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Home For Rap Line Tabled; Junior High Site Suggested



LOOKING AHEAD—The Rev. Ralph Rideout, founder of Rap Line and executive director of the Farmington Area Advisory Council, begins one of the busy days he spends helping troubled youth. (Evert photo)

The administrative building for the drug prevention program organized for the Farmington Area may be located on the Farmington Junior High site instead of near 10 Mile Elementary school.

The Farmington City Council Monday night expressed its preference for the Farmington Junior High proposed site and tabled a decision for two weeks until its next regular meeting.

THE CONTINUING episode now shifts to Shawassee St. when the Farmington Board of Education meets next Monday night (Sept. 28) and discusses the junior high site.

The city hopes to make a decision in two weeks on which site it is willing to approve a building permit for a portable building as administrative center for the Farmington Area Advisory Council (FAAC).

The FAAC is the parent body formed to operate a drug prevention program, based on the former Drug Rap Line concept. (See story below.)

THE CITY COUNCIL tabled a decision on the 10 Mile site to give the school board time to arrive at cost estimates for locating the portable building at Farmington Junior High.

Before the council began its discussion on FAAC site location Monday night, Mayor Wilbur Brotherton told of a petition signed by 49 residents opposed to location near the 10 Mile School.

The school board had earlier approved the first site which actually is closer to the school administration center on Shawassee than to 10 Mile Elementary.

The first site is directly west of the bus yard which separates the administration building from the playgrounds which are south of 10 Mile Elementary.

COUNCILMAN JOHN ALLEN suggested the Farmington Junior High site and said the FAAC building could be located between the northernmost parking lot, behind the junior high and the top of the ravine which separates city park from the school.

Allen said he preferred the Farmington Junior High site because it did not involve any dangers to elementary pupils and was not visible from residential areas.

Allen stressed he was not against the concept of Rap Line and "it is not my intention to reflect on the capabilities or methods of the people involved."

Allen explained his position is that the suggested site near 10 Mile is not the best location. He added that he has toured the 10 Mile Elementary site and the proposed Farmington Junior High site with Dr. Roderick J. Smith, superintendent of schools.

Allen said persons who use drugs are unpredictable and a

symptom of a user is a violent and easily provoked temper. He added he felt the extra cost to locate at Farmington Junior High would be something like \$23,000 for water and sewer connections.

BROTHERTON SAID he could not see the need to take the risks involved with locating the FAAC building near the elementary school.

The mayor added he did not want to stand in the way of the FAAC's operation but preferred the building be located at the junior high.

"Any place you put it, it won't really be acceptable," commented Councilman Ralph Yoder. "We must face up to our responsibilities. I'll vote for the proposed site but will also vote for the second site if the first is defeated."

Richard Peters, school board vice president and member of the FAAC board, was among those present in the audience. Peters said the board was concerned over the question of separating the facility from elementary children, and the junior high site would have much to offer if it were possible to finance that location.

Peters added there was a mixture of opinion among school trustees about the need for a fence to separate the FAAC building from the elementary school.

DON THOMPSON, FAAC chairman, said the FAAC

wanted to use its money for drug prevention and not for a lot of added plumbing expenses.

Brotherton said if the cost would not be that much greater, the reduced risk was worth choosing the junior high site. "I look at kids who take drugs in the same vein as persons who take liquor excessively," he added.

Councilman John Richardson commented that young people "bopped up" on drugs would not be apt to seek help while in that condition.

"If he has enough control of his faculties to know to seek help," said Richardson, "he shouldn't be any danger to others."

Richardson added that a man should be considered innocent until proven guilty, and the FAAC operation should not be condemned before it begins.

Allen added that persons who take drugs, even when not under the influence, tend to be unpredictable and high-tempered.

"Anyone not closely associated with our program," commented Thompson, "tends to prejudge because they look at how the kids, and the long hair, etc. But the program should not be prejudged on that basis."

Yoder made the motion to table the decision for two weeks so the schools could come up with cost estimate on the Farmington Junior High site. Richardson supported the motion which passed 5-0.

What Is Rap Line? What Can It Become?

By LIZ WISSMAN

The Rev. Ralph Rideout may have resigned his pulpit at North Farmington Baptist Church but he has not left the ministry — far from it.

Instead the former pastor has extended his ministry, has

become something of an apostle to troubled youth through his founding of Rap Line and all the ramifications that have evolved from Rap Line in the shape of the Farmington Area Advisory Council.

RAP LINE has gone far

beyond a phone number kids in a crisis situation with drugs.

Let Rideout explain: "In terms of the kids we are working with, we've got a culture of a society that's upset. And it is a very difficult society in view of the pressures that are going around, and kids are acting it out in a number of different ways."

"The kids I am getting to know who are having drug problems are also having problems in their personal relationships — basically lonely, depressed kids."

"It comes through as a lot of belligerence — but it's because they are trying to go through the adolescent years and learn how to establish appropriate relationships, and this is one of the things we do try to spend some time dealing with."

"As you deal with THAT issue, then drug abuse is no longer a thing that has to be. I'm beginning to discover that as kids begin to be honest with each other and with other people — then the drug issue just kind of slides into the background."

"I could spend all my time dealing with the symptoms of kids who are inadequate in their relationships with their parents (and parents inadequate in their relationships with their kids) and never getting at the cause — at where the trouble started."

"And I happen to feel that it's much more important for me to deal with the CAUSE than just with the symptom."

KNOWING the cause, what has Rideout devised as the mechanism of dealing with it? He says, "The mechanic is to set up as many relationships as possible through what we now call 'Rap Groups'."

"Basically they're self awareness groups, they're opportunities for people to get to know each other. And we don't use the gimmickery that is part of sensitivity training and encounter groups. I don't happen to think that works very well with all its specialized jargon."

"The groups themselves are

comprised of eight, nine, 10 young people and two adult leaders who have been trained in group techniques. Right now there are four of us working with three groups, or about 30 kids."

"Again the emphasis is on the positive. Topics such as drug usage and drug abuse come up — and they get dealt with because that's part of what is going on. But most important is that the kids try to develop a level of honesty where they can deal with the issue."

"I've had kids say to me, 'Gee, you know, it's been three months since I've smoked a marijuana cigarette ... and it's funny ... I don't miss it now.'"

MANY OF THE techniques Rideout uses in his work with the FAAC and Rap Groups were developed while he worked with alcoholics in Longmeadow, Mass., from 1962 until 1966.

"There was much about the nature of the community while I was there," he explains. "There were a lot of old rooming houses that surrounded the church I was serving. The rooming houses would attract single men who were alcoholics and very dependent personalities."

"I spent an awful lot of time working with them individually and in a group situation. I had one group of six or seven guys who met with me regularly for a year and a half. And part of this was a learning process for me and a lot of the techniques that I learned back then I'm using with the kids now."

RIDEOUT TALKS at length, and his pride is evident, on the extent the community is involved with the FAAC and the Rap Groups, which are meeting temporarily at Antioch Lutheran Church.

"The venture has become highly ecclesiastical with the pastor of Trinity Episcopal Church, the pastor of Antioch and the lay assistant at St. Clare Catholic Church deeply involved in the program."

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today's hot line bulletin

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Clear Sonnenberg

Livonia District Judge James McCann has dismissed second degree murder charges against William Sonnenberg, Jr., former Farmington Township patrolman.

McCann dismissed the charge during the pre-trial examination held in Farmington District Court.

His decision was made after the prosecution had called its final witness.

Sonnenberg had been charged in the slaying of Harold Draun, of Farmington Township, on July 3.

Draun's wife, Grace, is an heiress to the Vernor soft drink fortune.

Prosecution witnesses called included the medical examiner, a township auxiliary patrolman who was at the scene with Sonnenberg, Mrs. Draun and a neighbor and his fiancée who watched incidents before the shooting from across the road.

what's inside

Dunckel Dies

O. E. Dunckel, the long-time Farmington Area resident for whom a junior high school was named, died suddenly this past week. Details of his death and contributions he made during life are given inside.

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A. Sampling

Farmington Township has adopted its 1970-71 operating budget of \$1.7 million, another hearing has been concluded on the township's master plan, a Farmington family is trading its children with another family in Mexico, and an unexpected donation saves a boy's life. This is a sampling of the variety of many stories offered inside today's paper plus the regular features you now expect — the Farmington Community Calendar and Farmington Socially Speaking.

Pages 3-8A, 12A

Don't Blame Carrier

Occasional late delivery of your Observer is not the fault of your carrier boy. Production problems at our printers, from whom we buy our printing, have caused late delivery of papers to your carrier. We are doing everything we can to resolve these problems with our printers.

Amusements	6-7C
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If Johnny Can Read, Does He Hate Trying?

By EMORY DANIELS

Tests by the State Department of Education indicate the Farmington School District stacks up well, with a couple of exceptions, in financial resources and the teaching of basic skills.

The tests were given all public fourth and seventh graders throughout the state last January. Scores and district comparisons have been returned this month and are now being analyzed by Farmington school administrators.

INITIAL CONCLUSION drawn from the test results is that Farmington Schools compare quite well with other districts in ability to teach pupils the skills necessary for a good education.

The results did uncover what seemed to be problem areas at a couple of elementary schools. Administrators are now exploring to see if the problems exist, to what extent, and what corrective action should be taken.

Generally, the test scores confirmed observations already made by local administrators. But there was one glaring revelation which has slumped the district.

The scores showed that both fourth and seventh graders in the district seem to have a very poor attitude toward school.

THE POOR ATTITUDE

toward school was not expected and surprised administrators when the test scores arrived. Dr. Rodney Roth, associate director of systematic studies for the Oakland County Intermediate District, was called in by the district as an impartial resource to analyze the results.

Dr. Roth quickly cautions there were not enough questions in that part of the test measuring student attitudes to accurately sample student opinion toward school.

Although the accuracy of the test is in question, Roth noted, it does indicate there might be a problem with student attitudes which should be explored further.

DR. ROTH, in an interview with this newspaper, explained the test scores and observations to be drawn. Sitting in on the interview were Dr. Marinus Van Ameyde, assistant superintendent of instruction, and Joe Nicla, director of secondary education.

Test scores for Farmington students were compared with districts included in the "urban fringe" by the State Department of Education.

The urban fringe basically is those suburban school districts surrounding a large city and primarily involves western Wayne County and the suburban areas of Oakland County.

For this comparison, test

scores from Farmington were ranked according to percentiles derived by the collective scores of all districts.

Thus, if Farmington ranked in the 80th percentile in average teacher salaries, it means 79 per cent of the districts in the urban fringe have lower instructional salaries.

AS EXPECTED, Farmington schools were ranked among the upper 10 per cent in socio-economic status.

This was reflected in scores measuring the student's feelings about the importance of school achievement and his self-perception, both scores which were at the 70th percentile.

But when the test asked about the student's attitude toward school, the results showed 50 per cent of the students in the urban fringe had better attitudes towards their schools than Farmington students.

This expression of poor attitude towards school showed up in the tests for both fourth and seventh graders.

Dr. Roth explained that the state assessment was based on 26 questions, half of which tested socio-economic status.

But these 13 socio-economic questions, Roth added, tested three areas of student attitudes so there were only a couple of questions concerning student attitude towards school.

"The results are an indication that student attitudes should be

further looked at," said Roth, "but there were not enough questions to draw any conclusions."

"But we must remember that in comparison with other districts in the urban fringe, Farmington ranked low. There is a question on the validity of the test in this area, but that holds true for all districts being tested."

Van Ameyde suggested that parents and students from higher economic levels may have higher aspirations for their school system. Schools also have to compete with television and movies, he added.

Van Ameyde said a number of hypotheses can be drawn, but there is no real indication of what the attitude scores mean.

"It may not be valid but it had implications we must study," he added.

OTHER COMPARISONS

showed Farmington ranked well in ability of its professional staff and financial resources of the community.

One of the categories tested was the number of pupils assigned to each teacher. Some 54 per cent of the districts in the urban fringe had higher pupil-teacher ratios than Farmington.

The tests showed Farmington has a young teaching staff with 85 per cent of the districts ranking higher in the average

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