resident's perspective, there is no way that they could have found this project plan online and read it and had any idea that the trees were being removed. She said when she asked Rebecca if the trees were going to be removed, she was told if it isn't in the project plan, it 'probably isn't going to happen'. She reiterated that taking down the trees is not in the plan.

A member of the audience said a lot of people at the meeting are against the Nine Mile Road Rehabilitation project. He said the Council heard from the people and they do not want the road widened, or the trees cut down. He said there was nobody there that support the project.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

##### **1. Older Adult Needs Committee**

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said the Older Adult Needs Committee met last Monday. The focus group response was that there was not a lot of diversity, and they wanted to make sure they sought some input from additional residents. They had a group discussion with some of the older residents who were South Asian. She said it was a great conversation. The next meeting is on the following Monday, and the topic will be about what advocacy looks like going forward, and what kind of group or committee needs to be informed when this committee ends.

#### **MAYOR AND COUNCIL ISSUES:**

##### **1. Nine Mile Road**

Member Staudt said he is not in support of not spending a million dollars of Federal money, but he thinks it is important to know all the pieces to this, and this is an opportunity for a response to the audience, considering they don't normally respond. He asked Jeff Herczeg, Director of Public Works, to explain some of the history of this project. For example, when the Federal government went out and sent the grant, from there at what point did the removal of the trees become a reality in terms of the planning process? He added there was no discussion of tree removal at their meeting a year ago in relation to the project. Director Herczeg explained that the money is not a grant, but it is a federal aid committee that was Oakland County-based, called the CBTS. He said the funds were awarded in 2021 and obligated to 2024 as the construction year. He said as far as the design and the cutting of the trees, that isn't finalized yet. He explained that MDOT has

not provided them with 100% solid plans. He said they are going through something called the local agency, arguing the federal funding, going through a review process entailing safety recommendations and there are a lot of things that must be approved in the design. The design is in the final stages. He said the reason the specific trees are marked is there is a condition with long-eared bat trees that need to be removed between certain dates, so they do not disrupt the habitat. He said he doesn't suspect the project will be constructed this year, because funds are not available in the budget until July 1<sup>st</sup>. Member Staudt asked if he planned to cut the trees by March 31<sup>st</sup>. Director Herczeg said it is going to either be by March 31<sup>st</sup> or after November. He said the idea was to have them down to compensate for the contractor's timeline. Member Staudt asked if anybody involved in these decisions looks at the historical nature of our resources. He said this is something that a lot of people are emotional about. He added that previously they had excruciating plans to build things around the trees, and now it seems like we are just cutting them out. He asked if there was a way to review the plan and at least save a portion of the trees or implement a plan for putting them back in. Director Herczeg said after the project, there is a plan to look at it with the forester and come up with a plan. Member Staudt said he wants this done in advance. He said he would ask to find something short of removing all the canopy trees and to have a safe and passable road. Director Herczeg added that there must be miscommunication in regard to the tree replacements. He said they are not added to the project, because it would be non-participating and would be more efficient to do it when the project is done. He added that you don't want to put 24-inch in diameter trees in a crash zone six feet from the curb. He said you exclude the trees and then come back to it later like they have done previously with projects such as Wixom Rd., Taft, and 10 Mile Rd. Director Herczeg said they go to the residents and ask if they want a tree and what type. Member Staudt reiterated that he would like a plan to be in place prior.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey said when there are road projects, the Council isn't generally involved at this level of detail. She said she understands the feedback from residents and agrees that the tunnel of trees is awesome. She said she also agrees with the safety concerns on that road. She added that she is grateful they are talking about Nine Mile and that if the work isn't being done this year, let's be clear to leave the trees. She added that doesn't mean they won't come down next year. But if they are not doing construction this year, they shouldn't take down the trees this year. She said she understands there is a window, but this gives them time to do a little more due diligence. She asked if they needed a motion on that direction. City Manager Cardenas added that they will follow the direction and wait until after and come back with some other ideas in terms of planning.

Member Thomas asked Director Herczeg why they do the road improvements and landscaping separately and asked him to clarify. Director Herczeg said the federal process and the local agency process include participating and not participating funds. He said additional landscapes would be outside the scope and would not be participating. He added it makes it more difficult to include inside of the contract. He said we prefer to have control over what's going in by our people doing the design, talking to residents, and doing it cheaper rather than using the road contract. Member

Thomas asked if it would be possible to have parallel contracts, so there is at least a preliminary idea of what we think we would need to replace or how the city would mediate anything that needs to be removed or any problems that may exist. Director Herczeg said that is the direction that his team is going.

Member Smith said he is glad they are not taking the trees out this year. He said it sounds like there is still some room for design in that area and save as many trees as possible, and if we replace them, to do so with the most mature tree possible, not a sapling that will be fully grown in 50 years.

Member Gorumurthy said she heard the residents saying there was a lack of communication, and they didn't even know the trees were coming out. She asked what the normal process of communication is so that they don't realize something like this just weeks before it happens. Director Herczeg said on a major road project such as this one, the trees are all on the right of way. He said it is not like a neighborhood road where the impact is directly in front of the residents. He said he realizes the impact on their frontage and subdivisions. Communications are on the website, projects that are in the CIP, and trees are marked. Member Gorumurthy added that in the future there is an opportunity for a few months to give residents to react. She asked him to think through what they could do to alert the Council and residents to a situation like this.

Member Heintz asked Director Herczeg if this project is finalized or if there is potential for feedback from residents and the Council. He offered that potentially it is only segments of the road that need to be widened and tapered. He said the intersection of the three roads of Cranbrooke Dr., Sunrise Blvd., and Heatherwoode creates the offsetting of Heatherwoode and Sunrise, creating a left turn lock problem. He said as Member Staudt has pointed out, everyone is aware of the safety problems on Cranbrooke Drive. Director Herczeg said the profile or exhibit provided is the recommended design, if it is shrunk there will be trade-offs safety-wise. Member Heintz said that based on the feedback of residents, it could be further examined and could be beneficial to everyone.

Mayor Fischer said for clarification, Nine Mile Rd. to Haggerty Rd. is not being widened. The main widening is this 1400-foot section driven by three subdivision roads all hitting Nine Mile in a very close proximity, causing safety concerns from an engineering perspective. Director Herczeg confirmed the statement was correct. Mayor Fischer asked Director Herczeg to clarify the concept of a crash zone where the trees currently reside. Director Herczeg said generally you don't want fixed objects within what's referred to as the crash zone in the right of way. He said on some occasions there still are, and when safety adjustments are made typically, they are taken out. He said there are large existing trees in the crash zone currently. He said they could pose an infrastructure problem. He added that the trees are large, and their roots are likely the cause of the condition of that road, and these types of projects are driven by the condition, and safety is a second to the drive for the road rehabilitation. He said Nine Mile is one of the poorest-rated major roads in the city, patched together and cracks sealed. He said the main focus is the repair of the road for the entire mile stretch, the safety issue is the 1400 feet where all of the subdivisions intersect. Mayor Fischer clarified that the situation is similar to when the

trees start damaging the sidewalks and you have to lose some of the trees in order to repair the sidewalk. Director Herczeg said it is very similar and they are doing this for the long-term benefit of the new road. He said the trees have impacted electric service, sewers, sanitary sewers, sump pumps, and edge drains where there is head root growth. He said the trees can coexist with infrastructure in the right place. He said right now and long term, the priority has been the asset value of the road and fixing the road. Mayor Fischer said he is not looking to kill the project, there are getting 500 or a million dollars from federal funding and cannot just move over to another road. Director Herczeg said the Mayor was correct. Mayor Fischer added that they are trying to make decisions that are not just good for today, but for 10, 15, 20 years down the road. He said he would hate to lose some of the trees, and he knows that is something that is being looked at, but if it impacts safety, he will err on the side of keeping people safe in that general area. He said there should be a little more emphasis on getting a plan done sooner. He added that if it costs more money to provide mature trees, he is willing to pay it. He said we owe it to the residents to be ahead and minimize the aesthetic impact.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**ADJOURNMENT** – There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:42 P.M.

/s/

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cortney Hanson, City Clerk

/s/

\_\_\_\_\_  
Justin Fischer, Mayor

/s/

\_\_\_\_\_  
Transcribed by Alyssa Craigie,  
Administrative Assistant

Date approved: April 8, 2024