

# Get out and enjoy Founders' Festival

# Farmington Observer

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## Residents pan downtown authority

By LYNN ORR

The City of Farmington's proposed prevention plan aimed at stemming downtown deterioration hit a few snags Monday night when about 45 businessmen and residents turned out for a public hearing on a proposed downtown development authority.

Although the city council tabled any action on the proposal until its next meeting, they appeared surprised with community reaction—much of which was negative.

Receiving the greatest protest was an aspect of the proposal which would enable the authority to tax—with council's OK—downtown residents to pay for its operation.

"Experience proves that in matters of tax—like the little boy and the dike—the flood comes later," said John Clappison of Clappison Insur-

ance on Grand River. "I'm hesitant about the precedent of setting up the authority that somewhere down the road may hit me with 10 or 12 mills."

Some businessmen expressed disapproval of the plan in its entirety, while others were concerned about methods of financing. One resident was concerned about paying taxes that might be used to improve buildings neglected by absentee landlords.

Homeowners who live in the proposed district were equally disapproving.

The downtown district, to be governed by the authority, follows a zig-zag course in the business area, although it includes a few residential streets which could be rezoned commercial in the future.

The proposed authority would be developed under a city ordinance, an im-

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—John Clappison

plementation of a state law passed to aid cities with aging business districts. Port Huron and Cadillac are two cities which have taken advantage of the state law.

City Mgr. Robert Deadman said the purpose of an authority would be to promote economic growth; prevent

decay; halt property deterioration and put the burden for downtown development on the business community, rather than city government.

A board of eight members, at least five of whom would have to own property in the downtown district, would be supervised by either the city man-

ager or mayor. All members would be appointed by the city council.

The proposed ordinance gives the authority the power to develop plans and designate financing with city council approval.

Some financing alternatives might include a two-mill ad valorem tax, to be applied to property owners within the boundaries of the downtown district; the sale of bonds by the city; donations received by the authority; borrowing money and the allocation of revenues from tax assessment increases within the downtown district.

"THE BOARD may make and enter into contracts necessary to exercise its power; sue and be sued; and buy and sell property," Deadman said.

Beautification projects, street layouts, walkways, and deteriorating buildings could all come under the au-

thority's jurisdiction, he added. In its initial stages, the authority would have little or no budget and volunteer staffing.

Amending the ordinance to delete homeowners from the downtown district may be a necessary compromise in pushing the proposal, because residents' disapproval was strong.

"There are very few private taxpayers in that area, and I happen to be one of them," said D. Ormsby of Orchard St. "I can't believe that a downtown beautification project is going to benefit me like the downtown merchants."

Lawrence Mayer, whose florist shop is included in the district, was initially opposed to the concept, expressing the conviction that his building could not be improved. He later said he was in favor of the plan, since it

(Continued on page 4A)

## Senior citizen issues spark council campaign

By STEVE BARNABY

Senior citizen needs, particularly housing needs, have taken center stage in the Farmington Hills city council campaign.

Nine of the ten hopefuls gathered recently before the Farmington Area Democratic Club to give their views on how best to meet the needs of the fast growing ranks of older residents.

While all candidates agreed that a need for senior housing existed, the means for reaching that goal differed among the candidates who are attempting to survive the cut in the August 2 primary.

Running to fill the four council seats are incumbents Earl Oberthauer and Robert Amori. Other candidates present at the meeting were Joe Alkateeb, Robert Anzlov, Catherine Jones, Ben Marks, Melvin Pannovich, George Roberts and JoAnn Soronen.

Absent was Jack Renaud.

Strongly favoring government participation in meeting senior citizen needs was Oberthauer.

"A CRYING need can be seen for such things as housing and transportation for senior citizens," he said.

The veteran city and township politician said he strongly supports financing housing with city bonds as well as subsidizing transportation by federal, state and city funds. To keep an eye on elderly residents needs, Oberthauer supports the newly instituted Farmington Area Commission on the Aging and the study presently being made the city's housing commission.

Senior Citizen housing needs have been at the forefront of Farmington Hills news since last year when a senior's group, the Nardineers, requested rezoning to build its own senior housing complex.

Since that time, the Hills Housing Commission has made two proposals calling for low and mid-rise zoning designations for senior housing.

Alkateeb, who has led the opposition to a special senior zoning ordinance, told the Democratic audience that he only is against the zoning but supports housing for senior citizens.

"We should do something for senior citizen housing by planning for the future, like for the next 20 or 30 years,

instead of jumping the gun," said Alkateeb, an engineer, who says his training would aid the city in making just such plans.

"We must study the problem and define the alternatives. We must work at solving the problems of all those persons from the baby-boom years of the 1940s and '50s who will be senior citizens in the year 2,000," he said.

Candidate Roberts was emphatic in support of senior citizen needs.

"The Nardineers have a legitimate bitch," he said. The group was to build the senior facility with private funds.

"They have been studying senior citizen needs. We should be trying to build for today's and tomorrow's children," he said.

Pannovich, a City of Southfield police sergeant, endorsed the use of federal funds for senior citizen housing, saying that the strings attached to such funding would call for low income housing, something to which he is opposed.

"I am in absolute opposition to low cost rental housing. I have seen what happened in Southfield with people fleeing from the city because of the low-income housing proposal," he said.

"I worked hard for my home. Other residents who have worked and built feel the same way. Southfield government at such fears, saying that people see if they wanted low-income residents next door to them. I know I don't," he said.

BUT CANDIDATE Ben Marks scoffed at such fears, saying that city governments didn't have to back down to federal requirements. He cited the City of Warren as an example of a municipality which rejected go-by federal guidelines in rezoning aid, yet still received federal funds.

In recent years, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is requiring cities applying for federal funds to map out a plan of how they will allow low-income housing also to be built.

"It's unconstitutional to mandate requirements when a municipality applies for federal funds," said Marks. "Council members have to be knowledgeable. We have to be willing to

fight the bureaucracy in Washington," he said.

Although attacking federal requirements, Marks said he supports mid-rise senior citizen development, saying it is the only "viable" way to service the people.

Marks is a Housing Commission member.

Amori said he also would support mid-rise development as long as it wasn't in residential areas. He admitted to being "uncomfortable" with low-income housing and said other options, such as low interest loans, could fulfill federal requirements.

Ms. Soronen and Anzlov, part of Alkateeb's Council of Homeowners coalition, supported the concept of keeping the city in low-profile status.

Mrs. Jones, while endorsing senior citizen housing, said it was important that it be spread around the city, rather than being concentrated in one area.



Farmington Hills City Clerk Floyd Cairns demonstrates the city's new computer punch card voting machine which will be used in the August primary.

## Punch card voting heads for Hills

See page 4A for instructions

in addition, the new 28-pound voting table folds up like a suitcase for easy storage. The 600-pound booth needed three to four men to roll it into position and was difficult to store because of its bulk.

BESIDES THE problem of their bulk, the machines were also limited in the type of ballot it could carry.

"Last year we were afraid that the machine wouldn't hold the number of candidates on the ballot if there were ten parties. The machine only holds nine," said Cairns.

Computers could easily handle that number of candidates, he said. The machines allow for write-in votes, as well.

Once voting is completed, the punch cards will be fed into the city's new vote tabulating machine, which is the size of an office copier. With practice, the city clerk's office will be able to tabulate votes in a shorter time than was possible with the old machines.

A primary election was chosen to kickoff the new system so voters could get acquainted with the machine on a simple ballot.

"This year, we'll have one or two pages of ballot but during a bigger election we can have about five or six pages in the machine," Cairns said.

"We're doing it this year to get the people educated to it so they can go through the big gubernatorial election with it," he said.

COMPUTER VOTING was a huge fiasco when it was tried in Detroit, where computer cards were bent, splintered and mutilated.

Other surrounding communities, however, have been more successful, Cairns said. Redford Township, Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Oak Park, Lansing, Flint, Grand Rapids, Waterford and Allen Park are among the communities which are using the new system, according to Cairns.

"The only way the system can break down is if the people tear the pages out," he said.

"The city is touting the machine as an uncomplicated voting method. Punch cards marked 'This side up' are slid into the vote recorder, which resembles a loose-leaf notebook. A small stylus is used to punch the card through spaces in the notebook which correspond to the voter's choices. Write-in votes can be made on the envelope provided for the punch card.

It will be a boon for voters in other ways, too, according to Cairns. Voters who wear bifocals will find it easier to read the ballot because they will be looking down onto it instead of gazing up at a list on the voting machine, he explained.

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Farmington Hills voters and employees will face a learning experience at the polls in August when the city tries out its new computer punch card voting machine.

The city, which will save time and money on the computers, hopes voters will find the light, compact machines easier to use than their cumbersome predecessors. The hefty old voting booths are slowly becoming obsolete, according to Farmington Hills City Clerk Floyd Cairns.

Cairns feels the time is ripe for the computer move.

"In time we would have to go to the computers. In a few years voting machines will be scrap iron," Cairns said. "The prices of the machines are going down now. I can sell my seven to eight machines and come up with two-thirds of the cost of new equipment."

Computers are much less expensive than machines. A new computer voting machine costs the city less than \$1,000, according to Cairns. Voting machines sell for about \$4,000 each.

and coulcimen Richard Tupper and Alton Bennett are presently operating. Candidates for nomination must have the following qualifications:

- \*Must have been a resident of the City of Farmington for three years immediately prior to the last day for filing petitions.
- \*Must be a qualified and registered elector of the City of Farmington on Aug. 12 and throughout the tenure of office.
- \*May not be in default to the city or to any other governmental unit of the state.
- \*Must submit petitions signed by at least 50 and not more than 75 qualified registered electors by 5 p.m., Aug. 12.
- \*Must submit affidavit as to qualifications.

Terms of Mayor John Richardson

## Vandals tee off greenskeepers inside

Somebody's tearing up the greens. Golf carts are taking themselves for a ride and not coming back. At least, that's what's happening at Glen Oaks Golf and Country Club.

"The spring is the worst," says Bill Bryenson of Glen Oaks. "Kids come in at night and tear up the greens. They'll steal anything—pins, flags, carts."

"We still have three carts missing from the spring."

Carts, which run \$1,000 new, are one of the prime targets, although Bryenson says that the vandalism means constant repair on the greens.

Sometimes whole new greens must be installed, at a cost of \$10,000. Bryenson estimates that between \$5,000 and \$10,000 annually is spent on vandalism repair at Glen Oaks.

"It's the same everywhere, it's not just here," Bryenson says.

However, Grad Soira, assistant pro at the Farmington Country Club, and pro manager Al Marmon of San Marino, disagree. They say theft and vandalism are minor problems at their respective clubs.

"About a month ago, somebody hopped the fence and was banging the carts around," Soira says. "But that's all."

Also about a month ago, a woman left her clubs behind her car at San Marino, and when she returned, they were gone. Marmon says that that's the only incident they have had.

Meanwhile, at Glen Oaks, Bryenson says, "We've had to hire a full-time security guard."

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**Filing dates set for city council**

Petitions are now available at the office of city clerk, 2360 Liberty Street, Farmington, for the nomination of candidates for three seats on the Farmington City council.

Petitions may be filed from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, Aug. 2 through Aug. 12 at the clerk's office.

A primary election has not been scheduled, and all candidates who qualify will be placed on the ballot.

City of Farmington voters will elect three councilmembers on a non-partisan ballot at the regular city election scheduled for Nov. 8.

The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected to a four-year term, while the third highest vote-getter will be elected to a two-year term.

Terms of Mayor John Richardson