

Pets visit their ophthalmologist, 1C

Caesars is rolling, 1B

Going back to school takes homework, 3A



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Developer gives city Monday deadline

Wants answer on consent judgment

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A frustrated Melvin Kaftan said he wants a decision from Farmington Hills city officials no later than Monday, or he'll see them in court.

It's time to say, one way or the other," said the Hills developer, who has sparred with the city since 1989 on rezoning his 14.5 acres of property from Small Office to Industrial-Research-Office, or IRO. Kaftan claims he lost about \$100,000 per year awaiting decisions — first by the council and now by the courts.

He sued the city one year ago, and updated his lawsuit earlier this year, in a case which was slated to go to

Oakland County Circuit Court this week. His property is south of Hillside Estates Condominiums, north of Grand River and east of Drake Road.

"We were ready to go to court — I was told the city would like to sit down and work out something," Kaftan added, addressing the city council Monday. "Let's just make it next week or nothing. Either you say 'yes' or 'no.'"

THE CITY approached Kaftan

with a suggested consent judgment which would:

- Keep a berm in place between the Kaftan property and abutting Hillside Estates Condominiums. In addition, Kaftan will keep a 50-foot landscaped buffer on the north property line.

- Give aesthetic guidelines for buildings on the property, including installation of security lighting, and having all air conditioned buildings to contain noise.

- Allow all Office Service zoning uses, with several other professional businesses included. It would also allow product development and testing and analytical service businesses with planning commission approval. That would exclude biological, chemical or genetic product development.

City council members discussed the consent judgment in an executive session prior to Monday's meeting, but said little during the regular meeting when consideration of the

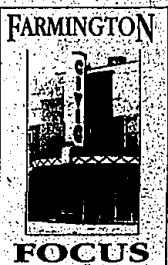
consent agreement was on the agenda. No action was taken but a vote is set for Monday's regular meeting.

"This (IRO zoning issue) affects the entire city," commented Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi. "Wherever there are condos which abut vacant property, they are impacted."

A number of residents reiterated earlier stands on both sides of the IRO rezoning issue.

Brenda Kandt, an Independence Hills subdivision resident and member of Citizens Against IRO Zoning, picked apart the proposed consent judgment and requested Kaftan's

Please turn to Page 2



HOLD THAT closely until 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 15, when the design of the commemorative heritage quilt — to help honor the 125th anniversary of Farmington as a village in 1992 — will be unveiled.

The big event will be in Farmington City Hall, 23600 Liberty. Anyone who is interested in taking a peek at the design or who is interested in helping work on the heritage quilt is welcome to attend.

Heading up the quilting effort will be co-chairwomen Laura Meyers and Ann Peterson. Nine participants agreed on the quilt design at their second meeting Aug. 7.

"Not only was this an amazing feat to accomplish in two hours, but an exciting one as well," said Farmington Mayor Shirley Richardson.

FAMILY LITERACY is something Farmington Community Library Director Beverly Papal takes to heart and mind.

"I feel real strongly about family literacy," said Papal, who served as vice chair of the Michigan Delegation to the White House Conference on Library and Information Services in July.

"It's absolutely frightening to see this cycle in the country where 50 percent of the children born into families with one or more illiterate parents, also will be illiterate."

To that end, Papal and Kathy Weisz, head of the Oakland County Literacy Council, prepared a resolution — Family Literacy — that was adopted by the Michigan Delegation. The resolution was sent to Washington. And now portions of it are included in proposed legislation, "Children and Use through Libraries Act."

The goal of the five-day national conference in Washington D.C. — 90 resolutions were adopted — was to develop a legislative agenda for the next 10 years. "We live in democracy, productivity and literacy," Papal said.

Though Papal's topic throughout the statewide delegation meetings was democracy, she said literacy is of importance to her and libraries across the country can be involved in preventing illiteracy, particularly in children.

"We can break this cycle," Papal said. "Libraries have the responsibility to assist parents in early education — for those kids who are not yet involved in the educational system."

Speakers at the White House convention were President George Bush, First Lady Barbara Bush, Marilyn Quayle, wife of Vice President Dan Quayle, and Lamar Alexander, head of the U.S. Department of Education.

Papal also was chosen to serve on the task force that will plan the next White House conference in 2001.

She also serves on the Library of Michigan board of trustees.

MEMORY LANE — From the Aug. 16, 1981, Farmington Enterprise: About 45 people met to select a local fire chief and nine-man volunteer force for a new fire station for the northeast section of Farmington Township.

Hills resident is new Chene manager

know your neighbor

By Susan Buck
staff writer

As showtime draws closer at the Chene Park Music Theatre, the knocks on Ted Ashburn's door come in closer intervals. "People are going B.B. crazy," an employee tells Ashburn of the then-upcoming B.B. King concert Friday, Aug. 9.

Ashburn, a Farmington Hills resident, is the new general manager at Chene Park. He replaced Mike Watts, who now does events at Hart Plaza.

"We've been doing concerts at Chene Park for eight years," Ashburn said.

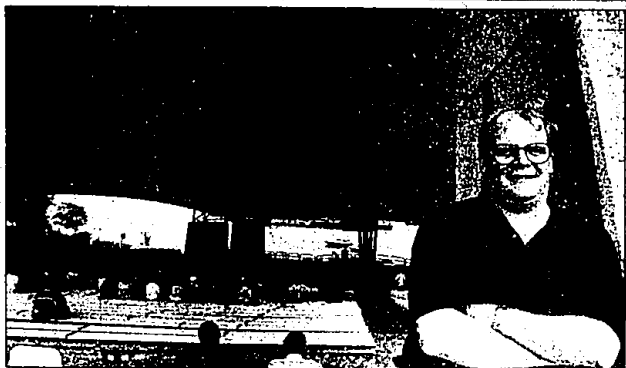
The theater, at Chene and Atwater, one mile east of the Renaissance Center, presents a breathtaking view of the Detroit River behind the stage.

There's seating for 5,767 — 750 on the lawn.

ASHBURN AND wife Karin are recent transplants from Ellicott City, Md. The pair pulled up life-long roots to relocate.

Ted Ashburn left his position as theater manager of Merrivewather Post Pavilion, an outdoor amphitheater in Maryland, last February. Karin, a second grade teacher, arrived in June.

The Merrivewather Post Pavilion, like Chene Park, is managed by Nederlander-Silber, which also



Ted Ashburn, a Farmington Hills resident, is the new general manager of the Chene Park Music Theater. With the Detroit River in the background behind the stage, musicians perform with an unusual ambience nearby.

manages the Fisher and Birmingham theaters.

Ashburn worked his way up from running security at the Pavilion and supervising the ushers.

WHILE WORKING as an usher, Karin met Ted. Her sister did the advertising, her mother the accounting in the box office.

"What better job to have than to get free music in the evenings and summers and have a day job, too?" she asked.

When Karin Ashburn's sister

married the Pavilion general manager, who took a job in Cincinnati, the theater manager position opened up. Ted Ashburn took it.

"I always enjoyed the business," Ashburn said. "The openings in this company are so few and far between. It was worth a shot."

ASHBURN WAS theater manager for four years before he came to Detroit.

With scholarships, he put himself through the University of Maryland with a bachelor's degree in

mechanical engineering. "It really comes in handy," Ashburn said. "My strong point, though, is production of the shows."

The couple chose Village Green Apartments in Farmington Hills in which to live because "it reminded us of where we lived in Maryland," Ashburn said.

"We like the fact that it is very rural. It looks like we are out in the country, which we like."

Please turn to Page 4

Hills council votes to control felines

Community Corner, Page 4A
Editorial comment, Page 18A

By Casey Hans
staff writer

The regulation of the independent, roaming feline appears to be under way in Farmington Hills. Despite concerns voiced by some on the city council that they risked expanding the ordinance book unnecessarily, the council voted 6-1 Monday to introduce a law that would add cats to the list of controlled animals.

The council will consider enacting the law at its next meeting.

Councilwoman and cat lover Jean Fox disallowed, even before the issue could be discussed. "You can't corral a cat," she said. "We will look foolish, foolish if we get into this thing."

But a number of residents wrote letters about neighborhood feline pets, complaining about sanitary problems, noise and the killing of wildlife.

"You can't corral a cat. We will look foolish, foolish, foolish if we get into this thing."

— Jean Fox
Hills councilwoman

Vivian Jurosek said she had written to the city "several times" saying her neighbor's cats kill birds and wildlife in her yard. And Tim Triscari said he and neighbors have problems with cats raiding garbage cans throughout the night. "I have even had to clean cat 'waste' off my house roof," he said.

OTHER COUNCIL members said they take the problems seriously and believed the sanitation and responsibility issues are important. The issue has even had a number of other city councils in the area, as the number of household cats

grows. National statistics show the number of cats has surpassed dogs in recent years.

The amendment to the Farmington Hills City Code would require cat owners to:

- Use reasonable control, including keeping their pet on a suitable leash or under oral control unless the animal is confined.

- Keep yards free of cat droppings and unclean food so as not to draw flies or vermin.

- Keep pets confined to the owner's yard, unless given permission to roam on others' properties.

The new law would also limit the number of pet six months or older in each household to three dogs and three cats. The provision does not apply to pet shops, kennels or veterinarian facilities.

"We've tried to approach it from a nutsane standpoint," said city manager William Costick. "I think the approach is as reasonable as one can get."

Please turn to Page 2

Costick: City erred in noise incident

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick said Monday his employees erred in handling a noise complaint at the Farmington/Farmington Hills Community Center last week because policies were not made clear.

"Perhaps there was an error on the part of some staff people," said Costick, responding to concerns raised during the public comment portion of the city council meeting.

"One of the planning employees misinformed police."

He was responding to resident William Shortt, who had complained to police a week ago Wednesday about an outdoor jazz concert at the center.

Shortt asked Monday for some injunctive relief for residents by the city because of what he said is excessive noise. Neighbors have been complaining about noise since the outdoor theater was opened two years ago.

"Why should we as citizens have to

endure this continued disturbance?" Shortt asked again Monday. "We are about at our wits' end."

CITY EMPLOYEES monitored concerts this summer with a meter under the assumption that a 70-80 decibel maximum reading was the appropriate measure, Costick said.

In fact, Costick confirmed, there is no such level in any city law although it was considered by the city's planning commission.

Wednesday's concert had a decibel reading of less than 70, Costick said,

which planning officials advised police was acceptable.

Police officers were working under the assumption Wednesday that a supervisor was to be called any time a complaint is lodged against the Community Center — a policy that is, apparently, no longer in effect.

"This week he (the city attorney) and I will take care of it through the police chief's office — and ensure that this error will not be repeated," Costick said.

Please turn to Page 2

what's inside

Building score	13B
Business	13B
Cable connection	D-G
Classifieds	8B
Index	10D
Auto	G
Real estate	D,E,F
Employment	F
Creative living	1D
Crossword puzzle	11
Entertainment	5-6B
Obituaries	7B
Opinion	1B-13A
Police/fire calls	13A
Sports	1B
Suburban life	1C

CLASSIFIEDS .591-0900
CIRCULATION .591-0500

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