

Low-income housing slated for Hills in 1980

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

Farmington Hills residents may see federally subsidized low-income housing constructed in their city within the next three years.

In a heated debate at this week's council session, city leaders approved a three-year housing assistance plan which calls for low-income rental units to be built for three types of residents: families with five or more members; families with four or less members and for the elderly and handicapped.

The early morning session came after council members learned that the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) demanded last minute changes in the city's application for community development funds.

Approval by HUD is critical, according to city officials, because \$438,000 for planned community development programs is at stake.

HUD officials demanded that some stipulation be made for low-income rental units in the third year of the three-year program.

IN THE ORIGINAL request made by the city administration, stipulations for low-income rental development were left out. HUD was dissatisfied and demanded that 200 such units be penciled in.

Debate ensued when Councilman Fred Lichtman accused his council colleagues of being deceitful in submitting an application with stipulations by which they didn't intend to abide.

Under the three-year plan, the city is required to submit an updated request every year. Lichtman said he

"How can we purport to represent the community when they can't even come down on the right side of elderly housing. If they can come up here to close a street, they can come up here to close a community."

- Fred Lichtman

sensed a "take it and run" attitude under which the city wouldn't live up to its third-year obligation simply by dropping the third-year request. The city is making its first-year request at present.

"We are making an application under false pretenses if we think these third year goals can't be met. We must be sincere," he said.

Although he said he would support

the low-income housing concept, Lichtman voted against a motion by Councilmember Jan Dolan to submit the application. Lichtman's objection was that the motion also ordered the city administration to go back to HUD and request that the emphasis of the application be shifted to middle-income housing construction.

Lichtman labeled that stipulation as "deceitful."

Councilmember Joanne Smith defended the council's action.

"We aren't working under false pretenses. We are upgrading what we've already got in the community by complying with the HUD request," she said.

The monies received from HUD will be used to refurbish housing in the city's south end as well to install a much needed drain to stop periodic flooding there. Housing in that area is the least expensive in Farmington Hills.

But Lichtman derided Mrs. Smith's contention, saying that the only reason that funds are being sought for that area is because it's an "embarrassment" to the rest of the community.

Also voting to withhold the application was Councilman Robert Amorri who said he objected to building 100

units of low-income rental housing in one area.

I don't find fault with low-cost and senior citizen housing, but to park 100 units in one place, then we would have a problem. If it was scattered around the community, it would be more legitimate," he said.

Lichtman also took some critical shots at the general community during the debate saying that it was unlikely they would approve of low-income rental housing when they object to luxury multiple dwellings being built in the city.

Citing the late hour, he urged that a decision on the application be postponed to enable more members of the public to express an opinion.

"How can we purport to represent the community when they can't even

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Farmington Hills' own Miss Michigan, Holly Ann Schmidt, dazzled the judges to bring home the state crown. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

She's our Miss Michigan Congratulations, Holly

By LYNN ORR

The wages of beauty can be a 1977 AMC Matador, more than \$2,000 worth of clothing, cameras, an AM-FM radio, a \$800 set of cookware, scholarships and the admiration of friends and neighbors.

That's what North Farmington High graduate Holly Ann Schmidt discovered when she walked away with the Miss Michigan crown in Muskegon last weekend.

"It hardly seems like it's happening," says the 18 year-old Farmington Hills resident, daughter of Herbert and Lorraine Schmidt. She was sponsored by the Farmington Chamber of Commerce at the competition.

"It just hit me yesterday that I'll be walking on stage with Bert Parks and saying 'Hello, I'm Holly Ann Schmidt and I'm from Farmington Hills, Michigan.'"

Early Monday morning the phone started ringing—the start of all the hoopla that attends the crowning of a beauty queen.

"We got up to the sound of the phone, and it's been ringing ever since," says the happy Miss Schmidt. And her return to her parents' home in Colony Park West subdivision Sunday night surprised her as much as capturing the state crown.

"All the neighbors were here, and there were signs at the entrance to the sub," she says. "It was so nice. I felt just like a celebrity."

MISS SCHMIDT will have to get used to that kind of attention in the months ahead as she prepares for the Atlantic City Miss America pageant and fulfills her obligations to her home state, postponing her college education for a year.

"They told us if you win this pageant, don't complain—you'll have things to do," she explains, and she plans to heed the advice. Besides, she thinks it will all be a lot of fun.

The two-toned gold car on lease from American Motors will make getting around to festivals and conventions easier for Miss Schmidt.

"I never owned a car and didn't expect to until I was out of college and could pay for it myself," she says.

The entire collection of prizes is overwhelming, she adds, including a \$2,500 college scholarship in addition to the \$250 scholarship she won last year from the Farmington Founders' Day Festival, the use of an Arctic Cat snowmobile and a complete snowmobile wardrobe, a \$1,000 glamour and modeling course from Mannequin Modeling, a bowling bag, ball and shoes, and a full year of hair care and cos-

metic counseling from Peggy White's in Muskegon.

"I understand I'll be there quite a bit of the time," she adds.

Getting in shape for the Miss America pageant is her immediate objective, and she admits to having a few rough spots in need of smoothing. She also wants to change her piano piece for the talent competition.

"I have to condense it anyway for Miss America, and I think I can find something I like better." But she doesn't plan to change a winning act too much.

Although Miss Schmidt failed to win either of the preliminary contests in talent and swimsuit competitions, she didn't expect to. "I think I must have consistently placed in the top five of all the categories to win," she explains. She admits to being slightly

nervous before the talent competition, but everything went well, she says.

And tradition may have helped in the swimsuit category.

"Most of the girls wore more modern shoes, rounded toes or sandals—but somewhere along the way, someone told me the old fashioned spik heels make your legs look better so I stuck to it."

After she won, she had another obstacle to conquer—a path strewn with balloons dropped from the ceiling when the winner was announced.

"My feet just weren't working—I couldn't seem to avoid those balloons and they were popping all over the place," she explains.

"I often asked if the week's event compared to 'Smile,' a recent film satire

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Hills man burned in truck explosion

By CAROLINE PRICE

A series of explosions rocked a truck carrying propane tanks Tuesday morning, badly burning the driver and reducing a Northville party store to rubble.

Three other persons in the store escaped unharmed after the explosion, which drew fire and police depart-

ment units from Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Livonia, Northville, Northville Township and the Wayne County Sheriff's Department.

Two doctors from St. Mary Hospital in Livonia rushed past roadblocks set up by Farmington and Livonia police departments to aid anyone injured at the scene while a Wayne County heli-

copter hovered overhead.

Gordon Long, 21, of Farmington Hills, was taken by a City of Plymouth ambulance to the University of Michigan burn center in Ann Arbor where he was reported in fair condition, Tuesday morning.

George Schoenerman, chief of the City of Plymouth Fire Department,

said Long received burns over 23 percent of his body.

WALTER HOLOWKA, a detective with the Wayne County Sheriff's Department investigating the explosion, said it occurred shortly after 10 a.m. at the Six and Park party store, 1701 Northville Road near Six Mile.

Hollowka said Long apparently pulled up in front of the store in the truck he drove for North West Propane Co. of Farmington Hills and went inside.

Three persons were in the store at the time: Andree Serra, 56, of Northville, the store operator; an employee, Gary Harkins, 22, of Livonia; and Ronald Johnson, the 10-year old son of one of the store owners.

The Six and Park is owned by Ronald Johnson Sr. of Northville and James Webb of South Lyon. Neither was in the store at the time of the explosion.

Ms. Serra told Long that she noticed vapor coming from the back of his truck, which was filled with propane tanks. Long ran out to the truck to investigate just as the first explosion occurred.

"Long ran back into the store with his clothes on fire. The others got his clothes off and escaped through the back door. They managed to call the Northville Township Fire Department before they got out," Hollowka said.

"Wayne County just happened to have a unit coming down the road at the time the call went out."

"We ended up sending seven marked units, two detectives and a helicopter."

Hollowka said the cause of the explosion is under investigation, "but it was probably caused by propane gas escaping from the tanks."

The party store, which caught fire after the truck exploded, was reduced to ashes. The cost of the fire has not yet been determined.

North West Propane Co. representatives would not comment about the explosion or its possible cause.

July 4th means picnics, parades and speeches. In the evening, the celebration of independence is topped off by fireworks displays that whiz, streak, pop and spark across the darkened sky.

Although they can be pretty and some still are allowed by law, fireworks fun can turn to tragedy, according to Farmington area fire chiefs.

To the fun of setting off sparklers and paper snakes, fire fighters are adding a note of warning for parents to supervise their children.

If sales can be any indication, area youngsters seem determined to celebrate the Fourth. Toy Town of Farmington reports that half of the stock of packaged fireworks was sold a week before the holiday. Children are buying pre-packaged sets of legal fireworks, such as sparklers, for prices ranging from 99 cents to \$3.99, according to Toy Town Assistant Manager Mark Kostich.

Children can make the purchase without adult supervision, he said.

CARELESSNESS CAN turn fun into a needless tragedy without adult supervision.

"Everyone wants to celebrate a little. But the kids should have parental supervision," said Farmington Hills Fire Chief John Van De Voort. Van De Voort would prefer to keep all fireworks out of the reach of children.

Safety precautions can make the holiday a good memory instead of a bad experience. Sparklers should be stuck into the ground, according to Farmington Fire Marshall Norm Madison.

Hot wires are another hazard of sparklers which should be held carefully if they are carried when lit.

Another example of poor fireworks handling can result in damaged property or injury, according to Madison.

"Don't throw the sparklers into the air," he cautioned. "Once you throw it into the air, you don't know where it will land. It can land on someone or a garage roof. I've seen vinyl roofs on cars burned by sparklers."

Another thing to worry about in dry weather is the placement of the fireworks.

BRUSH FIRES can start when an airborne sparkler or other type of fireworks lands in a dry field, according to the fire fighters. They advise that firecrackers should be set in open areas away from people.

Other types of fireworks can pose a safety problem. Skyrockets, bombs and any type of fireworks containing an explosive are illegal. Only properly licensed persons can possess them, according to the fire fighters. Some of the illegal fireworks contain nitro glycerin, chlorates, nitrates and sulphides, according to Van De Voort.



Firemen drag lengths of hose close to the blazing remains of a party store and truck in an attempt to quench the fire that began when propane tanks, car-

ried by the truck exploded. (Staff photo by Jim Galbraith)

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