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Twenty-five cents

Debate simmers over building height limit

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills Councilwoman Jan Dolan wants the city building height restrictions brought under scrutiny to see if it's time for a change.

Mayor Charles Williams and Councilman Joe Alkateeb, however, want the city to remain a "low profile community" with buildings kept under 60 feet.

But with Councilwoman Jodi Soronen and Joan Dudley's help, Dolan got her wish with a 3-2 vote Monday to sched-

ule a discussion of the height restrictions in specific situations.

"I DON'T think they'll touch it," Dolan said.

Dolan, an eight-year veteran Botsford trustee, broke her rule of abstaining from voting on hospital-related issues in early December when she joined the majority and voted to make the hospital the third business allowed to build higher than the current ordinance permits. The council voted 5-2 to waive the height restriction for Bots-

ford. The MetroVision cable tower and Alexander Hamilton Insurance Co. are the other firms with structures higher than 60 feet.

Both Williams and Alkateeb made it clear they are opposed to changing the city's low-profile status.

"I strongly like the type of city we have," Williams said, adding he is not ready for tall buildings in the city.

"I am in favor of a low-profile community," Alkateeb agreed, promising to fight "tooth and nail" against changing height restrictions. "I'm a little confused about what we're trying to achieve."

VOTERS DEFEATED two advisory ballot questions in 1979 asking if senior citizen housing and industrial-research office buildings should extend beyond 60 feet in height, so there is no reason now to consider discussing the height restrictions, Alkateeb said.

Williams, on the other hand, said the height restriction ordinance is a City Council issue on which members already know how each would vote.

"Consequently, he said, there is "no need to bring it to discussion." Williams also cautioned council members that "we better not make it a public

deal" if the council has no intention of changing the ordinance.

But Hughes interrupted Williams, telling him he should be more open minded.

"Sometimes Mrs. Dudley we don't have open minds. Why be phony about it," Williams responded.

Hughes also reminded Williams that the council's purpose was to schedule a meeting rather than discussing the issue before it was an agenda item. If a council member wants to discuss policy, the council should discuss because its purpose is to make policy, he added.

Drain funds ready

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills City Council members have given a unanimous "preliminary indication" that the 1984-85 Community Development Block Grant money might come to the rescue and help pay for the drainage improvements in Tarabusi Gardens.

In the 1970s, homeowners in the Farmington Hills Tarabusi Gardens sometimes would be forced to park their cars at the subdivision entrance and walk home.

The flooded gravel roads were impassable.

Although a ditch maintenance program was started in the late 1970s to help drain the ditches, the neighborhood's flat land is the culprit, according to city officials.

"It's so flat and the ditches are so flat that water has to build up to a point where it can drain away," said David Call, city engineer. "The gravel roads break up because the subsolls are being subjected to the standing water in the ditches."

ALTHOUGH IT has been a problem both residents and department of public service (DPS) crews have lived with, homeowners now are showing an interest in having their roads paved. Permanent pavement, however, won't last for long if the drainage problem remains unsolved, Call said.

But the cost of installing storm sewers, retcheting and paving in the neighborhood would cost an estimated \$515,000. That works out to approximately \$3,900 per household.

"This is extremely high compared to other paving projects," said DPS Director Thomas Biasell.

When residents were informed of the project's cost at an informational meeting last week, they were kind of taken aback," Call said.

Block Grant money was also used to pay for all of the Richland Gardens storm drainage and ditching improvements last year before the subdivision's road was paved.

If approximately \$198,000 of the total \$522,000 city officials anticipate receiving in Block Grant money this year is used to pay for storm sewers and ditching, plus another \$39,000 from the city to help with the paving, and about \$74,000 in Act 61 road funds, the residents' cost could be reduced to about \$1,690 per household, Call said.

"THE LIGHTBULBS turned on in their heads," Call said, referring to the Tarabusi Gardens residents when they were told that Block Grant money might be used to help them.

Although council cannot commit any grant money to the proposed Tarabusi Gardens project until all suggested uses are discussed at a public hearing, tentatively scheduled for Feb. 13, Biasell and Call asked for an indication that it might be used for that purpose so they could let residents know where they stand and get the ball rolling on the paving project.

The idea, Biasell told the council, is that the residents could have their petitions in hand indicating that at least 51 percent want paving before the council makes its decision on how the grant money will be spent.

"Are you not in essence suggesting a priority by this?" asked Councilwoman Joan Dudley.

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Gathering to discuss the future of the conservative movement in Michigan are, from left, Richard Headlee, chairman of Citizens for America, and economist Martha Seger.

Conservatives gather in hopes of furthering their power base

By Tom Baer
staff writer

The campaign button, "Reagan women will do it twice," was worn on the inside of the woman's coat lapel and flashed upon request.

"Women got Ronald Reagan elected in 1980, and we'll do it again in 1984," the woman said with conviction last Thursday in the rapidly filling 1776 Room of the Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. headquarters in Farmington Hills.

But if President Reagan does win a second term — and he was to announce last Sunday evening that he'll be a candidate — he'll have to do it without the help of Citizens for America, the "non-partisan, non-political, national civic

league" he created about six months ago.

Citizens for America was described as a forum for discussion of "ideas and specific national security and economic programs" by Lew Lehrman, former gubernatorial magnate and unsuccessful gubernatorial candidate in New York, who organized the group at Reagan's request. And despite the political preference of a majority of its members it will not support or endorse any candidate.

Last Thursday in the 1776 Room at Alexander Hamilton, Citizens for America came to Michigan.

SULLI wearing the red suspenders which identified him during his 1982 New York campaign, Lehrman stood before a huge red, white and blue banner and announced that the Michi-

gan chapter would be run by Alexander Hamilton President Richard Headlee — himself a failed Republican gubernatorial candidate — and former state banking commissioner Martha Seger of Bloomfield Hills.

"In Michigan, there is no person more aligned with the interests of working class men and women," said Lehrman in praise of Headlee, a Farmington Hills resident who was beaten by Gov. James J. Blanchard in the November 1982 election.

Headlee may have lost the election, Lehrman said, "but he won the race for the minds and the hearts of Michigan taxpayers."

HEADLEE SAID Citizens for America had been organized "to put into place a permanent infrastructure to

create dialogue and discuss ideas into the 90s."

Headlee was vague about the funding and structure of the group, which will be organized by congressional districts and have no paid employees.

"As you know, I'm very conservative," he told a questioning reporter. "I'm a low-budget operator. There are many patriots who are willing to serve as volunteers, and we'll raise some funds by contributions."

"I'm guessing we can do the whole thing on \$20,000 a year at the outset."

Headlee added that the group already had a mailing list of about 600 Michigan residents.

Lehrman, who's been pushing Citizens for America in 30 states and 78

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Vacancy spurs hopefuls

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills residents have until Jan. 31, Tuesday to join nine other candidates who are vying for an appointment to the city council.

The nine residents are bidding to fill the vacancy left by former Mayor Fred Hughes who officially resigned as a council member on Jan. 20. Hughes resigned to take a promotion as an assistant vice president with the newly organized telephone company.

As of last Friday, the following residents had applied to be considered for a city council appointment: former Councilman Jack Burwell, 32629 Wayburn, who was defeated in his bid last November for re-election; twice unsuccessful city council contender Terry Sever, 34455 Beechwood; Democratic politico Aldo Vagnozzi, 26193 Kiltaran; Section 36 activist Massie Kurzeja, Oxford; former Farmington Hills police officer turned attorney Timothy Romps; and political newcomers George Benington, Pipers Lane; Al Zolton, 29549 Gilchrist; Phillip Chase, 58217 Tralee Trail; and Eldon Dillon, Westcott Crescent Circle.

Applicants must be Farmington Hills residents and registered voters. Council members will interview all applicants at a public meeting Monday, Feb. 6.

Even though Hughes was re-elected last November to serve a two-year term, the appointee may serve only until the November 1984 election. The appointee would have to run for election at that time to stay on the council. If more than two candidates file for the November election, a primary will be held.

The council is following past procedure used in 1975 when Councilwoman Jan Dolan was first appointed and again in 1978 when Bob Amori was appointed.

For emergencies

The number for Farmington Hills Police and Fire Departments is 477-0911.

The number for Farmington Police and Fire Department is 474-4700. The Poison Control Center's number is 494-5711.

Hills wish list is focus of tonight's council meet

Farmington Hills City Council will discuss the capital improvement program and how it is to be financed at 7:30 tonight in city hall, \$155.11 Mills.

Specific projects listed in the city's capital improvement plan expected to be discussed are: the proposed police building, 13 Mile Road improvements, the master storm drain plan, the Cedar Hill and Michigan Department of Transportation drains to fill in 40 acres along the south side of I-96.

Council members also will discuss the possible creation of a citizens committee to promote the plan.

Although the city's first multi-year capital improvement plan was prepared in 1983, council members failed to adopt any financing plans for suggested projects.

When council members, under public pressure, defeated a proposed 1.25 mill tax increase last year, they automatically excluded a proposed one-half mill levy for projects listed in the capital improvement program. In 1983, city officials maintained the previous year's 7.8255 mill tax rate.

In determining how to finance the six-year capital improvement plan,

council members are expected to consider: increasing taxes, using tax increment financing, using existing fund balances, and debt financing through bond sales.

COUNCIL'S FIRST step with the proposed new police building, targeted to start within a \$2.5 million price tag, will be to review a preliminary layout prepared by Birmingham architects Luckenbach & Ziegelman Inc.

In May 1983, the architects complet-

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