

the farmington enterprise & observer

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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Residents Fill Auditorium To Speak Out On Cityhood

By EMORY DANIELS
Area residents interested in cityhood for Farmington Township nearly filled the auditorium at North Farmington High School Thursday night.

The interests were both pro and con as expressed to the State Boundary Commission during a public hearing held as a prelude to establishing a cityhood election.

No objections were made to cityhood for the township. Of the many residents speaking, all agreed the township should become a city but disagreed on steps to reach that goal and on the size the new city should be.

THE HEARING, which lasted about three hours, began with Commission Chairman David Calhoun tracing the history of the Farmington case.

That history began with the Oct. 13, 1969 filing of incorporation petitions and continued to the September 1970 denial by the State

Supreme Court of the commission's request for a leave to appeal an appellate court ruling that consolidation was not the only proper vehicle to join two villages with a township.

Calhoun cautioned residents not to expect a quick decision from the commission because since April 1 some 69 annexation petitions have been filed.

The chairman promised action would be taken as soon as possible but "not tomorrow or within the next three weeks."

Commissioner Irving Rozian added that the cityhood election is only the first step and an actual city will not be formed until voters approve a charter which is a two-year process.

THE HEARING opened with formal statements being presented by: Robert McConnell of Future Farmington Association, petitioner; Joseph T. Brennan, Farmington Township attorney; Burton Shifman, special counsel for the City of Farmington; Howard Bond, Quakertown attorney; and William Smolke, Wood Creek Farms council president.

The presentations from officials were for the most part, summaries of arguments presented to the commission at Oct. 27 pre-hearing conference.

McConnell presented petitions signed by 222 residents from five areas that the City of Farmington wants deleted from the incorporation. The 222 signers expressed a desire to be included in the incorporation to become a part of the proposed new City of Farmington Hills.

McConnell referred to a 1966 study made in Washington, D.C. entitled "Modernizing Local Government." That study reported that fragmentation of local governments cost \$22 billion in 1962 and \$42 billion in 1963.

That study, he added, suggests consolidation of governmental units to eliminate needless layers of government. Brennan argued that it was doubtful that adoption of a city charter would result in any drastic changes in life-style of the township or villages because "the die is already cast."

He argued against the city's exclusion request, stating all five areas were either being served by water and sewer or could be at any time by petitioning for special assessment to construct laterals to sewer arms already in place.

SHIFMAN reported the township in 1971 has a total tax base of \$261.9 million or about \$8 million per square mile.

The five areas asked to be excluded, he added, have a combined tax base of \$5.6 million for its one-square mile area, a tax base below that of the remaining township.

An argument supporting exclusion, Shifman continued, is that the city presently contains a disproportionate amount of public lands that are non-taxable. Public lands and buildings include: six public school sites, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic school, board of education headquarters and bus yard, the post office, library and a number of churches.

Addition of the five parcels to the city would make it more viable, Shifman said, and would not hurt the township since the area amounts to only three per cent of the township's total population.

Shifman said the wishes of any group of persons within a particular area must yield to the criteria of state laws governing boundary changes.

AN EARLY speaker from the audience was Robert Byron, president of the Council of Homeowners Associations of Farmington Township which represents 37 subdivisions.

Byron stated that since 1957 the City of Farmington has attempted five annexations, two of which were successful. He added that the MSU Study did recommend incorporation of the township and both villages as an alternative to consolidation of all four units.

Hatton suggested, the city could accomplish this by giving back to the township all property south of Nine Mile.

"It may be too harsh to say the city made its decision 20 years ago on consolidation, so let them lie there," Hatton quipped, "but it is hardly appropriate to say to these township residents to join the city in its bed."

ROBERT KELLER, a township resident of Area Three proposed for exclusion, said 78 per cent of the residents in that area's 89 homes have expressed a willingness to remain with the township.

John Richardson, city councilman and property owner in Area One, said 70 per cent of the property owners favor exclusion, and six of the 13 registered voters concurred, with four registered voters being neutral.

Richardson urged the commission to be creative and omit fractionated pieces of land from the incorporation because these parcels can be best served by the existing city.

A resident of Area One questioned Richardson's poll and said he felt most residents were opposed to exclusion because they did not want the burdens of assessments for water, sewer or sidewalks and felt that joining the existing city, in the past, has given varied opinions on what an optimum size should be. He argued the township should incorporate its entire area.

John Pinnell of Area Two presented petitions from half that area's residents urging exclusion from the incorporation for eventual annexation to the existing city boundaries is a problem.

today's hot line

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what's inside

Imus Killed

Fred Imus, Sterling Heights patrolman and former City of Farmington public safety officer, was killed Thursday morning and will be buried Monday. Details are inside.

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Citizens Help

The police campaign to reduce residential burglaries has received assistance from citizens reporting suspicious behavior to police. This time, the reporting citizens were 14-19 years old.

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Can Johnny See?

A new vision clinic operating in Farmington has a reading consultant on its staff to serve clients. A report on the clinic includes discussion on how visual problems can deter a child's education.

Page 3A

Dialogue

That's the program and the activity that involves two Farmington area clergymen every Sunday. You can read about it in our church section.

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Retiring

Louis Schmidt, a famous name in the Clarenceville School District, is retiring for the third time. What are his plans politically?

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LANDMARK REMOVED - A landmark was removed Thursday afternoon when bulldozers razed the old Huron Valley Hunting and Fishing Club at Freedom and Farmington Rds.

The private eating club, known locally as the "Hunt and Grunt" club, has moved into a new clubhouse on the same site. (Evert photo)

Opinions Are Many On Village Exclusion

One of the major unsettled questions in the cityhood question for Farmington Township is whether the Village of Quakertown should be excluded to become a fifth-class city on its own.

The Quakertown council on Oct. 27 asked the State Boundary Commission to exclude the village from an incorporation election for the township.

Much discussion centered on Quakertown exclusion during the night's public hearing conducted by the commission in the auditorium of North Farmington High School.

WHILE THE village attorney and president argued for exclusion, Quakertown resident Gerald Ellsworth presented a counter-argument on why the village should be made part of the proposed City of Farmington Hills.

Township speakers argued against exclusion of the village with only the villagers being favorable towards the notion of becoming a fifth-class city.

Robert McConnell, petitioner, stated that Quakertown did not request exclusion at earlier commission hearings and waited until Oct. 27. "We ask that the petition be allowed to stand and the people of this community get together and ignore the selfish interests of the different governments and work toward one community."

Joseph T. Brennan, township attorney, said exclusion of Quakertown would be "ridiculous" since the village was located in the center of the community and would be isolated as a hole in a doughnut.

Brennan questioned whether it was even legal to allow exclusion of the village

because such action could not be justified by statutory requirements.

HOWARD BOND, Quakertown attorney, said the village's tax base is now 32 per cent commercial and 68 per cent residential with a total base of \$7.3 million.

He predicted a future growth in tax base to \$31.6 million with 47 per cent commercial and 53 per cent residential. Bond stated this tax base will be sufficient to provide the village with necessary municipal services, including police and fire protection.

"The decision to 'go it alone' was made after thoughtful consideration by the council," Bond explained, and not because the village was "sniffed" at not being given veto power on cityhood.

Bond lamented, the village will be unable to control zoning and preserve its residential character.

Bond argued that the township's master plan calls for high-rise office development like Southfield's to be constructed along I-96 through Quakertown.

USING THE Sheldon development at 12 Mile and Farmington Rds., Bond said Sheldon originally wanted a high-rise office building, but the request was limited to a two-story structure by the village council. Bond observed that Sheldon's planning consultants were Vitan-Leman, the township's consultants, and his attorney was Brennan, township attorney.

"This is an indication to Quakertown that there does exist a clash in zoning thinking with the township now and would be in the future."

Continued on Page 2A

Study Begins On 12-Month School Year

An eight-member committee of volunteers will look into the feasibility of year-round school for Farmington School District.

The committee was named at a Tuesday night meeting of PTA Citizen Advisory Council and board of education members.

IT WILL BE headed by Richard Pryor, Eagle PTA president and a member of the council's study committee.

Pryor said his group will look into the kinds of year-round school programs under way elsewhere in the country, study costs and recommend what studies should be made.

"I see us as more of an advisory group on where studies should be made," Pryor said. "There's not much sense in a group like ours trying to make a full scale investigation. You need a full time man for that, and that means getting money from the state or federal government somewhere along the line."

INVESTIGATION of 12-month school plans was promoted by Trustee Kay Stirling, who said she was fulfilling a campaign promise.

"It appears that we are not utilizing our faculty fully and that a 12-month school year could offer a wider and more enriched program," she said. "I know it wouldn't save any tremendous amount of money. Maybe the community isn't ready for it, but we won't know until we at least investigate."

Mrs. Stirling said she had many queries, particularly from businessmen, asking why the board did not investigate the year-round school concept.

Committee members, in addition to Pryor, are: Emma S. Makinen, 33717 Colony Park; Donna per, 23180 Cass; Charlotte Muller, 3001 Northbrook; Rita Crudele, 21997 Leyte; Sally Kempf, 24900 Ivywood; Laura L. Orcutt, 24870 Ivywood; and Elaine McManus, 24844 Creekside.

Don't Miss the observer Gift Spotter in today's Classified Section

If you have a long list of gifts to get this Christmas, save your feet and start early by reading the Observer Gift Spotter. It's a special page in our classified section devoted to gift-giving ideas. It includes items for the whole family. Turn to the Gift Spotter and get a head start on your Christmas shopping.

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