



Clawson moves forward with new planning provider

By: [Sarah Wojcik](#) | [Royal Oak Review](#) | Published January 16, 2019

CLAWSON — Clawson's new planning team from the Birmingham office of Detroit-based Giffels Webster had its first day with the city Jan. 10.

Economic Development Coordinator Susie Stec said she thought Giffels Webster would mesh well with the Planning Commission and would bring fresh insight, creativity and best practices to the city.



After an approximately 10-year partnership with Northville-based McKenna, the city solicited proposals and received five bids for the role of city planner. The bids came from Giffels Webster, Beckett & Raeder Inc., McKenna, SAFEbuilt Studio, and Wightman & Associates.

Stec said the city's contract with McKenna was not active at the time, and that the city had a fair amount of turnover with individuals assigned to the city.

"They did a great job doing our master plan update for us, and we always had a good working relationship with them, but sometimes it's good to review what's out there and see if we can get better service," she said. "Clawson is in a great place as far as business development. We've had a lot of interest over the last four years. We're on a fantastic precipice."

On Dec. 18, the City Council unanimously approved a two-year contract with Giffels Webster. The proposal includes a \$3,500 flat monthly fee plus additional costs for planning services.

"I appreciate Giffels Webster's imaginative approach," Mayor Pro Tem Matt Ulbrich said.

Mayor Deborah Wooley said she felt that Giffels Webster "really did listen to the community" when it assisted with the city's Downtown Development Authority master plan.

The DDA master plan developed by Giffels Webster won the 2017 Vernon Deines Honor Award for Outstanding Small Town Special Project Plan from the American Planning Association.

"They're very thoughtful and creative in everything they come up with," Stec said. "They're in Birmingham too, so not that there's too many planning emergencies, but it's still nice to have them so close."

She said the city is at a point where it needs to update its zoning map and zoning ordinances to make sure there are no conflicts.

“We talked about coming up with landscaping standards and a tree ordinance,” she said, adding that Giffels Webster would help the city become certified through the Redevelopment Ready Communities program.

She said staff is also getting Giffels Webster up to speed on current projects.

One such project is the site of the former Super 8 motel, near West Maple and Crooks roads, which sold for approximately \$1.8 million Nov. 8. It will become a Comfort Inn hotel.

Another development is the demolition of the former Great Sport Coffee building and construction of Weiss Distillery Co., located at 24-34 E. 14 Mile Road, east of Main Street.

Stec added that the Wendy’s in Clawson is also due to undergo a facade refresh.

For more information, visit www.cityofclawson.com or call Clawson City Hall at (248) 435-4500.

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