

**CITY OF BERKLEY PUBLIC NOTICE  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, January 6, 2025  
7:00 P.M. – City Hall  
248-658-3300**

**CALL 40<sup>th</sup> COUNCIL TO ORDER  
APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
MAYOR-LED MOMENT OF REFLECTION  
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE  
PUBLIC COMMENT  
ORDER OF BUSINESS**

***Consent Agenda***

1. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**: Matter of [approving the minutes](#) of the 40th Regular City Council meeting on Monday, December 16, 2024, Special City Council meeting on Wednesday, December 18, 2024, and City Council Special Work Session on Wednesday, December 18, 2024.
2. **PROCLAMATION NO. P-01-25**: Matter of [receiving a Proclamation](#) recognizing the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Berkley Junior Women's Club.
3. **PROCLAMATION NO. P-02-25**: Matter of [proclaiming February 2025](#) as Black History Month.

***Regular Agenda***

1. **RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS**: Matter of receiving any recognitions or presentations from the Consent Agenda.
2. **PRESENTATION**: Matter of receiving a presentation from State Rep. Natalie Price.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**ADJOURN**

Note: The City of Berkley will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon four working days' notice to the City. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the City by writing or calling: Victoria Mitchell, ADA Contact, Berkley City Hall, 3338 Coolidge Highway, Berkley, MI 48072 (1-248-658-3310).

Note: Official minutes of City Council Meetings and supporting documents for Council packets are available for public review in the City Clerk's Office during normal working hours. Anyone wishing to submit correspondence for the meeting may send an email to [clerk@berkleymi.gov](mailto:clerk@berkleymi.gov) or call 248-658-3310 by 5 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORTIETH COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2024 IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS BY MAYOR DEAN**

**PRESENT:** Councilmember Steve Baker  
Councilmember Clarence Black  
Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin

Councilmember Dennis Hennen  
Councilmember Gregory Patterson  
Councilmember Jessica Vilani  
Mayor Bridget Dean

**OTHER STAFF PRESENT:**

City Manager Crystal VanVleck  
City Attorney Jake Mertes  
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell  
Deputy City Manager of Public Services Shawn Young  
Downtown Development Authority Executive Director Michael McGuinness  
Finance Director Carl Johnson

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve the agenda.  
Seconded by Councilmember Black  
Ayes: Black, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker and Dean  
Nays: None  
Motion Approved.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Margaret Dobrowitsky, Waterford, spoke on behalf of a Berkley resident regarding lead line replacement documentation.

Michael McGuinness, DDA Director, described the events happening in Berkley over the holiday season.

**Consent Agenda**

Councilmember Vilani moved to approve the following Consent Agenda  
Seconded by Councilmember Hennen:

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** Matter of approving the minutes of the 40th Regular City Council meeting on Monday, December 2, 2024.

**WARRANT:** Matter of approving Warrant No.1405.

**MOTION NO. M-108-24:** Matter of approving a three-year contract extension and additional addendum for Forestry Services with J.H. Hart Urban Forestry.

Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black and Dean  
Nays: None  
Motion Approved.

## **Regular Agenda**

**RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS:** Matter of receiving any recognitions or presentations from the Consent Agenda.

None

**MOTION NO. M-109-24:** Matter of authorizing the amendment of the 2024-25 budget as presented.

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve M-109-24

Seconded by Councilmember Baker

Ayes: Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black, Gavin and Dean

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

**MOTION NO. M-110-24:** Matter of accepting the quarter ended September 30, 2024 budget-to-actual report.

Councilmember Baker moved to approve M-110-24

Seconded by Councilmember Hennen

Ayes: Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black, Gavin, Hennen and Dean

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

**MOTION NO. M-111-24:** Matter of authorizing the reopening of Dorothea to vehicular traffic in the immediate future, considering upcoming seasonal, temporary closures and public space activation in the short-term, and standing ready to determine the best long-term plans.

Councilmember Patterson moved to approve M-111-24

Seconded by Councilmember Vilani

Ayes: Vilani, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson and Dean

Nays: Baker and Black

Motion Approved.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Matthew Kastle, co-owner of Bombshell Treats, spoke in favor of M-111-24.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **COUNCILMEMBER BAKER**

- The Historical Committee did not meet this month; they've been very active with events and activities throughout the holiday season and Merry Month.
  - Members want to thank the volunteers and all who visited the Museum during the Holiday Lights Parade and at other times throughout the last couple of months.
  - For more information about the cool things going on at the Museum and to learn more about our City's history in general, please visit [berkeleyhistory.com](http://berkeleyhistory.com).
  - The DDA met last week; they have put on some tremendous programming and other things throughout the city that were fantastic.
  - There's one more Merry and Bright shopping night this Thursday; the trolley will be bringing joviality and ease of transport throughout our downtown.
- Extended his heartfelt thanks as liaison to the DDA for all that Mr. McGuinness has done in leading, cheerleading, spiritual leading, and the creative expansion of all that our downtown could be.
- Finally, it was W.C. Jones who once said, "The joy of brightening others' lives becomes for us the magic of the holidays." No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted. Please,

especially in the holiday season—but we should do this all the time anyway—be kind to one another, be thoughtful, and please hug somebody you love, especially this time of year.

- The holidays are tough for many folks, those who have lost family members or other incidents and things, and it can be overwhelming at times. Please be conscious of your own health and well-being. Please be conscious of others. Be kind, hug someone you love, and let's root for the Lions. They're going to pull it out; they're going to do it.

#### **COUNCILMEMBER HENNER**

- The Zoning Board of Appeals had no cases to hear in December, but they have a meeting coming up Monday, January 13th at 7 PM in Council Chambers to hear a case on a rear sign for a business on 12 Mile.
- The Tree Board had no meetings in December, but it continues to look for grant opportunities. They have a subcommittee working on that, and its next meeting is January 27th at 7 PM at the Public Safety Conference Room.
- Recently, as a trustee of the Michigan Municipal League, he was able to attend its recent board meeting, he sent a document out to everyone on some of members' accomplishments and the impact they've had in the last year. They've started a Thriving Communities Initiative, and Berkley was chosen to be one of the first three or four communities to participate. One of the central ideas of the initiative is to try and find collaborative efforts that improve the quality of life of our residents; a concrete example of something that fits into that framework is the deal the City struck with the Dad's Club and the schools—that's a benefit for all of the parties—and looking for ways to continue to do that and leverage those partnerships.

#### **COUNCILMEMBER BLACK**

- Thanked Director of Communications Caitlin Flora, who did an outstanding job with the recent donation to the Berkley Cares Food Pantry; he said she's been very instrumental for working with the Committee on Engagement and Transparency.
- Remember this holiday season that military first responders don't get Christmas off. They give us 24/7 effort, so just keep them in your thoughts and your prayers while you're enjoying Christmas.

#### **COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON**

- The Planning Commission will meet tomorrow in Council Chambers at 7 PM to discuss a daycare application that we've already heard once and will be coming back.
- The Beautification Committee met last week; they decided on the Holiday Spirit Award and it'll be announced soon.
- Thanked Facilities Director Alex Brown. He said when he was at the Lights Parade, there was someone coming in the museum talking about a door not being locked, and Mr. Brown and City Manager VanVleck were already working on it when he sent an email the next day.
- Wished everyone a merry, safe, happy Christmas and holiday season.

#### **COUNCILMEMBER VILANI**

- There are no announcements for the Environmental Advisory Committee; they have not met, and meetings will resume in the new year.
- For the Berkley Chamber, a friendly reminder that the Berk Perk Card is available for \$35. If you need any last-minute gifts for friends and neighbors who live in this area, it's a great way to help them save money all year long. It's also a great reminder to encourage everybody to shop small and support all of our local businesses.
- Gave a big thank you to everyone who supported and volunteered for the Holiday Lights Parade. She said it was a wonderful event, and it was a delight to see all of the new entrants in the parade, really reflecting the spirit and inclusivity of our town.

#### **MAYOR PRO TEM GAVIN**

- The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board met on December 12th at 7 PM at the Community Center.
- The Library Board had no December meeting.

- Gave a heartfelt thank you to Director McGuinness. He said that Mr. McGuinness is an incredible asset not only to his community in Pontiac but to ours here in Berkley. He thanked Mr. McGuinness for all he's done as he continued to make incredible strides and improvements in our downtown.
- Like his colleagues, he said he hopes everyone has a wonderful holiday season and a Merry Christmas.

#### **CITY MANAGER CRYSTAL VANVLECK**

- As Mr. Johnson mentioned, the gaps in our Finance Department have been filled.
- She said we are also well on our way to hiring a Human Resources Director, which will go a long way in helping those processes and procedures that have not been well-established or well-communicated over the years.
- She said her hope is to have somebody in by the new year, and that the City will see a lot of progress just in that new hire.

#### **CITY ATTORNEY JAKE MERTES**

- Thanked everyone for having him.

#### **MAYOR DEAN**

- She said that she and City Manager VanVleck rode the trolley this past Saturday from 1 to 3 PM.
- She said that if anyone saw her social media post leading up to that, she walked into City Hall one day and saw this giant Nutcracker hat. She said she thought, "This could be fun." They took pictures with it and decided to bring it on the trolley. The nutcracker was named "Bob" by a shopper's daughter.
- Thanked everyone who engaged with them on the trolley and shared their Berkley stories.
- She said her next stop on the Mayor's Roadshow is Thursday, December 19th, at Sum Girls Boutique on 12 Mile from 6 to 8 PM. She said Councilmember Patterson will be stopping in, so if residents want to know exactly when he's coming, or to avoid that time, they can reach out to him.
- Legendary filmmaker Stanley Kubrick believed in the power of human will, calling it an incredible force capable of making a meaningful difference even in daunting times. In an interview, Kubrick said, "However vast the darkness, we must supply our own light." As we find ourselves in this season of light, this is the perfect opportunity to reflect upon our place in this community. What do our words, habits, and actions bring to it? Do they offer increased darkness or increased light? The choice is yours. Please make sure the loudest voice—your own—is serving you and those around you.
- She said she is absolutely grateful for the growth and opportunities they have experienced as a Council this year, as well as all they have been able to accomplish.
- She said Council came through tough moments, and she believes they are stronger and they have great leadership in City Manager VanVleck.
- However you celebrate this season of light, she wishes everyone much joy and connection with those you love and a happy, healthy 2025.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:41 PM

Seconded by Councilmember Baker

Ayes: Black, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker and Dean

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

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Bridget Dean, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk

DRAFT

**THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FORTIETH COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2024 BY MAYOR DEAN**

**PRESENT:** Councilmember Steve Baker  
Councilmember Clarence Black  
Councilmember Dennis Hennen  
Councilmember Gregory Patterson  
Councilmember Jessica Vilani  
Mayor Bridget Dean

**ABSENT:** Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin

**OTHER STAFF PRESENT:**  
City Manager Crystal VanVleck  
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell  
Assistant to the City Manager Charlaine Stevenson

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**  
Councilmember Baker moved to approve the Agenda  
Seconded by Councilmember Vilani  
Ayes: Black, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker and Dean  
Nays: None  
Absent: Gavin  
Motion Approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Matter of holding a Public Hearing regarding the Community Development Block Grant Program Year 2025 application in the approximate amount of \$31,509.

Mayor Dean opened the Public Hearing at 7:01:10.

There was no one present for public comment.

Mayor Dean closed the Public Hearing at 7:01:46.

**RESOLUTION NO. R-24-24:** Matter of adopting a Resolution for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Year 2025 application in the approximate amount of \$31,509 and requesting the Mayor and City Manager to sign the application and submit it to the Oakland County CDBG Division.  
Councilmember Patterson moved to approve Resolution No. R-24-24  
Seconded by Councilmember Vilani  
Ayes: Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black and Dean  
Nays: None  
Absent: Gavin  
Resolution No. R-24-24 Approved.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the Special Meeting at 7:03 PM  
Seconded by Councilmember Vilani

Ayes: Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black, Hennen and Dean  
Nays: None  
Absent: Gavin  
Motion Approved.

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Bridget Dean, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk

DRAFT



**THE WORK SESSION OF THE FORTIETH COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:00 PM ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2024 IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS BY MAYOR DEAN**

**PRESENT:** Councilmember Steve Baker  
Councilmember Clarence Black (arrived at 5:05 PM)  
Councilmember Dennis Hennen  
Councilmember Gregory Patterson  
Councilmember Jessica Vilani  
Mayor Bridget Dean

**ABSENT:** Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin

**OTHER STAFF PRESENT:**

City Manager Crystal VanVleck  
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell  
Deputy City Manager of Public Services Shawn Young  
Public Safety Director Matt Koehn  
Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski  
Communications Director Caitlin Flora  
Interim Parks and Recreation Director Dan McMinn  
Library Director Matt Church  
Facilities Manager Alex Brown  
Chief Innovation Officer Stan Lisica  
Adam Wozniak, Superintendent of Public Works

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilmember Patterson moved to approve the Agenda  
Seconded by Councilmember Vilani  
Ayes: Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker and Dean  
Nays: None  
Absent: Black and Gavin  
Motion Approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**DISCUSSION:** City Council Discussion of Strategic Alignment.

City Manager Crystal VanVleck opened the discussion regarding the City of Berkley Draft Strategic Two-Year Framework.

Ms. VanVleck introduced Management Consultant and former Interim City Manager Nate Geinzer who would be leading the discussion.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed the agenda for the evening.

Mr. Geinzer discussed the following:

## Governance/Meeting Best Practices

Roles: Council vs. Staff – two very different roles.

Mr. Geinzer discussed top areas where conflict arises.

Mr. Geinzer discussed Council and Staff work flight analogy.

Mr. Geinzer stated Council is elected for purpose and vision while staff is for day-to-day operations. He said it is a sliding continuum in the middle and both should work together.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed the Profile of Effective Council/Staff Communications/Relations I:

- Remember city staff has many demands on their time
- Clearly communicate to Staff what the Council needs in order to make well-informed decisions
- Come to meetings having reviewed the materials prepared by Staff
  - #1 key to efficient and effective meetings
- To help keep staff focused and productive, requests for information from city council members should be directed to the city manager, if possible, submit questions prior to meetings
  - #2 key to efficient and effective meetings
- If you disagree with a staff recommendation, state specific reasons
- Do not assume ... default should be benefit of the doubt
- Treat staff with respect
- Compliment staff when and where appropriate

Mr. Geinzer reviewed Conducting Meetings – Role of the Chair:

- Maintain order throughout the meeting
- Enforce meeting procedures
- Ensure that courtesy is maintained, and speakers are not interrupted
- Ensure that public input is heard, and direct which comments/questions should be addressed by the appropriate party (usually Staff) as necessary for on the spot or future follow up
  - Should not devolve into a back and forth

Mr. Geinzer reviewed Conducting Meetings – Robert's Rules

- Guidance not law
- Cheat Sheet

## 10 Tips for Effective Meetings

Mr. Geinzer reviewed:

- Preparation and Planning
  - All meetings must be in compliance with the OMA
  - Set clear objectives and agendas well in advance of the meeting
    - Agenda review process
  - Ensure that all board members receive the agenda, supporting materials, and relevant documents with enough time to review them thoroughly
  - Invests necessary time each month including meeting preparation in advance, meetings, and follow-up work as needed.
- Time Management
  - Start and end meetings on time to respect everyone's schedules
    - Average meeting should not have to be longer than 60-90 minutes
  - Business should be conducted according to adopted bylaws or rules of procedure
  - Allocate appropriate time for each agenda item and enforce time limits for discussions to prevent tangents and ensure productivity

- Every vote does not have to be unanimous
- Facilitated Discussions
  - Encourage active participation from all board members by facilitating open discussions and inviting diverse perspectives
  - Balance staff analysis, board deliberations, and strategic framework
  - Be mindful of others' time
- Decision Making Process
  - Establish clear decision-making protocols to ensure that decisions are made in a timely manner and with consequences whenever possible.
  - Provide adequate information and allow for thorough deliberation before making significant decisions
    - Work sessions

A discussion took place regarding holding work sessions and communicating to residents about work session topics/discussions. All work sessions are open to the public.

- Accountability and Follow-up
  - Assign action items and responsibilities at the end of each meeting, with clear deadlines and expectations
  - Regularly track progress on action items and follow up on outstanding tasks at subsequent meetings
    - Quarterly report
- Transparency and Communication
  - Foster an environment of transparency by openly sharing information and updates with board members
  - Avoid side conversations
  - Communicate effectively between meetings to address urgent matters and keep all stakeholders informed
- Strategic Focus
  - Keep discussions aligned with the organization's mission, vision, and strategic priorities
  - Prioritize agenda items that are crucial to the organization's long-term success and sustainability
  - Stay focused on items that align with strategic framework
  - Stay out of the weeds
- Board Development and Training
  - Invest in board development and training programs to ensure that all members understand their roles, responsibilities, and best practices for effective governance
  - Provide opportunities for continuous learning and skill development relevant to the organization's needs
    - There are opportunities outside of the usual outlets
- Evaluation and Feedback
  - Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of board meetings through surveys, feedback forms, or discussions
  - Use feedback to identify areas for improvement and make adjustments to meeting processes or agendas as needed
- Cultivate a Positive Culture
  - Serve as a model of leadership and civility to the community
  - Foster a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration among board members
  - Celebrate achievements, acknowledge contributions, and address conflicts or concerns in a constructive manner to maintain a positive and productive atmosphere during meetings
  - Volunteer for as-needed committee work

## Common Pitfalls of the Council/Manager Relationship

Mr. Geinzer stated he knows Council wants efficiency and productivity and a good relationship.

Mr. Geinzer stated uncertainty is not unhealthy for a relationship.

Mr. Geinzer discussed:

- Lack of Shared Expectation:
  - Issue: Driving blind, a manager might head in the opposite direction from the Council.
  - Tips: Set shared expectations out of the gate through a strategic framework or other similar strategy. Review annually at a minimum.
- Lack of Accountability and Communication around Accountability:
  - Issue: Related to “Shared Expectations” when we do not communicate progress, or address challenges, oftentimes assumptions get made.
  - Tips: Report out regularly. Address issues timely.
- Lack of Discipline/Strategic Focus:
  - Issue: Squirrels! Squirrels distract us from long-term goals and objectives. They slow Staff’s ability to complete projects in a timely manner.
  - Tips: Adopt a strategic framework or similar. Avoid pet projects/initiatives.
- Communication Inequity:
  - Issue: Perceptions of some councilmembers having more information than others.
  - Tips: Respond to/ask questions and copy all. Make the effort to connect, you cannot blame others or the Manager if you don’t.
- Disregard for Chain of Command:
  - Issue: Going around the city manager to direct staff and make/communicate administrative decisions without consulting the city manager.
  - Tips: Follow the Charter. General inquiries are ok but can be a slippery slope. Consult the manager.
- Disregard for Boundaries:
  - Issue: The manager, staff, and councilmembers are more than the job. They have lives. They have other responsibilities.
  - Tips: Take the time to communicate/learn boundaries. Respect boundaries. Define “real” emergencies.
- Leaving the Manager out in the Cold on Tough Decisions:
  - Issue: Getting thrown under the bus hurts.
  - Tips: Support the Manager when tough decisions must be made/implemented. Seek to understand. Empower manager to make and learn from mistakes.
- Apathy:
  - Issue: The manager is usually not in it for the glory but is also not just a tool to get the job done.
  - Tips: Remember the manager is human. Invest in the relationship. Show support.
- Empty Evaluations:
  - Issue: The evaluation plays a critical role in the Council/manager relationship. Too often they are a wasted opportunity.
  - Tips: Ensure structure. Invest. Keep it constructive. Evaluation should be two ways. Could work with a facilitator.

## Strategic Framework

Mr. Geinzer stated the City’s draft strategic plan is focusing on the next two years.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed what a strategic framework is and why it is needed.

Mr. Geinzer discussed reacting is wasting time. A strategic framework helps prioritize initiatives and informed decision making.

Mr. Geinzer stated a strategic framework promotes transparency, accountability, and coordination. He said it helps allocate human and financial resources more effectively.

Mr. Geinzer stated a strategic framework fosters public trust and provides a pathway to cohesion. He said we can't be all things to all people. He said he doesn't know how you build cohesion without a plan.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilmember Vilani moved to adjourn the Work Session until the conclusion of the City Council Special Meeting at 6:46 PM

Seconded by Councilmember Patterson

Ayes: Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black and Dean

Nays: None

Absent: Gavin

Motion Approved.

**THE WORK SESSION OF THE FORTIETH COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED BACK TO ORDER AT 7:15 PM ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2024 IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS BY MAYOR DEAN**

**PRESENT:** Councilmember Steve Baker  
Councilmember Clarence Black  
Councilmember Dennis Hennen  
Councilmember Gregory Patterson  
Councilmember Jessica Vilani  
Mayor Bridget Dean

**ABSENT:** Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin

**OTHER STAFF PRESENT:**

City Manager Crystal VanVleck  
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell  
Deputy City Manager of Public Services Shawn Young  
Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski  
Communications Director Caitlin Flora  
Public Safety Director Matt Koehn  
Interim Parks and Recreation Director Dan McMinn  
Library Director Matt Church  
Facilities Manager Alex Brown  
Chief Innovation Officer Stan Lisica  
Adam Wozniak, Superintendent of Public Works

Mr. Geinzer discussed:

- Two-year Strategic Framework
  - Simply: This is the time needed to get oriented and pull together the missing pieces
  - Time needed to prepare for larger strategic planning process and community conversations
- Strategic Framework Hierarchy
  - Strategic priority (owned by council, informed by staff)

- Objective (owned by council, informed by staff)
- Action Items (owned by staff, informed by council)

Ms. VanVleck described her strategic plan experience while in Oak Park.

Mr. Geinzer stated we want priorities and objectives to be locked in stone. The everyday needs need to be a little more fluid, but you will know what those are via quarterly updates. Ex. Long-term financial updates.

Mr. Geinzer stated collaboration and strategic planning serve as core drivers of equitable, efficient, and effective service delivery and policy development.

Mr. Geinzer discussed Organizational Effectiveness. Optimize organizational structure, staffing, policies/procedures, and level of service.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed some draft objectives of Organizational Effectiveness:

- Objective #1: Cultivate a strong organizational culture
  - Develop merit employee evaluation process
  - Investigate staff performance recognition strategies
- Objective #2: Optimize organization structure, staffing, policies/procedures, and level of service
  - Document Standard Operating Procedures across city operations
  - Implement recommendations of 2023 HR Assessment
- Objective #3: Foster stronger relationships with community and regional partners
  - Increase director/staff engagement with regional organizations
  - Promote regional networking amongst staff/peers
- Objective #4: Identify and implement innovative operational solutions
  - Prioritize document imaging
- Objective #5: Develop community strategic planning process
  - Outline community strategic planning process

Mr. Geinzer discussed Economic Sustainability. A vibrant Berkley embraces creative and innovative economic strategies that welcome and encourage commercial and residential diversity.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed some draft objectives of Economic Sustainability:

- Objective #1: Identify, prioritize, and deploy economic development tools
  - Complete economic development strategy per RRC
  - Bolster relationships with county and MEDC
- Objective #2: Identify development opportunities and focus areas
- Objective #3: Expand economic recruitment and retention efforts strengthening the City's economic portfolio
  - Complete marketing plan per RRC
  - Investigate/pursue P3
- Objective #4: Implement Master Plan updates and development process improvements
  - Finish Zoning Ordinance Update
  - Update Community Development Escrow Policy
- Object #5: Improve City/DDA strategic alignment
  - Everyone should be rowing in the same direction
  - Ensure DDA and city alignment through DDA strategic planning process
  - Review DDA staffing strategy

Mr. Geinzer discussed Community Assets. Recognizing the cumulative human, financial, and community costs of capital disinvestment, Berkley will develop a sustainable long-term capital investment strategy that bolsters quality of life.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed some draft objectives of Community Assets:

- Objective #1: Complete comprehensive asset needs inventory and management plan
- Objective #2: Develop a sustainable asset investment strategy that supports funding for the City's Capital Improvement plan
  - Update CIP Process and Plan Structure
  - Develop long-term capital plan
- Objective #3: Improve community resiliency
  - Update city engineering standards
- Objective #4: Improve facility/staff security and safety
  - Continue to evaluate and implement facility security/safety recommendations
  - Conduct regular safety training

Councilmember Baker asked that we also look at mental- and emotional-health training; suicide prevention.

Mr. Geinzer discussed Open Communications. The City of Berkley prioritizes authentic, transparent, frequent, and consistent internal and external communication strategies that foster confidence, awareness, pride, and community connection.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed some draft objectives of Open Communications:

- Objective #1 – Identify community audiences and most effective city “voice(s)”
  - Conduct community survey
  - Vary communication strategies by group
- Objective #2: identify and implement priority communication strategies within human and financial resources
  - Keep city staff informed about city initiatives
- Objective 3: Foster meaningful community engagement and genuine relationships
  - Support council outreach efforts
  - Reimagine and relaunch Citizens Academy

Mr. Geinzer discussed Fiscal Stewardship. Berkley is attentive to its fiscal realities, yet prioritizes value over cost, seeks to balance the delivery of community services and unfunded capital and financial liabilities through revenue diversity, operational efficiencies, and increasing private investment throughout the community.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed some draft objectives of Fiscal Stewardship:

- Objective #1: Clearly define and articulate the City's long-term fiscal realities
  - Develop a multi-year forecast
  - Identify and implement improved budget communication strategy
- Objective #2: Identify additional funding strategies and partnerships
  - Comprehensive review and update the city fee schedule
  - Identify/engage grant support /resources
- Objective #3: Investigate new shared service opportunities
- Objective #4: Develop a strategy to address the City's unfunded liabilities in a fiscally balanced manner
- Objective #5: Update financial policies/procedures
  - Update Procurement Policy
  - Streamline accounts payable process through BS&A

Mr. Geinzer reviewed Accountability & Next Steps:

- Strategic Framework Buildout:

- Continue Staff Review of Action Items
  - Study “achieveability” of action item list ensuring space for unforeseen needs (current draft 71 items)
  - Prioritize Action Items
  - Assign/Map out item timelines to manage staff capacity and expectations
- Build Out Quarterly Reporting Tool
  - Develop streamlined and digestible format
  - Define understandable progress levels
  - Communicate barriers
  - Assign KPIs where appropriate
- Accountability:
  - City Manager/Staff
    - Communicate quarterly progress
    - Integrate strategic framework into capital improvement and budget processes
    - Utilize framework in staff evaluation process
    - Communicate barriers
    - Review with council annually prior to the annual budget process. Optimize the consent agenda to use regular agenda to discuss items like updates, progress, etc.

A discussion took place about future strategic planning sessions, focus on telling the stories of Berkley, and productive updates from Staff to Council. Less is more. Council discussed stating what is really going on when discussing the budget.

Further discussion took place that information is only as valuable as the ability to act on it. Information has to be actionable.

Mr. Geinzer said what we are talking about is more of a spreadsheet.

City Manager VanVleck agreed information to Council should be kept succinct, but have the weeds there if they want it.

- City Council
  - Adopt strategic framework, stick to the framework (alterations require review and framework amendment, not simply adding to the list)
  - Utilize framework in the city manager evaluation process
  - Review with Council annually (at minimum) prior to the annual budget process

Discussion took place on when/how often a review of the strategic plan should take place. Mr. Geinzer offered some suggestions. They discussed how the strategic plan will provide more context for the budgeting process.

Mr. Geinzer reviewed the next steps in the strategic planning process. Steps include:

- Community Survey – statistically sound
- SWOT analysis: An assessment of the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Scope/Situational Review: An analysis of the organization’s current state
- Vision and Mission: A statement of the organization’s purpose and aspirations, and its reason for existence
- Goals and Objectives: Broad, long-term goals, and specific, measurable actions to support them
- Strategies: Detailed plans for achieving objectives
- Action Plans: Specific steps, timelines, and responsibilities for implementing strategies
- Resource Allocation: Identification and distribution of necessary resources
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Methods for tracking progress and measuring success



Mr. Geinzer concluded the meeting by reviewing the Fundamentals of Strategic Planning Process & Plan:

- Statistically significant community survey
- Extensive community engagement
- Needs vs. wants vs. resources
- Usually five-year timeline
- Usually 12 months+ process
- Annual review

Mr. Geinzer stated this would be like a master plan initiative.

Mr. Geinzer asked council members how they feel about bringing the Strategic Plan before them in January. He stated it would be a plan at the higher level and would not include the tasks. He stated Council will know all of the tasks and they will be included in the first quarterly report.

Mr. Geinzer stated he and City Manager VanVleck have to talk about capacity. He said they want to set Staff up for success and not failure.

Further discussion took place about the excitement and benefits of a strategic plan.

Mayor Dean thanked Mr. Geinzer and said Council's job is not to micromanage. Same team, same goals.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilmember Vilani moved to adjourn the Work Session at 7:54 PM  
Seconded by Councilmember Patterson  
Ayes: Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black, Hennen and Dean  
Nays: None  
Absent: Gavin  
Motion Approved.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bridget Dean, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk

**A PROCLAMATION**  
**of the Council of the City of Berkley, Michigan**  
**Honoring the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Berkley Junior Women's Club**

- WHEREAS,** the Berkley Junior Women's Club has been a cornerstone of our community, exemplifying dedication, service, and leadership since its founding in 1985; and
- WHEREAS,** the purpose upheld by the Berkley Junior Women's Club, is to develop and foster projects of civic betterment, promote leadership training and cooperative action among its members, reflect the highest ideals of civic responsibility, and serve as a shining example for all; and
- WHEREAS,** the members of the Berkley Junior Women's Club have consistently demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of life for residents of Berkley through volunteerism, advocacy, and beloved City events, including the Holiday Tree Lighting; and
- WHEREAS,** Club members' strong work ethic and dedication to our community over many years have left a lasting positive impact on individuals and families in our City; and
- WHEREAS,** the members of the Berkley Junior Women's Club have devoted countless hours of their time and energy to organizing events, raising funds, and providing resources to those in need, all while welcoming others to join them in the spirit of giving.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY HEREBY PROCLAIMS**

- SECTION 1:** The City of Berkley formally recognizes and honors the outstanding contributions of the Berkley Junior Women's Club, celebrating members' invaluable work and the enduring legacy they continue to build.
- SECTION 2:** The City extends its heartfelt gratitude to all past and present members of the Berkley Junior Women's Club, acknowledging their tireless efforts in making our community a better place to live, work, and grow.

*Proclaimed this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025 at a Regular Meeting of the Berkley City Council.*

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*Bridget Dean, Mayor*

Attest:

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*Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk*

**A PROCLAMATION**  
**of the Council of the City of Berkley, Michigan**  
**Proclaiming February 2025 as Black History Month**

- WHEREAS,** Black History Month grew out of the establishment of Negro History Week in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History; and
- WHEREAS,** It became a month-long celebration in 1976. The month of February was chosen to coincide with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln; and
- WHEREAS,** During Black History Month, we commemorate Black history and its cultural contributions to American life, and is designed to recognize and pay tribute to the many contributions of African Americans to the history, society, and culture of the United States of America; and
- WHEREAS,** Black History Month grants us an opportunity to recognize and honor the heroes of African American history and celebrates the achievements of African Americans in the Arts, Civil Rights, Education, Entertainment, Government, History, Law, Literature, Medicine, Military, Music, Politics, Science, Sports, and other endeavors; and
- WHEREAS,** The City of Berkley continues to work toward becoming an inclusive community in which all citizens—past, present, and future—are respected and recognized for their contributions and potential contributions to our community, the state, the country, and the world; and
- WHEREAS,** The City of Berkley is proud to honor the history and contributions of African Americans in our community, throughout our state, and nation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY HEREBY PROCLAIMS**

- SECTION 1:** That February 2025 shall be recognized as *Black History Month* in the City of Berkley.
- SECTION 2:** The City of Berkley also calls upon the community to celebrate the many achievements and contributions made by African Americans to our economic, cultural, spiritual, and political development.
- SECTION 3:** The City of Berkley urges the citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools in the City of Berkley to celebrate our diverse heritage and culture, and continue our efforts to create a world that is more just, peaceful, and prosperous for all.

*Proclaimed this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025 at a Regular Meeting of the Berkley City Council.*

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*Bridget Dean, Mayor*

Attest:

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*Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk*