

An Editorial

ON OCTOBER 23, a portion of Farmington Township will vote on whether or not to form a charter commission to draft a charter for a home rule "City of Farmington Hills."

While we sympathize with much of the Hills... While we sympathize with much of the thinking behind the incorporation proposal, we cannot escape the conclusion that as presented it is unsound and potentially harmful to the entire area.

SUPPORTERS OF incorporation have pointed to many problems with the present governmental set-up of the Township.

Fire protection for a community of 35,000 people obviously cannot continue forever on a volunteer basis. The police department is a first to say it needs more men and better administrative machinery.

Meeting these problems, say those supporting incorporation, requires the new powers of a changed local government structure.

But whether the incorporation proposal on the ballot for October 23 is in fact the best way to go about making these changes is quite another matter.

LOOK AT the details of the proposal. If passed, it would set up a new city which deliberately excludes the Villages of Wood Creek Farms and Quakerstown and most of Section 1.

The Villages can probably look after themselves, but the remaining chunk of the Township would have a pretty tough row to hoe. It would lack a tax base as well as any administrative machinery to run even a skeleton township government.

This chopping up of an area already badly enough factored is probably legal. But it isn't very responsible. It's gerrymandering, and it's bad government.

The viability of the new city itself is open to question. The advocates of incorporation say Farmington Hills would get an increased share of the state gas and weight tax, but it is not clear that this would be enough to balance the expenditures needed to support a city administration.

And if the new city proved unable to support itself, except at the cost of raising city tax bills, what would it do then? Opt for forced consolidation into the City of Farmington?

SO WHAT WE have is a proposal for incorporation which has been incompletely studied, presented to the voters suddenly and in a somewhat confusing manner, and which disregards the fundamental rule of politics, "Look before you leap."

Not surprisingly, public response toward the proposal has been, in the main, confused apathy. And why not, when the voter doesn't really know what options are available and what their implications would be.

In this case, he is being asked to vote on a proposal affecting the future growth and development of the entire Farmington community without having all the information he needs for an informed decision.

Such information would have been provided by the area-wide study proposed last spring. It would have been conducted by an impartial organization (Michigan State University was proposed), and it would have explored the various options available for the best development of the entire Farmington area.

The study was scuttled by the Township, which refused to put up its share of the \$3,500 cost, on the nebulous argument that having the study before the election would "cloud the issue."

Not having the study has blacked out the issue entirely, and has led to mass public confusion.

And it has raised the extremely sensible question: "Why not have the study before we take any irreversible steps, such as incorporation?"

WHAT IF VOTERS do reject the October 23 proposal? First, the Farmington City Council should be asked to give up any thoughts of any annexation until a complete study of local government in the entire area can be made.

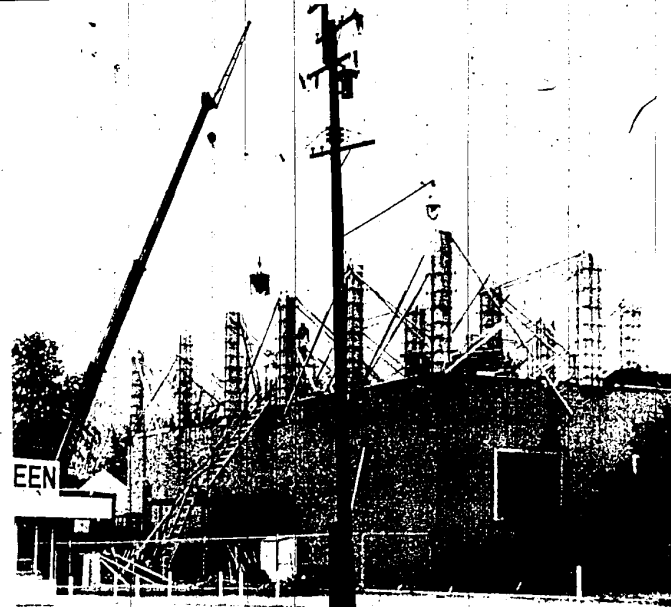
Second, the study proposal made by the MSU Institute for Community Development should be accepted. The city council has shown its willingness. The township board has not; it should reconsider. The leadership of the Future Farmington Study Committee has committed itself to financial support for the study, willingly.

Third, the study should be made with an open mind on all sides. Local government is extremely complicated. Facts—on growth patterns, utilities, planning, taxation, services—are urgently needed.

Once the facts are collected, people can start making up their minds. The study might point to consolidation; it might suggest partial incorporation; it might urge the status quo. We can't guess now.

But what we do know is that it's unwise to make such an important decision without facts. This much is certain: Any decision that is made after study will be better than the sudden and confusing proposal facing the voters on October 23.

—Farmington Enterprise & Observer



CONSTRUCTION of the \$1.2 million addition to the Farmington Bell Telephone Co. building makes an interesting picture study. Instead of going out from the first floor, the addition is going up two stories and will contain added local and long distance switching equipment.

Road Program Generates Heat In Alta Loma Sub

By SUE SHAUUGHNESSY Editor The simmering about the road conditions in the Alta Loma Subdivisions bubbled over Monday night with the promise of more to come. What was originally scheduled as a special meeting of the home-owners association turned into an "informal discussion" on the roads when the group failed to turn out the necessary quorum.

Consensus of the 30-35 members present was to have the association's Board of Directors re-evaluate the program and report back to the general membership. Association President Russ Williamson told The Enterprise & Observer that the Board would report to the general membership within two weeks. Whatever the decision a crowd from the subdivision is almost certain to be present when the City Council holds the public hearings on the road

work it proposes for some of the streets in the area. THE BACKGROUND includes five years of work on the part of the subdivision in setting up a capital improvement program for the roads and a move by the city council and some of the residents to establish special assessment districts for paving on Alta Loma, Moore St., Cass and Cass Ct. Slightly more than a year ago representatives of the association and the city officials agreed on a four-point capital improvement program with the members of the association paying a voluntary \$80 assessment over a four year period as the resident's share of the cost.

Last year curbs were installed on Wilmarrh along with curbs and cul de sac areas on Cass and Hamlin Cts. under the association plan. This year the program called for curb and cul de sac areas on Corroy and James Cts. along with the installation and restoration of drainage facilities under the driveways throughout the subdivision.

Candidates Night

Candidates for charter commission for the proposed City of Farmington Hills will speak at a public meeting Thursday, Oct. 19, at East Junior High School.

The meeting, which will begin at 8 p.m., is sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Farmington City and Township. East Junior High is located on Middle Belt Rd. between 10 and 11 Mile Rds.

The League is sponsoring the meeting as a service to the voters. The candidates will speak and answer questions at the meeting. Nine candidates will be elected to serve on a charter commission Oct. 23. The commission will meet only if the majority of the voters say "yes" to the incorporation proposal. A total of 16 have filed for the commission.

In Farmington

Friday The 13th Holds No Fear

By ELIZABETH WISSMAN Staff Writer Triakadeskaphobia? Farmington people don't have it—or if they do, won't admit it. To find out if many people have an irrational fear of number 13, The Enterprise & Observer talked to Farmington residents all over town last Friday (the 13th). Most said they didn't look at the calendar that morning. Most said they couldn't have cared less. But most said they knew it was supposed to be unlucky.

38646 Silken Glen, was one who said, "The date doesn't bother me at all. My daughter, Jeanne, is even going to a Friday the 13th party tonight." On the other hand, Ray Pyoralis, 33480 Bostwick, said he wouldn't make a big investment on the date. Walker Kreuter, 22789 Lilac, said, "It's just another day. As far as people worrying about it, to each his own. I think so little of it that I just put my father on a plane for Los Angeles." Andrew Betts, 23140 Orchard Lake Rd., said "I always think of it, but I can't have had luck any day in the year."

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Court Reform Could Mean Revenue Loss

Reform of the lower court system in the state could mean a loss of revenue to both the Farmington Municipal Court and the Township Justice Court. Last year Farmington Township received \$8,779.65 from its court. The money came from the first \$15 of each fine levied for violations of township ordinances and went into the general fund.

The municipal court in the City brought about \$56,000 into the city's general fund as revenue from fines. It cost an estimated \$26,000 to operate the court last year.

THE KNOTTY problem of how to unify and reorganize the state's lower court system is currently being hammered out by the House of Representatives in Lansing.

Many observers, however, doubt that court reform will be completed during the current special session. Under the new state constitution the justice courts will be abolished Jan. 1, 1969 and the legislature has been directed to provide for a lower court system.

which calls for 43 new judicial districts in the state outside Detroit.

According to this plan, Oakland County would have 23 district judges with magistrates to assist them in lesser actions. The new district courts would replace existing justice of the peace and municipal courts, circuit court commissioners, police commissioners and Cadillac's Recorder's Court.

THE ENTERPRISE & OBSERVER talked to Farmington's Municipal Judge Michael J. Hand about the effect of the court reform on the city.

Hand said that if no minor courts are established and the justice courts are simply abolished, townships would have to handle their cases to the surrounding municipal courts. This would increase the already-overcrowded dockets in many cities.

The city currently employs a part-time municipal judge and a part-time associate judge and Hand terms its dockets as "crowded." Township police forces would continue to function even though

Voter Registration

Voters of the Farmington School District have an additional day to register to vote in the Nov. 27 school election if they live within the City of Farmington or West Bloombfield Township.

These offices will be open Saturday, Oct. 21, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for voter registration. This is in addition to the regular Monday through Friday hours of 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Because of the incorporation election in Farmington Township on Oct. 23, voter registration in the township will not be possible until Tuesday, Oct. 24. Voters may register at the township from 8:30 to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

The last day of registration for the special election is Friday, Oct. 27.

If you are a new resident to the area or have not voted during the past two years you must re-register to vote.

The ballot proposal on Nov. 27 is whether or not the schools will be allowed to levy an additional five mills (\$5 per each \$1,000 of valuation) for operating expenses for a period of 10 years.



FANTASTIC FISHING - That's what Charles (Pat) Ray, 34031 Edna, Farmington, said after he brought home two Coho salmon. Both fish are over two feet long and weigh around 12 pounds each. He caught the fish on Loon Lake near the Platt River last Monday.

EVEN THOUGH his company was still out on strike last Friday (the 13th) Jake Varn Hagen said the day is a lucky one for him, especially when he goes fishing.