



Farmington Observer

Volume 97 Number 41 Thursday, February 27, 1988 Farmington, Michigan 84 Pages Twenty-five cents

Farmington FOCUS

Schools sue Hills over TIFA plans

By Casey Hans staff writer

Farmington Hills officials have not yet determined their legal response to a Farmington Public Schools lawsuit, filed to thwart the use of a tax increment financing authority (TIFA) along the 12 Mile corridor.

The city faces a March 6 legal deadline for responding to the four-count complaint, filed Feb. 12 in Oakland County Circuit Court.

City council has not met to discuss the city's position toward the suit, according to Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick. "We are reviewing the complaint as spelled out in the suit."

The suit was filed the day after the Farmington Board of Education authorized legal action according to school district attorney Dennis Pollard of the Birmingham firm of Clark, Hardy, Lewis, Pollard and Page. Its purpose is to halt the formation of the TIFA district and to declare the TIFA along 12 Mile unlawful, he said.

THE TIFA would fund \$10 million toward proposed road improvements, including widening and a boulevard, along the 3.5-mile stretch of 12 Mile, west of Farmington Road, and widening and additional interchanges along I-96. Government grants are projected to cover the remainder of the \$44-million road improvement proposal.

The city was served papers Feb. 14, although following the Feb. 11 school board meeting, interim superintendent Graham Lewis said the district would not file suit until the end of a 60-day waiting period from the time the TIFA was approved in December.

"That was our understanding," Costick added.

"It's a formality," Lewis explained. The district had to take action within 60 days after the TIFA's approval in

Farmington Hills mayor and Farmington school board president speak out on TIFA: Page 8A.

order to officially challenge its formation.

The district's four-count plea contends:

- There is no decline in property values along the proposed TIFA district.
- The district's operating millage was approved by voters to be spent only for school operating purposes.
- The capture and/or diversion of tax revenues "constitutes an unlawful use" of school tax money, according to the 1976 School Code, Public Act 451.
- A commitment was made to bondholders to levy on all taxable property in the district. Allowing a TIFA would breach the district's contract with bondholders.

THE SCHOOL board also based its legal stance on an opinion received in January from the Michigan Attorney General's office voicing opposition to use of a TIFA for the 12 Mile corridor. Farmington Public Schools requested the opinion one year ago.

The district is also concerned with deferral of local tax dollars, because local dollars fund out-of-parishula districts, such as Farmington. They do not receive state school aid based on a per-pupil formula.

Although extensions are "routinely granted," Pollard said he assumes the city's answer will be forthcoming by March 6. Costick said the council and city attorneys may ask for more time to review the 18-page complaint. An executive session — allowed for Reg-

Please turn to Page 8



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

The Tall Oaks office building (center), which looks somewhat like a house, can be seen between houses on Gilchrist in Farmington Hills.

Residents complain that the developers of the complex did not provide proper landscaping between the building and the houses.

Deadline set Denser greenbelt in Hills required

By Joanne Mellezowski staff writer

Developers of the Tall Oaks office building on Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills have until June 1 to improve landscaping that separates the 20,000-square-foot building from homes in the Franklin Knolls subdivision.

At the request of the Franklin Knolls Improvement Association, the Farmington Hills City Council referred the issue to city staff and set a June 1 deadline to force developers Beauchamp & Roesser to improve the existing greenbelt area to provide greater privacy and improved appearance for homeowners. Both developers, who were not

City planning commissioners are studying an ordinance amendment that would require improved screening between residential areas and office buildings.

present at Monday's meeting, are on vacation and were unavailable for comment.

Although developers planted bushes and trees in the approx-

mately 20-foot greenbelt about 1 1/2 to two years ago, the plantings have not been maintained and many have since died, said Susan Young, president of the subdivision improvement association. The greenbelt "has become an eyesore to the subdivision," she added.

For most office buildings that abut residential areas, a wall or berm is required to serve as a barrier between the building and houses, said Richard Lantini, community development coordinator. "In this case, the wall was waived in lieu of a planting plan," he added.

THE FARMINGTON HILLS Zoning Please turn to Page 8

STUDENT star gazers.

First and second graders at Farmington Public Schools' Flanders Elementary got a chance to reach for the stars this school year.

They spent evenings viewing the constellations and culminated the learning experience with a field trip Feb. 18 to the Cranbrook Educational Community, Bloomfield Hills.

Teacher Marlon Spencer said students were "just fantastic — they knew it all," during their visit to the science museum and planetarium. The visit also marked the anniversary of the discovery of the planet Pluto.

The Northern Lights obscured some of the constellations during the students' last outing, but there was still much to learn, she added. The students have studied the stars since October.

GOLD key winner. Farmington Harrison High School student Marnie Leonard earned a Gold Key for an oil painting entered in the Southeastern Michigan Regional Scholastic Art Awards.

Several Farmington Public Schools students works were shown at the exhibition held Feb. 8-23 in Tel-Twelve Mall, Southfield.

THERE'S a new face on the Michigan Board of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery.

Lt. Gov. Martha Griffiths has appointed Dr. Max McKinney II to the board for a term expiring Dec. 31, 1989.

He is in private practice in Farmington Hills.

McKinney is a member of the Michigan Association of Osteopathic Trustees and the Eastern General Hospital Board of Directors.

NO question about it.

The new Quality Inn of Farmington Hills is oriented to business travelers.

To meet their special needs, the hotel, at 12 Mile and Orchard Lake roads, has executive suites with two phones, a desk area and a personal computer hookup. The 250-seat meeting rooms offer audiovisual equipment, teleconferencing and satellite TV. And there's an audiovisual engineer and a notary public on staff.

The 160-room hotel — which also offers a Great Escape weekend package for local and out-of-town guests — is hosted by The Rosenhaus Group, the J&J Slavik Group and the Bosco Group.

Farmington Hills Mayor Joe Alkatech cut the ribbon at the champagne grand opening Feb. 20.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — The congenial, soft-spoken city hall watcher who died last October has become the center of a court case involving his nearly \$200,000 estate.

Oakland County Probate Judge Eugene Moore has set a March 5 hearing date for reviewing the estate of Liston Shepard.

Shepard, who was 74, died Oct. 27, 1984. He lived in Farmington Hills and had operated a Farmington Hills grocery store before his retirement.

The March 5 hearing will be held to review a petition filed by Marcella J. Calio, Calio, of Euclid, Ohio, claims to be Shepard's daughter from a common law marriage.

More pupils may lead to new school

By Casey Hans staff writer

Building a new school plus a short-term student shift would be Lawrence Freedman's first choice in solving an increasing enrollment problem in west-side Farmington elementary.

But the district's boundary study committee chairman's recommendation may not be accepted by his colleagues on the Farmington Board of Education, he stressed at a Longacre Elementary parents meeting Tuesday.

The school board will make the final decision on possible elementary bound-

ary shifts for the district.

Freedman is the district's assistant superintendent for elementary instruction.

BOUNDARY STUDY committee members went back to the drawing board recently — at the request of the school board — to develop alternatives for the district's lopsided growth as Farmington Hills develops along the western boundary.

The study board was formed one year ago when growth patterns on the west side became noticeable.

"We're going to show them (the

board) all the options," he added, showing parents at the meeting four possible solutions to the boundary crisis.

"If boundaries are not changed, we can anticipate a projected increase of 106 students (at Longacre) over the next three-five years, indicating a need for a minimum of four additional classrooms," Freedman said in a report.

THOSE OPTIONS affecting Longacre families include:

- The movement of approximately 70 students in Section 30 from Longacre to Flanders as a temporary move, while a new school is under construc-

tion. This section is bounded by Nine and 10 Mile and Haggerty and Halsted. This is Freedman's first choice.

• Reassignment of all kindergarten students from Longacre to Flanders as a temporary move while growth patterns are studied. Additional costs for busing the students would occur, school officials said.

The installation of three portable classrooms at Longacre while construction of a new school, or building addition, is completed, which Freedman noted as his second choice. New portables cost about \$30,000 each, according to estimates given. The school

is currently using two portables.

- Moving other Longacre students in areas other than Section 30 of the district to Flanders, which is at about

Please turn to Page 13

Lake rescue Harrison grad credited with saving 2 lives

By Bob Sklar staff writer

A former Farmington Hills resident pulled a Fenton woman and her 2-year-old child to safety after the all-terrain vehicle in which they were riding broke through thin ice on Strawberry Lake, south of Brighton, Saturday.

"They made it and I'm glad I was able to help," said Gregory Milosch, 28, Monday. The Lakeland resident is a 1976 Farmington Harrison High School graduate and the son of Jane and Mac Milosch of Farmington Hills.

"He should get all the credit he possibly can," said Hamburg Township Chief of Police Robert Krickhe. "It was definitely because of his quick action that those people were saved."

"The good Lord sure watched over those people," Krickhe added. "With the temperature of the water, the woman and child could not have held on very long before hypothermia would have set in."

Milosch, a sales engineer for Lucas Industries in Troy, said he was in bed when he heard someone screaming for



'I knew I was the only one there. I couldn't see anybody else coming to help. I was standing there and I wasn't going to watch them drown.'

— Gregory Milosch

help about 11 p.m. Saturday in his rural neighborhood.

"I grabbed my robe and ran out to the porch to listen better. And I quickly realized someone was in trouble on the lake, about 200 yards away," Milosch said.

Milosch RAN back inside, got dressed, told his wife, Suzanne, to call the police, then grabbed a flashlight

and a rope.

After running to the lake, he found a woman holding a child and clinging to a four-wheel-drive, all-terrain vehicle floating upside down in about 10 feet of water. The vehicle had fallen through thin ice near a lake inlet. Buoyant tires kept the vehicle afloat.

"She was visiting friends in the area and didn't know the lake," Milosch said

of the 39-year-old woman.

Milosch threw her a rope and pulled her to the edge of the ice.

"I tried to get her to wrap the rope around the baby, but I couldn't," Milosch said. "She said she was too cold."

After the woman pushed her child onto the ice, Milosch slid on his stomach and grabbed the youngster's foot.

WHEN THE woman said she could hang on to the ice a bit longer, Milosch carried the youngster inside to his wife. He then threw a rope to the woman and pulled her to safety.

Local emergency authorities directed both the woman and her child into a tub of warm water to raise their body temperature.

Milosch, who has lived in Lakeland since April, said this was the first time he has encountered a lake rescue.

Did he ever have any doubts? "I sure did," he said. "I knew I was the only one there. I couldn't see anybody else coming to help. I was standing there and I wasn't going to watch them drown. So I went for it — and made it."

what's inside

Around Farmington Business	9B
Cable connection	7-8C
Club circuit	15A
Classifieds	3B
Creative living	Sections C-E
Crossword puzzle	Section E
Entertainment	9-12C
Obituaries	12A
Opinion	16A
Police/tire calls	6A
Readers' forum	17A
Recreation news	15A
Sports	1-5C
Travel	15C
News line	477-5450
Home delivery	591-0500
Sports line	591-2312
Classified line	591-0500

PERSONAL FINANCE

SPECIAL SECTION IN TODAY'S ISSUE