

Farmington Observer

Volume 90 Number 104

Monday, October 15, 1979

Farmington, Michigan

46 Pages

Twenty-five cents

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Voice of Detroit seeks suburban allies

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

Detroit and suburban residents must unite to ensure that the metropolitan area continues to grow economically.

That was the message from Detroit administration spokeswoman Joyce Garrett, who addressed the Farmington Chamber of Commerce at last week's annual dinner.

"We share too many concerns," she told the gathering at the Boisford Inn. "We must wage an economic fight against the sunbelt. Industry is taking its money south."

Ms. Garrett filled in at the dinner for Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, who is campaigning for President Jimmy

Carter in Florida.

In recent years the metropolitan area has a record of cooperation which has turned the economic fate of the city around, she said. As examples, she pointed to the Renaissance Center and the Republican National Convention which is coming next year.

"Even the Republicans feel comfortable in coming to Detroit," she said. "The Mayor (Young) feels a coalition was the way to save Detroit. He has a good sense of catalytic action."

Although outlining areas of progress, she also said that there was still a long way to go in mending fences between the suburbs and the city.

areas, she said.

"We share a need for mass transit," she said.

The same economic growth which Washington D.C. has experienced because of its subway also can be enjoyed by persons in metropolitan Detroit, she said.

"We are all citizens of Michigan. Fostering business in one area is to the benefit of all areas."

A light rail and subway system on Woodward has been one of the controversial debates between Detroit and the suburbs in recent years.

But a fight over mass transit will only harm the metropolitan area, she warned.

"The age of the automobile is diminishing. We must have additional mobility."

She also plugged government aid to the economically strapped Chrysler Corp.

"The loss of Chrysler would be a disaster. We all need to lobby everybody that we can."

Presently, Chrysler is seeking \$1 billion in economic aid to keep its operation going. If Chrysler went down, 73,000 Chrysler employees statewide would lose jobs, she said. An additional 166,000 indirect jobs that depend on Chrysler also would be lost.

But a separate society still exists between the two areas — suburbs and Detroit. And that will continue to hamper progress until the "mythology of igno-

rance" is erased, she said.

"Too many whites and blacks talk only to each other. Too many youngsters are growing up without enrichment — of not knowing enough about other human beings."

She said that white flight was aided by development of the highway system of the federal government, but said an even more dramatic problem exists.

"There is no question that the American disease of racism is a major problem," she said.

This had led to the destruction of neighborhoods and of the near ruin of an entire city.

"We have created land and buildings as throwaways. The attitude is 'Dump it and move to the next turf.'"



JOYCE GARRETT

Aid is sought for the elderly in condo bind

By JACKIE KLEIN

State Sen. Doug Ross today announced the beginning of a major legislative campaign to protect apartment tenants from the effects of condominium conversions.

"A growing number of renters, particularly senior citizens, are being driven from their apartments by condominium conversions," said the Oak Park Democrat whose district includes Southfield, Farmington Hills, Lathrup Village and Farmington.

"With vacancy rates at an all-time low, too often there are no available, affordable apartments for those who are pushed out. In Southfield, known as the apartment capital of Michigan, there is great concern and many renters about conversions."

From July 1 through Aug. 16, 1979, owners of five apartment buildings in Southfield with a total of more than 200 units have filed with the state for conversions to condominiums, according to Paul Blatt, of the Michigan Department of Commerce. Others may have filed since then, he said.

The first step in Ross's statewide campaign is the establishment of a Legislative Task Force on Condominium Conversions, he said. Senate Majority Leader William Faust, a Westland Democrat, created the task force at Ross's request. Ross is chairman of the committee.

"We will begin holding hearings almost immediately to gather more information about condominium conversions in Michigan and what needs to be done," Ross said. "I'm committed to enacting measures to protect renters in this legislative session."

ROSS will be joined on the task force by State Rep. William Ryan, a Detroit Democrat, former speaker of the House of Representatives, and Rep. Joe Forbes, an Oak Park Democrat and House Majority Floor Leader.

Condominium conversions, Ross maintained, have been rapidly accelerating in Michigan. Department of Commerce statistics indicate that more than 4,000 units have been scheduled for conversion since July 1, 1978, he said.

"Most depressing is the increasing pace of conversion," said Ross, the former director of Michigan Citizens Lobby. "During the first six months of 1979, 33 apartments filed to convert

compared to 11 buildings during the previous six months. Another 31 buildings have filed in just the last three months.

"I'm deeply concerned that this process will greatly reduce the amount of available rental housing at a time when there is already a shortage of such housing. Senior citizens are particularly vulnerable because so many lack the funds to purchase their own apartment units or to move to a more expensive apartment."

A recent study of Department of Treasury data conducted by his office indicates that one-third of all seniors who rent in Michigan are paying more than 40 percent of their income in rent, Ross said. Anything which would make an already intolerable situation worse, demands serious study and public action, he said.

Ross said he has made studies of conversions in other cities and how they are being handled. A New York ordinance prohibits converting apartments into condominiums unless 35 percent of existing tenants are willing to buy units, he said.

A PROPOSED legislative bill in New York would impose a temporary moratorium on conversions, Ross said. The measure asks for a study on conversions by a federal commission with a possibility of condominium owners paying relocation costs to displaced tenants.

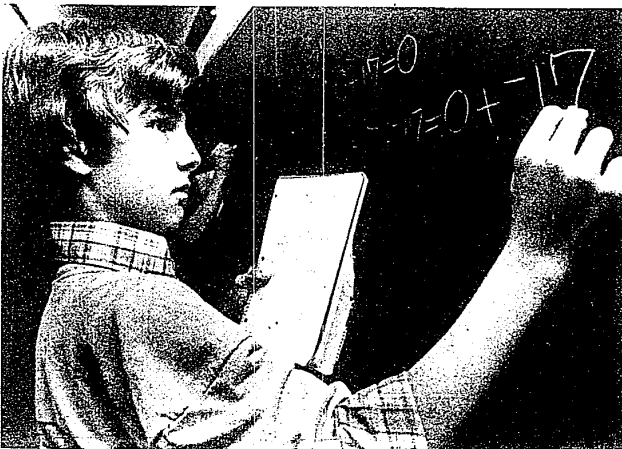
A two-year moratorium on condo conversions was thrown out by a Chicago court and is in litigation in Washington, Ross said.

"I don't know if any of these practices are the right responses," Ross said. "My purpose in forming a task force is to find viable solutions to the problem. In Southfield, for example, the apartment vacancy rate is extremely low. What will happen if renters who are displaced to live in the city are dispersed?"

"The phenomenon of conversions is conforming to economic forces. As the cost of housing goes up, it makes sense to sell anything. Buying homes is considered a hedge against inflation. Tax breaks and depreciation provide extra incentives to sell older apartments. That's the bottom line."

Ross admits he and many other legislators know very little about condom-

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Learning the basics is back in style in the classroom of the '70s. This is a turnaround from the trend of the '60s, when "new math" was considered

all the rage. Here, 14-year-old Mike Hunt, of Power Junior High, tackles a problem. (Staff photo by Randy Borsht)

Education today

Math is back to basics

By MARY GNIEWEK

If math ever went off on a tangent, some Farmington teachers believe it was during the 1960s "new math" period, long since dropped in favor of a return to the study of basic concepts.

"New math is an outdated term," said Russell Bonkowski, who teaches algebra, geometry and fundamental math at Power Junior High. "New math went overboard trying to explain how and why everything happened."

"There were more paragraphs of explanation in text books than problems. Kids weren't learning the basics. Bonkowski added, "Now the cycle is reversed. There are more problems in text books."

Basics like addition, subtraction, division and multiplication are stressed. So are decimal numbers, percentage figuring and learning the metric system.

Educators in the field see math as a practical, logical tool for life and as an instrumental pre-requisite for some college-bound students.

"They emphasize basic concepts but draw other resources like filmstrips, education games, and computers in the high schools."

In the Farmington public schools, math is a required subject from kindergarten through the eighth grade. High school students need at least one math course to fulfill graduation requirements.

THE SCOTT FORSMAN series of texts which was adopted by the district in 1976 is used from kindergarten

through eighth grade. Objections by some state legislators and Farmington residents last year to the texts' use of commercial products to illustrate problems is downplayed by math teachers and administrators.

"Years ago, youngsters learned to divide by looking at a picture of a sliced pie," said James Lanigan, Larkshire principal and elementary math co-chairman.

"That's the same concept here. When youngsters look at pictures of Hershey Bars, it's not a commercial for the product or a statement about nutrition, Lanigan said. "It's used because youngsters identify better with products they know."

Carolyn Hewes, a fourth grade teacher at Larkshire who co-chairs the math program with Lanigan, describes the curriculum as a sequential skills building process.

She likes the Scott Forsman text series because she thinks it's easy for children to understand.

"We see children in kindergarten who've been watching Sesame Street and they can rattle off numbers. But they have no concept of what five or nine or 10 is," she said. "There is a leveling off of knowing things. Each room is grouped to the level of the child and the teacher moves at their level."

AT EVERY GRADE acceleration courses are offered to students who move ahead at a quicker pace than their peers. The advanced math program in the high schools culminates with a year of calculus, a subject gen-

erally taught in college.

Advanced placement begins in eighth grade with teachers identifying students for algebra. At Power Junior High, ninth graders can choose from algebra, fundamental math, and geometry.

"An algebra prognosis test helps counselors direct students," said Robert Brown, Power principal. "If they score at least 70 percent, they will be successful in algebra."

When the Farmington school district implements the middle school next September, Brown thinks the math curriculum will stay much the same for sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

"Students are still developing basic skills at the junior high level and that should be our emphasis," he said.

Brown would like to see computers used in junior high level math.

"When the cost comes down, it will become more feasible. Not too far ahead, I think all the schools will have computers," he said.

The district's three high schools, North Farmington, Farmington, and Harrison have two micro-computers each for use by the math and science departments.

Norm Luebke, Harrison math chairman, would like to see enough computers in the classrooms so that a programming course could be taught.

"STUDENTS WANT math to be hard but fun," Luebke said. Luebke described the high school

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Decision delayed on zoning

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

Farmington Hills residents are going to have to wait until after the Nov. 6 election to see if they get a chance to vote on zoning for low-income housing.

In a move to neutralize the issue until after the election, the council refused to endorse Councilman Joe Alkateeb's proposal to put the question on the ballot.

The question, sparked by petitions, asks voters to reple a zoning ordinance which would allow construction of low-income housing on the corner of Drake and Freedom roads.

City Clerk Floyd Cairns reported to council that his office had received sufficient petition signatures (3,000) asking for the election. The petitions were circulated by the Citizens for More Responsible Government (CMRG). The group opposes construction of the low-income housing.

"It appears inappropriate for the council to act at this time to except or reject the petitions," said Mayor Earl Opperthausen.

Opperthausen said that persons on either side of the issue could gain publicity in the election over the issue if it was considered.

The city attorney has ruled that petitions calling for elections on zoning matters are illegal. But attorneys for the CMRG disagree.

The CMRG is supporting three candidates in the upcoming council election — Jack Burwell, William Lange and Donn Wolf.

"If we have the ability to wait until after the election, we ought not to favor one side or the other," said Opperthausen.

The "other side" consists of candidate incumbents Jan Dolan and Joanne Smith. Candidate Michael O'Hair also favors the issue. Candidates Shirley Stadler and Terry Sever have taken the middle ground in the issue. The eight candidates are competing for three seats on the council.

The city council has until 30 days after the election to see if it will decide the petitions are received to make a decision on the issue, according to the city charter. It will meet on Nov. 7 to decide.

But Alkateeb disagreed with Opperthausen's logic.

"I personally believe there should be a referendum on any ordinance. I don't understand the hesitation," he said.

"If the people want something voted on, they should get the opportunity. I don't agree with the city attorney."

If a firm decision isn't made, said Alkateeb, he would like to see the issue resolved in court.

Opperthausen admitted that he was in opposition to the issue in the election, saying he agreed with the city attorney who has been backed by a ruling from the state attorney general's office.

Rescinding the ordinance to implement low-income housing would destroy the entire housing project, he said.

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Seminar planned

All residents interested in learning how to get their news out to the public are invited to attend the Farmington Observer press seminar. Slated for Nov. 1, at 7:30 p.m. at the Twelve Mile Library, the seminar will feature presentations by the staff, questions and answers and a brand new slide presentation on today's community journalism. Be sure to fill out the coupon and bring a friend. It's free. Refreshments also will be served.

Candidate night set for Tuesday

The Farmington Democratic Club is sponsoring a candidate night for Farmington Hills city council candidates at 8 p.m., Oct. 16 at East Junior High School, Middlebelt, between Ten and Eleven Mile.

Candidates will be allowed to make a three-minute presentation, followed by questions from the audience. Each can-

didate will have an opportunity to respond to each question asked of any candidate.

Candidates also will have literature tables available so residents can learn more about their stands on issues.

All interested persons are invited to attend.

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Cars and Consumers
With the advent of the 1980 automobile models, consumers are flocking to the showrooms to pick their car. To see what consumers are looking for in the new cars, turn to Page 7A.