



Farmington Observer

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Farmington FOCUS

If you have a news item or an idea for a feature story or an action picture with a Farmington-area connection, send a note to our downtown office at 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

BOWL lately? You're never too old. Take it from Florence Lesotte, 77, of Farmington — mother to 12, grandmother to 54 and great-grandmother to 19. She had nine strikes in a row, good for a 266 game at the Farmington Lanes Feb. 11, in the Tuesday morning ladies league. She carries a 123 average.

FIXUP time. Farmington Public Schools officials are looking at needed building repairs, said Michael Flanagan, assistant superintendent for finance.

Building principals and special education supervisors were asked to submit building priority lists for budgeting purposes.

"We'll have a gigantic list," Flanagan said. Building improvements will dovetail with projected plans from a district task force on planning and probably be budgeted over several years, he added.

UPWARD and onward! Ann Aquilina, a Farmington Hills resident and Texas Instruments employee, won a trip for two to San Antonio, Texas, at a recent Mardi Gras party hosted by the Novi Hillton and Delta Airlines.

The trip includes transportation via Delta Airlines and accommodations at the Hilton Hotel.

PLANS for the Eagle Elementary Media Center are progressing, according to a Jan. 28 report to the Farmington Board of Education from Graham Lewis, interim superintendent.

Plans are being reviewed in Lansing. Once they're approved, bids will be sought, Lewis said.

A PROJECT allowing mixed land use is being studied for seven acres south of the Crossroads Shopping Center, Nine Mile and Farmington roads.

The Farmington Planning Commission formed a subcommittee Feb. 10 to make a recommendation on the proposed planned unit development.

Farmington Oaks Associates is the developer. The subcommittee will determine whether the parcels in a compatible mixed land use area.

The idea is to use the land for part office/part multifamily buildings, Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman said. The acreage is surrounded by commercial and multifamily facilities, he added.

If approved by the commission, appropriate public hearings will be held.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — For the first time in a decade, city of Farmington officials will examine the future of the downtown area.

Council will meet with planning commissioners, planning consultants and the Economic Development Corporation to develop a strategy for continued growth in the central business district.

The Grand River and Farmington Road shopping area has met with increased competition over the last decade with the construction of several new shopping areas — Twelve Oaks in Novi, Hunter's Square on Orchard Lake and 14 Mile, as well as several other smaller shopping malls in the area.

Hills officials enact revised massage law

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Skin care salons and beauty institutes whose massage therapists are certified members of one of two state massage associations are exempt under a new Farmington Hills massage regulation ordinance.

Farmington Hills City Council in a 5-2 vote Monday adopted a revised ordinance that allows massages to be provided by members of the opposite sex. Councilman Ben Marks and Council-

woman Joan Dudley opposed adoption. Marks was the only council member who opposed deleting the opposite sex massage prohibition. Dudley opposed adoption because of other ordinance provisions with which she disagreed, yet failed to garner enough council support to change.

The ordinance is designed to regulate massages and the businesses that provide them by requiring — in addition to a business license — an operating permit. Employees (who are not certified members of the state's two massage associations) of the businesses that intend to provide massages are also required to obtain a permit. The ordinance becomes effective March 10.

Adoption of the ordinance followed more than an hour of debate between council members, as well as professional masseuses and masseurs who were in the audience.

IN LATE January, the proposed massage regulation ordinance was sent back to City Attorney Paul Elbanu and Police Chief William Dwyer for refinement after council received complaints about several provisions, including the opposite sex massage prohibition.

"I am comfortable with the deletions and revisions made in the ordinance," Dwyer said.

Chief among complaints about the first version of the proposed ordinance was that skin care salons and beauty institutes, such as Farnara's Institute de Beauté and Bloomies — noted for professional body massages — would be required to comply with the ordinance.

Based on those complaints, the proposed ordinance was revised to exempt those masseuses and masseurs who are certified members of the state's two massage associations — the Michigan Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association and the Michigan State Association of Myomassologists.

Both state associations accept members based only on recommendation of current members. Applicants must show proof of their massage training and education and must pass certification tests before becoming members, according to association officials.

Despite the effort to exempt certified members of the state associations, many of the professional masseuses and masseurs in the audience told council they are not members. Both as-

DDA is formed; leaders chosen

By Casey Hays staff writer

A Downtown Development Authority (DDA) for Farmington was formed and its board of directors named Monday, following almost a year of study in the city's central business district.

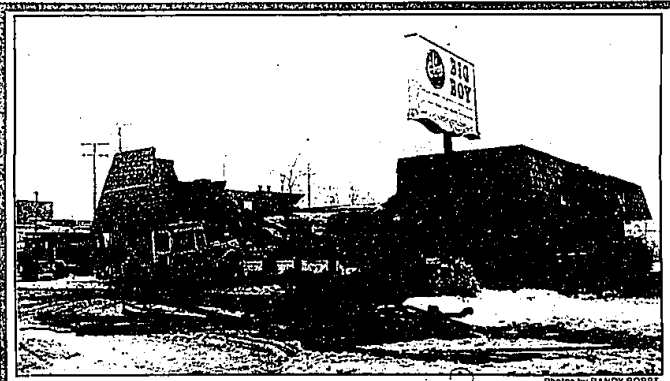
The city council voted unanimously, without discussion, to approve the DDA ordinance.

Named to the DDA board by Farmington Mayor William Hartsock for the following terms were: Frank Clappison and Harry Wingerter for four-year terms, Gregory Hohler and JoAnn Sorensen for three-year terms, Richard Donner and Larry Lenchner for two-year terms, Robert Heinrich and Ronald Oglesby for one-year terms, and Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman required to serve on the board according to DDA ordinance.

A DDA gives the city the economic clout needed to reinvigorate its downtown area. Its board has power to sell, lease,

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Photos by RANDY BORST



No injuries

The cause of an early morning fire Monday at Elias Brothers Big Boy restaurant, 24301 Halsted, is labeled suspicious, pending a final determination by the fire marshal, said Farmington Hills Fire Lt. Peter Baldwin. Firefighters (at left) were still sifting through debris late Monday in an attempt to determine the fire's cause. It is still uncertain where the fire started although heaviest damage occurred in the customer seating area. Damage to the building and contents is estimated at \$400,000, Baldwin said. No injuries were reported. The fire was in progress when Farmington Hills firefighters arrived on the scene at 2:05 a.m. Monday, Feb. 17. The fire was reported by a passerby at 2:03 a.m., Baldwin said. "When we arrived, the roof was collapsing," Baldwin said. Farmington Hills Police found footprints and tire tracks at the rear of the restaurant, according to a police report.

A blessing Library offers hope for handicapped

By Susan Steinmueller staff writer

Carole Hund, head librarian at the Oakland County Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, has a 1983 letter written by a 103-year-old librarian patron.

"The Talking Book and records that you have recently given me have made it possible to hear again, as well as see. What a blessing," wrote the late Floy Divine of Southfield.

"Our bodies are well cared for, but that's not all we need. When our minds and souls are neglected, they degenerate with speed."

The letter is one of many Hund has received since the library opened 14 years ago. It is located downstairs at the Farmington Community Library, 32737 W. 13 Mile, Farmington Hills.

Also known as the Talking Books Library, it offers 1,600 patrons a world of books and magazines otherwise reserved for the sighted through recorded and Braille offerings.

"PEOPLE WHO use our library feel very strongly about it," says Hund. "We're talking about people who can't go to the drugstore, get a daily newspaper, go to the library, or go to the bookstore."



"We want to give as personalized a service as we can. We're sort of like one big, happy family. We get to know our patrons very well!"
— Carole Hund
librarian

through the mail, Hund and her staff become acquainted with patrons such as Divine through the mail and by telephone. In addition to Hund, there are two full-time library assistants, one part-time assistant, and five student assistants.

"People never have to come into the library, and of course, many can't," she says. "But many do get here, and we welcome them, and do like to see them."

"We want to give as personalized a service as we can. We're sort of like one big, happy family. We get to know

our patrons very well."

The facility is part of a national library program for the blind and physically handicapped. It is administered by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) Library of Congress, and receives money from federal, state and local sources.

The Oakland County branch is the largest of the 13 suburban libraries for the blind in Michigan. Anyone who is unable to read or use standard printed materials as a result of temporary

or permanent visual or physical limitations may receive service, she added.

BOOK SELECTIONS and magazine subscriptions are available in flexible and hard disc, cassette and Braille. Special playback equipment is provided because, in order to get a book on fewer discs and cassettes, they are recorded at a slower speed. According to Hund, cassettes are the most popular. Materials are borrowed and returned through postage-free mail.

"A record is very difficult for a blind person to use. A student who is blind is going to use a cassette over a record." Braille books are mostly used by the young, because for many older people who are losing their sight, it is like learning a "foreign language."

The library has more than 10,000 talking books and magazines. In addition, it has access to more than 38,000 titles in the national book collection.

These are supplemented by more than 400 Braille and recorded titles produced by volunteers and circulated in limited quantities to readers each year. Local volunteers also record books, if requested.

In fact, Hund said, the library is helped by a vast volunteer network, who do everything from recording

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