

# Farmington Observer

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Twenty-Five Cents

## Senior citizen housing plans unveiled

By STEVE BARNABY  
Farmington editor

Farmington Hills senior citizen housing came one step closer to reality this week.

The city council has authorized further investigation into the possibility of selling bonds to construct the \$6.3 million project proposed for a site at Freedom and Drake in the city's west end.

The project would include 240 units—a mix of one and two bedroom apartments with a six-story height limitation.

Persons attending this week's council session got a peek at an architect's rendering of the site which would go

under construction beginning next spring if bonds were approved and sold by that time.

Making the presentation were members of Housing Commission and Building Authority.

But time and ballot proposals are making the go ahead more difficult and the fate of the project unsure, as was witnessed by discussion at the council.

"There isn't any reason to have a full set of (architectural) plans made until the vote of the people on Nov. 7," said Acting City Manager Floyd Cairns.

The problem, warned Cairns, is the question of whether or not the Headlee tax amendment is approved. Under

that amendment, any bonding proposals would have to be approved by a vote of the electorate in that municipality. Under present conditions, the city council can approve bond sales without a city-wide vote.

Housing Commissioner Ben Marks said the city should go ahead with the final renderings.

"If we wait for the bonding first, we will be going backwards," said Marks. "We must have the plans, first."

But Councilman Joe Alkateeb objected to that course of action, saying that the final drawings would cost the city \$30,000 and if voters defeated a bonding proposal, that money would have been wasted.

Housing Commissioner Bill Flattery

said it was inconsequential whether the Headlee amendment passed. The commission, he said, was working on the basis of a bonding under any circumstances.

"A time delay would be dangerous. It would mean additional costs in construction and interest rates," he said.

ANOTHER PROBLEM to be studied by administration is the cost of rent for senior citizens. Finance Director Grand Miller warned that with a \$5.3 million price tag, it would cost occupants \$300 a month.

He questioned the council over the possibility of levying a 4 mill for 100 of the units which would bring each unit rent down by \$100.

But members of the Housing Com-

mission said other avenues were open to senior citizens.

"This building was designed to qualify for federal subsidies," said Flattery. "But it would be up to the individuals to apply for the rent subsidies."

Marks told the council that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development would rather see the senior housing completed and have the rent subsidies go to individual senior citizens, rather than have a governmental unit apply for the subsidy.

The advantageous thing about these subsidies, said Marks, is that they carry no strings. HUD, he said, also agrees with the philosophy that local residents should have first crack at occupying the senior residences.

If a bonding election was necessary upon passage of the Headlee amendment, it couldn't take place until 60 days after the November election, according to state law, said Cairns.

Cost per unit would be \$22,640 according to a Miller. They would be specially equipped with each unit having a sprinkler unit. Most apartment buildings have sprinkler units only in the hallways, according to a spokesman from Progressive Associates, the firm which rendered the initial sketches.

The two bedroom units would be 850 square feet, while the one bedroom units would be 568 square feet. Among the features would be individualized storage spaces, community rooms and carpeting.

## Voucher plan Effect on public schools eyed

By JACKIE KLEIN

The school voucher plan, buffeted in a storm of controversy, could be a boon or a bane to education—depending on which side of the fence you're sitting.

The constitutional amendment, Proposal H on the Nov. 7 ballot, would abolish local property taxes as the means of financing state public elementary and secondary schools. If approved, the amendment would require the state to distribute school tax money in the form of vouchers to parents. Parents could use the funds to send their children to either a public, private or parochial school. The amount of money in each voucher would be set by legislators.

Jack Dodge, a Grosse Pointe attorney who's traveling the banquet circuit to push the voucher plan, recently spoke to members of the Southfield Bar Association. Some lawyers were leery, others were skeptical and most were concerned the proposal would dismantle the already troubled public schools.

Dodge said the voucher plan is actually two separate proposals. One would create a massive change in the tax structure by forbidding property taxes for funding schools. The other, he said, would develop a "revolutionary system" of supporting educational institutions.

"THE ABILITY to pay should be the criterion for most taxes," Dodge maintained. "Voucher plan supporters are opposed to the property tax because it's regressive. Property taxes discourage home ownership because of their negative impact on the retired, newly marrieds and moderate-income persons."

"The voucher creates a G.I. government issue type bill of rights. Veterans have the right to go to parochial, public, private and trade schools. Their tuition are paid. That's the most successful educational device I can conceive of."

Most nonpublic and parochial schools support the voucher proposal. Public school boards and associations have called the plan "parochial in disguise." Vouchers would guarantee public education, its supporters say. But vouchers don't cover the entire

cost of private schools. Other opponents of the plan say private schools can accept vouchers and charge tuition besides. That means private schools may attract the cream of the academically talented and public schools would be dumping grounds for the Johnny's who can't read.

Dodge claimed only the rich have access to the private education sector and the voucher system would be the first step to equal education for the middle classes.

"The voucher creates competing systems," he said. "Downtown Detroit churches will open private schools. But this is not parochial in disguise."

"PARENTS CAN still decide to keep their kids in the public school bureaucracy," Dodge said. "But the voucher would take the money away from had schools which offer the kind of education they damn well feel like giving us. It's time to give the poor, minorities and the middle class a chance to vote."

Dodge claimed the voucher plan wouldn't change good school systems or usurp local control. The proposal, he said, is aimed at poor schools in the suburbs and inner city. A byproduct, he said, would be to get rid of inadequate teachers and principals.

Howard Silver, a Southfield attorney, said he was offended by Dodge's reference to competition among school systems.

"We're not talking about free enterprise," he said. "Even with the voucher plan, schools can reject students and they'd have to go back to the poor systems. We'd be better off raising the level of all schools than trying to create a General Motors of education for kids who can get in."

Silver said he'd rather rely on the integrity of education instead of the competition. Another concern, he added, is that parents will take children out of public schools.

Another attorney claimed the voucher plan would be a cornerstone to desegregation. Black churches would form their own schools instead of public schools improving, he said.

THE VOUCHER plan wouldn't create an immediate, magic improvement in public schools, said Carl Bennett, a Southfield attorney. Quality

education to many teachers means fattening their pockets, he contended.

Dodge insisted the proposal would allow the moderate and middle-income family to do what the rich do and would offer alternatives for equality in education.

Black residents in Detroit, for example, want alternatives to public schools, Dodge said. In a multiple system, he said, different schools could specialize in certain vocational and academic skills.

But the concern of a number of attorneys in the audience was that private and parochial schools would be free to reject pupils they deemed unprofitable or undesirable. Public schools would have to admit the rejects.

Nobody is certain of what the effects of the voucher plan would be. Some opponents maintain it would severely damage public schools unless the state found ways to raise taxes sharply for funding public education.

Proponents maintain the reduction of local property taxes would increase the state's revenues by an estimated \$200 million to \$250 million.



Smashing entrance

Larry Koreen, of the North Farmington High School Raiders makes a smashing entrance to the playing field during the North-Livonia Franklin game last Saturday. North Farmington defeated Franklin, 23-3. For full details turn to page 1C. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Fire prevention crusaders stump

Songwriters beseech luck to be a lady and gamblers pray she'll depend on a winning horse for them.

But firefighters prefer to guide on something less whimsical.

Instead of luck they're stressing awareness during Fire Prevention week, which ends Oct. 14.

This year, the Farmington and Farmington Hills fire departments are taking their fight against the flames into the homes and schools.

In Farmington, Fire Marshal Norman Maddison spends fire prevention week in the classroom teaching elementary school children to be aware of potential fire hazards.

Using magazines, surveys and animated cartoons, Maddison teaches students from Our Lady of Sorrows, Flanders Elementary and Longacre Elementary schools to protect themselves against fire.

In the middle of the week, he discusses an escape plan with them, asking each child to devise a way to get his family out of the house in the event of a fire.

He always requests that each student survey their homes for fire hazards such as overloaded electrical outlets and combustible items stored next to water heaters and furnaces.

THE SURVEY is taken home by the

children and signed by parents who are encouraged to help in its completion.

To help the students learn the basics of safety, Maddison shows the animated film, "Donald's Fire Survival Plan."

The classroom is one way to make sure that children hear his message, Maddison said.

"It's a captive audience," he said. "It's difficult to get adults to come to an open house. But the children take the message home."

Getting the message home also occupies some time for Farmington Hills Fire Chief Adm Van De Voort.

While Maddison is urging the children to complement their family's smoke detectors with fire drills, Van De Voort is reminding citizens to buy the devices.

Along with the Farmington Area JayCees, the two departments are urging families to buy smoke detectors. But the project is the thrust of Van De Voort's Fire Prevention Week activities.

"It's D-U-M-B not to buy a smoke detector," he said. Each home should have two or three of the detectors, according to Van De Voort.

NEW OWNERS OF smoke detectors

should give both family members and machine a try-out by setting off the alarm during the night.

"You ought to check to see if it will get everyone out of bed," said Van De Voort. "Those smoke detectors should make everyone roll—especially if you have an animal in the house, a smoke detector will wake them up in a hurry."

Detectors which are battery operated or wired into the house's electrical system are both good buys, according to Van De Voort.

If the detector is wired to the electrical system, a licensed electrician should do the work, according to Van De Voort.

Do-it-yourself wiring jobs which are less than perfect have caused house fires, according to the fire chief. An electrician should do those kinds of jobs.

"It's worth the cost," he said.

If only one detector is installed, it should be placed near the sleeping rooms in the house for maximum efficiency.

The night hours are the ones during which a smoke detector is the most useful, according to Van De Voort. "The first few hours of sleep, when you're sleeping really sound are the ones in which you need a smoke detector to wake you up," he said.

"YOU WANT SOMETHING that will give you a jolt," he said. Smoke detectors helped warn residents of Valley View that their building was on fire, last year. In addition to purchasing smoke detectors, the fire chiefs recommend good housekeeping as a way to prevent fires.

Flues should be cleaned before a furnace or a fireplace is opened for the cold season.

When fire strikes the area, Farmington can place 23 men and three pumpers at the town's service. In Farmington Hills, 75 volunteers, four full-time men, a fire marshal, fire prevention inspector and fire chief can fight the blaze.

Eleven fire fighting trucks and a jaws of life extraction unit can be brought out by Farmington Hills during an emergency.

During Fire Prevention Week, the departments will take part in an open house on Saturday, Oct. 14, at the Farmington Fire Department training center in the Department of Public Safety complex at 3272 W. Nine Mile.

From noon until 3 p.m., the Farmington department will show a fire prevention cartoon, display equipment and offer refreshments.

## Program explores ballot questions

The 11 ballot referendums facing voters Nov. 7 will be the subject of a West Bloomfield-Farmington Area League of Women Voters program at 7:30 p.m., Oct. 18 at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus, 27055 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington. The program will be in room 22, building J.

League members participating in

the program include president Mary Lazaratoro who will present proposal A, dealing with the constitutional convention; proposal B, covering prisons and parole; proposal C, concerning the deposit of state funds; and proposal D, referring to the drinking age.

Marion McCracken will cover proposal G, collective bargaining for state police; proposal K, denial of bail; proposal M, transportation and proposal R, railroad redevelopment.

Neva Carter will present Proposal E, the Headlee tax limitation amendment. Ann Beuerle will speak about proposal H, the voucher plan and Barbara Worthen will present proposal J, the Tish tax cut amendment.

Following the presentations, league panelists will respond to questions from the floor with Pat Riley serving as moderator. A printed digest of the ballot issues will be available at the meeting for a cost. Refreshments will be served. The program was coordinated by LWV legislative chairwoman Ruth Brown.



Fire fighters Larry Henderson (left) and Steve Hume are among members of the Farmington Hills department hoping that Fire Prevention Week makes their skills less in demand. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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