

Farmington Observer & Eccentric

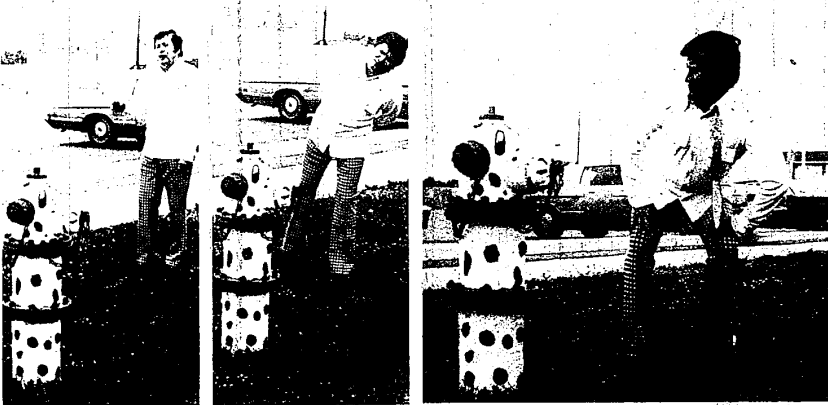
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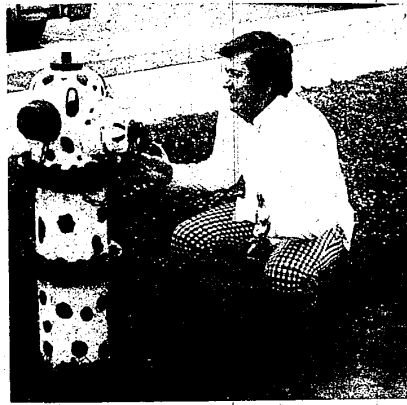
Fifteen Cents



They take some getting used to . . .

Casually ambling by one of the newly-decorated fire hydrants, painted gnome-like by the Farmington Beautification Commission, Pierre Turgeon found it a little tough to get used to. As he found himself going through periods of amazement, apprehension, and finally

a kind of fondness for the little statue, Turgeon reflected many of the emotions of other residents. He left with a strong feeling of sympathy for the confused dogs in the area. (Photos by Fran Evert)



Downtown area merchants eye future of the city

By DAN McCOSH
FARMINGTON — Which way will downtown Farmington go?

The question was discussed by about 25 members of the downtown business community Monday, and the result was a mixture of complaints, planning and pessimism.

"The north side is dead," Walter Sundquist said, beginning the hearing on a critical note.

"We have heard many so-called long range plans, but the number one priority is it should be cleaned up."

Sundquist's complaint was echoed by several other merchants in the area, who saw a trash and litter problem as a detriment to the area.

The city officials, who called the meeting, were generally sympathetic to the problems of policing the area, but most aimed at a larger problem.

"If we don't do something, we are going to see competitive businesses skip by us," Councilman Richard Tupper said.

His comment was repeated by some merchants who wanted to do something to increase the traffic in the downtown area.

- Among the suggestions were:
- Attempting to lure a major retailer into the area.
 - Promoting a second area festival.
 - Forming an active merchants association.

ONLY THE last was acted on. Ed Balden, of the Downtown Center, Gerald Bersick, of Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream, William Wilhelm, of the Village Mall, and Sundquist were named to represent the four sections of the downtown area.

The council asked the group to present one positive program by next month.

"Something we can act on," Councilman John Allen said. Criticism of the city role in the area went from a general problem of cleanup to complaints about the restrictive sign ordinances and other restrictions in the central business district.

COMPARISONS with downtown Birmingham, which has similar restrictions drew the comment from Bruce Habermehl, "Why do you keep comparing us with Birmingham? We aren't Birmingham, we are more like South Lyon or Northville."

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. John Richardson said, "Nobody has come to the council with a plan we can consider."

"I, for one, am willing to do anything necessary to support it. . . I am not opposed to spending money from the general fund."

Major plans were not forthcoming.

A suggestion to sponsor a street dance was brought up, as well as a second light at Grand River. Others were advertising the area as a group, or contacting real estate agents to urge the rental of vacant property on Grand River.

Pulte project is defeated

FARMINGTON — A proposed planned residential development zoning for 12 Mile and Drake Rd. was defeated Monday before the Farmington City Council.

Proposed by Pulte Homes, Inc., the development has been presented at least once before to the council and defeated. The planning commission recommended approval for the 320-acre development.

The proponents failed to convince the council the project could be built without the density affecting traffic in the area. Several councilmen told residents gathered at the hearing there was a possibility the current single-family zoning in the area would not stand a court test.

An undetermined number of multiple dwelling units mixed with single-family homes were proposed for the area.

Also included was a plan for a common recreation area, open space called for in the PRD zoning.

4 mill vote set for July

By DIANE HUBÉL
FARMINGTON — A special school election will be held on July 30. The Farmington School board will ask voters to approve a four mill increase in operational taxes.

The school board unanimously adopted a resolution at their Tuesday night meeting calling for the four mill increase.

A request for the same increase on the June 10 ballot was defeated by 265 votes.

FOLLOWING THAT election the board held a special meeting during which they decided to ask the county board of scheduling for permission to hold a special election July 30.

The county board gave the school board permission to hold that election last week.

Board President Mervyn Ross said, "This board has a responsibility to the children in trying to offer the best programs and experiences we can. We have based our need for four mills on a number of factors which were named in the last election."

Ross cited several reasons for the request, including inflationary prices, the loss of the variable millage, and the need for building repairs.

A resident protested the boards action, stating that the election would be a waste of money. She said the people of the district had a chance to state their preferences during the June 10 election.

Dr. Ross explained that the election would cost \$3000 at most.

"When we are talking about approximately 1.6 million dollars that we need, \$3000 is a pretty small risk," he said.

Bruce Duke, a defeated candidate for the board who opposed the millage during the election said, "The people have said they do not want the school board to spend any more money."

"This action on the part of the

board is that of an arbitrary dictatorship."

ALDO VAGNOZZI, the co-chairman of the Citizens for the millage, a citizen group which is working for the millage, cited recent legislation which has increased the responsibilities and the financial demands upon the district.

Trustee William Corliss said that the board has not had an increase in millage in eight years. He said that the Supreme Court action requiring schools to buy all supplies for students fell within those eight years yet the district did not receive a higher millage.

"I wonder how many people in this room could live on the same wage they were earning eight years ago?" he said.

Following a unanimous vote by the board to adopt the resolution, Dr. Ross said the three newly elected board members who had been sworn in earlier in the evening also indicated their support of the resolution.

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Destroyed

Farmington Hills volunteer firemen pulling down the remains of an abandoned home on 13 Mile and Drake Road destroyed by fire on Sunday, June 16. Three trucks, two pumpers and a rescue truck from stations two and four responded to the call Sunday evening. The cause of the fire is unknown. (photo by Ralph Evert)