

THE SPECIAL WORK SESSION OF THE FORTIETH COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:00 PM ON MONDAY, MAY 5, 2025 BY MAYOR DEAN

PRESENT: Councilmember Steve Baker
Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin
Councilmember Dennis Hennen
Mayor Bridget Dean
ABSENT: Councilmember Clarence Black
Councilmember Jessica Vilani
Councilmember Gregory Patterson

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Crystal VanVleck
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell
Deputy City Manager of Public Services Shawn Young
Deputy Finance Director Amy Zurawski
Library Director Matt Church
Human Resource Director Jessica Stover
Parks & Recreation Superintendent Dan McMinn
Department of Public Works Superintendent Adam Wozniak
Facilities Manager Alex Brown

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

REGULAR AGENDA

DISCUSSION: Matter of participating in a Michigan Municipal League Thriving Communities Workshop.

City Manager Crystal VanVleck introduced the item. She explained how the Thriving Communities Workshop fits into the Strategic Plan.

Richard Murphy and Margaret Mooney from the Michigan Municipal League (MML) were present to lead the Thriving Communities Workshop.

Mr. Murphy said Berkley is the first community they visited in the field to conduct the workshop. He thanked the City for being the League's inaugural group.

Mr. Murphy introduced MML's Thriving Communities initiative, provided some helpful tools the League created within this framework, and instructed the group on utilizing the tools.

Discussion included:

- Introduction of the MML

- It is a premier statewide association representing more than 500 full-service cities, villages, and urban townships dedicated to making Michigan's communities better
- Introduction of the Thriving Communities initiative
- Setting a baseline with the Equalizer Tool
- How Thriving Communities fits into the City's Strategic Plan
 - Thriving Communities is an evolution of the MML's continuing placemaking work
- Reviewing the placemaking term: "We love where you live"
 - Help communities figure out their assets
 - Define themselves as a place
 - Public space adaptation is only part of the answer
- Reviewing Thriving Communities tools
- Reviewing local government can lead, but it can't go it alone
 - Local government has important tools, but not the complete set needed
 - Local government is the conveners of place, and the stewards of it communities; bringing people together to do inclusive community guiding and moving toward thriving
 - A thriving community embodies connection
 - There are six focus areas of thriving communities
 - Thriving isn't one size fits all

Group members participated in the following activity:

What Makes a Community Thrive

Some answers included:

- Downtown
- Foot traffic
- People
- Parks and green space
- Library
- Family businesses
- Events
- Opportunities
- Public safety
- Belonging
- Events
- Involvement
- Eagerness to say, "Yes"

Group members discussed setting a baseline utilizing the Equalizer Analysis and determining a baseline frequency.

Group members participated in another exercise where members marked on their Equalizer each focus area based on Berkley's current position.

Members rated on a scale from one to 10 each of the following factors:

- Financial Security
- Sustainability
- Infrastructure
- Arts & Culture
- Public Health and Safety
- Life-long Learning

Mr. Murphy reviewed the Equalizer Analysis Tool for Policies, Projects, and Initiatives. He discussed how the Tool would help and inform the City's Strategic Framework, including:

- What Thriving Communities focus areas does the City have well addressed
- What focus areas are outside or beyond the City's framework
- Where might the City need to identify partners who can complement Berkley's role?

Mr. Murphy reviewed the Community Partnership Map exercise that was provided to participants before the meeting, and how it relates to the Equalizer Analysis and the City's Strategic Plan.

Further discussion took place on relationship building and other tools the City could utilize moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Baker moved to adjourn the Special Meeting at 6:54 PM

Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gavin

Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Baker and Dean

Nays: None

Absent: Black, Patterson and Vilani

Motion Approved.

Bridget Dean, Mayor

ATTEST:

Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk