

Dancers make a joyful noise, 1B



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Latchkey program eases dogs' lives, 3A

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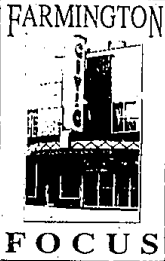
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Hills, Boys Republic settle

Council ponders ethics code, 3A

By Joanne Malliszewski staff writer

After a year-long legal battle, Farmington Hills officials and Boys Republic have reached an agreement that will cost the city at least \$115,000. Boys Republic will wind down its controversial evaluation and assessment program, and the city will pay the money and OK converting assessment dormitories into

standard dorms.

The consent judgment signed Monday by Oakland Circuit Judge Jessica Cooper hit an 11th-hour bump ride as former Farmington Hills councilman Paul Sowerby — named as a defendant — at first refused and then reluctantly agreed to give his blessing to the agreement.

"I'm not doing this out of grandstanding. This is not a good settlement," Sowerby said. Sowerby was named as a defendant because as council member he signed an original stop work order against Boys Republic, a boys' detention center on

Nine Mile, between Middelbelt and Inkster roads.

THE CONSENT judgment came just before the long-awaited trial was to begin at 1:30 p.m. in Cooper's court. Details of the consent judgment were settled at a city council executive session Thursday, Nov. 15, to which two interested Old Town residents were invited.

"I have not been included in the discussion," Sowerby said. Boys Republic attorney Karen Piper of Detroit said "we're happy it's resolved. We're looking forward

to rebuilding a relationship with the city."

SOWERBY SAID said he signed the consent judgment "under duress" because the city would not continue to represent him if the matter was not settled.

Sowerby maintains that the city's position could have been upheld in court because the assessment program was a non-conforming use. He also said he was never advised by a city attorney that signing a stop work order against Boys Republic was inappropriate.

"If you don't enforce and protect the zoning ordinances, the whole city will crumble."

But other city officials maintained that the consent judgment enforces, protects and upholds the city's zoning and land use ordinances.

"I BELIEVE you have . . . ensured the use of the center would report to the way the center was when the program was implemented," city attorney John Donobue said.

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Parents protest boundary changes

By Susan Buck staff writer

Leave students where they are and preserve neighborhood schools. That's what parents told two subcommittees studying secondary level boundaries for Farmington Schools at a packed meeting Monday at Power Middle school. Officials estimated attendance at 450.

"Moving students is a Band-aid approach," said Charles Owen, a Farmington resident whose students attend Flanders Elementary and Power.

The committee presented tentative proposals for boundary changes with the goal of minimizing the number of classrooms needed in the future.

Presently, the district is most concerned with the student population levels at North Farmington High and Power and Dunckel Middle schools.

"We want to hold down the costs



Pam O'Malley (right), Farmington Schools spokeswoman, briefly interrupts resident Shirley Unger during the debate over

of construction," said Don Cowan, director of building and student services. Twenty-nine parents, four school district representatives and members of the Farmington Education

Association participated in the study which began on Oct. 9.

The middle school subcommittee presented two plans each to populate schools by building capacity, follow present and/or possible high

school boundary changes Monday at Power Middle School. Residents packed the school cafeteria for the meeting.

school boundaries, and keep the majority of the elementary school students together at the middle school level.

JAN HENKINS, a Farmington

SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Hills resident whose children attend Power and Hillside, suggested that a Highmeadow-type middle school be created at East and Warner Middle

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Students show support for accident victim

By Susan Buck staff writer

Harrison High School students are trying to cheer up their favorite life-of-the-party, Erik Dilland, who is in critical condition at Botsford General Hospital.

Dilland, a 17-year-old junior, was hit by a car on 12 Mile Road Saturday afternoon on his way to the Grape Vine party store across the street from the high school.

Dilland, who plays French horn in the school's marching band, planned to pick up a snack before leaving with the band for Jackson, where the Harrison football team was to meet Oxford in the state Class BB playoffs. Mark Phillips, Harrison band director, has been in contact with Dilland's parents twice daily.

He said Dilland had surgery on his left leg, which went "quite well," but added that Dilland is suffering from internal head injuries.

"The swelling is coming down, and he wakes and goes in and out, but he is not in a coma," Phillips said. "A couple of his very closest friends have gone in. He responded. He squeezed his hand and nodded. There's no way to know the extent of the injury. No one was with him at the time."

AS PHILLIPS explains it, the Harrison marching band had just finished rehearsal and was preparing to board a bus for Jackson.

Farmington Hills traffic officer Jim Baker, who is investigating the case, said eyewitnesses told him that Dilland ran out into traffic. He was struck in an eastbound lane by a car driven by a man in his late teens.

Baker would not release the name of the driver of the 1987 Pontiac that hit Dilland or provide any additional information. It is uncertain whether the driver will be charged, police said.



Erik Dilland

Eyewitnesses said that a female driver in the eastbound right lane slammed on her brakes and stopped.

"The car in the east right-hand lane shielded both their views," Baker said. "The gentleman didn't have a chance to stop. Erik saw her stop, so he probably felt he could

make it. Neither the (male) driver nor Erik saw one another. He did slam on his brakes and veer to the left. He did his best, in my estimation."

QUOTING THE statement made to police by the woman who managed to stop in time, Baker said: "We had just passed through a traffic light. We had ample time to stop without hitting the boy or the car."

Added Baker: "It would be easier if we had Mr. Dilland's account."

Apparently there was no excessive speed involved, Baker said.

"The kids here are very upset," Phillips said. "You can sense the support. Erik is a real active kid, a good musician. He's a real positive, nice person."

Phillips said that Dilland came in a month before school started in September to help teach a new student. He is also the attendance secretary. "He is the only student we ever put

in charge of that job," Phillips said. Dilland's close friends are equally complimentary.

"He's the only person who could ever cheer me up," said Michelle Japenga, a sophomore. "He always can get a smile out of people. He juggles fruit at lunchtime."

PRIOR TO THE accident, Dilland asked if his fellow band members wanted to go to the Grape Vine with him, Japenga said.

There were no takers. Japenga "described the Dilland family as close-knit. Dilland's parents are close-not to be reached."

Mark Rehtay said Dilland usually always has friends around him. "He'll go out of his way for a friend," Rehtay said.

Pat Holand, who has known Dilland since third grade at Eagle Elementary said Dilland is "very industrious and determined. He wants to see everybody with a smile."

Series looks at the devastation suffered by head-injury victims

By Janice Brunson staff writer

Deceptive. Disabling. Devastating. These words can be used to describe head injuries, which strike an estimated 1 million citizens annually. A head injury can render a victim confused or forgetful in its most benign form or, at its worst, wheelchair-bound and with little or no control of bodily functions.

Auto accidents account for the majority of injuries, but a slip on the ice or a bump from the kitchen cabinet can sufficiently jar or scar the



brain into unusual behavior. A continuing mystery to most people, head injuries are deceptive, carrying disabling effects that are often

devastating. The first of a series of three articles on head injuries begins today, on page 5A. We meet survivors, as they call themselves, those living with the wreckage caused by injured brains.

Next, we meet the families, who attempt to cope with loved ones whose lives have been changed forever.

Finally, we look at Michigan's no-fault auto insurance, which finances the often long rehabilitation essential in overcoming brain injuries. The most progressive program of its kind in the nation, it is under attack.

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