

Study cost objections delay park plan

By STEVE BARNARD

Consideration of a proposed master plan study for Farmington Hills park development has been delayed because of objections by Councilman Earl Oppenheimer to the proposed study, saying it didn't break down into small and large park concepts.

The council voted to table consideration of allowing Bills and Childs Associates to study park development until the council was provided with cost estimates from other firms. The Bills and Childs study would cost \$12,000.

Recreation Director Doug Gaynor appeared before council and recommended

that the consulting firm be hired to carry out the study.

WHILE MCCONNELL EXPRESSED concern over being informed as to costs of such a study, Councilman Earl Oppenheimer objected to the proposed study, saying it didn't break down into small and large park concepts.

"I don't have any hesitation on this proposal, but I want to know the range of prices."

"It is a charter requirement that we have bills. The council should have been acquainted with the different costs of such a study."

City Manager George Majors said a determination would be made on a firm which

would do the best job rather than who would do it the least expensively.

"Most of the other professionals didn't give firm figures. We got ballpark estimates," he said.

Councilwoman Joan Dudley defended the administration's action in recommending the Bills and Childs Associates, saying that other consulting firms were hired by the city without going through the bidding process.

"I'm a little perplexed on why this wasn't brought up before," said his Dudley.

"I recall at the pre-incorporation meetings that we hired Pale, Hino and Bogus, Plante-Moran, Villan-Lemmon and Brennan

and Bibben. But I don't remember getting any bids."

Gaynor was, in some cases, unable to get replies by some firms and other replies were "irrelevant" to the Farmington Hills situation, she explained.

"While I agree that it is nice to get a dollar per dollar figure, so say could we do it this time," she said.

McConnell said the bidding process was necessary in this case because it was a "brand new area" which the council was studying.

"It was always my understanding that we hired known performers. The council has always retained it negative for bids," he said.

Oppenheimer grilled Robert Bills, of

Bills and Childs, on why the proposed study wouldn't be broken down by various park concepts. He also wanted more specific cost estimates on how much a parks system would cost.

OPPENHEIMER HAS BEEN A proponent of small neighborhood parks and believes a referendum earlier this year indicated that many residents wanted that type of parks.

"The problem with this study is that it gives you all or nothing. Although I was a supporter of having a master plan study, I was under the mistaken idea it would be a study as we could pick the kind of parks the community wants and could afford," said Oppenheimer.

Bill explained that a study of neighbor-

hood parks was an integral part of an entire master plan study.

"A balanced study should look at all the ranges of parks. If the research indicates neighborhood parks, so be it," said Bills.

Mrs. Dudley objected to Oppenheimer's objections, saying that the majority of the council, including Oppenheimer, had agreed that a study should be made "irrespective of the type."

Absolute costs of a parks system was difficult to determine until a study could be made, said Bills. Although unsure of costs, Bills indicated that if a master plan is adopted by the city, it would be eligible for matching funds from the state and federal government for implementation of the park development.

Farmington Observer-Excentric

Volume 87 Number 77

Thursday, July 15, 1976

Farmington, Michigan

80 Pages

Twenty Five Cents

State school aid solves district's budget woes

By RON GARNINSKI

With the help of the new state school aid bill, the Farmington School District will be able to balance its 1977-78 budget.

"That is if Governor William Milliken approves the financial package which provides relief for most districts in the state," said the word from Superintendent Lewis Schulman in a "Status of the District Report As Of July 1" presented to board members Friday night.

Prior to the approval of this aid bill, district officials were predicting a \$250,000 shortfall due to declining enrollments, cutbacks in aid and other financial problems.

"When the governor approves the bill, it looks as if we'll be able to balance our budget," Schulman says. "We don't have a definite figure yet because of the specific line items still to be approved. When he does that, we'll know for sure how much money we'll have for next year."

With the funds the district receives from the bill, its deficit for the 1977-78 year should be wiped out. But the district still is making cutbacks in all areas and has already chopped more than \$1.1 million from its proposed budget in order to make ends meet.

ALSO IN THE STATUS report, Schulman and his administrative staff recommends that the board not seek additional millage at this time.

"I recommended this because I thought we could balance the budget and make cuts elsewhere. We can't always be asking the public for funds. If at all possible, I want the district to live within its means," Schulman explains.

To do this, we must adjust our priorities and work within the proposed budget.

The major area to be affected by budget reductions has been maintenance and care of school buildings. Since most board members are "curriculum sensitive," most budget cuts have been made in this area, he says.

And district officials say it is beginning to catch up with the schools. There is a natural tendency to make reductions in maintenance and buildings because these areas affect education the least.

"The district has been postponing many things in the maintenance side of education and it's beginning to have a moribund effect. We're in poor shape-in many areas because of money cuts."

And we weren't able to do a full job of maintenance last year because the money just isn't there. The board feels we shouldn't cut classrooms, so that is the only major area we can chop into," the superintendent continues.

"I'M ASHAMED AT times the way some of our schools look but I can't be helped. Some of the buildings are becoming shabby because we can't cut the grass or paint the buildings as often as we would like. Cutbacks in maintenance, replacement items and additions show up in many areas and it can't be helped."

While the district is making reductions trying to balance its budget for next year, it is putting its building and site funds to good use.

With the interest the district receives on its bonds, building improvements are financed through this fund. In the face of declining enrollments, these funds are used to continually upgrade school facilities and sites.

Ground recently was broken at North Farmington High School to expand the art, sewing and music storage rooms which will be ready for students in the fall.

A major remodeling of the auto, metal and wood shops at the senior high also is expected to be completed in time for the opening of school.

When Farmington Junior High closed last month and enrollment figures were projected for next year, the district was forced to release more than 60 employees district wide.

On the elementary level, the staff was reduced from 333.5 to 310.3 employees while the secondary level was cut from 343.5 to 327.

THIS TOTAL INCLUDES administrators, teachers, librarians, counselors and a reading specialist.

"While staff reductions will be painful for the educational program and certainly to the individuals involved, it is heartening to note that retirements and leaves will help ease individual situations," Schulman told the board.

"While the reduction in personnel will be reflected in increased class size and limitations in course offerings, the results will not be catastrophic in nature. It is our intent to continue to purchase texts and supplies to appropriate quantity and maintain the heart and substance of the major portion of the educational program," Schulman concludes.

Police awarded decision

By RON GARNINSKI

Oakland County Circuit Judge Robert Temple Tuesday ruled in favor of the Farmington Hills police in their cost-of-living contract dispute with the city which paves the way for the department to become one of the highest paid in the state.

Top pay for patrolmen after three years with the department will increase by a maximum of \$1,950 from \$10,000 to \$11,950. Starting pay for a Hills police officer is \$14,000.

Farmington Hills took its police department to court recently over the interpretation of their past contract's cost-of-living adjustment.

Judge Temple decided that the city failed to prove its case that there was a mistake by both parties in the contract meaning. He then awarded the policemen their pay adjustment, retroactive to the past's signing three years ago.

City Manager George Majors said that if the city lost the case, it would file an appeal.

"The city failed to show the judge that a mistake in the contract was made," said Hills police union president Jerry McConnell. "What the contract says is that the cost-of-living adjustment doubles each year. The city said that wasn't the intent of the contract, so they took us to court."

"But the judge said that's what the contract said and that's what we believed. It said when we signed it. So the court awarded us the decision for the cost-of-living adjustment which is retroactive to the contract's signing in 1972," McConnell continues.

An appeal by the city is expected and such an appeal process could tie up the case in the courts for several years, a circuit court official said.

Old time concert set for July 28

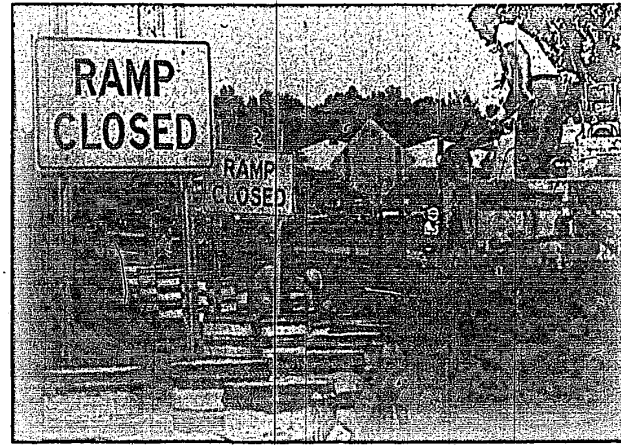
The Franklin Village Band will give a thirty minute concert in the downtown shopping center at 7:30 p.m. July 28. This will be the 12th appearance by the 30-piece brass concert band at the Farmington festival.

The concert will coincide with the crowning of the festival queen, Miss Farmington.

The band, under the management of William T. Ellison, has been organized for 14 years and now has more than 450 arrangements.

Programs, tailored for each occasion, generally focus on American composers such as John Philip Sousa, Stephen Foster and Cole Porter.

The band is under the direction of Dr. Conrad R. Lam, a physician, and is composed of periods from a variety of occupations ranging in age from 18 to 75. The band makes many national appearances and has played in Washington D.C. as well as other major American cities.



Cut Off

State Highway Department and Oakland County road crews moved into Farmington Tuesday morning to begin work on closing the entrance ramp to I-96 off Freedom Road, east of Farmington Road. City officials requested the state highway department in May to close

the ramp, causing traffic to continue west-bound on Freedom to the Ten Mile interchange. A highway department spokesman said his agency is studying the feasibility of developing a major interchange at Farmington Road. (Staff photo by Harry Mauths)

Man supplies the brains New generation grows around custom computers

By RON GARNINSKI

A new frontier in computer technology is upon us and it's easy to visualize every home some day equipped with customized computers controlling the functions that once were done by hand.

Consider for a moment, sitting at home and ordering groceries from the market by push buttons, being provided with news which comes supplied with newspaper's on a video screen, or just opening or closing doors to your house without moving from your favorite easy chair, all by using computers.

While research shows that 90 percent of the nation's population will be working with computers by the year 2000, Ron Reeves says man's future depends on the utilization of these unemotional knowledge banks.

"There's a new generation of knowledge workers growing up around the computer. Man supplies the brains and the computer supplies the work," explains Reeves, president of Computer Engineering, Incorporated, 3200 Industrial Park Drive in Farmington Hills.

"Computers are the first extension of man's nervous system. Anything we can envision doing can be done with computers," he said.

AND THAT'S exactly what Reeves is doing. In 1974, he started his computer business on a card table in his basement in Southfield.

Since then, it has grown into a nationally recognized custom computer design company. It has handled projects for General Motors, Ford Motor Co., NASA, the Department of Agriculture, Union Carbide Corp. and Tech Inc., just to name a few.

One of its most recent projects has been designing analytical stereopters for the Viking Space Program under NASA's sponsorship, which will back pictures of Mars.

This was CEA's third space program contract and will be used to determine the prime landing spot on Mars for the Viking spacecraft.

"We're a custom computer system design company," says Reeves, who has been in the electronic business for 12 years. "We'll implement any computer system designed especially to solve a client's problem."

"Actually, there is only about one or two per cent of the computer business doing the same type of work we do," he continues. "You have to be a jack of all trades because you never know what you are up against in this business."

When he talks of problems, he explains that trying to tie all the integral parts of a computer system together and then attempting to have it interact with people at times can be a real hassle.

"COMPUTERS ARE really stupid if you just think of them as a machine. They need man to program it and talk to it," Reeves explains. "The key to computers is programming, and once there are programs for the specific tasks in demand, you can utilize any existing software (computer)."

"Man supplies the brains as computers supply the work. The real challenge is taking a computer and finding its useful man place into the real world," he continues.

"Computers are the one thing that has brought together all the sciences. Man can't do without them because of their infinite capabilities."

With this in mind, Reeves and his sales manager, Charles Gallagher, make their business solving problems through computers.

"We design interfaces for the computer

systems," Gallagher explains. "We like to consider ourselves integrators and designers. We buy the larger chunks of machinery from major suppliers and then do the final designing that will solve specific problems for a client."

Computer Engineering is a more highly technological "designer" than manufacturer. Several major corporations are making computer systems, but most of them only do programming and data processing for other companies.

Since the area of custom-designing computers is unlimited and the specializing companies few in number, Computer Engineering has experienced much success in the past three years.

IN ITS FIRST year, the company grossed \$250,000. This year it hopes to top the \$1 million mark and Reeves has plans to exceed \$12 million in the next few years.

"When you think of computers, you think of data processing and the old concepts attributable to the early computers," Gallagher says. "But computers are so highly technical today, most people can't even begin to comprehend what they're all about."

"Consider the size of the first computer (Continued on page 12A)



Ron Reeves, president of Computer Engineering, Inc. in Farmington Hills, explains the integral parts that make up the computer mapping system his firm has custom designed for NASA and the Viking Space program. (Staff photo by Cyd Abatt)

inside

News	Section A
Farmington Freeholder	14
Crackerbarrel Debates	14
Editorials	14
Business	Section B
Sports	Section B
Classifieds	Section C,D
Farmington Suburban Life	Section E

GOOD MORNING

Mrs. Birken couldn't have found a better way to start her morning. She advertised her used Mustang in our classified section and sold it before breakfast on the first day that the ad appeared.

FORD MUSTANG 1961, new good 1960.

When it comes to selling cars fast, you can't beat the Observer & Excentric's want ads.

DIAL DIRECT
644-1100