



Farmington Observer

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Library chief suspended; probe continues

By Julia Brown staff writer

Gordon Lewis has been suspended without pay from his position as director of the Farmington Community Library.

Lewis' suspension followed a four-hour closed meeting Thursday of the Farmington Community Library Board of Trustees. Library trustees voted unanimously at that meeting to suspend Lewis from his duties as library director.

A decision was made "to go to a more formal hearing." Library Board president Ernie Sauter said. That meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 15.

"It's going to be a hearing where we're going to interview some of the employees, and give Gordon's attorney an opportunity to interview them," library trustee Jonathan Grant said after the meeting.

Questions have recently arisen concerning the library system's accounting

practices under Lewis' administration.

A report on the findings of an audit, done by the Plante and Moran accounting firm, was released at the Thursday meeting. (See related story.) The accounting firm's findings cover a variety of areas, including personal

Auditor findings are revealed

By Julia Brown staff writer

A report on the findings of the Plante and Moran accounting firm was released at the conclusion of Thursday's meeting of the Farmington Community Library Board of Trustees.

The audit followed questions that were raised concerning the library system's accounting practices. Gordon Lewis, director of the Farmington Community Library, was sus-

pendent without pay at the Thursday meeting. Lewis had been on an unscheduled "vacation," following a closed meeting with the library trustees April 10.

Auditor findings are revealed

The following is the text of a letter sent to Ernie Sauter, president of the Library Board of Trustees, from Plante and Moran.

"Enclosed is our report on the findings of the procedures performed for the Farmington Community Library at your request, as outlined on Exhibit A. As a result of these procedures, we

present the following items for your further evaluation:

MEMBERSHIPS
Check number 374 was issued in February 1985 to the American Library Association for a life membership for Gordon Lewis for \$1,445. This check was charged to account number 957-1, Books, by Mr. Lewis. It appears that it should have been charged to account number 957-2, Periodicals, Indexes, Societies. According to the February 1985 Library financial statement, account 957-2 showed a budget appropriation of \$19,000 and expenditures to date of

\$16,884. The Books account showed a budget of \$128,500 and expenditures to date of \$68,552, including the above check.

Compensatory time
It has been the usual policy and practice of the Library, as much as we can determine, to require that compensatory time accumulated by employees be taken off or lost if the accumulated time exceeded 50 hours. This limit was temporarily suspended during the fiscal year because of the extra hours

read this audit, that's all you're getting."

LIPSON ALSO questioned why earlier audits of the library system's financial records have not uncovered evidence of wrongdoing. "Then where was Plante and Moran during the prior clean bills of health? If something's wrong, where were they during the prior audits?" Personal uses of public money described in the audit are "misleading," Lipson said, and only appear questionable "when you pull them out of context and highlight them." Lewis' uses of the money were "not abnormal," his attorney said. "It's still a business, and that business compensates its employees. The point I'm making is he was entitled to these things as perks of the job. Perks may be the wrong word, business-related functions or whatever." ("Perks," a shortened form of the

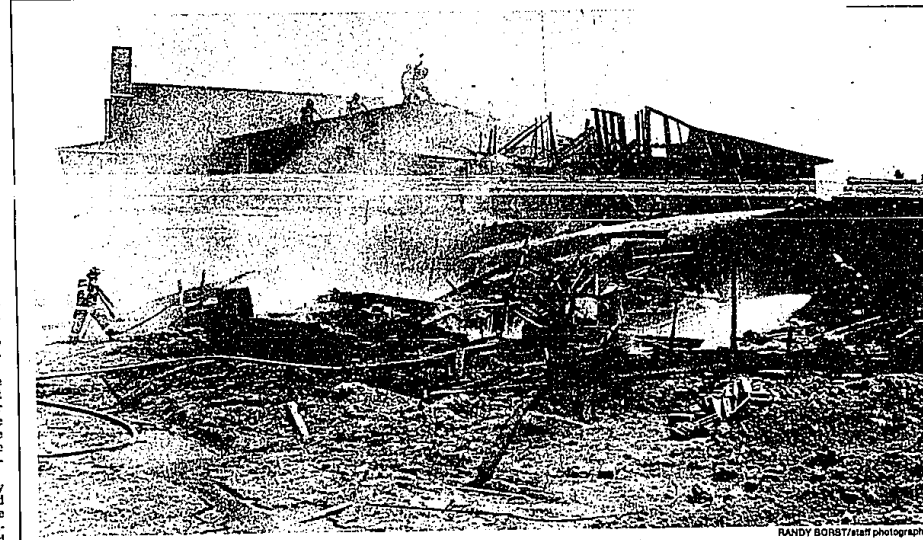
Road fix eyed

By summer's end, Farmington Hills residents will see improvements along four roads which have been targeted for safety improvements.

In a unanimous 7-0 vote last week, council agreed to spend \$65,000 on the improvements that include the addition and/or completion of passing lanes along 11 Mile and 14 Mile roads, and two separate sections of 13 Mile.

"We would anticipate we would do this very quickly," said Tom Blaseil, director of public services. The improvements are part of the city's annual road safety improvement program. The money used to pay for the improvements is allocated from the city's major road budget. Money in the major road budget comes from the city's share of state gas and weight taxes.

Because of the need for the safety improvements along the designated roads, city staff are pushing to get the projects under contract by June, Blaseil said. The projects will be handled by an engineering consultant rather than having them completed by city



No major injuries were reported in a fire Friday afternoon in Farmington Hills. The fire hit at the site of the Hillside Estate condominiums, east of Drake Road and north of Grand River Avenue.

Blaze guts Hills condo

By Julia Brown staff writer

No major injuries were reported in a fire that hit a Farmington Hills construction site early Friday afternoon.

There was "one minor injury of a firefighter," a foreign object in the eye, said Lt. Pete Baldwin of the Farmington Hills Fire Department.

"But for all intents and purposes, no injuries." The construction site for the Hillside Estate condominiums is east of Drake Road and north of Grand River. "They were cutting a steel beam," Baldwin said. "Subsequently, it caught the building on fire." The worker was in the building at the time. "Just the welder at the time, as we understand it. The welder was not injured, Baldwin said.

Builder sees thousands of jobs in new development

By Gary M. Cates staff writer

Developer Robert DeMattia announced plans Friday for a 130-acre industrial park at M-14 and Beck Road in Plymouth Township, expected to attract between \$40 million and \$50 million in development.

DeMattia, based in Farmington Hills, made the announcement during a press conference called to disclose plans for finishing the construction of his Metro West Industrial Park at Five Mile and Sheldon roads.

"This second industrial park (to be called Metro West II) is an ambitious project which will require \$4 million to

develop and will result, when completed, in a capital investment of at least \$42 million and 3,000 jobs," he said.

"We will be going to Plymouth Township within the next week for help with this project," said DeMattia. More than 100 government officials, business and financial institution representatives attended the conference Friday at the Plymouth Hilton.

"Ventures like this truly do take the efforts of all government, business and lending institutions," DeMattia said.

He praised the cooperation of township, county and state officials in bringing Metro West I to the point where all four phases can be completed in the

next 18 months, representing a \$6 million tax base increase and the creation of some 5,000 jobs.

METRO WEST I, now entering construction of phase II plants and warehouse, is comprised of 215 acres and will have between \$65 million and \$200 million worth of development when completed.

"When we sat down and mapped out a plan to have phase II of the park platted within two months, everybody who we were chewing locu weed or something," he said.

Instead, DeMattia said he found government officials interested in economic development and willing to cut through red tape.

"Without their help, we would have missed landing a couple of major firms," he said.

One of these is Aisin U.S.A., a Japanese-based electronics and robotics firm which recently purchased a 10-acre site in the park. The company, an automotive supplier, plans to build a large facility for manufacturing and will bring several hundred jobs. They already have sales offices in Detroit.

"The Aisin development represents all new jobs, and they plan to fill the 10 acres up," DeMattia said, noting that Aisin will build the largest facility in the park to date.

DeMATTIA BELIEVES the Plymouth Township area is one of the hot-

test industrial places in the state. Demand for sites in Metro West I, according to him, is incredible. Situated close to the east/west M-14, and north/south I-275 expressways, DeMattia says this area has the most to offer in western Wayne County.

"Besides the expressways, we are close to the airports, railroads, the University of Michigan, and the area can provide the people needed for a work force," he said.

The residential areas of Plymouth and Northville also provide incentives for companies to locate in Metro West, as well as the local governments' willingness to provide tax and financial incentives, he said.

It is for those reasons that DeMattia believes Metro West II can fly. The proposed park will be between M-14 and the C&O railroad tracks, west of Beck.

"This is the future area of western Wayne County," he said.

The developer plans to get the land, which he closed on Thursday, rezoned for light industrial and office use. On the 80 to 100 lots he plans to land "non-smoke-stack industries," offices and research buildings.

"I imagine the process to get this through will take one year," he said. DeMattia recently made a trip to Ja-

Hills lets city buddies pay same fee

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Despite a new Farmington Hills policy charging non-residents a higher fee for using the San Marino Golf Course, Farmington golfers will pay "resident" green fees.

In a unanimous 7-0 vote last week the Farmington Hills City Council increased green fees at the municipal course on Haledale and also agreed to charge non-residents an additional fee.

Before the vote was taken, however, Councilwoman Joan Dudley made a plea to include Farmington golfers as residents under the proposed fee schedule. "I'm very concerned about charging

city of Farmington residents more," Dudley said.

Dudley reminded council and administrative staff that Farmington Hills residents have never been charged to use Farmington's park at Shilawassee and Power roads.

"I didn't pay to use that city park," Dudley said. "I think they (Farmington residents) should be included in (as residents) and that may not be budget wise. But we're close enough."

Councilman Joe Alkateeb agreed. "I THINK we should start developing this feeling that we are one city. And one day it may happen." Although specific statistics are unavailable, the use of the course by Farmington residents is low, said Spe-

cial Services Director Doug Gaylor. "It's not going to cost us that much," said Councilman Charles Williams.

Effective May 1, residents will pay a 50-cent increase to play nine or 18 holes on weekdays, weekends and holidays. The increase does not apply to resident senior adults and juniors. Non-residents will pay 50 cents more than residents.

For example, residents will be charged \$5.50 for nine holes on a weekday while non-residents will pay \$6.

This is the first time Farmington Hills has established a fee differential for non-residents. Approximately 63 percent of the golfers who use the course are residents, according to a report from the

city's special services department staff.

Until now, city staff felt that charging non-residents a differential fee might eliminate play and cut the demand by residents who might play rounds with non-residents, the report added.

Part of the reason for the new fee differential policy stems from complaints by residents that they have difficulty getting tee time, according to the report.

The fee differential may eliminate some non-resident playing and consequently make the course more available for residents, the report indicated. In addition, residents are paying for the purchase of the course through their taxes, Gaylor told council.

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