



Farmingington Observer

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Hopefuls debate quality

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

In a campaign without controversial issues, candidates talked of maintaining educational challenge and excellence during the first debate of the 1985 Farmington school board race.

Twelve of the 14 candidates met at the invitation of the Farmington Democratic Club at the Bolstead Inn last Thursday to outline their political and educational philosophies.

Candidates participating in the debate were Donald Allen, Joan Brown, Jack Cotton, Helen Ditzhazy, a spokeswoman for Roxanne Fitzpatrick, Pat Girbach, Elaine Harwin, Michael King, Rick Knauer, Marty Krohnert, Jean Moran and Al Zolton.

Talk of maintaining educational excellence in the district and of providing students with continual challenge surfaced in response to a question from the audience.

"I think some of the kids that are leaving public schools are leaving because they aren't being challenged enough," said Harwin, who advocates introducing foreign languages into the elementary grades, as well as using letter grades for evaluation starting in the fifth grade.

ZOLTON, an associate professor at Mercy College, and Knauer, an attorney, tended to agree, arguing in favor of striving for excellence in the public school system instead of letting that fall to the private schools.

If the Farmington district continues to provide excellent educational opportunities for children, those who transfer to private and parochial schools won't be doing it because "of a lack of excellence" in the local district, Knauer said.

Girbach, who calls herself a "professional volunteer" with education-oriented activities such as Olympics of the Mind, pointed to a difference between public and private schools.

Private schools can choose their students and buttress their academic standing, Girbach said. Public schools don't have that option, she added.

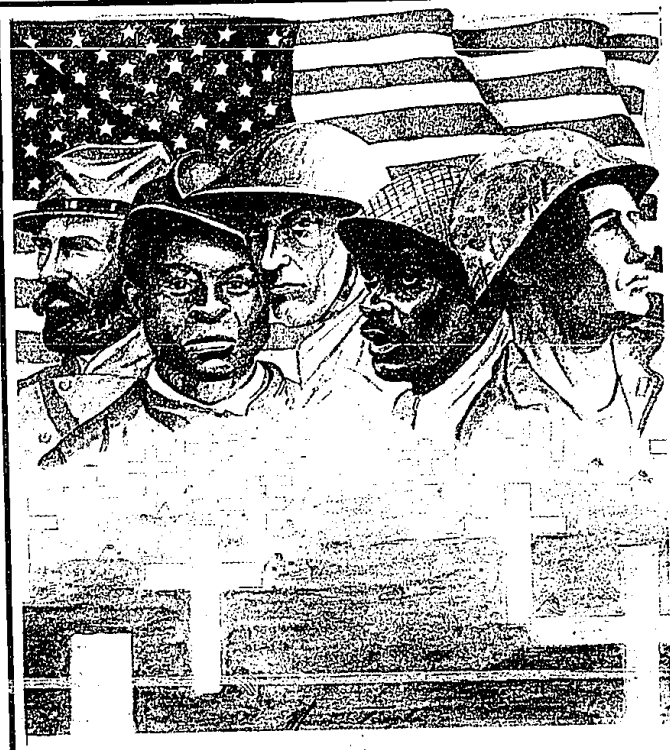
But Cotton, former athletic director for the Farmington District, made it clear he opposes "any type of segregation of students." Instead, emphasis must continue on the excellence of programs to meet all students' needs.

ON A SIMILAR note, Brown, a hospital homebound teacher for Oakland Schools said: "People think they can buy things that can't get in public education. I don't think that's true."

Most of the candidates agreed that the Farmington School District provides an excellent education for children. But the problem, many said, is that the excellence of the educational programs is not advertised or marketed enough to parents and those outside of the district.

"I don't think we have been positive enough with what's been happening in

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Remembering

As millions of Americans headed for beaches or were filled with memories of those who died and other summer inaugural events, many others were in America's war.

MARVIN TEEPLES/illustrator

Hills looks to increase for improvements

By Julie Brown
staff writer

If you'd wanted to fight city hall — or perhaps just speak your mind — Wednesday was your chance.

A public hearing on Farmington Hills' recommended 1985-86 budget was held Wednesday. City council members and city administrators met with approximately 20 residents at the hearing.

City Manager William Costick got things started with a review of the 1985-86 budget. The budget must be adopted by June 10, the council's first regular meeting of the month.

The proposed general fund expenditures add up to \$16,647,137, the city manager said. That sum represents a 6.4 percent increase over the \$15,668,188 operating budget for 1984-85.

The budget recommends an 8.8 millage rate, an increase from the 1984-85 rate of 8.0.

The proposed 8.8 millage rate consists of a total 7.7 mills for operations and debt, the same rate levied last year.

The remaining 1.1 mills would be used for implementing projects listed in the upcoming year of the city's six-year capital improvements program.

At Wednesday's hearing, Costick reviewed the general fund and capital improvement expenditures. Recommended General Fund budget expenditures for 1985-86 include the following:

- Administration, General Government, \$3,001,104, 18.5 percent;
- Library, \$1,051,312, 6.3 percent;
- District Court, \$508,351, 3.1 percent;
- Police Department, \$5,374,031, 32.3 percent;
- Fire Department, \$1,322,076, 7.9 percent;
- Public Services, \$2,990,903, 18 percent;
- Refuse Removal, \$1,034,187, 6.2 percent;
- Special Services, \$921,050, 5.5 percent;
- Debt Service, \$366,223, 2.2 percent.

about the budget ran the gamut, ranging from such areas as the unappropriated fund balance to property assessments for apartment buildings to workers' compensation costs.

He also questioned expenditures for consultants and for the city's corporation counsel. The budget recommends a total of \$181,000 for corporation counsel expenditures, in comparison to \$159,813 in actual expenditures for 1983-84 and projected actual expenditures of \$156,100 for 1984-85.

"I know that covers routine matters, but have the routine matters gone up that much?" Vagnozzi asked.

"It's been noted over the past few years the city attorney's been reluctant to increase the retainer amount," City Manager Costick told Vagnozzi. The services the city attorney provides have been on the increase, he said.

Vagnozzi praised the addition of three positions to the police department. Those positions are one new sergeant, one additional police officer, and a clerk-typist for the department's records division.

"We've stood still too long on the number of police officers," Vagnozzi said. Dennis Fitzgerald, chairman of the

City closes deal to buy Spicer park

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Farmingington Hills' acquisition of the 212-acre Spicer property was completed Thursday.

"We closed on the property Thursday at noon," said Doug Gaynor, Farmington Hills' director of special services.

Gaynor was among several city employees who met Thursday with Mark Thomas, broker from Weir, Manuel, Snyder & Ranko, and with Nicholas Spicer, executor of the estate of the late Eleanor Spicer. Checks totaling \$1.5 million were accepted by Nicholas Spicer from the city to complete the closing.

The Spicer property is located west of Farmington Road and north of 10 Mile Road in Farmington Hills. A citizens' committee began studying possible uses for the property last November.

In March 1983, the city entered into an agreement for the purchase, following negotiations on the possible acquisition.

"We had two one-year options," Gaynor said. "Each option was accompanied with a \$200,000 check, which went toward the purchase price."

"BASICALLY, WHAT we did was we took it off the market. We took it out for two one-year options. In the meantime, we sought the grant from the Michigan Land Trust Fund."

The grant funds covered \$1.2 million, or 60 percent of the total cost of \$2 million. A reimbursement check from the state was delivered to the city by a

'We're very appreciative of all the people who spent a lot of time and made commitments to the project.'
Doug Gaynor

Farmingington Hills employee Thursday. "We're very appreciative of all the people who spent a lot of time and made commitments to the project," Gaynor said. "And, of course, to the Michigan Land Trust Fund board for their sensitivity and understanding in approving our application."

The city's Parks and Recreation Commission will make recommendations to the city council on possible uses for the property. A public hearing on possible uses was held May 14.

"The commission's working on some things and we're working on some things," Gaynor said. Within 30 days, there should be some recommendations for the council on the next step.

"We've got a number of alternatives we're working on," he said.

"The acquisition portion of the project has been completed, but there's the next step of development, and then use or operating and maintenance. So, it's probably just beginning."

School budget up by 4.9 percent

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmingington School District taxpayers will pay 34 mills in 1985-86 to support a \$19.7-million budget.

The new tax rate represents a reduction of 7 mills from the 1984-85 levy. School trustees last week voted 8-0 to adopt the 1985-86 budget and the new tax levy. School Board President Jack Luch was absent.

The 34 mills to be levied in 1985-86 include 32.5 mills for operations and 1.5 mills for debt.

In 1984-85, school officials levied 34.7 mills, comprised of 33 mills for operations and 1.7 mills for debt.

The district's debt levy in 1985-86 plus interest will provide approximately \$2.6 million. Approximately \$2.2 million has been specifically appropriated for the redemption of the principal, payment of interest and other miscellaneous expenditures.

EVEN THOUGH SCHOOL officials will levy less millage in 1985-86, the school district will be generating more revenue than last year because the district's total state equalized valuation

Finance Director Bill Prisk. The new budget does not represent any new programs, Schulman said. Although the budget increases are due in large part to anticipated increases in elementary and special education enrollment, the increases also reflect salary increases for all district employees, with teachers receiving a 5.5 percent raise in 1985-86 and increased expenditures for student supplies.

School officials expect an enrollment decline of 3 percent in 1985-86. That works out to about 44,900 being spent on each of the estimated 10,932 students. The cost per student also includes the higher cost of education for special education students.

THE NEW BUDGET also takes into account the following:

- Employment of two consultants for the expanded elementary science program.
- New copy machines for the secondary schools to serve as alternatives when the rented machines need repairs.
- Expansion of the computer application class to include North and Harrison high schools.
- Replacement of seven passenger buses and two orthopedic buses.
- An increased allocation to replace two maintenance vehicles.
- The addition of a teacher and aides for the reading and gifted program which will be split into separate programs. Administrators are still considering this pilot program.
- "We're looking at it more deliberately," Schulman said.
- An increase in the district's capital needs account.
- Continuation of the district's telecommunications coordinator.
- What the new budget does not include, Schulman said, are expenditures for "some serious needs on roof repairs and paving repairs."
- "This is not indication," he said. "The analysis (of the cost of these proposed projects) was incomplete by budget time."
- Although final figures won't be in until at least the end of July, Prisk estimates the district's fund equity will actually be about \$2.6 million (this is not the same as the \$2.6 million in the debt fund).

city's Parks and Recreation Commission, also spoke at Wednesday's hearing.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility of making recommendations to the city council for uses of the Spicer property. In the capital improvements portion of the recommended budget, a \$50,000 expenditure is recommended for development of the Spicer property.

IN RECENT MONTHS, a citizens' committee has been studying potential uses for the Spicer property, the last open area in the city which will be designated as a park area. The property is west of Farmington Road and north of 10 Mile Road.

A survey of possible uses for the property was done, asking respondents to rank their preferences among the following:

- Botanical gardens
- Multipurpose meeting place
- Multipurpose youth sports field
- Nature interpretive center
- Picnic area and pavilion
- Trails (hiking, nature, cross-country)
- Outdoor ice rink
- Working farm

what's inside

Community Calendar . . .	4B
Inside Angles	6A
Oral Quarrel	2A
Shopping cart	Section C
Sports	Section B
Suburban Life	3, 4B



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