

Farmington Observer

Volume 89 Number 6 Thursday, September 14, 1978 Farmington, Michigan 62 Pages Twenty-Five Cents

Council torpedoes rehabilitation plan

Farmington Hills City Council has backed a federal program which would have provided nearly \$450,000 for community rehabilitation.

The action came in a 4-3 decision at this week's council session where more than 500 residents crammed city hall. Most of those present protested the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded plan.

Voting to pull out of the agreement were council members Keith Deacon, Joe Alkateeb, Earl Opperthauser and Joanne Soronen. In favor of reaching with the plan were Mayor Jan Dolan, and council members Cathy Jones and Joanne Smith.

The program was designed to rehabilitate substandard housing, provide low income housing and provide funds for construction of major drain projects.

Unless the city comes up with some alternative funding, two major drains in the southern section of the city will go uncompleted, according to city officials.

Leading the drive to pull out was Alkateeb who claimed that the community development program was just another "grannies" plan by HUD to force integration on the country since busing had failed.

"When you're working with HUD you can't give priority to (Farmington Hills) residents. The net result is that you bring the area down," said Alkateeb.

Alkateeb also objected to the Coalition for Block Grant Compliance, a citizen watchdog group, which monitors cities that have applied for federal funds to see they comply with federal regulations.

Although the program provides funds for loans and outright grants for upgrading housing, the controversy revolved around a stipulation in the contract which made it mandatory for the city to build new low income housing in the south end of the city, sections 25,26,35 and 36.

Under this part of the agreement,

the housing would be built for expected to reside (ETR) persons. The ETR classification includes persons who now work or might be expected to work in the community.

Opponents to the plan wished to reserve any low income housing for local residents and objected that the housing would be clustered in one area of the city.

A last ditch effort by Mrs. Dolan at a compromise failed when Opperthauser, who initially said he would vote against dropping out of the program, changed his mind after council discussion.

Mrs. Dolan had proposed that a three-month moratorium be placed on the program until a feasibility study could be made. The study, in reality, was to see if a compromise could be worked out with HUD on the expected to reside clause.

But Opperthauser was persuaded by Alkateeb's argument that a moratorium was unfeasible. City Attorney Paul Bibeau was unsure whether a moratorium could be waged against the program.

"You can't put on a moratorium," said Alkateeb. "A developer could come in to town tomorrow and build low income housing."

The only way out, he said, was to pull out of the program immediately. With the unofficial vote at 3-3, the crowd yelled, "C'mon Earl, c'mon," as the veteran councilman struggled to make up his mind on the issue.

"I'm not sure if we reject this program that it may be like throwing out the baby with the bath water," said Opperthauser. "If the Tisch and Headline amendments pass it is questionable that we could accomplish our own financing," he said, referring to the two tax restriction amendments to be placed on November's ballot.

Opperthauser did say he might reconsider his stand at next week's meeting if HUD came up with a compromise palatable to Farmington Hills.

Cheers and jeers from residents echo in city hall

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

A highly organized campaign by persons in opposition to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Block Grant program outlined for Farmington Hills brought out a record crowd to last Monday's meeting.

Standing room only was an understatement as the estimated crowd of more than 500 homeowners packed council chambers, standing on tables and window ledges, and sitting on the floor and the steps to the council table.

Many of the persons attending the session were forced to park three and four blocks away from city hall as the parking lot rapidly became full.

While some persons portrayed the gathering as democracy in action, Mayor Jan Dolan scolded the gallery as the "most unruly group I've ever seen."

Cheers and jeers were the order of the evening as speakers, pro and con, approached the podium to give their views.

At issue was the city's participation in a community development program which would have provided funds for rehabilitation of low income housing, building of new low income housing in the southern section of the city and funds for building major sewer lines in the same area.

After lengthy debate, the council, in a 4-3 vote, opted out of the program which would have garnered the city \$450,000 in the next year.

Leading off the public discussion was Hills resident Donald Wolf, a member of the governmental affairs staff of Detroit Edison.

An opponent of the program, Wolf received several rounds of applause as well as a standing ovation at the end of his presentation.

Wolf told the council that after long study of the grant application, he believed the only choice the council had was to withdraw from the program that night if it was to avoid HUD-regulated low income housing.

"Homes must be open to all expected to reside persons in metropolitan Detroit. HUD will call the shots," he warned.

Expected to reside (ETR) classifica-

tion includes persons who now work or might be expected to work in the community.

"You aren't dealing with just money. You're dealing with our homes and our lives. It is important that we be part of the decision," he said.

"Strings attached by HUD will soon become chains and it won't be good for Farmington Hills."

He labeled the HUD Community Block Grant Program as a "tired handout philosophy" that just doesn't work anymore.

Under the agreement, Farmington Hills would be required to build 100 low income units in the southern section of the city and receive funds for sewers and rehabilitation.

Wolf urged the council to let Farmington Hills help itself. He cited communities such as Denver, New Orleans and Phoenix which used revenue bonds to finance similar projects.

He told the council it was time for the community leaders to catch up with the followers.

ON THE OTHER side of the question was Fr. Jim Anthony, pastor of St. Alexander Roman Catholic Church, a parish in the south end.

Anthony received a quite different reaction from the audience as he portrayed the need of the poorer residents in the southern sections. One person yelled, "Let the Pope help 'em."

Another spectator yelled, "Make them work for a living."

"It may be news to some people but there are poor people in this city. They have no inside plumbing. Their children are susceptible to contagious diseases," said Anthony, who has lived for 30 years in the south end.

He accused the city of being derelict in cleaning up the situation in the south end in previous years and said this program was the chance to rectify it.

"People live and die in poverty in this city. Yet, we are part of the Hills and we need help," he concluded.

For years many sections of the south end have been lacking in drainage, sewage facilities and roads and have homes which are substandard to city code regulations. Many of the streets are unimproved.

But other residents who opposed the HUD program because of the federal rules said they would be willing to allow the city to tax them to get the work done.

"We didn't ask the government for help. If we need any help we can increase taxes one or two mills," said one spectator.

Mayor Jan Dolan was forced to suspend the meeting rules when the angry crowd protested the three minute time limit for each speaker. Speaking at the time was Massie Kurzeja, a HUD program opponent, who wasn't finished with her statement before the three minutes.

"Let her speak, let her speak," yelled the crowd. She was allowed to finish her statement.

Mrs. Kurzeja said the city would be

(Continued on page 12A)



Councilman Keith Deacon (foreground) discusses the low income housing issue as a crowded gallery observes. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Bees, bees everywhere

Invasion mystifies residents

It has all the makings of a science fiction thriller entitled "Invasion of the Killer Bees."

Actually, there haven't been any fatalities and bees aren't the true culprits. But as anyone who's tried to enjoy a picnic lunch or who has spent much time outdoors in recent months can testify, stinger insects are everywhere.

And they can make life miserable.

Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills reports that bee sting incidents are near normal for this time of year. But the Oakland County

Extension Service has been receiving about 30 calls a day from people searching for an explanation about all the buzzing.

And the bee experts at Cranbrook Institute of Science in Bloomfield Hills have been summoned repeatedly to exorcise the unwelcome visitors.

Although Botsford statistics indicate otherwise, some people wonder if there's a bee epidemic in the making.

"I've noticed myself on picnics that there's hundreds of them around," says Gladys Hanert, executive secretary at Botsford. Mrs. Hanert's daughter had the unfortunate experience of nearly swallowing one of the varmils.

"A bee flew down her throat and stung her on the back of the palate," Mrs. Hanert explains. Fortunately, a cough brought the bee out, and ice soothed the pain somewhat.

Pool and patio lovers have found difficulty enjoying summertime sunbathing, and picnics promise trouble.

WHAT'S GOING ON? Cranbrook bee aficionado Norton Williams says dry weather and suspected migration of a European yellow jacket wasp labeled *Verpula germanica* are to blame for the big sting of '78.

Williams says the recent rash of stinging incidents is giving honey bees a bad name. In nearly all cases, he insists, yellow jacket wasps are the villains.

"I haven't seen one case this year of honey bees bothering anybody," he explains. "Yellow jackets will eat just about anything they can, especially garbage. And they don't resent taking food from the picnic table. Honey bees won't do that. They are vegetarians."

Competition for food has grown more intense, he added, because dry weather has reduced normal food sources. Thus, the hungry yellow jackets are more than willing to feast on your picnic lunch with or without your permission.

"This dry spell is decreasing nectar production in goldenrod, which is one of the primary sources of food this time of year, and undoubtedly in other miscellaneous plants," Williams noted.

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And unlike bees, wasps can sting the same victim repeatedly.

Wilson Jewelers robbed once again

A robber who stole two rings from Wilson Jewelers in Farmington Monday afternoon may be responsible for 10 similar incidents in the metro Detroit area.

According to Det. Tom Daniels of the Farmington Public Safety Department, police are seeking a suspect who fits the description given in 10 other robberies in Livonia, Dearborn, Westland and Detroit.

At 1:45 p.m. Monday, the man cruised through two other jewelry stores in Farmington before walking into Wilson Jewelers at 33185 Grand River in the downtown center.

He asked clerk Cathy Gooding if he could look at two diamond rings while considering a purchase. After Ms. Gooding removed the rings from the case, the suspect pointed to a gun in his waistband, grabbed the rings, and fled the store, warning her to keep quiet.

A man's diamond ring valued at \$325 and a man's diamond wedding ring valued at \$375 were taken by the robber, according to police.

THE SUSPECT is described as a male between the ages of 25-28, 5 feet, 10 inches tall, weighing about 165 lbs.

The suspect has a long, natural haircut and wore a blue shirt, blue pants and a maroon T-shirt. Witnesses at Wilson's and two other jewelry stores in Farmington described the suspect as possibly having two moles on the left side of his face, a light mustache, and a two-inch scar on the left side of his neck.

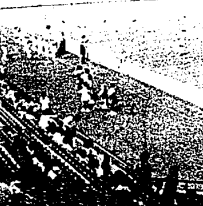
After checking with police in other areas, Daniels reports the description of the suspect, and other details of the case correspond with other robberies. A composite drawing made by Dearborn police will be circulated among area police officers and jewelry

stores in Farmington, he adds.

Upon conviction, the robbery charge carries a maximum life prison sentence and a minimum two-year prison sentence for commission of a felony with a firearm.

FOR DON WILSON, owner and proprietor of the jewelry store, the robbery is the third incident in 3 1/2 years.

In February 1975, Wilson jumped through a plate glass window at the front of his store to avoid a knife-wielding assailant. Wilson sustained some injuries and the assailant fled on foot after following Wilson out the window.



Just like the pros
North Farmington High School beat Pontiac North last weekend while playing at the Pontiac Silverdome. To read the details, turn to the sports section.

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