

# Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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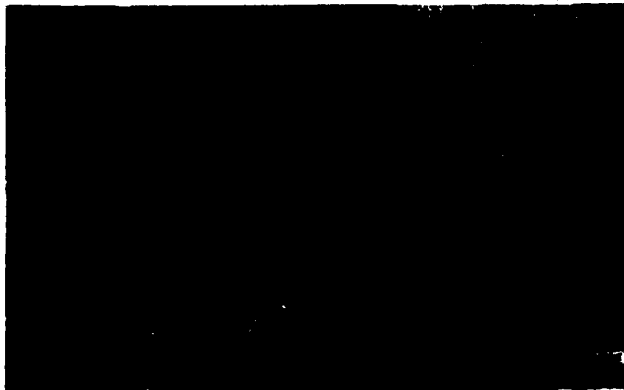
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Farmington, Michigan

64 Pages

Fifteen Cents

## Winery plans hinge on financial backing



Plans are still brewing for the renovation of this Farmington landmark. But time is running out for one entrepreneur who hopes to turn it into a dinner-theater. (Staff photo by Harry Mauths)

By CORINNE ABATT  
**FARMINGTON**—The question of what will happen to the former winery on Grand River which has been vacant since 1970 may be answered before the summer is over.  
 But then again, it could be up in the air like the bubbles from champagne for another year or two.  
 Last August, Southfield architect James Coquillard presented an elaborate set of plans for the 83,000 square foot building to the Farmington City Council. The officials liked the plan and orally agreed to issue a liquor license if, within a year, he came back for a building permit.  
 That's the last anyone heard from him until he contacted an interview this week.  
 In the meantime, attorney Ronald Ogdenby, who represents the building owners, Chamberlain Co. of America, a New York-based holding company, has been grinding his teeth.  
 He has had trouble peddling the building because of the assumption among potential buyers that Coquillard had it all tied up.  
 Meantime, valuable tax dollars which the city could be realizing from the structure if it were improved and in use are non-existent.

COQUILLARD, however, fully intends to carry through with plans to turn the inter-urban railroad, into a restaurant and mall.  
 The architect's plans call for stage one of the improvements to be a dinner-theater complex.  
 "We do have a restaurant ready to go. He is well-known in the Detroit area. We also have a theatrical producer lined up. We are definitely committed to the dinner-theater concept."  
 He explains the financial backing has been the stumbling block.  
 "It is unconventional, and we have to find a financing institution experienced in this kind of unique operation."  
 Figuring the financial backing could come "any day, any week," Coquillard says he fully intends to honor the commitment given him by the council. If by August he can't get it together, he will tell City Manager, Robert Deadman the project is dead.  
 Coquillard says, "It's terribly frustrating to me because I've put in so much personal time—we have been over there almost every day—and time from my firm."  
 If the financial backing comes, Coquillard is ready to unhook well-laid plans in a hurry.

"Within 30 days we'll start to renovate. I would guess the restaurant will be ready three or four months later, but the theater would probably not get going until next spring. The producer will need at least six months to book his stars. The theater will be using well-known stars in quality productions."  
 Coquillard says he has had many persons interested in the rest of the building—artists, boutique owner—even a therapy-oriented health club. A surprise to him is that many sculptors and artists are looking for studio space, and the second floor of the building impresses them.  
**THE AGREEMENT** between the architect and the council expires in six weeks. He is aware that he will must either put up or shut up, and he is scrambling to find backers, a delicate task. They have to be willing to let the architect have an equity in the operation. He wants to be in a position of ownership.  
 He calls it "very exciting, very interesting" at times—we have been over there almost every day—and the windows are boarded up. A watchman is on duty to keep youngsters from using the bulk of a building for a meeting place. All of that could change before summer is over.

## Councilmen support disclosure but oppose bills

By WYLIE GERDES  
**FARMINGTON**—City councilmen agree that some kind of financial disclosure law is needed for officials. But they oppose a bill now before the Michigan legislature.  
 City officials said some form of political reform bill is almost certain to be passed by the Legislature this year. However, they said total disclosure may discourage qualified persons from seeking public office, or may be an invasion of privacy.  
 City Manager Robert Deadman said current bills call for public disclosure of sources of income, property and business holdings for mayors, members of governing bodies, planning and zoning commissioners.  
 "Similar financial disclosure requirements in other states reportedly have had such a discouraging effect on individuals," Deadman told councilmen.  
 Deadman said the new law might affect planning commissions and zoning boards meet. The sections affecting public employees might be an infringement on the employer's right to privacy, he added.

and Tupper, who said he "doesn't totally disagree with it" but added total disclosure isn't needed.  
 "Some people might not want to tell how poor they are..." Tupper said.  
 A law, Tupper said, should require disclosure of sources of income and property within the city.  
 When they are elected, Tupper said, officials "no longer have a private

life, so to speak." However, some of the things required to be disclosed by the proposed laws are "none of anybody's damn business."  
 Councilman John Richardson called the laws a "real invasion of rights of privacy."  
 "I have nothing to hide but for a lousy \$500 a year. I don't want to disclose what I own or don't own."

There must be an answer to the problem, Richardson added, but the current proposals aren't it.  
 "The guy who's stealing from the public through isn't going to report it anyway."  
 Councilman William Hartsock said he "agrees with most of the bill" but it might discourage people from seeking office.

COUNCILMEN AGREED with Richardson and Tupper.

## Glass cost increases because of vandalism

By SUSAN AVERILL  
**FARMINGTON**—This year, Farmington School District has spent \$2,000 more than it did last year to replace broken glass in school buildings—and the blame can't be put entirely on the rising price of glass.  
 School officials Tuesday approved a \$2,007 expenditure to replace and repair broken windows at Farmington Junior High School.  
 Business Manager William Prisk said the district last year spent \$2,002 to replace damaged windows. Some of the breakage was caused during school sports activities or accidents such as catchers missing balls.  
 "Unfortunately, though, that's not what most of the repair is necessitated by," Prisk said.  
 A FEW YEARS AGO, the schools paid \$18,000 to replace broken glass, but different methods of glazing and materials have driven up the cost, Prisk said.  
 "But I don't think all the increase can be attributed to the increase in glass prices," Prisk said, adding that the district will pay more than \$24,000 this year.  
 Prisk said there has been more breakage at Farmington Junior High than at other schools. "We haven't been able to keep up with the repairs," he said.  
 Some school board members questioned the expenditures because the school was scheduled to close after next year.  
 "Is it wise to expend \$3,000? Perhaps there is something that doesn't need to be repaired or replaced at this time," school board president Gary Lichtman said.  
 Prisk said windows throughout the building had been broken, including the front doors which had been temporarily repaired with plywood.  
 But plywood, he said, isn't much cheaper than glass. To prevent further breakage in accessible areas, the maintenance department will install acrylic.  
 Board Vice-President William Corlan objected to acrylic, saying that it is easily defaced and becomes an eyesore.  
 PRISK ASSURED him that the material would not be used "anywhere where the kids could reach it."  
 Lichtman again questioned the expenditure in view of Farmington Junior High's scheduled closing.  
 "If we expect young people to attend that school for another four years, then their school should be no less than other schools in the district," Prisk replied.  
 "I'll accept that viewpoint," Lichtman said.

In other action Tuesday, the board approved the purchase of two maintenance vehicles and additional music equipment for elementary school students.  
 The district will replace a 1964 Jeep and a 1969 pickup truck with two pickup trucks from Town and Country Dodge.  
 The district will pay \$8,100 for each truck from the Dodge dealership, although they received a bid from Star-Richley West (Ford) for \$6,604 per truck.  
 Prisk recommended the purchase from Dodge because "the Dodge, if purchased, would be purchased from the local dealer who has regularly provided the district with driver education cars."  
 To complete a music education program begun a year ago, the board authorized the purchase of seven sets of equipment. The total expenditure approved was \$2,000.



**Youth awaits trial for Wagner slaying**  
 The 14-year-old Farmington Hills youth accused of the murder of 18-year-old James Wagner is being held in Oakland County Children's Village without bond.  
 He will face a first degree murder charge before Juvenile Court Judge John J. O'Brien, Wednesday, July 2. Conviction means the youth could be held for a maximum of five years according to Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson.  
 The slaying of the child, a fourth grader at Girce Elementary School, took place Monday, June 9. Her body was found in a plastic garbage bag in the rear of a home near where she lived at 32116 Malden. Police indicated she died from a stab wound in the chest. Interviews with neighbors led police to the youth who lived near the Wagner home.  
 Court referee William Kopp presided at a pre-trial hearing Monday, June 18 and decided the evidence presented warranted the hearing in Oakland County Juvenile Court.

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### Touring Farmington

Considered a landmark building in the county, the Masonic Temple in Farmington is a highlight of a tour the area architecture described on Page 1C.