

Farmington Observer

Volume 92 Number 10

Monday, November 17, 1980

Farmington, Michigan

40 Pages

Twenty-five cents

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Bad news for low income senior housing

A research expert investigating the feasibility of privately developed senior citizen housing is expected to tell the Farmington Hills City Council Monday night that such a project would be difficult to finance without federal funds.

Larry Wilkinson, of Wilkinson Associates, will report on his company's research into the practicality of privately financing a 200-unit development for persons 55 or older.

The council meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. tonight in the city administration building, 31555 11 Mile Road.

The best current rate of interest for bonds for such a project is at 11 percent, according to Wilkinson. This makes such a project "marginally feasible" for a private developer, he said.

Financially, the project would be "questionable" unless the interest rates on the bonds went down to at least 10 1/2 percent, he said.

"Unless some federal program could be used to bring down the interest rate," the project should be approached with caution.

A PRIVATE builder might be able to make the project feasible by charging a higher rent for the building but he might price himself out of the market, according to Wilkinson.

He estimates the minimum rent the project could charge and be financially

feasible as well as attractive to the seniors at which it would be aimed project, Wilkinson said most of the projects he investigated are popular with tenants over 65 years old. He aimed his research at the over 60 market, which he loosely estimates in Farmington Hills has a yearly income per family of about \$21,000.

"This isn't low income housing. What we are looking at are middle and upper middle income households," he said. Estimated rents are aimed at the 1982 market and may not seem to be that expensive by that time, he said. While the city asked him to look at a

project for persons in the over 55 age group, Wilkinson said most of the projects he investigated are popular with tenants over 65 years old. He aimed his research at the over 60 market, which he loosely estimates in Farmington Hills has a yearly income per family of about \$21,000.

"You have to consider that some of them are still in the labor force, so

there is a little distortion," he said.

In compiling his report, Wilkinson visited Epitaph Manor in Farmington Hills, Franklin Club and Franklin Terrace in Southfield.

He also used income statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Commerce in its annual housing survey as well as take Farmington Hills survey of senior citizens taken in 1979.



Ruth Moehlman will be honored Nov. 30 at the Farmington Community Center for her newly published book "If Walls Could Talk: Heritage Homes of Farmington." (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Remembering Farmington

History chronicled through homes

Lured by the chance to establish a farm, an orchard or a mill, settlers began making their permanent homes in the Farmington area in 1824.

At one time a wintering place for Indian tribes and a game preserve for white settlers, the area gradually developed a core of homes of historic and architectural interest.

The story of these homes has been compiled by Ruth Moehlman into a book of black and white photos and narrative entitled, "If Walls Could Talk: Heritage Homes of Farmington."

Sponsored by the Farmington Historical Commission, the book grew out of a series of stories by Mrs. Moehlman, a freelance writer.

It will be available at the end of the month for \$10 at the Farmington Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Roads.

EACH CHAPTER is based on newspaper stories Mrs. Moehlman wrote for the city's sesquicentennial celebration in 1974 and the nation's bicentennial two years later.

Her work reflects her realization that "We had a pattern of history that would be lost if not recorded."

Her curiosity about historic buildings and places has led to her discovery of early mills in the areas as well as

her desire to preserve the homes of stalwart farmers and 19th century merchants.

All of these groups were tied together by the economics involved in settling a new area, Mrs. Moehlman said. When the fields prospered, the farmers stayed. When the fields didn't yield enough crops the farmers moved onto a more fertile area.

In these days the cattle held just as much, if not more importance, than the people. This is reflected in the architecture of the time. The stone horse barn

belonging to the Ward Eagle home on 14 Mile is three times as large as the original home, according to Mrs. Moehlman.

EAGLE, AFTER whom an elementary school was named, was involved in the state milk producers' association as well as local politics. Although he taught for a while in the German School he didn't have any children of his own.

These buildings have become modern landmarks but there are faint re-

mains of other more transient settlements in the area which sprung up next to mills and streams after 1824.

On 14 Mile and Farmington Roads, there was a small cluster of homes which had once been near a mill.

The small town, which was split down the middle by a road, was vacated when it became unfeasible for the inhabitants to stay.

In the area of Drake and Howard there remain some signs of an old mill which had encouraged settlement in that area.

State budget cuts punch lightly at local level

By MARY GNIEWEK

The good news about Governor Milliken's recommended state budget slashing is that the sister cities and the Farmington school district won't be cutting back services.

Spokesmen for all three government units said they had anticipated and planned for cuts in state shared revenues this year.

Milliken's proposed \$288.5 million reductions include a \$65-million slash in state aid to local school districts and a \$20-million cut in revenue-sharing funds for local governments.

That amounts to almost negligible losses on the local scene.

Since the Farmington School District is "out of formula" the district receives no state aid on a per-pupil basis. It recovers state money just for state-mandated programs like special education and transportation.

More than 89 percent of this year's \$33 million school budget was generated by local property taxes. State aid accounts for only 8 percent of the budget.

Superintendent of Schools Lewis

Schulman called a proposed \$126,000 cut in state aid modest.

"I thought it would be closer to \$200,000," he said. "We'll be able to absorb that without damaging our programs at all."

FREDERICK WHIMS of the education division of the state Department of Management and Budget says the estimated \$126,000 cut breaks down like this:

There will be some cuts in the bilingual program, special education and vocational education. A new program called professional development which doles out funds to local districts on a per-capita basis for teacher in-service training will be cut. It would have been the second year for the program.

Cuts to local municipalities will come in two categories which were withheld in the last budget: the relative-tax-burden formula and the intangibles tax.

The city of Farmington Hills will lose an estimated \$52,000, which is 3 percent of the \$1.9 million it expects to receive in state shared revenues.

City Finance Director Chuck Rosch

says that equals less than 5 percent of the city's \$12-million budget.

"We can absorb the loss," he said. "It was anticipated."

There will be no cuts in city services or layoffs, Rosch said.

ROBERT DEADMAN, Farmington city manager, expects a \$6,000 cut in state shared revenues.

"The City Council figured it would be a lean year for the state. We used conservative estimates in developing revenues from the state," he said.

"There's no cause for reduction of services or personnel. The cuts probably will cause a delay in the purchase of new equipment of small items."

The city's total budget is \$2.7 million. The cities will not receive state shared revenues until next January. Those funds usually come in November. The slowdown is due to the delay in adoption of the state budget by the legislature.

"It won't cripple us, but I certainly hope there's no further delays," Deadman said.

Added Rosch: "We won't have any payroll paydays, but I hope it doesn't extend much past January."

Home for retarded slated for opening in the Hills

Despite the Nov. 3 arson of a residence for mentally retarded persons in Farmington Hills, the Macomb-Oakland Region Center (MORC) is preparing for the January opening of another home in the city.

The latter home, near 12 Mile, west of Orchard Lake Road, has been in the planning stages since at least Oct. 23, when the Michigan Department of Social Services received a license applica-

tion for it. Representatives of MORC stressed that second group home is not a replacement for the one in West Franklin Estates Subdivision which was destroyed by fire.

In both cases the homes were rented by non-profit corporations which act as MORC's overseers. MORC itself does not rent or buy the homes but acts as a developer.

At this point it is unclear if the new home will include persons who were slated to live in the home in West Franklin Estates, said Jean West, a development specialist for MORC.

Each home's residents are chosen so they match each other in skills and personality. More independent persons are not housed with persons who need more supervision, according to Ms. West. (Continued on Page 5A)



This home in Farmington Hills has been chosen as the site for housing of mentally retarded residents. (Staff photo)

SC must cut \$300,000 more

By TIM RICHARD

Cutting a college budget 2.8 percent is tough enough. Making the cuts when more than half your money is spent is even tougher.

"We've got our work cut out for us," said C. Nelson Grote, president of Schoolcraft College, in the wake of Gov. William G. Milliken's budget cuts last week.

It was the second time this fiscal year the governor was forced by the state constitution to make cuts due to poor tax collections in a recession. The college's fiscal year began July 1.

"THEY HAVE reduced the state appropriation of all community colleges to \$12.4 million," Grote said.

"If we assume we'll get the same share of that as last year, we should receive \$4.7 million.

"We had estimated (in drawing up this fiscal year's budget) we would receive \$5.1 million. That's the figure you take our 1979-80 appropriation

and reduce it by 1.5 percent which would be a continuation budget.

"So now we are down \$393,000 less than we would have gotten with a continuation budget."

He said the college reduced expenditures \$95,000 by attrition — not replacing persons who retired or left.

"We still have to reduce expenditures by nearly \$300,000," he added.

THAT \$393,000 is 2.8 percent of Schoolcraft's total budget of about \$14 million. But the picture is worse than it appears, Grote said, because the fiscal year is almost half over.

Meeting set for asbestos discussion

In response to concerns expressed by residents, the city of Farmington Hills has slated a public meeting Wednesday, Nov. 19, to discuss the effects of asbestos pipes on personal health.

The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. in city hall council chambers, 31555 11

"Most colleges have spent more than 50 percent of their money in the first six months. We've done a lot of our maintenance already. We've purchased the equipment that was provided in the budget. Our winter semester schedule is already out," Grote said.

How to make the remaining \$300,000 of cuts?

"We were mulling a mid-year tuition increase. But there's no big dollar amount that can be gained by a tuition increase, and people have already begun paying tuition for the winter semester (starting Jan. 1). The earliest we could increase tuition would be for

the spring semester (about May 1)," he said.

Could athletics be cut? "The coaches, the referees, the tournament people are already hired," he said. "Everything is under contract. To cut athletics, you'd have to do it a year in advance."

MEANWHILE, the recession dealt Schoolcraft still another jolt. Community colleges are a "countercyclical industry," in economist's jargon. That is, when jobs are scarce people enroll in their local two-year college.

Meeting set for asbestos discussion

Representatives of the Michigan Department of Public Health, the pipe manufacturer and the Oakland County Department of Public Works, will discuss water mains and answer questions about asbestos.

Superintendent of Schools Lewis

will consider today the state attorney

general's request for an injunction prohibiting Oakland University trustees from conducting closed interviews with candidates for the campus president.

Attorney General Frank Kelley, who sued trustees Nov. 7, charges the closed interviews violate the state's Open Meetings Act.

Judge Gilbert was to consider the injunction request last Thursday, but res-

cheduled a show-cause hearing for today. Thursday's docket was full, a court employee said in explaining the postponement.

Meanwhile, the executive secretary of OU's Presidential Selection Committee, which is comprised of OU's eight trustees, said Friday that trustees are "moving right along" in selecting a final candidate for the presidency.

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