

Farmington Observer

Volume 88 Number 99 Thursday, September 28, 1977 Farmington, Michigan 64 Pages Twenty-Five Cents



Turning a shower into a bloodbath

That's what North Farmington High School did last week when they defeated Redford Thurston, 40-0. During the game, valiant fans withstood the downpour to see their gridders to victory. To see further

details of the game, turn to the sport section. (Staff photo by Tom Baer)

Hills finally gives the nod to SEMCOG

After years of rejection by Farmington Hills legislative leaders, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) has received the nod and the city has joined the volunteer regional governmental unit.

By a vote of 32, the city council agreed to pay the \$2,380 membership dues to gain entrance into the seven-county strong organization. Counties represented in SEMCOG are Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne.

Voting for membership were councilmembers Mayor Joan Dudley, Joseph Smith and Jan Dolan. In opposition were councilmembers Fred Lichtman and Keith Deacon. Councilmembers Earl Oppenheimer and Robert Amori were absent.

The vote came after a presentation last month by SEMCOG Executive Director Michael Ghusac who urged Farmington Hills to join by saying the city could solve many regional problems before they became state problems.

But Lichtman, who was the most outspoken critic of casting the city's lot in with the regional organization, said it would be a waste of money and time to join the group.

"SEMCOG is embroiled in its own internal squabbles. I don't see any benefits emanating from joining this organization," said Lichtman. The veteran councilmember criticized SEMCOG for the amount of literature it sends to local governmental units. Yet, none of the literature lists any of its accomplishments, he said.

Public sentiment, he said, also would probably be against joining SEMCOG.

"I question, knowing the value our citizens put on the master plan, whether they would approve of joining," said Lichtman, who cited the fact the SEMCOG deals in land-use planning.

But Mrs. Smith countered Lichtman's arguments and picked up the support of Mayor Dudley, who over the years, has opposed SEMCOG membership.

"I don't think we are joining SEMCOG to necessarily solve our own problems. SEMCOG is attempting to make us aware that we all live in Oakland County and southeast Michigan. We can't isolate ourselves. We aren't an island," Mrs. Smith said.

The city's credibility would be at stake if the Hills council refused membership, she said.

"We must participate with fervor and enthusiasm. This is the spark we need to make a vital community. This could aid in dissuading the apathy and make people aware," she said.

"BUT it doesn't mean that somebody will tell us what to do with our land," she concluded.

Mrs. Dudley said that although she doesn't agree with all that SEMCOG does, membership is necessary to protect the interest of the city.

"Whether we like it or not, SEMCOG is involved in our lives. To protect ourselves, we must become members. Citizens may not like it but at least it will shake them up a bit," she said.

Residents tackle the issue

Toyota challenges America

By LYNN ORR

About 2,400 traveling miles separate Detroit and Los Angeles, but some news out of L.A. a few weeks ago made the distance seem a lot shorter.

Toyota took the lead in the largest number of registered cars in Los Angeles County, the first time a foreign market has infiltrated the top spot in the U.S.

And while most Farmington area residents agree that the news is bad for the Motor City, they fail to agree on why it happened or what should be done about it.

Buying American, limiting the import market, or hoping American manufacturers meet the foreign challenge are some of the solutions, say local residents.

"I think more people should buy American-made cars," says Barbara Howard, a Farmington Hills resident. Poor service is behind the foreign market's capture of a bigger piece of the pie.

"I think American manufacturers could give better service. When you buy a car and it doesn't work, and then you don't get good service, people switch to foreign cars."

OTHER PERSONS quizzed about the Toyota coup had other ideas.



Chester West

"I don't like the news, but what can I do about it?" says Mary Lou Boldt, a West Bloomfield resident, who's employed at Crowley's on Twelve Mile at Farmington Road. She owns two American-made cars and believes in buying American, like Esther Engelberg and Rosalie Greenberg, mother and daughter from Southfield.

"People should buy American-made



Mary Lou Boldt

cars and more American-made merchandise," says Ms. Greenberg. Change American small cars to meet the Toyota competition, she advises. However, the term "American-made" strikes some sparks in other residents.

"They should build their own cars here," says Farmington resident Jack Hampton, who thinks the Toyota news might get some American engineering

wheels turning in the right direction. "Maybe it'll get these people back off their butts and make them do something," Hampton says. "I think they (American manufacturers) could have done it a long time ago."

Those who can afford big cars will continue to buy them, but the average man wants a small car, and economy is why he turns to the foreign-made product, Hampton says.

"I'm an American, right, wrong or indifferent," he adds, but he believes American cars should be built in the U.S.

Detroit's Chester West says we've got to sell cars here, and hopes Ford's new Fiesta (built in Germany) will be a challenge in the economy field.

"We've got to be able to get the gas mileage that the foreign cars are getting," he says.

However, John Sullivan, an auto salesman at Roger Peck Chevrolet in Farmington Hills, doesn't see any trend in the Toyota takeover, although he thinks the public is misinformed as to the quality of foreign-made cars.

Toyotas are imported at Los Angeles, he says, which is one reason why they've captured a bigger share of the market. And dealership saturation might be a factor also, he contends.

But he believes American manufacturers have already answered the foreign economy car challenge with the Chevrolet.

"And this car is made in the U.S.," he says. "I don't believe that a Toyota or any other foreign car can be better."

Foreign cars can't compare to American cars in terms of service, he adds.

"They have limited dealers. Where do you go around here for service?" he asks. "And if you're deer hunting in the grassland, and your car goes out, you're stuck."

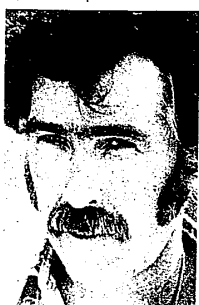
Sullivan drives a Chevette and likes it, but he believes public opinion has been swayed by indoctrination, to which the public is convinced foreign cars get better mileage and have fewer maintenance problems.

Public opinion killed the Vega, General Motors second stab into the economy car field, he says. First introduced in 1971, Vegas were discontinued with the 1977 models.

"But we admitted we had problems with it," Sullivan says. "They were corrected with the '75, but public opinion couldn't be changed."

Whatever American manufacturers want to do about the foreign challenge remains to be seen, but it's likely they'll do something. Import gains hold little favor with American workers and balance of trade watchers, as well as the general public.

There are exceptions, however. Pinckney resident Linda Schrader wasn't surprised that Toyotas had scored a west coast triumph. "I like them personally," she says.



Jack Hampton



Rosalie Greenberg



Barbara Howard



John Sullivan

NW extension dropped

After blistering its own staff for its adamant pro-freeway stances, the four-man Michigan State Highway Commission has ordered cancellation of the Northwestern Highway extension in Oakland County.

Chairman Peter B. Fletcher and the other members also ordered completion of engineering and environmental studies on alternatives to the M-275 project, which it cancelled last January.

The resolution asked for "emphasis on the grid pattern currently in place" on county roads. While there was no further comment, this holds out the possibility of the widening of Orchard Lake Road, where Northwestern currently ends.

The highway department staff has tentatively suggested widening Orchard Lake Road and grade separations for Northwestern at 12 Mile in Southfield and 14 Mile in West Bloomfield Township.

THE COMMISSION'S resolution was adopted Wednesday morning in Lansing by voice vote, once again before a packed house.

It ordered staff to "enter into immediate negotiation with the Oakland County Road Commission for the cancellation of the contract for the construction of Northwestern Highway to remove this long-standing impediment to innovative, new thinking on solving area road problems."

Commission member Weston Vivian of Ann Arbor said, "I would have been happy to vote on widening of Orchard Lake and Haggerty roads months ago" except that the highway department staff hasn't completed engineering and environmental studies.

The resolution bore the literary touch of the erudite Fletcher. Before introducing it himself, Fletcher said, "I do not understand why I cannot get the attention of the state bureaucracy," referring to the department staff's continued championing of freeway and near-freeway projects once the policy-making commission has ordered them cancelled.

Asked whether decisions on western Oakland roads weren't being delayed for more years, Fletcher replied:

"We don't have sufficient engineering studies on the alternatives (to free ways). We've continually asked these questions."

Fletcher said there were staff members "with a bias who say, 'M-275 or die.' Well, they just died."

A RESPONSE from the Oakland County Road Commission was unavailable at press time.

The road commission has held out strongly for both freeway projects. The road commission has gone to the State Court of Appeals with a suit to force the highway department to go through with a 20-year-old contract to

extend Northwestern, contending the county has put up \$1.8 million for the project.

How the road commission will take to negotiating an out-of-court settlement remains to be seen.

Roger Smith, Southfield traffic engineer, urged the highway commission to 1) widen the I-696 freeway, 2) widen US-24 to eight lanes instead of six (a reduction in laneage that was attributed to the M-275 proposal) and 3) consider a short extension of the Northwestern freeway to alleviate the traffic backups that occur at 12 Mile during evening rush hour.

THE COMMISSION looked coolly at the suggestion of building a highway in the same route as M-275—a proposal often dubbed "M-275 Jr." This led to speculation by Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy's office that the state might consider his "Lakeland Parkway" or some modification. The Lakeland Parkway idea would use mostly present county road rights-of-way to make a north-south route across western Oakland County.

Fletcher said the commission would demand 90-day status reports on engineering plans. One factor that has delayed a solution to western Oakland's problems so far, he said, is that "we have had no final plans on anything until this January"—a reference to the M-275 proposal.

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"OVERWHELMING RESPONSE"

Ann McCarthy reported she was "overwhelmed" by the response to her miscellaneous for sale ad. All the items were sold in just one day, leaving her with handy cash in no time at all.

SOLD: OAK Table, 12 inch leaf & 4 chairs, \$25; porcelain top dining table with four bin, \$20; china cabinet, \$20; lawn mower, \$10; washing machine, \$20; extra large garage table, \$15. Call after 6 p.m.

Advertise your extras with a low cost ad in the classified section of your hometown newspaper. Call today.

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