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Council hears widening foes

The Farmington Hills City Council agreed Monday night to take another look at the proposed widening of Orchard Lake Road between 10 and 12 Mile roads. Residents of nearby subdivisions have said that they disapprove of the project.

Although the project is conducted by the Oakland County Road Commission, the Hills City Council has the option of withdrawing its widening request.

While the council received petitions from subdivision-association representatives from the affected area, it also sought residents opinions on limiting the widening to three or four lanes instead of the proposed five.

Most representatives advocated resurfacing the road and maintaining it with two lanes for through traffic and a third left-hand turn.

"This design, complemented with 'legible signs, properly timed traffic signals and a clearly striped and well-maintained roadway would be entirely adequate for this area," said Richard W. Steiger, treasurer of the Pasadena Park Association.

"I believe a five-lane road isn't necessary," said James Miller of LaMura Civic Association, echoing Steiger's recommendation.

DISPUTING THAT Orchard Lake Road between 10 and 12 Mile carried enough traffic to merit the widening, resident R. W. Doherty said. "I see no reason to widen the road at all. There's never a traffic jam from Grand River to 11 Mile Road.

"I'd just as soon make a race track

out of this highway" than add extra lanes, he said.

Doherty, and several other persons who voiced their opposition to the project, said they would consider moving if the road was widened to five lanes.

The added road would move residents closer to the traffic and destroy the rural atmosphere of the area, representatives argue.

"People moved out here because they liked the country road, the clear air and the rural atmosphere," said Roy Goodspeed, president of the Pasadena Park Association.

Developing the city to include a central business strip doesn't always work in the best interests of the residents and the area, Goodspeed said.

"Farmington Hills is not a metropolitan city. Farmington Hills is not a core city. Farmington Hills was developed as a bedroom community," he said.

Moving from the concept of Farmington Hills as a bedroom community would mean a higher concentration of traffic and all the attendant problems, Goodspeed added.

"CITY COUNCIL should protect and preserve our right to open spaces and freedom from congestion," he said.

The Springbrook Subdivision Association supported the effort to widen the road.

City Council must consider the growth of the entire city in making its decision, said Springbrook subdivision.

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A Consumers Power worker reinforces gas lines along Greening Avenue, a preliminary step before water main construction. The asbestos water pipes in the foreground, a health worry for some residents, weren't installed as planned Monday. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

Residents stop asbestos work

By MARY GNIEWEK

Residents concerned about a link between cancer and asbestos blocked construction of an asbestos water main Monday in the Oakland Hills Orchard Subdivision.

A half dozen residents parked their cars in front of the construction site at 12 Mile and Greening, one block east of Orchard Lake.

"What got our dander up was a CBS-TV report a year ago about a small town in the South which traced a high incidence of cancer to the water system which was asbestos," explained Donald Loosli, blockade organizer.

The city planned to install an 8-inch water main along Greening from 12 Mile to 13 Mile, bringing that subdivision into Farmington Hills' water system. The neighborhood is serviced by wells.

Consumers Power workers reinforced gas lines along Greening Monday, a preliminary step before construction could occur.

City Engineer Tom Biassel said project contractor, Electra Construction Company of South Lyon, will halt work until subdivision homeowners meet with City Manager Lawrence Savage.

"No credible studies show that these pipes are a health hazard," Savage said.

"If the residents still object, they may petition for a special assessment to get steel pipes, but many transmission lines in the city are asbestos."

FARMINGTON HILLS City Council adopted a special assessment district for Greening homeowners after two public hearings last year. Homeowners who would benefit directly from the service would pay the cost.

Residents will pay between \$1,300

'I don't think (asbestos pipes) should be on the market unless they're proven absolutely safe.'
— Homeowner Donald Loosli

and \$2,400 plus 10 percent annual interest over 15 years, according to the city clerk's office. The assessment will go on tax bills.

"As long as we're paying for the water, I want to make sure it's safe," Loosli said.

The city chose asbestos cement pipes because they're cheaper than common alternatives, like ductile iron.

"At present, we don't see any problems because it's approved by different agencies," Biassel said.

Asbestos, a proven carcinogen (a chemical compound which can produce tumors) can be fatal if inhaled. It hasn't been proven to be fatal when ingested, according to Richard Lehner, water supply division engineer for the Michigan Department of Public Health.

"The concern with drinking water is that it might lead to cancer of the colon or intestinal tract, but studies haven't been done," Lehner said.

Asbestos pipes became popular about 1960.

"Keeping up with Environmental Protection Agency tests, asbestos cement presents no health hazard," said Frank Naglich, Oakland County DPW engineer.

That evidence doesn't pacify homeowners like Loosli.

"The evidence against asbestos isn't conclusive because it hasn't been around long enough," he said.

"I don't think it should be on the market unless proven absolutely safe."

Teacher retires after 30 years as local historian, journalist

For the first time in 30 years, Farmington High School opened this September without Lee Peel to teach English and the school's journalism classes.

With thoughts of pursuing some long-standing projects, including a book on 19th and early 20th century architecture in Farmington and a collection of humorous anecdotes gleaned from the old Farmington Enterprise newspaper, Peel decided to leave teaching behind.

"I was a fixture. Like a neon light," he joked.

His long tenure at Farmington High prompted some students to assume he was a graduate of the school.

But the first time Peel, 54, a native of Ewart, Mich., laid eyes on the school was 30 years ago, when, as a young teacher fresh out of the University of Michigan, he arrived to take his first job.

He stayed to become the publisher of the school newspaper, the sometimes director of school plays and the acknowledged impetus for several careers in publishing, teaching and journalism.

Don Nichols, one of Peel's former students and a dean at Oakland Community College-Orchard Lake, says Peel introduced him to classical music and inspired his own teaching career.

WHEN NICHOLS completed work for his Ph.D., he gave a party for the persons he believed had influenced his education the most. Peel's name was on the guest list.

A teaching career was not a lifelong ambition for Peel. In his first two years at college at Western Michigan University, he found that many of his friends were planning on a teaching career. He was influenced by them to chose the same goal.

At first, he thought teaching could serve as a stepping stone to another career. But he liked the job so much he never switched until his retirement.

Running the school paper appealed to him as a creative operation both for him and his students.

"In a way you can create your own little world," he said.

Teaching the students writing skills imposed its own challenges.

"I was so close to the students and their writing that frequently I couldn't sense (especially in the early days of teaching) if they were making improvements in their writing," he said.

"Through their practice, he saw improvements in his students' writing skills. Yet he continues to doubt if anyone can really teach a high school class to write.

"FOR 30 years I've pondered that

question. I don't really think you can teach people to write," he said.

"You can improve their writing; you can rid it of clichés. But by high school, if they can't understand a sentence and have no feeling as to what a graph is — they're never going to."

After three decades of expurgating bad writing habits, Peel says he didn't miss getting up and going to school in this September.

"It's like an extended vacation," he said.

If it is a vacation, it is a busy one for Peel, who spends his time on various private projects long delayed due to his teaching responsibilities.

After conducting a series of autograph parties for his book, "Farmington: A Pictorial History," Peel has started concentrating on his next local project, the city's architecture. He has the photographs for the book and is looking for a publisher to put out the paperback edition.

But Peel is not just tackling projects on a local subject. He is also interested in doing a book on tornadoes and one on Isaac Shelby, Kentucky's first governor.

PEEL SEEMS fascinated with Shelby's fiery character. On Oct. 5, 1813, at the age of 63, Shelby led a band of Kentucky volunteers to fight the British in the Battle of the



LEE PEEL

Thames in Michigan. The Kentucky troops, fighting under General William Henry Harrison, defeated the foreign army.

"He was quite an old man when he walked with the volunteers from Kentucky," Peel said.

Shelby's great-granddaughter, Mrs. Eleanor Paulcner, 65, still lives in Kentucky and Peel plans to use her information as one of his principal sources.

Industrial firm to relocate here

By MARY GNIEWEK

The Farmington Hills City Council approved two resolutions Monday that gave the way for a \$1 million industry to move into the city on a low-interest Economic Development Corporation (EDC) loan.

The industry, Fern Leaseholds Corporation, a Ferndale pipefitting company, plans to move its headquarters to the Farmington Freeway Industrial Park and eventually expand its employment base from 100 to 150 workers.

Council approved the site on which the development will be built in the rear of the industrial park, south of 10 Mile, in its first resolution.

In the second resolution, it named James Pierce and Christopher Gopin, directors for two previous EDC projects, to the EDC board. The two will represent business and residential interests for the project.

"They'll join the regular board of seven local businessmen and two city officials in steering the project through legal channels in compliance with a state act governing the EDC.

The application now returns to the EDC board which is expected to float municipal finance bonds for the project.

"Until the actual bond resolution is adopted and signed, it isn't official," said Robert McConnell, EDC chairman.

But McConnell expressed optimism about the project.

"NOW THE PETITIONER can find the best rate on the market," he said.

"Rates could drop in the next few months."

If the EDC board adopts the project, it must draw a purchase agreement and pass a resolution to float bonds for \$1 million, the precise cost of the new building.

"The project is rolling along nicely," said Michael Sinclair, bond attorney for the city.

Sinclair called the project "an American dream."

"Ten years ago, three guys who worked together in a factory decided to go out on their own," he said. "They became business partners and their company boomed."

The Ferndale-based operation is called Hoyt, Brumm & Link, which manufactures, bends and fabricates pipes.

The company could move to Farmington Hills as early as 1981 if plans move according to schedule, Sinclair predicted.

Fern Leaseholds is just one of four applications the EDC is considering. The others include two \$7 million shopping developments and a \$10 million office complex.

Since regulations exempt interest earnings from income tax, EDC loans save businesses thousands of dollars.

More than \$71 million worth of new businesses are being considered or have been okayed for loans by the EDC since the board was established a year ago.

Market study shows consumers have enormous spending power

Farmington-area residents will spend nearly \$53 million for food, \$77 million for cars and \$51 million for automobiles this year.

They will spend close to \$50 million eating in restaurants, \$17 million for personal-care items and almost \$13 million for furniture.

Those figures were tallied by Urban Decision Systems, Inc., a market-research firm hired by Michigan Bell Telephone Co. Bell uses the data in a brochure designed to sell ads for the Farmington/Farmington Hills Neighborhood Yellow Pages.

"We've done these research promotions for years. Each year we upgrade them," said Robert Kuschel, directory staff manager for Bell.

The projections are based on per-

capita income (\$1.2 billion) and number of residents (93,318) in the area. The net effect shows that local spending power is enormous, Kuschel said.

The study also shows household income has skyrocketed in the last decade. The 1970 U.S. Census shows that more than 50 percent of all Farmington/Farmington Hills households earned in the \$10,000 to \$20,000 range. Nearly 20 percent were in the \$25,000-plus bracket.

The study estimates that more than 75 percent of all Farmington/Farmington Hills households will earn \$25,000 or more this year. Thirty percent of that group will earn between \$35,000 and \$50,000 and 22 percent more than \$50,000.

GROSS HOUSEHOLD income in

1970 was \$313 million, according to the census. It rose to \$1.1 billion this year.

Here's how families will spend money this year:

- Appliances \$5.6 million
- Washing machines \$1.2 million
- Clothes Dryers
- Kitchen Ranges
- Refrigerators
- Dishwashers
- Air Conditioners \$541,900
- Automobiles \$51 million
- New Used
- Food Away from Home \$49 million
- Food At Home \$82 million
- Cereals
- Bakery Goods \$7.9 million
- Meats
- Poultry

Fish

Dairy Products \$11.4 million

Fruit & Vegetables \$6.7 million

Other Grocery Items \$15.8 million

Non-Alcoholic Beverages \$9.5 million

• FUELS \$77 million

Gas

Gas & Electricity \$25 million

Other Fuels \$4.6 million

• Home Entertainment \$3 million

• Black & White Television Sets \$305,300

• Color Television Sets \$1.7 million

• Radio & Stereo Equipment \$1.1 million

• Home Furnishings \$13 million

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The excitement of indoor soccer and the Detroit Kickers offer Season Kicks off November 15. Soccer fans now have a chance to win 2 FREE tickets. See the Classified Section for full details.